

CAMERA, ACTION

Video feeds from vehicle cameras are now being combined with truck data feeds to provide extra information about the precursors of traffic accidents. Chris Tindall zooms in on the market

Truck cameras have been available for more than a decade. Today, the market is broad and the options available to hauliers huge.

Paul Singh, CEO at SmartWitness, says that the objectives haven't changed since the first cameras were introduced. Risk management still remains at the forefront of hauliers' minds, as insurers benefit when fleets don't have accidents.

Singh says SmartWitness was first to come to market with a camera solution for HGVs back in 2007 and has experienced the market changes first-hand: "Margins are now under pressure; adoption rates have gone up."

And the market continues to evolve with the technology. At the moment, video combined with telematics is beginning to offer haulage companies the whole story of incidents on the road; increasing 'visibility', according to Singh.

He offers an example: "The telematics system might have reported someone as a poor driver, due to harsh braking. But without the visibility side of the story you don't really know if that harsh braking was an heroic act the driver did, or because he was not paying attention. Video gives them an insight into the context of the telematics information they are seeing."

Asked how he'd differentiate the levels of the market, Singh says: "One's a camera and the other's a solution." He explains: "At the low end it's basically a camcorder on a windscreen.

The middle is exactly that, but with the ability to historically track the vehicle via a memory card. At the high end it's the ability to have live services. There's even a very high end, a bespoke area. There, you can transmit data and integrate with other platforms."

Camera provider Lytx, which primarily sells in the aftermarket, says that hauliers have become increasingly interested in getting to the bottom of what happened during an incident on the road, in an effort to improve driver safety and save money. As a result, its DriveCam programme combines video with predictive software, driver feedback and coaching to identify and deal with risky driving behaviours.

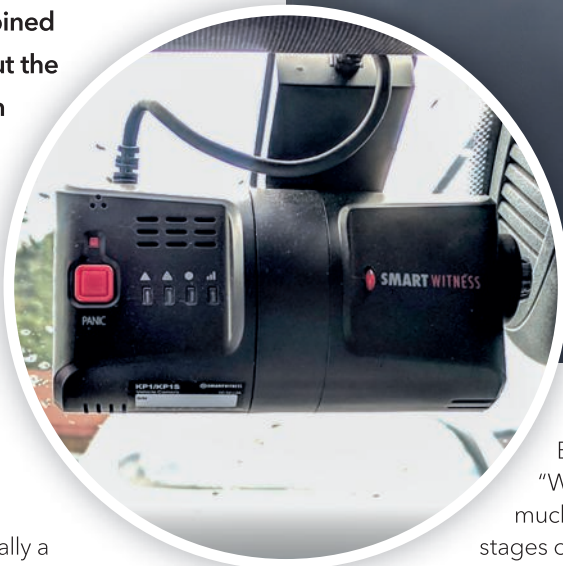
John Mills, Lytx UK sales director, says that overall understanding of the benefits of video telematics has

increased. But he adds: "We are still very much in the early stages of adoption in the UK and in Europe.

Only about 30% of commercial vehicles in the UK have telematics installed, and even fewer use video telematics. Plenty of hauliers still use traditional forward-facing dash cams in their vehicles."

Teletrac Navman recently launched its Safety Analytics Dashcam, which is a front-facing camera that interfaces with its fleet tracking system. Peter Millichap, UK marketing director, says customer research drove the product's development: "It was a very clear gap, there was very high interest. Getting hold of the SD cards [in a dashcam] was proving unsatisfactory, and they wanted the immediacy of the data, and they wanted the context."

Microlise recently launched a 'multi-camera solution' that integrates with telematics software. Matthew Hague,





executive director for product strategy, says: "It used to be that people invested in a telematics system and then they bought a third-party camera system. In my experience, those customers have had telematics for a while and use it to understand vehicle utilisation, tachograph information and driver preferences. But they have switched to thinking that they could be getting a lot more value out of the system in terms of safety. It's the next natural progression."

Typically, Microlise sells up to four cameras for its video solutions, but Hague says it is seeing demand grow for more than four, and that's where the market could develop: "There's still a market for a single camera with 3G and a cellular connection, but that market is quite mature. We are making sure we have flexibility to span the one- to four-camera market, which seems to have broad appeal. Then there's the six- or eight-way cameras and 360° cameras. There'll always be a demand for a 'slap and go' low-end camera for smaller

operators or your man in a van. But we are seeing a lot of demand for much more integrated safety models."

Changes in demand are also changing the way that the products are supported, manufactured and updated. Innovative Safety Systems (ISS) specialises in mid- to high-end digital vehicle recording (DVR) systems and focuses mainly on the refuse collection vehicle and bus and coach sectors, as well as other niche areas. Director Gavin Thoday says it is building a managed service monitoring customers' equipment and data, and analysing footage remotely on their behalf; clients would receive a daily 'health' report.

Thoday says: "The difference between ISS and others is that everything we do is on a platform that's future-proofed. Ten years ago there was no Cycleclear or Rearclear [cyclist and reversing warning systems], but a customer using a DVR system now can have it linked to these. Software updates can be done remotely with no interruption."



CRANSWICK BRINGS HOME THE BACON WITH HGV CAMERA SOLUTION

Pork and chicken producer Cranswick is rolling out a vehicle camera solution from Intelligent Telematics across its 79-strong HGV fleet. The vehicles will be fitted with the SureCam device, enabling the Hull-based operator to have visibility of customer deliveries, as well as using footage to improve driver behaviour. If an incident occurs – either a collision or near miss – a live alert with HD footage and vehicle data will be transmitted automatically to the transport office. This gives Cranswick protection against fraudulent insurance claims or disputed liability, as well as supporting lone drivers on the road.

Dale Middleton, transport manager at Cranswick, says: "The SureCam devices will provide us with full visibility of any situation within seconds, so we can respond immediately to avoid unnecessary insurance costs, improve fleet efficiency and mitigate any risks facing our business."

Hague says that managed services such as the type offered by ISS will feature heavily in the future of truck camera development. He concludes: "Where the market is going ultimately is advanced driver assistance systems. With smart camera technology, they can kill two birds with one stone. Some of the technology in the vehicle for safety systems will be used for back-end reporting, too." **TE**