

Using an inexpensive Miniature CamCorder to Record your Track Layout

Robert J. Wilkins (Feb 2019)

A recent article in the February 2019 issue of Model Railroader Magazine, written by Don Ball describes the use of a miniature video camcorder, a Replay Prime X Camera, mounted on a modified 4 wheel truck frame from a Bobber caboose. While this article presents a great idea the cost of the camcorder is around \$150 plus the cost of the truck. Furthermore these cameras and the website quoted are currently unavailable.

While at Bed Bath and Beyond recently I found the COP CAM on sale at \$19.99 . This unit is a small cube shaped, 1 inch in size, that records video and sound on a miniature 8 Giga Byte SD card. The camera records in AVI format with a 720p video resolution at 30 frames per second. The unit records up to 45 minutes of video. The camera can also take still photos in JPEG format. The unit comes with a USB cable to connect to your Windows (XP,7,8,10) system computer for direct downloading of videos for editing and setting the date and time stamp file. A swivel clip and wall mount are also included. The unit can be upgraded to accommodate a 32 G memory card.



The unit can be mounted on any flat car, preferably a short car to minimize the tangent alignment effect of the fixed camera as it transverses curves. The camera car is pushed around the layout by a locomotive to record the track scene in front of the camera. The camera is mounted onto the flatbed using adhesive putty for temporary adhesion and tilting of the camera downward.



I have listed below a few points noted while making a video of my Great Western Railroad, a project still under construction.

First, select a pusher locomotive that moves slowly. This avoids the vertigo feeling especially on curve turns. Slow progression also gives better definition and color rendering of the video being recorded.

Second, make sure the camera is properly oriented. The **PRESS RECORD** button is set on the right side of the wagon. If not oriented correctly the video will appear on it's side or upside down.

Third, the **PRESS RECORD** is pressed for 4 seconds to activate the video recording which is also motion activated by means of infrared detectors set around the camera lens. When finished recording press the button again for 4 seconds to turn off.

Finally make sure that there is adequate good overhead lighting to ensure good recording quality.

The camera will however record in dim light such as in tunnels being traversed.



Once the video is finished , attach the unit to your computer USB port using the USB cable provided , the driver software will load allowing access to camera as if it were a flash drive. The video and photo files are located in the DCIM folder as avi or jpg files respectively. They can be edited using video editing software.

As an inexpensive cam camera for your railroad this appears to be an ideal solution.

Compact, Wireless Security Camera

Cop Cam by Atomic Beam

\$39.99

★★★★★ 3 Reviews

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

- > **MINI CAMERA:** security camera measures less than 1-square inch so you can hide it or place it anywhere unseen.
- > **MOTION ACTIVATED CAMERA:** powerful motion sensor camera loop-records in HD video and audio when motion is detected.
- > **INCLUDED:** one (1) Cop Cam by Atomic Beam.

MORE DETAILS

**Available at Bed Bath Beyond
for \$19.99 plus 20% off with
coupon**