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# WHAT IS DRIVING NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN REMOTE BROADCAST CAMERAS?

Small, specialist broadcast cameras are doing more work than ever before. David Bradley of BR Remote explains how the operation of cameras is changing to deliver much greater volumes of content, and outlines some of the creative possibilities the next wave of remote technology will bring. >>





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» Perhaps the greatest challenge facing broadcasters and production companies at the moment is to find a way to create sufficient volumes of high quality content to feed the ever increasing number of broadcast channels and their audiences – traditional broadcasters, Internet broadcasters and on-demand viewing. The sheer amount of broadcast content required has grown massively, it is still growing, and all of this needs cameras!

At BR Remote we can see how remote cameras will enable broadcasters to capture much greater volume of content. Camera control from another location, is key to the philosophy. The future of Outside Broadcast will be to have only part of a crew at a venue and the rest of the crew in a central control room with the Director, where there will be a number of live feeds coming in. For example, in the case of football, a broadcaster will be able to offer more live games, using a mixture of manned, remote and automated cameras. The centrally located remote operators can take over control of automated or static cameras if a particular game gets interesting. Like this, the broadcaster can cover perhaps double the number of matches for the same cost, using more cameras but not necessarily requiring more operators. It is convenient, and it makes business sense to manage production this way. Also, if cameras are required in inaccessible places, where Health and Safety regulations would never allow a camera operator to go, a remote camera will do those jobs as well.

We have become used to “always-on, 24 hour” news coverage. While this is not new, it remains a challenge to meet expectations. There are more places to film and more stories to cover, and a broadcaster may need to operate cameras 24/7 in order to capture a key piece of action for one piece of news coverage. If you operate news cameras 24 hours a day, 7 days a week the costs would soon become ludicrously high. Again, remote controlled cameras provide the solution - they can be left to run unattended but monitored, and no event of any significance will be missed.

The ability to control the camera from a remote location, enabled by fast networks, is central to achieving more from the same number of lenses. This is quite a new concept, and is sure to grow, as production moves more towards a “Cloud” based model. We are starting to see IP networks carrying more television feeds, and we

are already sending comms and camera control to operate over IP – although we think broadcasters understand the potential of IP better than IP engineers understand television!

Clever features already available in cameras are enabling all of this. WDR, motion control which is silent, and cameras that can hold profiled moves and which can turn through 360 degrees as standard are just some of these, while IP and fibre interfaces bring lots more flexibility.

People want to put cameras in all kinds of places, so we have added some interesting features to the BR Remote CamBall4 cameras. We have made the cameras weatherproof, so you can use them out doors, and we have self-levelling options, so that cameras can be placed on top of an OB vehicle and will remain level even when the van is parked with two wheels are on the pavement.

**What next?**

AR and VR present the newest creative opportunities. A camera using Metadata and built-in motion-controlled moves lets you place a live image over a background generated by graphics, and the metadata will keep the picture intact – the classic news piece to camera, with a particular view behind the presenter. This has always been possible for static shots but we are optimising our camera to provide the absolute accuracy of movement required for VR and AR. Remote camera technology is bringing solutions to old problems and giving us new ways to build video. Composite images are the future. Camera technology and remote technology in particular means that production can create more, both in terms of output and creativity, without necessarily adding more staff.

We can see that remote camera rigs will play a big role in delivering the increasing amount of content needed today, and that metadata, sending camera and lens positions with every frame will enable camera applications to move towards studio automation. Look out for remote cameras with more features and more software in 2019.

The author is David Bradley, Development Director at BR Remote Ltd, (br-remote.com) BR Remote’s remote-controlled CamBall4 PTZ cameras are used in sport, reality shows, wildlife filming, concert tours and studio automation.

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