A Look Under a Pair of Axis' Vandal-Resistant Domes

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Axis M3005-V
network camera

Axis P3384-VE
network camera

The Axis P3384-VE network camera is one of the P33 Series of network cameras from Axis Communications, designed primarily for locations where a vandal-resistant dome is indicated or required. The P3384-VE is the "middle of the pack" model for the P33 Series and is designed with a 1MP (megapixel) imager that provides a very clear image. The camera also has wide dynamic range (WDR), which allows it to be effective in locations where lighting can be challenging. Complementing the WDR is Axis' Lightfinder technology that allows the camera to maintain image quality, light sensitivity and color images in very poor lighting conditions.

The Axis M3005-V network camera is one of the M30 Series of cameras designed primarily for locations where a vandal-resistant dome is indicated or required. The M3005-V is the "next step up" among the four models in the M30 Series and has a 2MP imager. The M3005-V has a much smaller footprint than some other Axis vandal-resistant cameras and makes it an attractive choice for semi-concealed mountings.

Construction

The P3384-VE has a solid feel to the camera assembly with its cast aluminum design. The camera housing is designed with a mounting plate that is easily separated from the main assembly to allow the camera to be flush mounted to any surface. The unit's clear dome is constructed of durable polycarbonate plastic to also resist damage to the unit's assembly. The dome also has a built-in black plastic shroud that can easily be moved to help disguise the direction the camera is looking. The enclosure is IP-66 and NEMA 4 rated. The camera assembly ships with a premade Cat-5 cable that has a gasket preinstalled. The camera assembly comes equipped with a heater and fan to provide the necessary temperature control to prevent condensation and fogging within the unit. The camera comes with a separate sun shield and smoked dome to allow customized camera mounting .

On the other hand, the M3005-V does not have the design fabrication I associate with a vandal-rated camera assembly. The case and dome are made from ABS plastic and it just doesn't "feel" like it could take a hit from a rock and survive. The plastic mounting plate of the camera assembly is flexible and feels like it could break with a solid hit to the housing. The M3005-V camera housing is designed with a rubber seal. This model is not IP-66 and NEMA 4 rated and therefore cannot be mounted in an outdoor environment. Mounting the M3005-V requires the top cover to be removed and the camera assembly mounted on a flat surface. The unit's clear dome is constructed of durable polycarbonate plastic. The camera assembly has a Cat-5 cable that protrudes through a gasket on the case and has a male RJ-45 connector. I am not a big fan of this design because it requires use of a network cable coupler, which adds one more chance for a bad connection.

Features

The P3384-VE is powered via its network connector, drawing 12W of power from a standard PoE connection. It also has the capability to provide two-way audio from the camera and can be configured to alert the end user. The camera can also be configured to alert on remote alarm contacts, which can allow the camera to do "double duty" at a location. Another nice feature of the P33 Series is the ability to remotely focus a fixed network camera. I can't count the number of times I thought I had the image "just right" on an IP camera with my laptop only to get back to the head-end and see my eyes must need adjustment. The P3384-VE also has a built-in slot for a SDHC memory card.

The M3005-V is also powered via its network connector, drawing 2.7W of power from a standard PoE source. The camera, with the use of the Axis P8221 network I/O module, has the ability to provide two-way audio from the camera's installation point. The M3005-V also has a built-in slot for a Micro SD memory card.

Setup

Axis still ships every camera with the same default IP address, which to me is much preferred over having to use proprietary software to

assign a camera's IP address and other parameters. I prefer to always test a new camera before it is installed in the field and knowing the IP address makes it much easier to perform the initial setup on the test bench. I did discover an issue with MS IE 11 when performing my evaluation. The setup menu on Axis cameras and video encoders has the same basic design for the older and newer cameras. This is a plus to me as it allows an installer to readily set up a camera or encoder on the fly without having to remember a bunch of programming parameters for different cameras.

Testing

Both the P3384-VE and M3005-V, like all Axis cameras, are shipped from the factory "ready to go." Just install the camera, configure the IP address and place it into service. More complicated installations take just a bit more configuring. The system setup menu for Axis cameras is generally the same. Some models, such as the P3384-VE, have additional tabs with optional system settings. The P3384-VE's adjustments were easy to accomplish and the camera's performance was excellent. The camera easily switched from color to black & white and provided a very good image in low light.

The M3005-V has a system setting I really like for hallway coverage (*see last month's Axis M3024-V review for more details*). I did notice the M3005-V's horizontal look angle is somewhat restricted by the camera design. This design will not allow the camera to be ceiling mounted and point down a hallway, for example. It appears the best coverage this camera can provide would be through the use of the wall mount option.

Conclusions

The Axis P3384-VE is a solid network camera. The design is first-rate and the camera's programming and operation settings are very easy to navigate. This camera would be a welcome addition to a company's CCTV system.

The M3005-V is a good network camera. The design is adequate for the cost of the camera and its programming and operation settings are very easy to navigate. This product would be useful in specific applications, but I would not make it one of my "go-to" cameras for a CCTV system. **SSI**

VERDICT: P3384-VE
FEATURES ❶ ❷ ❸ ❹ **❺**
CONSTRUCTION ❶ ❷ ❸ ❹ **❺**
SETUP ❶ ❷ ❸ **❹** ❺
PERFORMANCE ❶ ❷ ❸ **❹** ❺
OVERALL ❶ ❷ ❸ **❹** ❺

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OVERALL ❶ ❷ ❸ **❹** ❺