

# LOREX Live Connect Wireless Skype Home Surveillance Review

October 25, 2011

The [LOREX Technology](#) Live Connect LW2031 Series is a cool Skype-powered home surveillance system sporting night vision (via IR LEDs) and full color H.264 video. It can be used both for home surveillance, but also as a baby monitor due to its night vision and its portable handheld monitor sporting a color 2.4" LCD. It seemed like an interesting [Skype](#) product so I had LOREX send me a LW2031 to review.



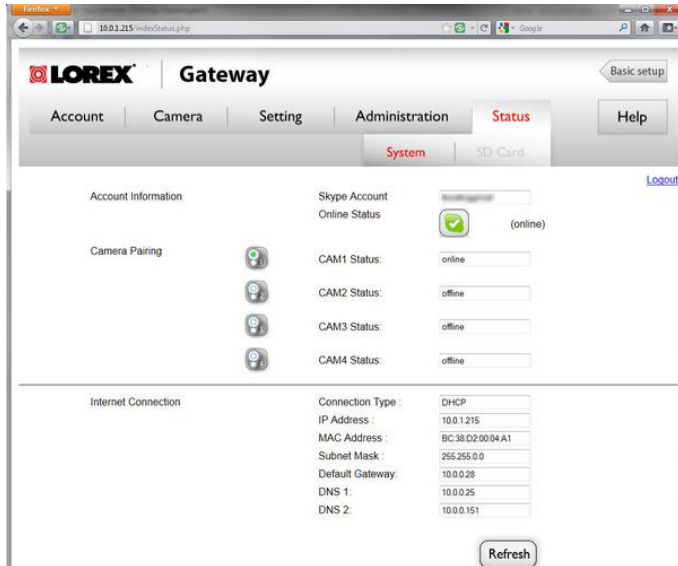
## **Installation**

Installing this was pretty straightforward. Two of the three devices - camera & handheld monitor use mini-USB power adapters, which are included. The gateway device uses a 5V AC adapter, which is also included. They ship the rechargeable batteries in the camera and the handheld monitor partially charged, so I only needed to hook up power to the gateway initially. I also connected the included Ethernet cable. I powered on the handheld device and in seconds I was able to see the video feed from the camera, which ships already "paired" to the gateway. You can pair up to 4 cameras. Local viewing on handheld monitor supports up to 4 cameras in auto-sequence mode (one camera at a time) or selectable single camera viewing. In just two minutes I had everything out of the box and working.

## **Hooking up Skype**

The only thing that might trip up potential buyers is that they need to have two Skype usernames. One personal one and an additional Skype username to assign to the LOREX Live Connect system. Fortunately, their instructions are very good and the Getting Started single sheet spells this out very clearly. The next part of the Getting Started guide is to launch to the web interface of the gateway. It's actually pretty simple since it leverage UPnP. All you have to do it click Start, Computer, Network, then

under Other Devices I was able to see "LOREX Gateway". Then you simple double-click which opens the IP address into your default browser.



*LOREX Web Admin Interface*

The web interface asked for a timezone and then asked if I had a Skype name. I already have test Skype accounts, but I was curious what the "user experience" was for users without multiple Skype usernames, so I selected the option for no Skype username. It then allowed me to register a new Skype username without having to leave this interface, go to [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and register there. Definitely a nice touch to make it as easy as possible.

After registering the new Skype username, I logged into Skype using these new credentials. I then added a new contact - my primary/personal Skype username. I logged out, then logged in with my primary Skype username and accepted the contact request. Now I was ready to call the Lorex Live Connect over Skype!

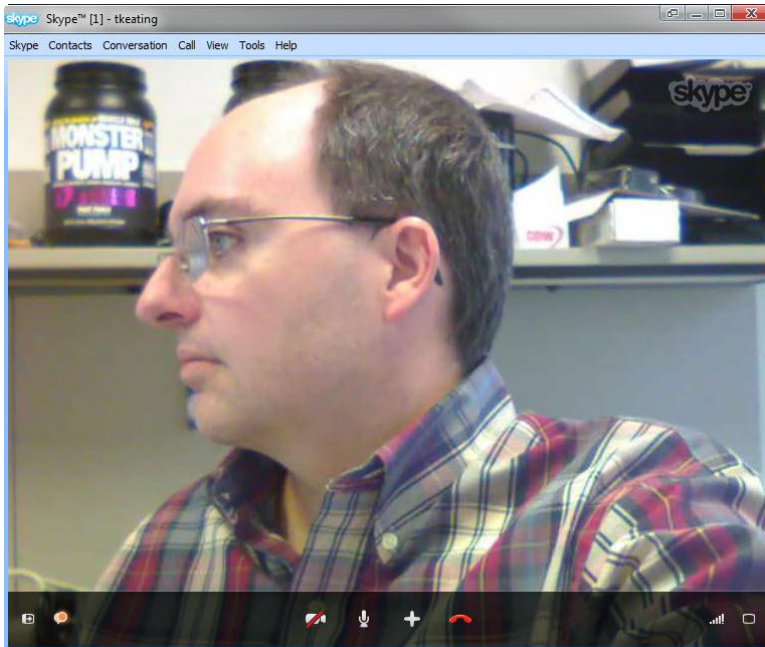
I made a call and the Lorex Live Connect gateway automatically answered the call and began transmitting video in about 15 seconds. This was really my own complaint with the product - that it took 15s before video began. Fortunately, audio is near instantaneous.

### **Lights on vs. Lights off**

The video quality was pretty good. I captured a video (using iPhone 4s) of the video call, including some video of the handheld monitor and uploaded it to YouTube, which you can watch here:

I should point out that the YouTube video I took above was taken with my office lights **off**, and my window shades closed since I was trying to duplicate "baby monitor" type conditions - or at least very low-light conditions. Though it wasn't pitch dark, my office was pretty dark, so I was pretty amazed that

in low-light conditions and even with the IR sensors not kicked in (not quite dark enough), that the video quality was pretty good. You obviously get more "noise" in a video when taken in a darkened room, so to be fair and to get an accurate representation of the quality of the video in a brightened room I also snapped this screenshot with my office lights **on**:



As you can see, the quality is pretty good. You can even make out my greying sideburns. 😊 Oh and the Monster Pump Creatine mix on my shelf. I liked that the camera was very rotational allowing you to get just the right angle. The back of the base has a hole allowing you to wall-mount the camera. The camera microphone was quite sensitive and easily picks up the slightest sound even 20 feet away, making it very useful as a baby monitor or to covertly listen in on conversations! 😊

The handheld monitor, which features a 2.4" color LCD is a handy little device for when you're home and want to monitor a room or area, such as a playpen or crib. It had pretty good range in my testing and they claim 150 foot range. The color quality was pretty decent and the frame rate was pretty good as well. Here's a sample photo of it:



Interestingly, the handheld monitor sports a microSD memory slot on the side and the unit ships with a 1GB microSD memory card, as well as a microSD adapter for connecting to your PC. From the handheld monitor you can kick off an impromptu video recording by pressing the camera icon button for 5s. The handheld monitor records 320x240 video but it doesn't support audio recording. Though if you really insist on recording audio, there are plenty of Skype add-ons that support both video and audio recording to your PC.

Because the system leverages Skype, you can use your smartphone, tablet (i.e. iPad), PC, or Mac to view the video and listen to the audio. Initially my new iPhone 4S running Skype had problems when calling the LOREX Live Connect. The call connected, but then after about 15s it tried to initialize video and then it just dropped the call. The audio worked for the first 15s or so before the call dropped. I rebooted my 4S and tried again and then it worked. Damn iPhone! I also tried it on an iPad 2 and it worked fine on the first try.

### **Features & Specifications**

Video camera:

- Image Sensor: CMOS
- Image Resolution: 640 x 480 up to 20fps
- Automatic night-vision up to 22ft
- Minimum Illumination: 0 Lux (IR on)
- View Angle: H: 64°, V: 48°
- Built-in rechargeable lithium battery for portable use (4 hrs battery life)
- Power adapter included for continuous non-portable use.
- Secure, private Digital Wireless video & audio
- Built-in microphone for listen-in audio

Handheld monitor:

- Color 2.4" LCD

- 640x480 resolution
- Compact design with rechargeable lithium battery for true portability
- Snap, store and share pictures and video with microSD recording
- Expandable up to 4 cameras
- Digital Wireless range up to 150ft indoors. Actual range may vary depending on obstructions.

Internet Gateway:

- Remote viewing via Skype compatible devices (PC, Mac, iPhone 4/3GS, iPad/iPad 2)
- H.264 video compression for efficient internet streaming

### **Conclusion**

The LIVE CONNECT LW2031 Series is an certainly an easy-to-use portable home monitor and surveillance system. It will retail for \$299.99, which is a bit of a premium. Just for price comparison, I searched Amazon for [baby monitor with night vision](#) and the products range from \$80 to over \$269, however even the [most expensive one](#) doesn't support Skype. So when you combine the portable handheld monitor for local monitoring, the night vision feature, support for four cameras, and the Skype capabilities, this certainly makes for a worthy home surveillance choice.

very rotational - xyz

### **Lights vs. Lights off**

The YouTube video I took was taken with the lights off, and my window shades closed. You obviously get more "noise" in a picture in a darkened room, so to be fair and to get an accurate representation of the quality of the picture in a brightened room I also snapped this screenshot:

As you can see, the quality is pretty good. You can even make out my greying sideburns. 😊

<http://www.lorextechnology.com/liveconnect/>

A SOLUTION FOR HOME AND AWAY.

Use the system at home with the handheld monitor or connect when you are away from home via Skype™ using your smartphone, tablet, PC or Mac.\*

Connect over the Internet via Skype

- View on the go with iPhone & iPad
- Wireless portability
- Clear video—day and night
- Easy to use and set up

#### Video camera:

- High resolution image sensor for clear video
- Built-in rechargeable lithium battery for portable use<sup>1</sup>
- Automatic night-vision up to 22ft<sup>2</sup>
- Secure, private Digital Wireless video & audio<sup>3</sup>
- Built-in microphone for listen-in audio

#### Handheld monitor:

- Color 2.4" LCD Display
- Compact design with rechargeable lithium battery for true portability<sup>1</sup>
- Snap, store and share pictures and video with microSD™ recording<sup>4</sup>
- Expandable up to 4 cameras<sup>5</sup>

#### Internet Gateway:

- Remote viewing via Skype™ compatible devices (PC, Mac, iPhone™ 4/3GS, iPad/iPad 2™)\*
- H.264 video compression for efficient internet streaming
- Connects easily to your internet router

1. Rechargeable battery life up to 4 hours. Battery pre-installed in the camera. Power adapter included for continuous non-portable use.

2. Stated IR illumination range is based on ideal conditions. Actual range and image clarity depends on installation location, viewing area and light reflection/absorption level of object

3. Digital Wireless range up to 150ft indoors. Actual range may vary depending on obstructions.

4. microSD™ memory card and SD card adapter included. Resolution limited to 320x240, for viewing on handheld monitor or sharing on social media sites. Audio recording not supported

5. Local viewing on handheld monitor up to 4 cameras in auto-sequence mode (one camera at a time) or selectable single camera viewing. Additional cameras sold separately (model: LW2030AC1).

\* Internet monitoring via Skype requires registration for a free Skype account for both gateway and personal account. Remote viewing over the internet requires high speed internet and a router (not included). Mobile charges may apply if accessing through cellular network, check with your local service provider. You cannot simultaneously watch video on handheld monitor and remotely via Skype™. Handheld monitor for local viewing takes priority, however a notification will show you that someone wants to connect remotely. See manual for more details.

Transmission Frequency: ISM 2,400~2,483.5 MHz

Transmission Power: 18dBm

Unobstructed Effective Range: 450ft / 135m

Spread Spectrum: FHSS

Modulation Mode: GFSK

Operating Temperature: 32 ~ 122° Fahrenheit /  
0 ~ 50° Celsius)

Operating Humidity: Less than 90%

Camera:

Image Sensor: CMOS

Total Picture Pixels: H: 640, V: 480

Minimum Illumination: 0 Lux (IR on)

Night Vision Distance: 22 FT (7m)

View Angle: H: 64°, V: 48°

Image Resolution: 640 x 480 up to 20fps

Power Consumption (Max.): 700mA

Power Supply: 5V DC

Dimensions (W x D x H): 66mm x 95mm x 115mm / 2.6" x 3.8" x 4.6"

Weight: 0.5 lbs / 0.3 kg

Handheld Monitor:

Image Sensor: CMOS

Total Picture Pixels: H: 640, V: 480

Minimum Illumination: 0 Lux (IR on)

Night Vision Distance: 22 FT (7m)

View Angle: H: 64°, V: 48°

Image Resolution: 640 x 480 up to 20fps

Power Consumption (Max.): 700mA

Power Supply: 5V DC

Dimensions (W x D x H): 66mm x 95mm x 115mm / 2.6" x 3.8" x 4.6"

Weight: 0.5 lbs / 0.3 kg

**TMCNet – Tom Keating requested a Lorex LIVE CONNECT to review. The article ran on Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>: <http://blog.tmcnet.com/blog/tom-keating/skype/lorex-live-connect-wireless-skype-home-surveillance-review.asp>.**