Aerial thermal imaging camera set for 2016 drone market release

11 December 2015, by Nancy Owano

Best of class thermal-imaging technology is available for aerial applications, with news that drone company DJI has entered into a collaboration with thermal imaging systems company FLIR.

If you see any kind of thermal imaging chances are it was shot with a FLIR camera, said a promotional video, as FLIR has become a market leader in thermal imaging technology; FLIR's thermal camera can generate images up to a resolution of 640x512.

The upcoming result from DJI and FLIR's collaboration will be the release of the Zenmuse XT – which the press announcement described as the world's most-powerful aerial thermal-imaging camera—in the first quarter of 2016.

The Zenmuse XT will (1) integrate a FLIR thermal-imager with DJI's gimbal stabilization and Lightbridge video-transmission technology and (2) the Zenmuse XT will be compatible with the DJI Inspire 1 and Matrice M100 aerial platforms.

What people get out of all this, said the video, is incredible precision and empowerment to put it into the sky almost instantly.

Industries will benefit by adding thermal imaging as an additional sensor option for aerial platforms. Aerial systems with thermal imaging tech can provide different types of sensory data, which can be essential for sectors such as firefighting and agriculture.

Applications are endless, said the video presenter. Aerial thermal imaging used for crop management, for example, delivers a noninvasive way to monitor nurseries and greenhouses and plan irrigation scheduling.

A city fire chief in the video said DJI's XT camera is valued as a great way to assess where the fire is and what is happening—to see how the fire is affecting the roof and whether other parts of the building are getting involved or how the fire travels through the building, all before the firefighters make their entry, resulting in a better coordinated attack.

The point is made that a number of industries will be able to do their work not only faster but safer.

Eric Limer commented in *Popular Mechanics*: "Surely hobbyists and professionals alike will be able to find some cool uses for these thermal eyes in the sky."

The Zenmuse XT will be available as two separate models with two different resolutions. It provides high-sensitivity (50mK), infrared scanning at 640/30 fps or 336/60 fps, depending on the model.

FLIR sees a strategic advantage for its future. Andy Teich, president and CEO of FLIR, said "we're accelerating our growth potential in the commercial drone market."

"The collaboration between the two companies is something of a no-brainer," said Martyn Williams, IDG News Service. "FLIR already makes camera systems that are used on military and emergency aircraft and these agencies are increasingly eyeing drone technology as a useful way to carry out low-cost aerial surveying."

More information:
www.dji.com/newsroom/news/dji- … l-imaging-technology

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