What's New!

George Harding

QBIC Video Camera

Anyone with a smart phone has a video camera at his/her disposal. So what makes QBIC so different?

Well, first of all, it's small, about 2" X 2" X 1.5". It doesn't make calls and can't text. It doesn't require a cell or any other type of subscription.

Here's why it's so different and why you will want one: it has its own Wi-Fi network and it can cover from 135 to 185 degrees of horizontal visual space.

It can be used to cover sporting events, travel, landscapes, field trips, family gatherings and more. It records in full HD (1080p) at up to 60 frames per second with high quality stereo sound.

It can take photos as single shot, interval mode, self-timer mode or burst mode. Burst mode is what you would use for fast moving sporting events. QBIC takes 10 shots rapidly in a burst.

The Wi-Fi network is generated by the device itself. You connect with it using either iOS or Android by downloading an app from the App Store. You connect the QBIC directly to your smartphone or tablet by way of this network and are not tethered to a static network.

You can use the photo or video function, record to QBIC on the SDHC card (not included) and view it simultaneously on your smart phone or tablet. It is possible to control QBIC from this application, so you need not hold it in order to use it. You can also download the recorded files to a computer through a cable connection (micro-USB to USB).

The device is very light, only 3.5 oz. It is also water-resistant. One other feature that's interesting is the ability to take a close-up picture as near as one inch.

There are various types of mounts available that make it possible to mount the device on your head, your bike, your water ski or just about anything else.

The kit comes with the camera, a cable (micro-USB to USB), a Start-Up Guide and a small metal holder for the camera to attach to your smartphone. The Guide is very small and has correspondingly small type – almost too small to read. There is a downloadable PDF of the Guide, which is preferable. You need to have a SDHC disk in order to store any files.

I tried both the iOS and the Android app. The iOS app works very well and did everything I wanted to do. It is responsive, with the only limitation being the size of my iPhone screen. I was able to download pictures and videos to my laptop, though it's not a speedy process.

The Android app was not as efficient, although I could take pictures and videos. My tablet would not allow me to download pictures or videos, but that's the fault of the tablet, not the app. My video was abruptly stopped and the app exited without warning, but the video file was saved. I also found that the Android app was not as responsive as the iPhone app.

This is an interesting and useful tool for taking videos and pictures in situations where you are not able to physically hold the device.

About: QBIC by Elmo

Manufacturer: Elmo
http://www.elmousa.com/m

Price: $260

Wearable Technology

One of the fastest growing segments of the technology industry is wearable items. These involve hardware/software combinations that sense and display information about your body and your performance.

At CES 2014, there were many vendors showing their products measuring your pulse, temperature, oximetry, steps, sleep time and even keeping track of your diet and efforts to lose weight.

Since then (only eight months) this field has exploded with more companies and more products examining ever deeper into you and your activities. Many of these products involve a wristband with the usual features of a watch, but are enhanced with features relating to your health.

One such is by Casio, that not only has all the usual features of a multi-function watch, but also measures heartbeat, notifies you of calls and e-mail, keeps track of your workout data and more. No info yet on price.

A recent news article caught my eye because it dealt with this category of wearable technology. *USA Today* reported that **Qualcomm Foundation** launched a contest to reward the three companies with the best product resembling the Tricorder used in the Star Trek shows.

QUALCOMM TRICORDER XPRIZE

The Qualcomm Foundation required that the winning device detect 15 ailments by continuous monitoring of blood pressure, respiration, temperature and more while weighing less than five pounds.

The contest was launched in January 2012 and attracted over 300 entrants! In August 2014 ten finalists were announced from countries around the world (http://tricorder.xprize.org/). Here is a description of some of them:

Basilleaf, USA-PA, www.basilleaftech.com. A device to diagnose specific medical conditions, provide insight into the user's medical condition and guide them to appropriate action.

Biodyn, Taiwan, dbg.ncu.edu.tw. Five devices with sensors to monitor vitals, blood, respiration and urine. Accompanying smartphone app analyzes results to diagnose disease.

CloudDX, Toronto, www.clouddx.com. Necklace and cuff record biological data along with algorithms to display analysis on tablet and store in the cloud for tracking.

Mesi, Slovenia, www.simplifyingdiagnostics.com. Includes wristband and modules to measure and record vital signs. Its companion smartphone app displays the results and, with the included questionnaire, determines possible diagnosis.

Scanadu, USA-CA, www.scanadu.com. Device monitors vital signs (temperature, respiration, heart rate and blood pressure) and sends result to a smartphone for display and analysis. Two additional sensors test urine for pregnancy and health problems.

Scanurse, London, www.scanurse.com. Uses sensors to analyze breath, movement and vision to provide user with easy-to-understand results.

Zensor, Ireland, www.intelesens.com. Monitor detects arrhythmias when they occur and transmits them to a secure server where they can be reviewed and diagnosed by a physician. Also detects respiration, temperature and motion, blood and urine.

The prizes will be awarded in early 2016. First prize is $7 million, second $2 million and third $1 million.

It is likely that the Wearable Technology section of CES 2015 will be greatly expanded with vendors displaying many new and innovative ways to sense, record and analyze our body's condition.