

Xanboo is now addressing the issue of requiring the PC to be always on in order for the system to function. Their new Telemetry Gateway interlinks their modules directly into the Internet, bypassing the need for a computer. The gateway can be user-installed into a telephone line/broadband connection, and will work with existing modules as well as new ones that will allow for two-way interaction. The gateway and two wireless video cameras with motion sensors sell for about \$500.

## Spy Shop

Beverly Hills, California might seem a strange place to find the Counter Spy Shop of Mayfield, London—you'd think expensive clothes and restaurants would be more in keeping with the character of the area than hidden microphones and concealed video cameras. And concealed is the operative word; because in a few minutes I'll have strapped on a remote video camera system that makes James Bond look like a piker.

My "tour guide" is Arielle, director of public and media relations, and she takes me into their back room, which holds a bewildering array of "normal" items, ranging from a tiny alarm clock, to a tie clip, to a stylish pen and man's wristwatch (even the kind of fire alarm you'd find in your home). All of these contain miniaturized video cameras, but the one I'm interested in appears to the naked eye to be an ordinary pair of sunglasses. And which contains a low-light CCD camera (up to 330 lines of resolution). It's even got UV protection! This is the video component I'll be using as part of their CVS-3030 Body Worn Remote Dial-Up Video System.

Arielle points out that the "cord" (housing the fiber optic wires transmitting the video signal to the transmitter) that loops around a person's head and keeps the sunglasses from falling off is actually the leads that attach to a small cellular transmitter worn surreptitiously inside a pocket or in the waistband. This contains a power supply that powers both the video camera as well as digitally processing the video signal and sending it through a cellular modem using the same com-

mercial airwave network that cell phones do.

Putting the sunglasses on and attaching the transmitter to my belt, we exit the store and walk down Rodeo Drive. The glasses feel comfortable and no one is staring at me, so obviously my cover is secure. I didn't mention how to turn on the video camera, and that's because I can't—it's done remotely by an operator on a computer using Windows-based software. The software "calls" the cellular modem as it would call a cell phone, and tells the modem to turn on the video camera. In the span of a few minutes time, the computer screen is receiving a 256-color picture of what I'm seeing in near real time.

We go back into the store and look at a video that was made from my surveillance. I'm introduced to Brady Geril (vice president, product management), who boots up the software on a nearby computer and shows me how simple the interface is to use (icons are big and there are lots of help menus included). I ask him why the video was very jerky and he tells me that the picture is only updating about once a second—this is inherent due to the slowness of the commercial airwaves that the video is being transmitted over. However, the picture that I saw was clear and there's no question that this is what I was looking at during my jaunt down the block. And as I divest myself of the CVS-3030 components, Brady adds that the proprietary CCS software isn't limited to viewing just one camera, but can support up to 16 remote cameras at a time.

So what does all this high tech cost? The CVS-3030 is a modular system, and pricing varies depending upon the specs wanted: you could spend less by getting a black and white video camera that just transmits a couple of hundred feet rather than using cellular, but where's the fun in that? The sunglasses start at about \$2,800, with the CVS-3030 interface starting at around \$2,500. (there is no charge for the software).

As I leave the store, it occurs to me that hidden video cameras are probably going to be more prevalent in the future, due to personal as well as public need for security. The upside is that there's probably always somebody watching so you can feel safe; the downside is that they're watching you. ■



Arielle, of Counter Spy Shop of Mayfield, London holds one of the company's tiny video cameras

## Security Quick Bits

### ReX10 Robodog Barking Dog Alarm

X-10 \$69.99

It's a dog behind that door—a BIG dog! Working in conjunction with a motion detector or keychain alarm, ReX can be triggered automatically and even tell the lights to go on a minute or a couple of seconds later (just like what would happen if someone were being woken up). Works on batteries or A/C. [www.X10.com](http://www.X10.com)

### Lasershield

Lasershield Systems \$149 for main unit, \$59.95 for satellites.

Lasershield is an easily installed pyramid-like wireless security system. When its motion sensor is triggered, the unit flashes high-intensity lights, sounds a high-decibel alarm and alerts a professional alarm-monitoring center through a telephone line. Additional units can be added to expand coverage as well. [www.lasershield.net](http://www.lasershield.net)

### Auto Taser

Spy Shop of Mayfield, London \$199

There's no need for lo-jack when Auto Taser is on the job. Attached to the steering wheel, the "electrified wheel locking club" envelops the wheel with 100,000 volts—low amperage makes it non-lethal, but boy does it hurt! Activates with pocket remote and is legal to use. Just make sure to turn it off before letting a valet get the car! [www.spyzone.com](http://www.spyzone.com)

### Floodcam

X-10 \$129.99

The weatherproof Floodcam combines an X2Cam wireless video camera and a powerful set of floodlights with a motion sensor. When activated by motion, the lights go on and a video signal is sent wirelessly to a receiver via a built-in 2.4 GHz transmitter. [X10.com](http://X10.com)