

Keep an eye out

By Greg Meckbach

LOREX TECHNOLOGY INC. OF MARKHAM, ONT. IS shipping a video surveillance system that doubles as an electronic picture frame and office PC.

The All-in-One Professional Digital Surveillance Recording System, which costs US\$2,399, includes a 20.1-inch monitor, digital recorder, 320 GB hard drive and four cameras.

“You can connect any PC or laptop to it and it will double as a PC monitor, so you can use it as your PC monitor while recording in the background,” said Gilad Epstein, director of product management for Lorex. “You can see what’s happening in your store while you’re working on your computer.”

He added it could be used by companies wanting to run a promotional video or advertise something.

The standard version comes with a 320-GB hard drive, which can be swapped for a drive of higher capacity, Epstein said.

Users can also backup archived video over the network through File Transfer Protocol.

“You can set a schedule and archive the data to a network location, whether on your local area network or even a remote location over the Internet,” he said. “All you have to do is specify the location and, at a certain time, (for example) 7 at night, the system will offload the information according to the settings that you’ve put into the system.”

Users can also purchase extra cameras with frequency-hopping wireless connections.



The 20.1-inch screen can double as a PC monitor so you could work on your office software and watch security videos at the same time. It also displays digital pictures from USB flash drives.

The 320-GB hard drive is included, and you can replace it with a higher-capacity drive.

The cameras are capable of night vision and each comes with a 100-foot cable. The daytime resolution is 480 TV lines, and the infrared LEDs to provide surveillance at night. The camera cable provides both video transmission and power.

The monitor has USB ports, so you can save video clips to your USB drive. It also comes with a 10-foot Ethernet cable so you can connect to your network through a router. It has an extra port for component video so you can attach it to a DVD player and run promotional videos.

: status symbols

By James Speedy
content producer, PCWorld Canada
jspeedy@pcworld.ca



Phone needs bigger keys

THE BIG VALUE IN THE SONY

Ericsson K850i is that Sony has packed a 5-megapixel camera into the phone that Ericsson designed. But Sony Ericsson is not two companies, it's one, which is where these new and interesting ideas are hatched from. The interesting thing is that, unlike their competitors designs, the line is still very clear where the phone ends and the camera begins.

My only real complaint with the look and feel of the K850i is that the buttons are lame. They're small, they make a loud clicking noise, and they're hard to dial with.

The navigation box — or whatever the glowing ring on the front is called — that you use to move between menus and options, is equally hard to grasp. And those little buttons for send and cancel are incredibly minute.

The camera that is on the reverse side of this phone is the obvious selling point. I took some pictures inside at night, and it took some nice pics. My only issue is that it's touted as having a Xenon flash, using the same technology as those headlights that blind you on the highway.

Taking pictures inside with the camera on 'auto' for flash settings, I ended up with pictures that were too dark to make out.

The Sony Ericsson K850i is a completely decent phone in call. It's not stupendous, like a Samsung or an LG, but it is perfectly acceptable. It's not distorted at all, and, like most Rogers phones, benefits from their excellent cell range and line quality.

The real conclusion here is not a matter of good vs. bad. It's one of usage. For a guy with big fingers who doesn't mind the blurry and awkward pictures he snaps with his regular camera phone, it may be worth a pass. You can get great snaps in a flash without having to lug around a second device. That is, at least until they make the phone part better and the flash more effective. That, I would buy in a heartbeat.

: editor's picks

By Greg Meckbach

assistant editor, ComputerWorld Canada
gmeckbach@itworldcanada.com



Ever wonder what those other folks on a boring conference call look like? Lotum, which bills itself as a voice 2.0 company, last month announced it's beta testing a visual conference call system. Dubbed Calliflower, the product lets users see the names and photos of people participating in the call. For users who want to talk to other participants without interrupting the conference, Calliflower includes a group chat feature, which allows conversations before, during and after a conference. Users can also share handouts and links. It also lets moderators record the call in MP3 format. Unless the price of oil drops unexpectedly, this may be a better way of collaborating with users outside of the office, without paying through the nose for telepresence.



Cherry Electrical Products has made a splash into the washable keyboard market with its J84-2800 Series.

This keyboard is intended mainly for hospitals and schools. Peripheral manufacturers have recently started to tout washable keyboards and mice in the wake of studies showing places where people put their fingers tend to get really, really dirty. The Cherry J84-28000 includes a “clean” key so you don't end up accidentally hitting a key while you're cleaning it. The alternative is to spend lots of time swabbing the keys and spraying out the food particles, hair, dust and crappola fermenting underneath the keys.



Belgian vendor Aventiv has a product that lets remote users collaborate without using VPNs. Noma Desk 2.4 is a virtual file server that lets employees manage, edit and share files through their browsers. With Noma Desk 2.4, currently in beta testing, Aventiv claims the files can be



encrypted. Designed for teams of two to 20 users, version 2.4 boasts faster performance and better access for mobile users. If you're easily confused by endless e-mail chains and umpteen versions of the same document, this might be a product worth considering.