

A Tale of Two Presenters

Review by Jeffrey Allen

This review looks at two lightweight, highly portable document cameras (also known as visual presenters). Each of the two presenters lists for just under \$1,000. Elmo makes one, the HV-100XG; AVerMedia makes the other, the AVerVision 300.

The AVerVision 300 Document Camera

The AVerVision 300 folds compactly to fit into a soft carrying case provided by the manufacturer. It opens to set up on any flat surface. To conserve size and weight, the unit has no table for documents or other objects to be projected; it uses whatever surface you set it on for that purpose. The presenter plays well with both Macintosh and Windows computers and is plug and play with most projectors as well. The 8.8" x 5.6" x 2.2" (folded) unit opens up to provide 22" of extension for the camera arm. Weighing only 3.3 pounds, the presenter packs and travels very well.

The unit can display full-size pages as well as oversize pages. The camera head rotates to allow the best view of the projection. The camera head also contains four red LEDs that project down to the table and mark the outer edges of the camera's visual field, which allows you to properly position your document or whatever you wish to project. Sixteen additional LEDs in the camera head provide supplemental lighting for the object to be imaged.

The AVerVision 300 comes with VGA and DVI outputs. It also has a VGA input so that you can use the presenter as a pass-through device for your computer and switch back and forth from the presenter to the computer with the push of a button.

The AVerVision 300 uses a 1/3" CCD (Charged Coupled Device) sensor that generates 850,000 pixels. The camera has a powered 8x digital zoom, but it focuses manually. The digital zoom provides a surprisingly good quality expansion of the image. The unit also comes with an infrared remote control. Additional optional accessories include a light table that allows the projection of

negatives or slides and a microscope adapter.

The AVerVision 300 appears to be well built, and its plastic housing looks like it will hold up to a reasonable amount of wear. I would like it better if it included a protective cap for the camera head housing the lens and 20 LEDs. An optical zoom and automatic focus would also add to the utility and quality of the presenter (but would also add to its size, weight, and cost).

I am very impressed with this presenter. It performs well, produces good images, and does everything that you would want from a basic document camera. I think that most attorneys will find it quite satisfactory for their needs in and out of court.

The Elmo HV-100XG Visual Presenter

Elmo calls its portable document camera a "visual presenter." The three-pound Elmo HV-100XG transforms into a 11.1" x 6.3" x 2.3" protective case that reduces the likelihood of damage to the camera head or to the other parts of the unit. When it folds up, it has space for a small bag (included) to hold the power adaptor and VGA cable, so that the entire package fits into the presenter in its storage/travel configuration.

From its storage and travel configuration, the presenter opens up to form a 14.3" x 10.7" stage to hold documents or other objects to be projected. The camera head attaches to the stage through a mounted folding arm. The HV-100XG uses a 1/3" CCD sensor that generates 850,000 pixels. It has a powered 4x digital zoom. The camera arm does not contain extension units. The control for the wide-angle and telephoto or close-up zoom adjustments is on the camera head. The unit also has a light source on the camera arm to supplement ambient lighting when necessary. You focus the camera by physically moving the camera head closer to or farther away from the document or image to be projected.

The HV-100XG has a VGA input and output, so that it can be used as a pass-through device for the computer, allowing you to switch back and forth between the computer and the document camera as the image source for projection at the push of a button.

The Elmo HV-100XG visual presenter is a decent basic document camera that works well enough and includes sufficient features to satisfy most attorneys' needs. The inclusion of optical zoom or at least a more powerful digital zoom and a better focusing mechanism would improve the camera's performance, as would a better lighting system. Additionally, and more significantly, the images generated by the camera fell a bit short in sharpness and clarity.

Although both units are quite good, I prefer the AVerVision 300. My comparative analysis follows:

1. Both document cameras/presenters are usable pieces of equipment that would be helpful to have in presentations in and out of court.
2. Both document cameras fold compactly and travel

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easily, but the Elmo packs better and more protectively.

3. Either unit could fit into a large computer bag with a laptop computer and/or a small projector. The AVerVision would, in my opinion, require additional packing to protect the camera head; the Elmo would not.
4. Both presenters produce an acceptable image, but the AVerVision 300 generated a clearer, sharper, and generally better image than the Elmo HV-100XG.
5. Both cameras have powered digital zoom, but the AVerVision's 8x beats the Elmo's 4x zoom.
6. The AVerVision's extra features and optional additions allow the creation of a more versatile package. **GPSOLO**