

# Made-in-S'pore mini-videocam may pose security issues

BY KENNY CHEE

**S**MALL is the way to go and the latest product to capture attention is the i-Ball, a nifty made-in-Singapore video camera, which is only as wide as a 50-cent coin.

Going on sale today, it makes filming much easier and more imperceptible.

Its size and features could lend the device extremely well to meeting various lifestyle and security needs, although it has

sparked concerns about its potential for abuse.

The 50g product is made by home-grown company Trek 2000, which invented the thumbdrive in 1999.

The 2-megapixel video camera, which costs \$119, can wirelessly stream live videos it records, with audio, to a computer or smartphone at a distance of up to 20m away. As many as seven computers or phones can be connected to one i-Ball to receive video signals from it.

It has battery life of 1½



**PORTABLE:** The i-Ball is a 2-megapixel video camera that does remote video capture and live streaming. (PHOTO: INTERNET)

hours and supports only video recording on computers, for now. There are plans to release iPhone, Symbian and Windows Phone 7 video-recording apps.

Mr James Aruldoss, president of the Association of Certified Security Agencies, said that if the i-Ball really works, "I can see a lot of social and privacy is-

suues with it, but there could be positive security spin-offs".

Mr James Loh, owner of private investigations firm SG Investigators, also saw the benefits of the i-Ball but cautioned that it could be misused, as it can record videos from a distance

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and can be easily concealed.

Ultimately, Mr Loh said, "it depends on the individual who uses the device".

"Someone could place it in a toilet to stream live videos of women without being present."

He reiterated that those who do so could be charged with insulting the modesty of women. If convicted, one could be jailed for up to a year and/or fined.

Sales engineer Crystal Tan, 22, has some concerns over the

i-Ball. "It's very small and could be hidden in a palm. You never know how peeping Toms could misuse it," she said.

A Straits Times report in April said that the easy availability of camera-enabled cellphones could mean more up-skirt voyeurs on the prowl.

The latest case was a coffee-shop supervisor who was jailed for a month on Monday for recording video footage of a woman showering in a toilet by using a cellphone concealed in an empty shampoo container.

Mr Poo Teng Pin, the vice-president of operations with i-Ball's maker Trek 2000, said he understands the privacy concerns but added that "we can't control how people use the i-Ball. It depends on their intentions".

Instead, he sees it as a fun and portable gizmo for youth and young adults to take videos without needing line of sight of what they wish to record.

Furthermore, he believes the i-Ball can be very handy as a security tool. He said several security firms have approached Trek

2000 to evaluate how the gadget could complement their security surveillance work.

Mr Loh of SG Investigators, who also has eight years of security experience, said the i-Ball can be useful for private investigators in garnering audio-visual evidence.

Also, if it could function continuously by plugging to a power supply, the device could be a boon to a security guard who can scan several more areas. "It saves on manpower," he said.

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