

Assessing Video Quality for Public Safety Applications Using Visual Acuity

Public Safety Communications Technical Report

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Science and Technology

Support to the Homeland Security Enterprise and First Responders: Office for Interoperability and Compatibility

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Homeland
Security

Defining the Problem

 Emergency responders—police officers, fire personnel, and emergency medical services personnel—need to share vital voice and data information across disciplines and jurisdictions to successfully respond to day-to-day incidents and large-scale emergencies. Unfortunately, for decades inadequate and unreliable communications have compromised their ability to perform mission-critical duties. Responders often have difficulty communicating when adjacent agencies operate on different radio bands, use incompatible proprietary systems and infrastructure, and lack adequate standard operating procedures and effective multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary governance structures.

OIC Background

 The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) in 2004 to strengthen and integrate interoperability and compatibility efforts to improve local, tribal, state, and Federal emergency response and preparedness. Managed by the Science and Technology Directorate's Support to the Homeland Security Enterprise and First Responders Group, OIC helps coordinate interoperability efforts across DHS. OIC programs and initiatives address critical interoperability and compatibility issues. Priority areas include communications, equipment, and training.

OIC Programs

 OIC programs address voice, data, and video interoperability. OIC is creating the capacity for increased levels of interoperability by developing tools, best practices, technologies, and methodologies that emergency response agencies can immediately put into effect. OIC is also improving incident response and recovery by developing tools, technologies, and messaging standards that help emergency responders manage incidents and exchange information in real time.

Practitioner-Driven Approach

 OIC is committed to working in partnership with local, tribal, state, and Federal officials to serve critical emergency response needs. OIC's programs are unique in that they advocate a "bottom-up" approach. OIC's practitioner-driven governance structure gains from the valuable input of the emergency response community and from local, tribal, state, and Federal policy makers and leaders.

Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals for OIC include:

- ! Strengthen and integrate homeland security activities related to research and development, testing and evaluation, standards, technical assistance, training, and grant funding.
- ! Provide a single resource for information about and assistance with voice and data interoperability and compatibility issues.
- ! Reduce unnecessary duplication in emergency response programs and unneeded spending on interoperability issues.
- ! Identify and promote interoperability and compatibility best practices in the emergency response arena.

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Abstract

 This report describes a laboratory study investigating the ability of human subjects to use a video system for various tasks. The particular tasks of interest focus on human targets and range from awareness of their presence to positive identification. The test simulates recorded video by allowing viewers significant control over how and when video sequences are displayed. The video sequences represent a variety of target sizes, motion, and lighting conditions. Various resolutions and encoder bit rates were used to allow us, public safety researchers at the Institute for Telecommunication Sciences (ITS), to recommend requirements for a particular task. Test subjects were asked to identify letters on an eye chart synthetically inserted into the video sequences. This allowed us to use visual acuity as a quality metric, which made it possible to separate measurements of the quality required for particular tasks from measurements of quality delivered by particular systems. The task-based subjective tests this report describes follow the test methods described in (ITU-T) Recommendation P.912 [1]. the International Telecommunication Union's Telecommunication Standardization Sector

Key words: positive identification, video quality, subjective test methods, video, acuity

1 Introduction

 Public safety practitioners use video for a wide variety of applications. These applications are often task-based and can be generalized as identifying targets (objects or persons of interest) in the video. While some applications rely on autonomous imaging systems to automatically perform these tasks, the majority of public safety video applications are intended for a human observer. Examples of public safety video applications include surveillance, telemedicine, urban search and rescue, and remote command and control.

 For the applications listed above, subjective quality assessments such as mean opinion score (MOS) are not very useful. A useful measure of video quality for the public safety practitioner would be whether a viewer is able to recognize a target. If the operator of an unmanned urban search-and-rescue vehicle is not able to distinguish between an earthquake casualty and building debris on a video feed, then that video feed would be considered to be of poor quality and, therefore, less useful to that practitioner. The approach of this study is to evaluate video quality by measuring the success rates of test subjects who were assigned certain target-recognition tasks in a controlled environment.

 Generalizing the factors that affect target-recognition success rates regardless of the application leads to results that may be useful to a wider variety of users in the public safety video system market. The success rate of target-recognition tasks depends on factors that are common to most public safety video applications; whether the recognition task is to be performed with live/real-time video or previously recorded video impacts the difficulty of

 the target-recognition task. For this study, recognition tasks using a recorded video scenario were studied.

 Categorizing public safety video applications in this way is the concept behind the generalized use class (GUC) framework, an integral part of the practitioner User Guide developed by the Video Quality in Public Safety (VQiPS) working group [2], [3]. The guide, *Defining Video Quality Requirements: A Guide for Public Safety*, provides recommendations for each GUC so that public safety video system consumers can match their specific video application to one of the GUCs and then use the provided recommendations to guide informed video system equipment purchases. Figure 1 illustrates the process by which an appropriate GUC for a specific public safety video application is identified. A user identifies whether his or her application involves large or small targets; high or low motion; bright, dim, or variable lighting; live or recorded video; and what discrimination level is required. By making these determinations, a user selects a specific GUC.

Figure 1. A representative example of determining an application's GUC

 After identifying the appropriate GUC, the user is presented with a set of recommendations and resources linked to that GUC. Though the generated resources and recommendations may not exactly match the needs of each user's particular video application, the information provided will, at the very least, serve as a guide for informed purchasing decisions. This study was conducted in such a way that its results are consistent with both the User Guide [2] and GUC framework [3]. Further, the video system parameters used in this study contribute to the definition and understanding of target-recognition video (TRV) quality.

 The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) has supported the Public Safety Communications Research (PSCR) program in providing content for the User Guide and GUC framework. More importantly, DHS OIC has enabled researchers at PSCR to perform laboratory experiments that explore the effects of network conditions on video quality for public safety applications.

 This study explores how target-recognition tasks are affected by changing network conditions—specifically how target-recognition task success rates for H.264-compressed video sequences change when the resolution is reduced to Video Graphics Array (VGA; 640

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 x 480 pixels) or Common Intermediate Format (CIF; 352 x 288 pixels) levels and the encoder bit rate ranges from 64 kilobits per second (kbps) to 2048 kbps. The Coding/Decoding (CODEC) and resolutions used are representative of video that has been transmitted to mobile devices.

 While video-based applications are commonly used on third-generation (3G) Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) and Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) commercial networks, public safety users have been slow to embrace them. This is partly due to network constraints; most public safety wireless networks are not capable of supporting data or the bandwidths required by video-based applications. This is rapidly changing. On February 22, 2012, the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) was created when the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 [4] was enacted into law. FirstNet is charged with building, deploying, and operating a nationwide Long-Term Evolution (LTE)-based interoperable public safety broadband network.1

 Commercial LTE has been in use since 2010 and differs from the proposed FirstNet LTE network in a number of fundamentally important ways. First, commercial LTE users enjoy 20 megahertz (MHz) of bandwidth per device, per channel, while public safety users are limited to 10 MHz of bandwidth per device, per channel. Additionally, commercial networks do not face the priority or scaling constraints that will be placed upon a nationwide public safety broadband network. In times of national emergency, public safety network traffic must be prioritized in such a way that the most important information gets to an incident commander, even when the network is overloaded. These constraints, combined with the already high bandwidth consumption of video applications, necessitate exploration of TRV quality under dynamic, LTE-like network conditions.

 The test method used in this study adheres to ITU-T Recommendation P.912 [1], which addresses subjective assessment methods for video that is to be used for TRV tasks. A subjective test was performed using expert viewers and naïve viewers. The multiple-choice method was used (i.e., subjects were asked to recognize a target in a recorded video sequence and given several choices). Test-scene parameters were varied and five-bit rates were imposed on the H.264 encoder for each of two resolutions.

 The tests reported here expand beyond ITU-T P.912 by introducing the idea of visual acuity. In this report, we attempt to use acuity as a single measure of video quality for public safety tasks. We are motivated by the fact that measuring video system requirements for each of the 96 GUCs separately would be prohibitively time consuming. We have used visual acuity to separate the dimension of discrimination level from the other characteristics that define a GUC. We performed one experiment (referred to as PS8) to measure the acuity delivered by a video system under a variety of lighting, motion, and target size conditions. We performed a separate experiment (referred to as PS9) to measure what level of acuity is required to achieve each discrimination level. When the acuity delivered by a video system equals or exceeds the acuity required for a particular discrimination level, we can recommend that system for a task associated with that discrimination level. While it would be more accurate to examine each GUC separately, this approach greatly reduced the time and effort required to make a complete set of recommendations.

¹ Source: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/category/public-safety

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 We believe acuity will be a particularly good measure of quality because the task of recognizing characters on a chart has many physical and psychological similarities to recognizing an object. For this reason we expect visual acuity to provide more relevant information than MOS, peak signal-to-noise ratio (PSNR), pixels per foot (PPF), and many other video quality metrics.

2 Targets and Scenario Groups

 The test scenes used for this test also adhered to ITU-T Recommendation P.912, "Subjective Video Quality Assessment Methods for Recognition Tasks," [1]. This Recommendation introduces the concept of scenario groups. For the PS8 test, we used the same scenario groups as in the previous two experiments [5], [6]. Details are available in the reports, *Video Quality Tests for Object Recognition Applications* [5] and *Recorded-Video Quality Tests for Object Recognition Tasks* [6]. The scenario groups are designed to capture the three lighting levels, two motion levels, and two target sizes defined by the Video Quality in Public Safety (VQiPS) group. Although these parameters are not defined in a quantitative way, our scenes were designed to capture a variety of conditions. As in the previous tests, seven different objects served as targets: a gun, taser, police radio, cell phone, flashlight, mug, and soda can.

 A new set of scenes was used for PS9. They were not designed to cover a wide range of GUCs. They were chosen because they presented human targets. A group of four male and four female actors were featured in this set of video sequences and at least one appeared in each sequence. This allowed us to ask subjects to perform a positive identification task within our multiple-choice framework. Viewers were also asked to perform other tasks involving human targets. Details can be found in Appendix A.

$\bf{3}$ **3 Acuity Charts**

 To measure visual acuity, we generated a set of reduced Logarithm of the Minimum Angle of Resolution (LogMAR) charts. These charts are roughly similar to the Snellen eye charts commonly used by physicians, but a few key differences make them recommended for any visual acuity research [7]. LogMAR charts are made up of rows of Sloan letters. A subset of the alphabet, C, D, H, K, N, O, R, S, V, and Z, is used. Each letter is randomly selected with a uniform distribution. Each row is made up of characters of a particular size. At the bottom of the chart, the smallest row is sized so that the height of each character will be exactly five pixels when the chart has been resized to fit within a VGA frame. This is regarded as the minimum number of pixels necessary to reliably recognize characters with good contrast and perfect quality. For this reason, there is no purpose in using any smaller characters. Each row uses characters 1.414 times the height of the row directly beneath it so that the size of the characters doubles every two rows. Eight rows were used for each chart. Typically, a LogMAR chart includes five characters on each line, but our tests used only three characters per line. This is because we are not interested in measuring the visual acuity of particular viewers. We can combine results from multiple viewers to measure the acuity of the group and save time for individual viewers by reducing the number of letters in each row. Figure 2 shows examples of the charts used in PS8 and PS9.

Figure 2. An example of acuity charts

4 Processed Scenes

 All high definition (HD) clips were down-converted to two display resolutions: VGA and CIF. The frame rate was kept constant at 29.97 frames per second (fps).

 Each clip then had an acuity chart synthetically inserted into it. For PS8, the chart moved across the screen at the same rate (in pixels per frame) as the target object. The contrast of the chart was also adjusted to reflect the lighting on the object. This changed over time for variable lighting conditions. For the moving charts, the shutter speed of the camera was simulated by averaging the light that the lens would capture over an entire 1/30th of a second. This matches our observations of the workings of practical video cameras. For PS9, we were not attempting to control motion or lighting, so each of the charts was stationary and nothing was done to affect the contrast of the chart. The chart images were generated at very high resolution. For each test, great care was taken to ensure that the charts were resized accurately, taking any simulated motion into account.

 The clips were then compressed via H.264 encoding at various bit rates. Five bit rates were chosen for each resolution. The bit rates were chosen to represent a wide range of resultant video quality and to represent a wide range of bandwidth requirements. Table 1 lists bit rates.

 Each combination of resolution and bit rate is what is referred to as a Hypothetical Reference Circuit, or HRC. The Video Quality Experts Group, or VQEG, uses this term. HRC refers to the distortion to the video signal that is being tested—in this particular case, combinations of compression and resolution reduction.

 After being processed through an HRC, each clip was decoded and resampled to VGA resolution. By doing this, we minimized the computational requirements for our test computer to display the sequences, although this required faster storage. Appendix B provides further details.

5 PS8 Test Design

5.1 Test size

As in our previous two experiments ([5] and [6]), there were 14 scenario groups. Seven objects were used in twelve of the groups, and only six were used in the other two. This results in a total of 96 source scenes. A different random chart was inserted into each source to avoid any memorization effects. After processing through 10 different HRCs, there were 960 total clips. To avoid showing any viewer the same source twice, each viewer only saw one HRC for a given source. The HRCs were chosen so that the distribution of HRCs among viewers was as uniform as possible. This meant that each viewer saw 96 different video sequences over the course of the test. This generally resulted in a total test time of 60 to 90 minutes. Additionally, at the beginning of the test, each viewer saw a training sequence showing each target object with a label; they then took a practice test consisting of four additional clips for familiarization with the test software.

5.2 Viewers

 Thirty-nine viewers participated in the test. In accordance with ITU-T Recommendation P.912 [1], expert viewers were recruited. These viewers had experience as practitioners in law enforcement, the fire service, or emergency medical services.

 Viewers were screened for visual acuity and color vision by way of Snellen and Ishihara tests, respectively. Viewers were not automatically excluded from the test if they demonstrated impaired acuity or color vision. In our previous tests $([5]$ and $[6]$), an analysis revealed performance of the recognition task was not significantly affected by such visual impairments.

5.3 Test Environment and Software

 Viewing conditions generally followed the recommendations in ITU-T P.910 [8]. One exception was that the viewers could choose their viewing distance, and it was not recorded. Viewing distance is measured relative to the height of the picture being displayed. It is reasonable to assume that viewers' chosen viewing distances most likely fell into the recommended range of one to eight times the picture height, given an approximate picture height of five inches.

Figure 3. Test software user interface with acuity chart input

 Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the user interface for the test. Viewers were shown processed video clips, asked to identify letters on the acuity chart, and asked specific questions about the target of interest. Viewers were allowed to view the clip as many times as they chose; they also had the option to rewind and fast-forward, pausing and advancing the video frame by frame as much as they wished. This degree of control allowed viewers to find the individual frame that was most useful to the task at hand. The user interface recorded all such interactions with the software for future analysis.

Figure 4. Test software user interface with multiple-choice input

 The test length was expected to be approximately 90 minutes spent actively viewing videos and providing answers to the target-recognition questions. Because the viewers controlled

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 their own interaction with the video, the total time for the test could vary widely among viewers. Subjects were free to take breaks as needed. Appendix D shows the viewer instructions.

6 PS9 Test Design

6.1 Test size

 There were 48 source scenes and 10 HRCs under test. Eight different actors each appeared in six scenes each. The total number of clips when all source scenes were processed with all HRCs was 480. To reduce test length and viewer fatigue, each viewer did not see each clip, but instead saw only one HRC for each source. Additionally, at the beginning of the test, each viewer took a practice test consisting of three additional clips for familiarization with the test software. These practice clips included charts that did not appear later in the test, so there was no risk of memorization.

6.2 Viewers

 Forty-five viewers participated in the test. In accordance with ITU-T Recommendation P.912 [1], expert viewers were recruited. These viewers had experience as practitioners in law enforcement, the fire service, or emergency medical services. Naïve viewers were also used. These viewers were recruited from a temporary employment agency and were paid for their time. Based on previous experiments, we believe these two different sets of viewers produce equivalent results. For the purposes of this report, we do not distinguish between the two sets of viewers, but this remains an important subject for future analysis.

 Viewers were screened for visual acuity and color vision by way of Snellen and Ishihara tests, respectively. Viewers were not automatically excluded from the test if they demonstrated impaired acuity or color vision. In our previous tests ([5] and [6]), an analysis revealed performance of the recognition task was not significantly affected by such visual impairments.

6.3 Test Environment and Software

 Viewing conditions generally followed the recommendations in ITU-T P.910 [8]. One exception was that the viewers could choose their viewing distance, and it was not recorded. However, it is reasonable to assume that viewers' chosen viewing distances most likely fell into the one to eight picture heights recommendation, given an approximate picture height of five inches.

 Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the user interface for the test. As in PS8, viewers were shown processed video clips, asked to identify letters on the acuity chart, and asked to answer specific questions about the target of interest. For each scene, there were four multiple- choice questions. Viewers were first asked a question about how many people were present in the scene. This was intended to measure the viewers' ability to perform a task at the "general elements" discrimination level. Second, viewers were asked whether the target actor in the scene was male or female. This constituted a task at the "classification"

 discrimination level. Third, viewers were asked to indicate whether the target actor was wearing a hat, glasses, a necklace, some combination of the three, or none of the above. This was designed as a task representing the "characteristics" discrimination level. Finally, each viewer was asked to perform a "positive identification" task by selecting each target actor from a choice of eight people. Labeled pictures of the eight actors' faces were displayed for the viewers throughout the test. See Appendix A for source scenes.

 Viewers were allowed to view the clip as many times as they chose; they also had the option to rewind and fast-forward, pausing and advancing the video one frame at a time as much as they wished. The user interface recorded all such interactions with the software for future analysis.

 The test length was expected to be approximately 90 minutes spent actively viewing videos and providing answers to the multiple-choice questions. While there were fewer clips than PS8, more questions were asked about each clip, so the total viewing time was similar. Because the viewers controlled their own interaction with the video, the total time for the test could vary widely among viewers. Subjects were free to take breaks as needed. Appendix D lists viewer instructions.

7 Results

 For PS8, each viewer's responses to each clip were examined and compared against the ground truth for that clip. The total number of characters correctly recognized in each row of the acuity chart (ranging from zero to three) was tallied. We also determined whether each viewer correctly recognized the object they were shown for each clip. We then treated all viewers as statistically equivalent and combined their results for each clip. We assumed that the object recognition task is essentially the same, regardless of which of the seven objects is shown, and combined all the results across objects. For each combination of scenario group and HRC, we were then left with a total number of times viewed, a total number of correct object recognitions, and a total number of characters recognized for each of the eight sizes. Appendix E details these results. By dividing the number of correct object recognitions by the total times each combination of scenario group and HRC were shown, we calculated the object recognition rates.

 The detailed results of PS9 are too voluminous to be included in this report, but they are available upon request. We combined results from different viewers assuming they are statistically equivalent. For each video clip (each combination of source and HRC), we totaled the number of times the clip was shown, the number of times acuity chart characters of each size were recognized, the number of times the correct number of people were identified in the clip, and the number of times the gender of the target actor was correctly identified. We also totaled the number of times that viewers correctly indicated whether the viewer was wearing a hat, wearing glasses, or wearing a necklace. We separately totaled the number of times a viewer answered all three elements of this question correctly. By analyzing the three aspects of this question separately, we have laid the foundation for a future analysis of what aspects of this question were most difficult and how close the viewers were to answering correctly when their answers were not perfect. Finally, we totaled the number of times viewers correctly identified the target actor for each clip. By dividing each of these totals by the total time each clip was shown, we were able to calculate the rate at which each task was successfully performed.

 Because PS9 was not designed with meaningful scenario groups (as PS8 was), we were able to combine the results from every source clip and examine how each of the 10 HRCs produced changes in visual acuity as well as the ability to perform particular tasks. Appendix F provides these totals.

7.1 Measuring Acuity

 The exact definition of visual acuity we have chosen to use is the inverse of the height (measured in pixels) of the smallest reliably-recognizable characters on the acuity charts. For the purposes of this report, we chose a 90-percent recognition rate as the minimum to be considered reliable. In these experiments, this means that if 10 characters with a height of 5 pixels are shown, and 9 or 10 of them are correctly recognized, the acuity is 0.2. If fewer than 9 are recognized, the acuity must be lower. In addition, if fewer than 9 characters with a height of 7.1 pixels are correctly recognized, but 9 or 10 characters with a height of 10 pixels are recognized, the acuity is 0.1.

 In this way, we have developed a metric based upon the acuity charts used in our video clips that increases as recognition ability increases. This metric also appropriately deals with the statistical nature of these recognition tasks.

 With this approach, we were able to calculate acuity values based on the totals of correctly- recognized characters for each scenario group and HRC combination in PS8 and for each clip in PS9.

8 Conclusions

 The purpose of the PS9 test was to calculate acuity requirements for particular tasks. With these requirements we can use the PS8 data to recommend appropriate video systems. To come up with these acuity requirements, we first define the tasks in mathematical terms and then use the data in Appendix F to find an acuity level that can be considered sufficient.

 We defined the positive identification task as requiring viewers to correctly identify the target actor from among 8 choices 90 percent of the time. Our PS9 results show that this is achieved in systems delivering an acuity of 0.144.

 For the target characteristics task, we required the viewers to perfectly describe whether the target actor was wearing a hat, glasses, or a necklace 75 percent of the time. It should be noted that because an error in any of the three elements of this task will fall short of a perfect description, it is not unreasonable to have a somewhat lower reliability. Our PS9 results show that this task was achieved at an acuity of 0.1.

 For the classification task, we asked viewers to identify the gender of the target actor. This task was performed with 98- to 99-percent accuracy with every HRC. Essentially, this means that the task was too easy or that the test was not designed with sufficiently degraded video to cause viewers to fail at this task. Essentially, the minimum quality

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 required for the classification task is outside of the range of what was measured in this test. The lowest acuity measured in the test was 0.07. What we can say is that an acuity of 0.07 should be sufficient for the recognition task. We will proceed to make recommendations on that basis.

 For the "general elements" task, the rate of correct answers hovered around 90 percent regardless of HRC, acuity level, or quality. In fact, viewers seemed to perform the task slightly better when acuity was lower. This indicates that video quality was not the limiting factor for the performance of this task. Searching the entire video sequence for any time a person appears and successfully counting every person in the scene is more cognitively demanding than the other tasks in this test. Additional testing would be required to define a "general elements" task that is more dependent on video quality; however, such a task is likely to be easy if video is being transmitted at all and only difficult when quality is clearly unacceptable. For this reason, we believe it is reasonable to make recommendations based on an acuity level slightly lower than anything actually measured in this test. We have chosen to set an acuity requirement of 0.05 for the "general elements" task.

We have now established acuity requirements for each discrimination level as Table 2 under a variety of lighting and motion conditions. Because target size is not defined in any quantitative way, we have chosen to always recommend our higher resolution (VGA) for small targets and our lower resolution (CIF) for large targets. Previous testing $[6]$ has indicated that live and recorded video do not produce significantly different results for recognition tasks. Using these assumptions, all that remains is to find the lowest bit rates that provide acceptable acuity for a particular GUC. Table 3 shows these results. shows. Using data from PS8, we can determine which HRCs meet these requirements

8.1 Recommendations

 Table 3 shows the bit rate and resolution recommendations we are making for each of the VQiPS GUCs. Some of the bit rate recommendations are marked with an asterisk. This indicates that no bit rate tested produced sufficient acuity to perform the desired tasks. In these cases, we have recommended the maximum bit rate tested. Based on earlier results produce the desired quality. These are generally cases involving very poor lighting and possibly high motion. In these circumstances, the compression of the video is not limiting the quality and the only way to see an improvement is to improve the lighting. [5], we believe these are situations in which no amount of additional bandwidth will

 Nevertheless, if poor lighting or high motion is unavoidable, we recommend high bit rates to ensure that the CODEC will not further impair video quality.

Scenario	General Elements	Classification	Characteristics (75-percent perfect)	Positive ID (90-percent accuracy)
Bright light, low motion, large target	64 kbps, CIF	64 kbps, CIF	64 kbps, CIF	128 kbps, CIF
Bright light, low motion, small target	128 kbps, VGA	128 kbps, VGA	128 kbps, VGA	128 kbps, VGA
Bright light, high motion, large target	64 kbps, CIF	64 kbps, CIF	128 kbps, CIF	$*1024$ kbps, CIF
Bright light, high motion, small target	128 kbps, VGA	128 kbps, VGA	128 kbps, VGA	256 kbps, VGA
Dim light, low motion, large target	128 kbps, CIF	128 kbps, CIF	256 kbps, CIF	512 kbps, CIF
Dim light, low motion, small target	256 kbps, VGA	256 kbps, VGA	512 kbps, VGA	512 kbps, VGA
Dim light, high motion, large target	128 kbps, CIF	256 kbps, CIF	512 kbps, CIF	$*1024$ kbps, CIF
Dim light, high motion, small target	512 kbps, VGA	512 kbps, VGA	1024 kbps, VGA	$*2048$ kbps, VGA
Variable light, low motion, large target	256 kbps, CIF	512 kbps, CIF	512 kbps, CIF	$*1024$ kbps, CIF
Variable light, low motion, small target	256 kbps, VGA	1024 kbps, VGA	1024 kbps, VGA	*2048 kbps, VGA

Table 3. Summary of Recommendations

8.2 Limitations and Future Work

 A significant limitation of the PS8 and PS9 experiments is the tasks that have been studied. While we believe these tasks are representative of many public safety applications, we have no basis for generalizing beyond the specific tasks we asked our viewers to perform. However, by introducing the idea of visual acuity as a quality metric, we have created a framework to run experiments for any task that may become relevant in the future.

 Many opportunities for further analysis of the data presented here have already been suggested. In addition, significant work could be done with this data to evaluate the utility of acuity as a quality metric. Figure 5 shows a scatter plot of the object recognition rate versus visual acuity for the PS8 data. There appears to be some relationship between the two, but acuity only captures a part of what is happening to the utility of a video system as the quality changes. Further work should be done to determine when acuity is a meaningful metric and when it is not. Different quality metrics could also be explored to attempt to find a better option.

Figure 5. PS8 Data: Object Recognition Rate vs. Acuity

 Additionally, there are significant opportunities for future work related to the new public safety broadband network. The tests we have performed for this report and previous ones [5] [6] have focused on measuring the relationship between resources devoted to digital video (bit rate or bandwidth) and the utility of that video. This kind of information readily lends itself to optimization algorithms. Using the results of these studies, we could potentially calculate the optimal distribution of resources over a network as demands increase from multiple users and multiple video streams. This is particularly practical for public safety in emergency situations.

9 References

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- [8] ITU-T Recommendation P.910, "Subjective Video Quality Assessment Methods for Multimedia Applications," Geneva, 1999 (available http://www.itu.int), Cited September 2012.

Appendix A Source Scenes

 The test scenes used for this test followed ITU-T Recommendation P.912 [1]. For PS9, six scenes were chosen for each of eight actors. Four male actors and four female actresses were used. Throughout the test, the image in Figure 6 was on display as a reference to the viewers. The image displays a photo of each actor along with an identifier (name).

Figure 6. Test targets, as shown in background during each test

 A representative sample of still frames from PS9 is shown in the next several figures. Scenarios included simulated bank robberies, simulated shoplifting, and general surveillance.

Figure 7. Frame from an original clip

 Figure 8 shows the same frame as Figure 7 but is cropped to 4:3 and includes an acuity chart (see Figure 2).

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Figure 8. Frame cropped to 4:3 with acuity chart

Figure 9. Target walking hallway, unprocessed video

Figure 10 shows the same frame as Figure 9 but is down-converted to CIF at 512 kbps.

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Figure 10. Target walking hallway, video down-converted to CIF at 512 kbps

Figure 11 shows the same frame as Figure 10, but is down-converted to CIF at 64 kbps.

Figure 11. Target walking hallway, video down-converted to CIF at 64 kbps

Appendix B Processed Scenes

 All HD clips were down-converted to two display resolutions: VGA (640 x 480 pixels) and CIF (352 x 288 pixels). The CIF resolution clips were enlarged to cover the same area on the screen as the VGA clips. The interpolation was done with a Lanczos filter. The frame rate was kept constant at 29.97 fps.

 The clips were then compressed via H.264 encoding at various bit rates. Five bit rates were chosen for each resolution. The bit rates were chosen to represent a wide range of resultant video quality. Table 4 lists bit rates.

Table 4. Encoder Bit Rates

Encoding was done with TMPGEnc Xpress 4.0 software, which employed the MainConcept H.264 encoder. Table 5 lists the software settings used.

Table 5. Software Settings for H.264 Encoding

Appendix C Notes on Experimental Design

Randomization

The total number of clips in PS8 when all source scenes were processed with all HRCs was 960. The total number of clips in PS9 was 480. To reduce test length, each viewer did not see each clip, but instead saw only one HRC for each source scene. This reduced viewer fatigue and any memorization effects. This resulted in each PS8 viewer seeing 96 clips and each PS9 viewer seeing 48 clips.

 The clips to be viewed were selected in advance and distributed uniformly among the viewers. The order in which the clips were presented was randomized for each viewer in advance of the test.

Appendix D Viewer Instructions

PS8 Instructions

 Public Safety Video Quality Test Overview for Subjects

 Thank you for participating in our study. This study concerns the quality of video images for use in public safety applications. As a likely user of next-generation devices for public safety applications, we are interested in whether the videos to be presented are of sufficient quality to be used by you to perform several different potential tasks.

 The study examines video used in a **recorded** situation and the ability to use this video to make decisions on how to respond to an incident. This study applies to video that has been recorded for later examination. The task currently under investigation is gathering information about people appearing in video scenes, from awareness of their presence to positive identification. You will be asked to answer specific questions regarding content in the video.

 Each scene is approximately 10 seconds long. While the clip is playing, you may pause or step backward or forward frame by frame. You may replay each clip as many times as you wish. You will then be asked to type in the letters you saw on an eye chart in the video and answer a series of multiple-choice questions about the video. The test software will record your answers, as well as when you paused, replayed, or stepped through frames of the clip, and the total time you spent on each clip.

Important Clarifications for Multiple-Choice Questions

 Some multiple-choice questions ask how many people appear in a certain part of a scene. If any part of a person appears in the given part of the scene, they should be counted, even if you can't see their face or if they later leave the scene.

 Other questions ask if a person is wearing particular items of clothing or jewelry. Be aware that people can wear these items in unconventional ways. For example, if a person is wearing sunglasses on top of a hat, you should consider that person to be wearing sunglasses even though the sunglasses are not covering their eyes.

Text Entry and Multiple Choice Instructions

 If you are unable to recognize a letter on the chart, enter an "X" in the corresponding box. Only enter "X" if you are completely unsure. If you recognize any characteristics of the letter, please make your best guess. Then, please choose the object that best matches what you saw in the video. For this question, there is no "other" or "I don't know" option. Therefore, please select the answer you believe to be most likely.

 You will be asked to participate in one viewing session that is approximately 90 minutes long. A practice session will be presented to help you become familiar with the scene

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 material and rating process, as well as a clip showing the objects you might see in the videos. You may take a break at any time during the session.

PS9 Instructions

Public Safety Video Quality Test Overview for Subjects

 Thank you for participating in our study. This study concerns the quality of video images for use in public safety applications. As a likely user of next-generation devices for public safety applications, we are interested in whether the videos to be presented are of sufficient quality to be used by you to perform several different potential tasks.

 The study examines video used in a **recorded** situation and the ability to use this video to make decisions on how to respond to an incident. This study applies to video that has been recorded for later examination. The task currently under investigation is gathering information about people appearing in video scenes, from awareness of their presence to the video. positive identification. You will be asked to answer specific questions regarding content in

 Each scene is approximately 10 seconds long. While the clip is playing, you may pause or step backward or forward frame by frame. You may replay each clip as many times as you wish. You will then be asked to type in the letters you saw on an eye chart in the video and answer a series of multiple-choice questions about the video. The test software will record your answers, as well as when you paused, replayed, or stepped through frames of the clip, and the total time you spent on each clip.

Important Clarifications for Multiple-Choice Questions

 Some multiple-choice questions ask how many people appear in a certain part of a scene. If any part of a person appears in the given part of the scene, they should be counted, even if you can't see their face or if they later leave the scene.

 Other questions ask if a person is wearing particular items of clothing or jewelry. Be aware that people can wear these items in unconventional ways. For example, if a person is wearing sunglasses on top of a hat, you should consider that person to be wearing sunglasses even though the sunglasses are not covering their eyes.

Text Entry and Multiple Choice Instructions

 If you are unable to recognize a letter on the chart, enter an "X" in the corresponding box. Only enter "X" if you are completely unsure. If you recognize any characteristics of the letter, please make your best guess. Then, please choose the object that best matches what you saw in the video. For this question, there is no "other" or "I don't know" option. Therefore, please select the answer you believe to be most likely.

 You will be asked to participate in one viewing session that is approximately 90 minutes long. A practice session will be presented to help you become familiar with the scene

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 material and rating process, as well as a clip showing the objects you might see in the videos. You may take a break at any time during the session.

Appendix E Detailed PS8 Results

Table 6. Detailed PS8 Result Data

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Appendix F PS9 Results by HRC

Table 7. PS9 Result Data by HRC

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