PRODUCT TEST

Optex iVision+
Wireless Video Intercom

Ease of installation is a major benefit of this system. The monitor handset charging cradle can be desk or wall mounted close to a suitable mains power socket.

What’s in the box?
IVP-HU(G)
Handheld monitor unit
Battery pack
Charging cradle (with wall fixing screws)
Plug-in power supply with multiple adaptors
Installation instructions (multiple European languages)

IVP-DU(G)
Door camera unit
Fixing screws and wall-plugs
Installation instructions (multiple European languages)

IVP-GU(G)
Gateway chime unit
Fixing screws
Installation instructions (multiple European languages)

Also tested:
IVP-GU(G)
Gateway chime unit
Fixing screws
Installation instructions (multiple European languages)

The first impressions are of a well presented wireless door intercom with clear installation instructions. As supplied the standard iVision+ package includes one Handheld Monitor Unit and one Door Unit. The monitor unit and door unit are already “paired” together using a “Home ID” unique identification number. An additional door unit can be added to the system for front and rear door use and three more monitor handsets can be added if required. Additional items are simply linked in using a pairing button.

An optional Gateway Chime Unit is available to provide an additional sounder and to give a relay output to release a suitably controlled door.

As with all such 2.4GHz devices the range may be severely limited by building structures and metallic surfaces so it is sensible to test for actual performance before permanently fixing in place. The manufacturer’s website includes a useful guide to the attenuation of signal for various construction materials.

Getting started
Ease of installation is a major benefit of this system. The monitor handset charging cradle can be desk or wall mounted close to a suitable mains power socket. The door unit should ideally be powered from a local power supply source but can operate on battery supply for reasonable periods of time. Three AA cells can be fitted internally; the installation guide states that these should last 12 months, but this is based on just three ten second activations per day so a suitable calculation will need to be made for higher usage levels.

Both the Door Unit and the Gateway unit have removable back panels that can be fixed to the wall with their pre-drilled fixing holes serving as a template for any necessary drilling.

Setting-up the system is relatively simple although it did take some time for the monitor handset to initially charge to a suitable level for operation to begin.

The door unit can operate on battery supply and while this may not be advisable for permanent installations could be useful for temporary set-ups and is very helpful to confirm operation in potentially difficult locations where building structure or electrical noise could be a problem.

While battery operation of the door unit worked well, the use of an external power supply (not supplied) gives the advantage of an illuminated bell push symbol and the ability to view the live image from the camera and hear any external sounds by pressing the “Browse” button on the handset.

Menu Options
The handset has a straightforward menu structure that is accessed by holding down the left function button for more than 3 seconds. This gives the following 4 options and their sub-menus or details:

1. TIME & DATE
The currently stored Date and Time is presented as YYYY/MM/DD MM:SSAM with cursor control to increment or decrement the highlighted values in pairs from left to right.

2. SYSTEM CONFIGURATION
2.1. NUMBER OF CAPTURING IMAGE – allows from 0 to 10 images to be stored when the call button is pressed. The first image is within one second of the push, the second is 4 seconds later and then any additional images are stored at 1 second intervals.

2.2. TALK SWITCHING SET-UP – adjusts the management of noise levels to control two way speech handling.

2.3. DOOR OPEN DURATION SETUP – scrolls through 1, 5, 30 or 60 seconds option for each of Doors 1 and 2.

3. DEVICES IN NETWORK
Displays the number of devices in the system, listed in order as Handheld Monitor unit, Gateway Chime unit and Door Camera Unit.

4. PC CONNECTION
“Connect to PC” Yes or No selection. This function can only be activated when connected to a PC and then the handset screen will display “PC CONNECTION MODE” until the Back button is pressed or the PC is disconnected.
Performance

When the door unit push-button is activated by a caller, the handset sounds a chime tone and presents a live video feed from the door unit camera onto its display. Pressing “ANSWER” on the handset then allows two-way audio between the handset and door unit; the “OFF” button can be used to end a call or to ignore an unwanted call.

The Gateway unit can be used as a Chime repeater with 4 volume settings being push-button selected in a rolling sequence. A slider switch turns the unit’s sound off, if being used for door control only. For door control the Gateway Unit has a changeover relay so that either a normally closed or normally open switching state can be provided to control or interface with a suitable locking device or access control system.

If a Gateway Chime Unit and suitable lock interfacing is fitted to the system then the operator can press the handset’s “OPEN DOOR” button to release a connected door lock.

The camera gave good image quality and handled subject back-illumination well. Even with bright sunlight behind the subject facial details are clearly discernible. The night-time performance is equally good albeit in monochrome with LED illumination of the subject.

The door unit camera’s angle of view is not stated in the specification list but was measured as approximately 64° horizontal by 46° vertical so is based on a 4x3 aspect ratio image sensor. The camera module has an adjustment of +/- 15° in each direction from the centre and this can be adjusted from the rear of the door unit prior to mounting onto its back plate.

There are four chime volume levels on the handset changed by the Up and Down cursor keys. Simple intuitive buttons control all other tasks. These are laid out in four rows with the top row of 2 function buttons used for assignable menu functions such as “OK” and “BACK”, the next row of 3 are labelled “OPEN DOOR”, “ANSWER” and “OFF”.

The next row of 3 are “SNAP” to capture a still image of anything being displayed from the door unit, an up arrow for cursor control and a “PLAY” button that shows stored images and serves as an occasional cursor right function.

The final row of 3 are “BROWSE” to show a live image from the Door unit, a down arrow for cursor control and a “BRIGHTNESS” button that sequences through 5 levels of display brightness to suit the viewing environment.

It is stated in the manual that the handheld unit can store up to 500 images and will then overwrite the earliest images as new ones are added. There is a later recommendation however that a monthly erase of all images is performed to “reduce a risk of memory failure”.

Pressing the PLAY button allows the stored images to be scrolled through with an on-screen indicator showing the image number and total images stored. The right function button allows the current image to be deleted following a YES / NO verification, alternatively holding down the PLAY button for over 3 seconds allows all images to be deleted after verification.

When connected to a PC, the files appear as standard JPEG images in a “DCIM” drive folder. The images are stored as relatively low-resolution CIF images of 320 x 240 pixels and highly compressed requiring just under 11KB per image however these are perfectly adequate for their purpose. The images have no embedded time and date data. The files are stored in a non-removable 14MB internal memory and are named from IM_00000.JPG, incrementing the number for each file added. An additional file “FILE_IDX.SYS” keeps track of the 5 digit number sequence in non-delimited format that can be viewed using a basic text editor.

While the files on the handheld unit hold their creation date and time, this attribute’s value is lost when files are copied to the PC and are replaced with the time and date of the copy being made so there is then no way to verify the original time of image capture if the door unit files are deleted. Once files are deleted any remaining files are re-indexed meaning that the file name is not unique; so if storing files for future reference, a suitable dated PC sub-folder structure would be advisable to prevent images being inadvertently overwritten.

In addition to the charger unit the handset can be charged using its USB connection from a suitable charger or PC port.

Conclusion

An impressive wireless video intercom system that is simple to install and configure. It is very well suited to domestic and small commercial installations or any situation that requires visitor identification with the added flexibility of portable response handsets.

www.psimagazine.co.uk

9.5 out of 10

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