June 15, 2005
Excerpt from Steadicam Forum posting

I did not want to post anything about the CanaTrans until I had some experience with it. I am thrilled by its performance. There were several issues I had with the Modulus: Interference with other things on my sled, including video assist camera, remote stage, even the focus system. I found a particular way to run the power cable and place the transmitter antenna to make everything happy - this with my own more carefully shielded power cable as there is a lot of RF coming out of it. The CanaTrans is perfectly clean in this regard, so no more worries about interference. It also only transmits on the intended frequency instead of generating several harmonics like the Modulus does, sometimes causing poor reception when using scanning receivers and finding what looks like the primary signal.

I am especially happy with the variable video gain menu for the transmitted signal. In the past I would set the video iris and gain for the best image on my monitor only to have video assist ask for "more iris please". This would satisfy the people watching the video but compromise the operating video! With the CanaTrans I just change the output gain and leave my settings alone.

The amount of power output is very important, and I now routinely set for 1/8 to 1/4 W for small interiors and 1W when outside. I tell the video assist operator that I can change this if needed. So far all of them like the CanaTrans signal better than the Modulus.

I was concerned about the reduced number of frequencies available, but to date I have always found a good channel. The only time I had trouble with the signal, a change to another channel resulted in dramatically better performance even though there did not appear to be a broadcast signal on the original channel. It pays to do a quick range test in each location to get maximum performance.

I have been assured by Emery that service is a very high priority and he will turn around repairs in as little as 24 hours. I cannot comment on this as I have had no problems so far, but this promises to be far better than Modulus repairs which routinely take 3 months or so. I have rarely gone more than a year without repairs being needed on the Modulus 3000 so I am hoping the CanaTrans will change this routine.

The CanaTrans is much more expensive, much bigger and much heavier than the Modulus, so although I sold one of my Modulus 3000's I kept the 2nd. I use it as a backup and on my video finder (Telefinder) and on conventional cameras - it is certainly easier to mount the Modulus than the CanaTrans. I am very happy with both for different reasons, but for the very demanding situations with my Steadicam I am definitely sold on the CanaTrans.

I have seen a couple of Wifi systems and the signal was unbelievably good without any glitches, although when there is a problem the image either freezes or goes away completely. It is all or nothing. Still this is a very intriguing new technology that may prove to solve most of the problems we have with a moving camera. However, both systems had considerable delay, 1/4 second to 1/2 second, rendering them unusable. We often depend upon the real time nature of video assist both to hear synced audio and to react to the camera or actors' actions for focus, lighting cues, etc. We have evolved TV broadcast usage to the point that many members of the crew use their own receivers to do their job. With a Wifi system a TV transmitter would need to be part of the base station to supply all of them with a signal. Still, if a realtime Wifi system comes around I would be very, very interested, but until then I have the best performance so far with the CanaTrans.

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