



Stop Looking Out that Window and Get Back to Work!

By Tim Dietz – SSA VP, Communications & Government Relations

Without debating the effectiveness or privacy ethics of hyper-micromanagement, check out the latest gizmo from our old friends at Kodak. I know what you're saying- "Kodak?" Didn't they miss the digital camera revolution and melt away with Smith Corona and Encyclopedia Britannica?

Despite quarterly losses in the millions for many years now, Kodak still engages in R&D with hopes of finding its new niche in U.S. markets. It appears that the one-time film and photo print giant will go anywhere to ensure that they don't miss the boat again.

If it ever reaches production, Kodak's new creation will recast the term "micromanagement" forever. The as-yet unnamed device is a head-based live webcam and projector. The prototype looks like better-than-average headphones, awkwardly fixed with glass eyes on either side right above the ears. The first version of the tool will enable users simply to project what they are looking at. But, theoretically, you will eventually be able to remotely monitor what your employee is looking at or doing, then show up right in front of them and tell (or show) them how to do the job right.

Miniature live-video cameras, with microphones, have been common for decades. Where would *60 Minutes* be

without them? They've become the most important tool for private (and public) investigators and doctors. Live webcams are now equally as commonplace. While writing this article I looked through one mounted at the top of a lighthouse, just to confirm that the ocean is still there for my upcoming vacation.

The miniature projector and wireless pieces of Kodak's invention are the keys to its functionality. Last year 3M introduced a "pico projector" that fits in the palm of your hand which presents pictures that are up to 50-inches wide and is battery powered. Not surprisingly, Apple has secured patents for miniature projectors also. Audio headphones round out the trinkets on this Kodak wireless hybrid, which will initially utilize wireless P2P (peer to peer) and wifi networks.

The new equipment would almost certainly be used first on the battlefield, in law enforcement or in industries where management might want to keep a keen eye on, and record of, busy activities. But it's not hard to envision a day when employers will have to reconsider exactly how much trust is really necessary. Hire them, strap them up and sit at your computer as you orchestrate the exact movements of your workforce: ants marching for the new millennium. ❖