

# Wireless webcam is easy to use, hard to beat

April 18 2011, By Jim Rossman

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the Dropcam Echo

I've been a fan of live webcams since I discovered them online years ago. I've also always wanted to set up my own camera, but it's not an easy undertaking.

The camera must be on your home network, and you must have your own website. A Web page must also be set up to display the uploaded video. It always seemed like too much hassle.

Dropcam offers a solution.

Easy to configure, Dropcam has two wireless Web camera models - with or without a microphone.

The original Dropcam (\$199, [dropcam.com](http://dropcam.com)) is video-only, but the Dropcam Echo (\$279) adds sound and a [motion sensor](#).

You can connect the Dropcam to your wired or wireless network and have your webcam broadcasting in just a few minutes after an easy setup.

Dropcam is not designed like other Web cameras. It does not record video to be stored on your computer. All video is transmitted to and viewed from the Dropcam website.

Here's where it gets interesting. Dropcam can record your [video stream](#) for playback like a DVR.

This is especially handy for security-conscious people or small business owners who want to have 24-hour [video monitoring](#) of their home or workplace without the hassle of setting up a PC or DVR to make their own recording system.

But the recording is not free.

Dropcam has two options - maintaining footage from the last seven days (\$8.95 per month per camera) or the last 30 days (\$24.95 monthly per camera).

Of course, you can have as many cameras as you like. If you need to copy any of the recorded footage, clips can be downloaded from the website to your computer.

If you just want to watch the live stream, there is no monthly charge.

If you have a Dropcam Echo, the recorded stream's timeline will be bookmarked to show instances of detected motion, making it a perfect

[security camera](#). Scrubbing through hours of footage can be done in seconds.

You have to log in to the Dropcam website to watch the video. You can also send emails to others to invite them to have access as well, but they will have to register at the Dropcam site.

As the camera owner, you control the list of who is allowed to see the video. You can also embed the [video](#) feed into your own website to allow anyone who sees your page to view the live feed.

It gets a little better.

There are iPhone and Android apps to allow monitoring of your Dropcams from anywhere.

Dropcam can also send alerts to your phone when motion or audio is detected. For instance, a Dropcam can be pointed at your front door to get a notification that your kids made it home from school.

This could be the perfect solution for nervous parents to keep track of the babysitter or for pet owners to see if Fido is really sleeping on the sofa when they're away.

## **Dropcam**

Pros: Easy to set up. Viewable from any Web-enabled computer or iPhone or Android phone.

Cons: Expensive. Not weatherproof.

Bottom line: Slick implementation. Does its job well. Business owners should love this.

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