

Chapter 38 of the Society of Broadcast Engineers

SBE

EL PASO - LAS CRUCES - JUÁREZ

MARCH  
2023

PO Box 3561 El Paso, TX 79923-3561 [www.kint98.com](http://www.kint98.com)

# NEWS

## Insta360 Link

**REVIEW :** This motorized webcam can't take its eye off you. But when you look this good onscreen, can you blame it?

**Rating: 8/10**

**OPEN RATING EXPLAINER**

### WIRED

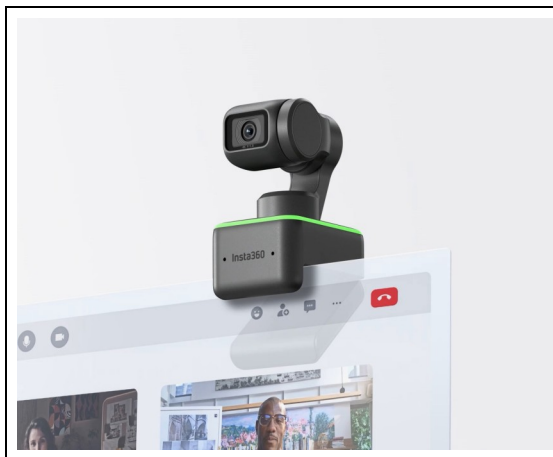
Outstanding sharpness, color, white balance, and low-light performance. Connects via USB-C (USB-A adapter included). Fully motorized with nearly 360 degrees of swivel. Clear, intuitive companion app. Excellent autofocus.

### TIRED

**Expensive**

"THAT'S PROBABLY THE best-looking webcam I've seen you test", one of my colleagues remarked over ZOOM the other day as I stared into the eye of the Insta360 Link webcam. A chorus of agreement piped in through my computer speakers from the rest of the team. I'm zoom, zooming more work days than not, so it's a great way to test webcams. Two birds, one stone. A great many cameras have adorned the space above my laptop screen and monitor over the years, and I've been quite happy during my time with the Insta360 Link. It's from a company known for its action cameras — which we like a lot — so this webcam has a lot going for it. Well, except for its eyebrow-raising price.

### HEAD on a Swivel



Plug in the Insta360 Link to your PC via the included USB-C to USB-C cable (there's a USB-A adapter in case you need it). The first thing you'll notice is its motorized head—the camera perks up and looks around before settling into a straight-ahead stare, not unlike the Pixar lamp after it squishes the "i." The Link is mounted on a gimbal that allows near-360-degree horizontal rotation, as well as a certain degree of vertical rotation. It's not so heavy that it poses any problems on the top of a laptop screen either. This kind of movement is handy if you're frequently helping presentations in a room and need to move around, or even for showing off a dance routine. The Link can detect faces, so it'll track yours and will automatically keep you in the center of the frame. It'll zoom in and out, too, so that you're not too far or filling up too much of the shot.

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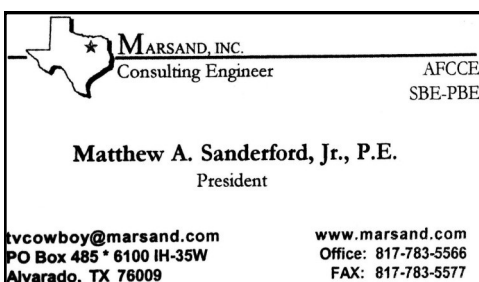
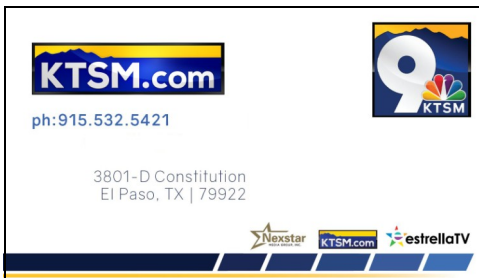
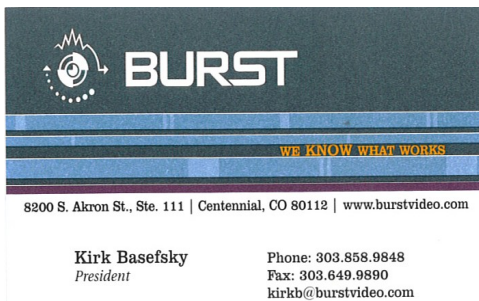
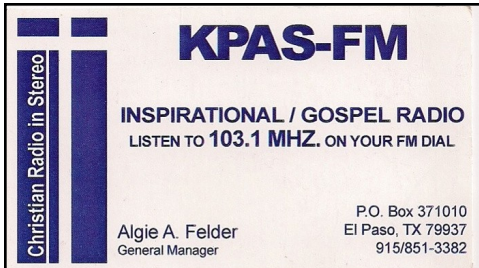
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Using a series of hand gestures, you can give wordless commands to the Link. One gesture zooms the camera in and out. Another enters Whiteboard Mode, which forces the Link to recognize rectangular surfaces (whiteboards or chalkboards) and train its focus there. In Whiteboard Mode, it'll frame the board and won't track you if you decide to move out of the way to give viewers a better view of the board. You have to apply four reusable stickers (included) that frame the whiteboard to help the Link recognize what you want it to focus on, but it's a minor inconvenience.

Then there's Overhead Mode, which turns the focus to an object you're presenting on your desk by pointing the lens nearly straight down at the surface your monitor or laptop is resting on. If you're demonstrating something—playing the piano, drawing, showing off blueprints—it'll recognize that and automatically frame whatever you're doing for the prettiest shot. It works far better than I was expecting. You place your materials in front of you right side up so that you're able to read them, and the Link flips the video so that others on the call can read it right side up, too.

The camera is controllable via the Link Controller app (available for Mac and Windows), which has a simple, clean interface that explains everything. Forgot how gesture zooming works? Click the “?” next to the menu item and a short, silent explanatory video plays. Arrows and a zoom slider let you control the Link manually, and you can also move it with your mouse. All the controls are hidden away so they're really meant for anyone who doesn't feel overwhelmed by them. Off in a sidebar, you can tweak the white balance, contrast, brightness, saturation, and sharpness, although I hardly ever wanted to. The video quality is astounding.

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## EL PASO, TX SBE CHAPTER 38 MEETING MINUTE

DATE 2 /08/2023 LOCATION: ZOOM ANTONIO'S

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 11:00 AM , BY ANTONIO CASTRO. WE WERE 11(ELEVEN) ATTENDANTS

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:** MINUTES IN THE FEBRUARY NEWS-LETTER. ACCEPTED BY DAVID GRICE, SECONDED BY DAVID HALPERIN.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER:** \$ 4,901.88 IN THE BANK AFTER SOME DEPOSITS OF MEMBERSHIPS FEES. ACCEPTED BY ALFREDO DURAND, SECONDED BY NORBERT MILES.

**REPORT OF THE CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE:** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** GLENN LEFFLER WILL TALK TO KEMP OWNER TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP. SUSTAINING MEMBER. FEES WILL REMAIN THE SAME FOR 2023. WILL TALK TO "ZARCO ELECTRONICS" TO BE A MEMBER. .

**REPORT OF THE FREQUENCY COORDINATOR COMMITTEE:** **KSTL**, AM STATION IN SUNLAND PARK, MAY RE-LOCATE TRANSMITTER SITE.

**REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE** NO REPORT.

**REPORT OF THE WEBSITE COMMITTEE:** NOW 4230 VS. 4074 EQUAL 15639 HITS. THIS IS A RECORD.

**REPORT OF THE EAS CHAIRMAN:** TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO MONTHLY TESTS WERE FINE.

**REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE:** PRESENTATION FROM RHETT FRAZIER TO BE POSTPONED FOR MARCH 21st ON ZOOM. WILL SEND THE NOTICE LATER.

**NEW BUSINESS OR ANY ITEMS FOR THE CHAPTER INTEREST** WIL, COORDINATE THE FUTURE "ENNES WORKSHOP" WITH NATIONAL

**OTHER.** BRUNO WILL CONDUCT A MEETING WITH TEXAS DOT FIBER DISTRIBUTION.

**NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION:** MARCH THE 14th .TIME AND PLACE T..B.D.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** AT 11:35 AM .

*We have a date for the El Paso 2023  
ENNES WORKSHOP  
FRIDAY MAY 19th !*



# MARCH PROGRAM

FOR THIS PAST FEBRUARY 2023 MONTH, WE MET IN A ZOOM MODE.

THERE WAS NO PRESENTATION WITH RHETT FRAZIER FROM: TM TELEVISION, BROADCAST SYSTEM INTEGRATORS.

WE WILL SCHEDULE A DIFERENT TIME OTHER THAN OUR NORMAL MEETING FOR THIS PRESENTATION

NOW, FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH, WE ARE GOING TO MEET PERSON TO PERSON

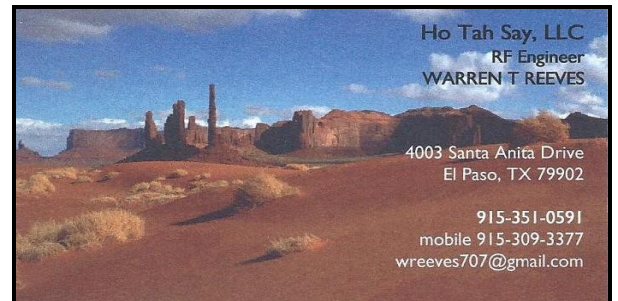
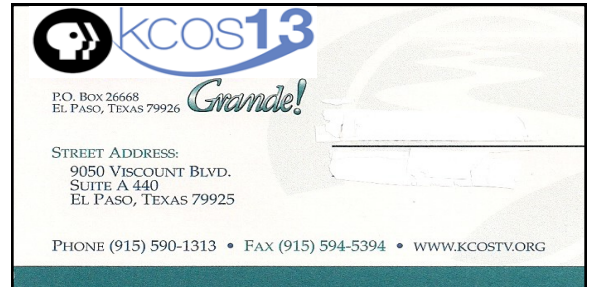
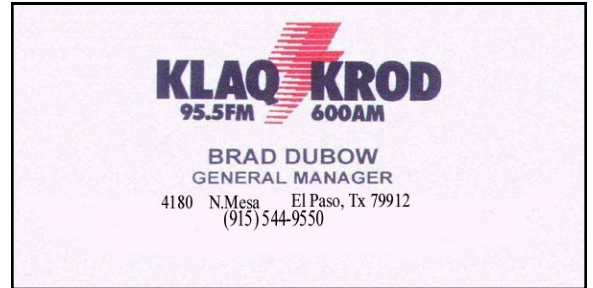
WHEN:

TUESDAY MARCH THE 14 TH.

WHERE:

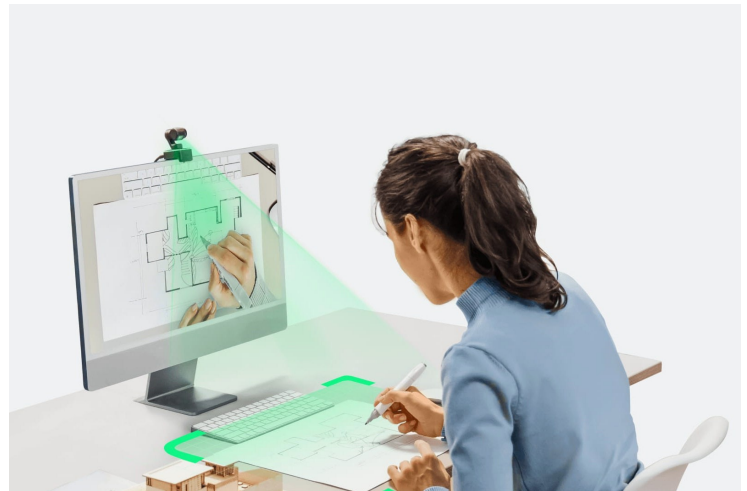
LUBY'S CAFETERIA (UTEP)

TIME: 11:55 AM



## What a View

Most webcams have an image sensor between 1/4 and 1/3 inches. The Link outdoes them with a 1/2-inch sensor. It's likely why the video quality looks so much better than the competition. A larger sensor can gather more light in a shot, delivering better results in low-light conditions, with better colors and more detail. The Link's video quality pops with a vividness and a sharpness that made my video feed feel less like I was seeing myself through a digital screen and more like I was peering into my own apartment through a window.



When I'm testing a webcam, I often play with the lighting in the room, both ambient and artificial. I do my best to throw off the autofocus and white balance to see how the webcam adjusts and responds. I move farther back in my chair and wobble around like a bowling pin. I got more *oohs* and *ahhs* from my colleagues as they marveled at how smoothly the Link refocused on my face. I've tested a lot of webcams that have jarring autofocus, but not the Link. It's capable of focusing with my face as close as 4 inches (10 centimeters) to the lens, which is closer than I'd ever need to get to a webcam.

The Link can zoom up to four times, but it's a digital zoom. That means zooming in will create a picture that's more pixelated the more it closes in on a subject. However, this is a 4K webcam, so by supporting such a high resolution, you can zoom in a fair bit and still retain a sharp image. At the top end, the Link supports 4K resolution at 24, 25, and 30 frames per second. For less bandwidth or for a faster frame rate, which makes the video look smoother, you can downscale to 1080p at 50 or 60 frames per second, among other choices.

Twenty-four frames per second might sound redundant when 25 is also an option, but it's the gold standard for movie productions, so capturing at this frame rate is desirable for anyone recording themselves on camera to upload later to YouTube or for a cinematic project. There's support for High Dynamic Range (HDR) too, which helps keep the bright lights in your frame in check without underexposing or overexposing the image. It's optional, but only works in 1080p or 720p at 24, 25, or 30 frames per second.

Most webcams come with pretty awful microphones, but the dual noise-canceling microphones on the Insta360 Link make me sound pretty decent (according to my colleagues). That said, I still prefer a standalone USB microphone like the [Blue Snowball Ice](#).

There's no physical privacy shutter, but the Link deters hackers and weirdos from peeking through your webcam uninvited by automatically spinning its gimbaled head downward, away from you.

This happens 10 seconds after the webcam is no longer in use by a conferencing app. When you start a video meeting, the Link perks back up and awakens to begin streaming again (it supports the likes of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and more).

## The Sign Off



The problem? Three hundred bucks is a lot of money for a webcam. It has competition too. There's the Obsbot Tiny 4K, another PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) webcam that has many of the same tricks (albeit with less polish) for a little less. The sublime Logitech Brio 4K Webcam is frequently under \$150 and delivers almost-as-good image quality sans all the motion.

The question is whether you need automatic tracking and gesture control. If the answer is no, then even the slightly superior video quality of the Link isn't enough to justify spending almost twice as much as a webcam like the Brio, which is already an expensive webcam. You can get a great, simple webcam for just \$50

If you're recording video often, though, or if you give virtual presentations regularly—or you just want to film your dance practices—then the Link is a fantastic choice. It nails the basics (great video quality) with a suite of polished extras, like automatic tracking, gestures, and what I refer to as the privacy droop. It's not a bargain, but it is the best.