

Facilities Stay Connected With Infrared Imaging on Smart Phones

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This article originally appeared in the June print issue of IMPO, [which you can read here](#) [1].

It's anybody's guess what the average brain might conjure up when it hears the term "thermal imaging." The fact is, this technology has become ubiquitous in industry, emergency services, DIY, and municipal applications. Here's the latest on all things infrared.

Infrared Technology in the News

- The actor Denis Leary plans to present to the Detroit fire department new thermal imaging equipment paid for by proceeds from a documentary film about the city's firefighters. "Burn" chronicles the struggles of Detroit firefighters. According to the Detroit Free Press, the donation is being made through the Leary Firefighters Foundation. Leary is a "Burn" executive producer and portrayed a firefighter on the TV series "Rescue Me."
- Local ABC Affiliate 10 reported in late May that, for the first time, a thermal imaging camera was tested in San Diego County during the recent fires. The devices are being used to see through smoke and identify hot spots, as well as find fire victims inside a home. Other jobs that can be taken on by the camera include peering through smoke and spotting smoldering embers on rooftops and arcing power lines.
- In the UK, thermal cameras are being employed to curb the major problem of dog waste. The heat-seeking cameras will be used to catch people who don't clean after their dogs. Wardens and police will be able to spot dogs "fouling the pavement" as the thermal cameras home in on heat from the animals and their waste, says the Daily Record.
- BMW uses thermal imaging technology to help optimize its German touring cars for competition. Race footage obtained via thermal imagery gives you an idea of how hot the car runs, where the heat is emanating from and how warm they get the fresh rubber before they get it onto the car, says Autoblog.com.

Thermal Imaging Comes to the Smart Phone

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)



FLIR Systems, Inc.

announced two new products at CES (Consumer Electronics Show, January of 2014) designed to put thermal imaging into the hands of consumers. FLIR ONE, the first consumer-oriented thermal imaging system, places the power of thermal imaging technology into the palm of the consumer via a smartphone accessory case.

According to Market Watch, FLIR ONE attaches to any Apple iPhone 5 or 5s smartphone and displays a live thermal image on the phone's screen, giving users the ability to see the world in a way the naked eye cannot, including in complete darkness.

FLIR ONE's unique ability to see and measure infrared energy gives consumers a versatile new tool that can be applied in a wide variety of applications. For example, homeowners and contractors with a FLIR ONE can easily identify heat or cooling leaks in buildings, find studs in walls, or locate water damage. A family can detect intruders in total darkness, find a lost pet, or see through smoke in an emergency.

FLIR ONE houses its own rechargeable battery that can power the device for two hours of continuous use and can boost iPhone 5 battery life by up to 50 percent.

Stay Connected, Improve Accuracy of Diagnosis

According to Fluke, maintenance technicians make better, faster decisions when they have field access to maintenance records and when they can review measurements in real time with team members and supervisors — yet records are usually kept back in the office and team members are rarely in the same place at the same time.

The Fluke Connect system allows maintenance technicians to wirelessly transmit measurement data from their test tools to their smart phones for secure storage on the cloud and universal team access from the field. Infrared cameras can connect wirelessly with the app, which is also compatible with digital multimeters, insulation

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testers, process meters, and specific voltage, current and temperature models.

Technicians can AutoRecord measurements and infrared images to Fluke Cloud storage from wherever they're working, without writing anything down. Everyone on the team with a smart phone and the app can see the data. The app also allows users to pull up archived data wirelessly, meaning there is no need to run back to binders full of images.

Part of the reason behind this technology development has to do with the challenge of remote diagnosis as it relates to a thermal image — Fluke says it's hard to “write down” a thermal image. The sharing of images and readings has become more precise and efficient, while preventing confusion that might come from someone describing an image to another person who wasn't present to see it.

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