



MOBOTIX

CASE STUDY

Network Video: Top-Of-The-Line Cars On The Internet

A "Star" In Its Own Class

For more than 100 years the name Mercedes has stood for the most innovative automobile brand in the world. When "Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft" delivered the first Mercedes on December 22, 1900, it marked the beginning

of a dynamic development defined by technical perfection, high standards of quality, innovative strength and a host of automobile legends.



In 1998, Daimler-Benz AG and the Chrysler Corporation merged – two companies with long traditions, having been instrumental in shaping the history of the automobile throughout the past. Today, more than 360,000 people around the world work for DaimlerChrysler AG.

As Good As New

DaimlerChrysler AG sold 3.85 million passenger cars and approximately 501,000 commercial vehicles worldwide in fiscal year 2003 and earned EUR 135.4 billion in sales. One source of these sales that is not to be underestimated is the sale of used company cars that are equipped with many high-quality extras, are well cared for, receive excellent servicing and meet very high quality standards.

The Internet As The Sales Channel

In selling used company cars, sales via the Internet (mercedes-benz.de, autoscout24.de, mobile.de etc.) are rapidly becoming more popular. A professional imaging process was devised to promote this development and to provide a perfect presentation of these high-quality vehicles. And DaimlerChrysler chose to use network cameras from MOBOTIX.

Security Vision Systems





More than 10,000 used company cars are sold each year.



The Perfect Presentation

Too Much Work

Before the used company cars appear on the Internet, the vehicles are thoroughly overhauled, any visual blemishes are eliminated and they are photographed. This standard procedure is performed at the DaimlerChrysler vehicle reconditioning locations in Fellbach, Sindelfingen and Untertürkheim in Germany. Originally, these vehicles were photographed with a regular digital camera and the photos were then put onto the Internet.

“Unfortunately, however, these photos were not up to the professional standards that our customers are accustomed to,” explained Peter Gruner, head of sales. “The pictures did not have any kind of uniform look. And the corresponding vehicle data had to be added manually. In view of the increasing number of vehicles sold via the Internet, this task just got too work-intensive.”

A search was launched to find a solution that would largely automate the entire process and deliver high-quality photos for the Internet. A systems supplier

developed special imaging software that automatically allocates all the sales-relevant vehicle information to the original photo - a very intelligent way to present these cars on the Internet.

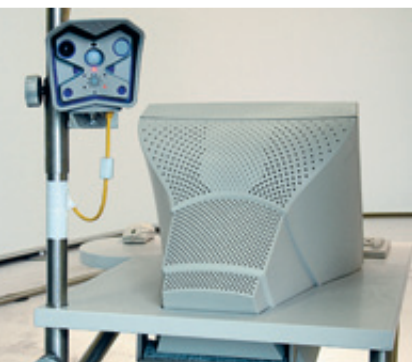
Brilliant And Robust

What was needed was a camera that not only shoots brilliant photographs, but that can also be easily integrated into the network.

During their research, the employees at the systems supplier stumbled across the MOBOTIX technology. Thomas Seeliger, owner of Sit-Livecam (www.sit-livecam.de) and a MOBOTIX partner, then received an opportunity to present the network camera made by the Kaiserslautern-based company with its versatile range of features and uses. The concept was convincing, the camera met all the requirements, and so the decision was made to integrate the MOBOTIX solution into the imaging process. The software and the camera were adjusted to make a perfect match.

Uniform Photo Sets

First, however, it was necessary to build uniform photo sets with identical image backgrounds and outstanding



Mobile photo station equipped with a MOBOTIX camera.



Uniform photo sets make a uniform statement. The photos taken by the MOBOTIX camera displayed with the vehicle data on the computer screen (bottom right).

lighting at all three locations to ensure a consistent presentation of the vehicles. The cameras were then mounted on a mobile photo station with a monitor and connected directly to the LAN. Despite these efforts to create photos with a standardized look, the same question came up again and again: How can vehicles of different types, sizes, shapes and colors all be photographed so that each vehicle is best presented and all the photos have a uniform, professional look without having to invest a lot of time and money?

"We had to find a 'photo compromise'," explained Thomas Seeliger. "We defined the vehicle positioning, the angle at which the photo is taken, the position of the photo station and set-up of the spotlights once, so that we would get the best possible photo every time – regardless of whether it was an A-class car or an SLK in front of the camera. Just two http command variations had to be integrated into the program, simplifying the entire handling process enormously."

Facts And Figures

To take the vehicle pictures, the MOBOTIX camera is used as a web cam. The camera delivers the current live image of the vehicle parked in the correct position

via http access to the integrated web server. This process is comparable to pressing the camera's shutter release when taking a shot. The live image is retrieved from the web cam every three seconds and it appears on the computer screen. The operator then stores the current image of the used company car along with the corresponding vehicle data on a web server with a click of a mouse, which ensures that the information is stored directly on the right Internet platform.

The quality of the MOBOTIX images corresponds to that of a digital camera. To get your own first-hand impression of the uniform, professional look of the vehicle presentation, simply click on www.mercedes-benz.de ► Gebrauchtfahrzeuge ► PKW ► Online-Suche ► Fahrzeugbestand: ► Werkswagen on the Internet.

Improved Chances

DaimlerChrysler is very happy with the results. Head of Sales Peter Gruner commented: "Thanks to MOBOTIX technology, we have found an efficient and stable, yet still user-friendly way to take the best possible photos of our used company cars – and that improves our chances of selling them on the Internet considerably."

