

Global Camcorder Report Highlights What Pros Seek

By Douglas I. Sheer

Results of the second global camcorder survey among video professionals, called *Professional Camcorder World tm 2007* which was published in early February, 2008, showed some very interesting shifts in the formats preferred and types of features and functions that end-users are seeking in new camcorders this year. The new camcorder report, *Professional camcorders World tm 2008* is due for publication this March.

The market research project began in the fall of 2007 and had been sponsored by every major camcorder manufacturer. In addition to the basics of what brand and how many units of camcorders people plan to purchase, DIS Consulting Corporation also focused on what the features and functions were that most motivate buyers in 2008. And, what formats were most sought. Of the 800+ responses that were tallied, globally, DIS noticed some key trends. Among the vertical user segments that responded were: broadcasters & cable-casters, production companies, mobile/OB firms, event video, independent film & TV producers and institutional users (from government, religious, educational, medical and corporate sites).

Clearly, the dominant trend in camcorders today is the migration that started almost a decade ago and has continued to build towards DV-based recording formats and particularly towards the use of removable media options. Most recently, as HD has been the hot button technology. And, HDV was seen supplanting Mini-DV as the type of camcorder most professionals sought. But, now from a format perspective, it is now the various removable media options that are most attracting buyers going forwards. That is not to say that other formats have completely gone away, but they pale by comparison. Small,

inexpensive, lightweight, HD capable and 16 X 9 aspect ratio-delivering and removable media using models are what are most sought.

Removable Media Formats Sought

Throughout the world, in 2008, professionals were gravitating towards and shopping for new formats in their camcorders. And, generally speaking, they have been gravitating away from DV-based media and towards one of the several removable disk media solutions available as they do so – including ~ in particular Panasonic's P2, Sony's XD-Cam, Thomson/GVG's Iomega REV-Pro media and several others. Additionally, on the low-end of the spectrum, that took the form of using SD memory cards in lieu of more expensive solutions.

Specifications and Desired Features Professionals Seek

The survey also took the opportunity to assess the various camcorder specifications and features, and assess their value to video professionals. In other words, global respondents were asked in a wide-ranging manner how they thought their next camcorder might be configured. Among the conclusions were that durability, specifically the need for a camcorder to be rugged and able to withstand use/abuse, impact, and be able to work in extreme temperatures or humidity was seen as imperative. They want it to be compliant 16 X9 aspect ratio. They need to record in HD. They would like it to weigh less. They want a longer recording or storage time. They were evenly divided between manual focus and auto focus controls. Many sought inter-changeable lenses, but there was some ambivalence about them being bayonet or C-mount. Most wanted 4 channels for audio and professional connectors. Among the image control aspects, users sought white balance, black burst, color bars, gamma, DB gain control and memory card slots. In display, color reigns in both viewfinders and LCD screens were popular. Scene file displays are helpful to them. Camcorder professionals have been given a wide range of features and specifications to

wade through when making a purchase, but our survey indicates that they are pretty clear about what they plan to buy.

Douglas I. Sheer is CEO and Chief Analyst of DIS Consulting Corporation of New York and can be reached at doug@disresearch.com. The firm also plans 2009 reports in servers, editing, graphics, storage and switchers and a total of 28 reports in all.

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