

Budget IP camera

Need to set up a low-cost surveillance system at home or work?

Dominik Krupinski tests six IP cameras starting at just \$90.

While it's a rare PC and even rarer notebook nowadays that doesn't have a webcam attached — and can subsequently record surveillance video if placed correctly — people who are a little bit more serious about home or office security could do well to invest in an IP camera or two. These networked cameras offer several advantages over jury-rigged webcam recording: the biggest being their physical separation from an attached PC, as they're accessed via wired or wireless networking. This means that captured video

can't be removed simply by swiping the attached computer. Unique hardware and software of IP or network cameras are important. With low (and sometimes zero) light recording, nighttime intruders in the picture, and software specially designed to facilitate motion detection and email alarms, these cameras make basic security a snap, often for quite a reasonable price.

EDIMAX IC-1520DP

STREET PRICE \$140 / **CONTACT** BLUECHIP INFOTECH
PHONE 1300 727 474 / **WEB** www.edimax.com

With a maximum capture rate of 20fps, the IC-1520DP isn't about to set new standards for smooth video, however, for a security device, that's somewhat beside the point and this wired IP camera brings the goods elsewhere. The feature we like most about this model is its extremely wide-angle lens (128° horizontal), which when paired with a pretty decent 1.3MP sensor, allows it to take in a whole room if placed carefully, while still capturing a good

amount of detail. Indeed, for a relatively cheap camera, the IC-1520DP is particularly good at resolving facial detail, which relies heavily on good contrast. It's not all good news, though: the wide field of view affords remote digital pan, tilt and zooming, which is great in theory (assuming you're constantly watching the camera), but very slow in practice. Similarly, we found motion detection to be an extremely hit-and-miss affair,

with even big obvious movements failing to trigger a recording. This means that either **constant or scheduled recording is the only way to go with this camera** — something to be aware of given that the 640 x 480-pixel videos are captured as fairly inefficient MPEG-4 .avi files. Still, for the price, this is definitely worth considering. **PC User says: Poor motion detection is the only downside to this fairly inexpensive and well-featured wide-angle model.**



85%