

Camcorder Research

The Research below explores the different types of Camcorders that I could have used as well as the price it would have cost for me to buy them.

Mini-DV Camcorders^[1]

Mini-DV (Mini- Digital Video^[2]) Camcorders are generally popular with Documentary filmmakers and use Video Tapes to store the images that they record. Video tapes are generally inexpensive, with used ones being cheaper still. They allow good quality pictures and have a 1 minute of footage: 1 minute of computer import ratio.

VHS Tapes are not really popular in modern day society with everyone having moved onto DVDs and Tapes do take up a lot of space.

Price: £59.99^[3]



DVD Camcorders^[1]

DVD (Digital Video/Versatile Disc)^[2] Camcorders are not recommended for those who want to film documentaries but are convenient and inexpensive. The footage within them is compressed and therefore is not the best that it could be, that is why professional documentarists generally do not use them. However, if you are just filming a short home video for a birthday celebration or catching a child's first steps is it a great thing to have as the images go straight onto a DVD that can be automatically be put into the DVD player.

Price: £114.99^[4]



Hard Disk Drive (HDD) Camcorders^[1]

HDD camcorders have a built in Hard Drive built into the camcorder which means there is no need for Video Tapes or DVDs (which means less clutter). Although this seems great, how much footage a Hard Drive holds depends on the quality of footage that is recorded.



Standard Definition with a 13GB Hard Drive will hold an hour of footage; whereas, the highest quality DVCPRO HD/ DVCPRO100* 13GB Hard Drive will get you 13 minutes of footage.

*The DVCPRO HD^[5] is a high-definition video format that is similar to 4 Digital Videos working in Parallel. This is usually used by Professional Videographers, and only has Tape-based recorders available to be mounted on the shoulder (Explaining why you see all videographers on TV with their cameras perched on their shoulders).

As well as this, once the video tape is filled with data, you cannot continue to film without downloading the footage onto the computer. This isn't helpful if you are not near one. Also, hard drives crash and because Camcorders are full of small bits, they are easily broken.

This type of camera is great if you are doing a short interview. However, if you want to film a long documentary this is probably not the best camcorder to go for.

Price: £178.88^[6]

Flash Memory Camcorders^[1]

This form of camcorder is generally smaller than a Hard Disk Camcorder and therefore easier to handle and is also not as easy to break due to less moving parts within it. Flash Memory Camcorders also record higher



quality footage than that of a Hard Disk Drive Camcorder.



Flash Memory Camcorders allow the user to record directly onto a Secure Digital (SD) Card/ SDHC Card (a SD Card above 4GB^[7], like the one to the side) and Sony Cameras also allow the data to be downloaded onto a Memory Stick.

In many ways is the Flash Memory Camcorder better than a Hard Disk Drive Camcorder^[8]. However, if you lose the SD Card or Memory Stick then that session of recording is lost. Whereas, a Hard Disk Drive is backed up on a computer.

If you are organised and know where you put all your SD cards then the Flash Memory Camcorders are a good thing to use for Documentaries due to how much recording it can do, it can also stand up to the travelling and stay in a better condition, at least compared to a Hard Disk Drive Camcorder.

Price: £84.99^[8]

Combo Models^[1]

Combo Models combine both the Flash Memory Camcorders and the Hard Disk Drive Camcorders. These models allow the user to continue filming once their built in Hard Disk Drive fills up due to the space available for an SD/SDHC Card. Other combo models combine the use of DVDs and Video Tapes.



These are popular due to the insurance space available by the removable SD/SDHC card. However, they are not light and easy to handle.

Price: £129.99^[9]

My Phone Camera^[10]

I have the 2020 released iPhone SE. It has a 4.7 inch screen and weighs 148 grams with the back camera having 12 mega pixels whereas the front “selfie” camera is just 7. The Phone has a 128GB



storage capacity, with no excess storage available to it.

The phone's imagery is good within light areas but not so great within the dark meaning night time filming is a hard task^[11]. The image stays clear however fast you move the camera and an option to edit is given at the end. The video's can automatically be sent to an online drive meaning that storage is not used up. The phone is also waterproof (to a point) allowing videos of the water and in the rain to be filmed.

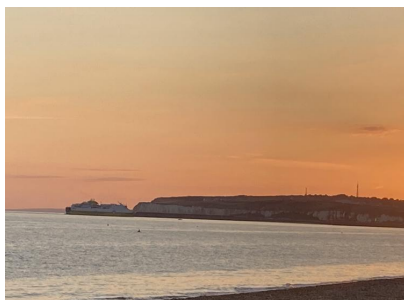
Price: Already own

Many users are currently going for light and easy to handle cameras, with microphones built in.^[12] The idea of dual SD slots is also important with Zoom and built in waterproofing also being important due to both the English Weather and any water shots. Camera's have moved on from those pictured above with many more light-weight options becoming available but the prices between just a standard family camcorder and those for professionals still maintains a large boundary.

For my work I have had to use my iPhone as I cannot afford to buy another camera. Luckily, compared to other camcorders the images are of the same quality and it is lighter. I can transfer the videos easier to the areas that I want them and it is always with me, therefore if any images that I want to capture come out of the blue I am ready. If I were to use any other camcorder I feel like I would pick the Flash Memory Camcorder. Despite being more expensive than others, the SD/SDHC cards allow the data to be transported easier and can be swapped over when I have run out of space. The quality is better and doesn't break as easily.

I have, however, been able to buy a tripod for my phone so I will be able to take more pictures without the phone shaking. The tripod is sturdy and can be used at different heights, it can also be used when I need to film myself as a selfie stick. For the price I thought it gave me a lot of options. It also came the next day so could be used straight away.^[13]

Below is a few images where I have tried my phone in different lighting within and out of college.



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