

# CCTV, Live and Videotapes

How Presentation Mode Affects the Evaluation of Witnesses

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Avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i psykologi, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid Göteborgs Universitet kommer att offentligens försvaras fredagen den 16 maj 2008, kl. 10.00, sal F1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg

Fakultetsopponent: Professor Graham Davies, School of Psychology,  
University of Leicester, United Kingdom



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**Abstract**

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Videotaped and closed circuit testimonies are often used in legal procedures, but little is known about the psychological effects of these courtroom technologies. The present thesis examines how different presentation modes affect observers' perception, veracity assessment and memory. In **Study I** truth-telling and lying adult witnesses were interviewed. Mock jurors ( $N = 122$ ) viewed the testimonies, either live or on video, and rated their perception and assessed the veracity of the witnesses' statements. Live observers rated the witnesses' appearance in more positive terms and assessed them as being more honest than did video observers. Furthermore, both live and video observers' deception detection performance was at chance level (49.2% vs. 50.8%). Live observers incorrectly believed they had a better memory of the witnesses' statements than video observers. **Study II** was structurally similar to Study I (but used child witnesses). Mock jurors ( $N = 136$ ) viewed truth-telling and lying children's testimonies (either live or on video), rated their perception of the children and assessed the children's veracity. Live observers rated the children's statements as being more convincing than did video observers. The overall deception detection performance was 59.6%, which was significantly different from the level of chance. Live observers were better than chance, but not better than the video observers, in assessing veracity. Moreover, live observers believed they had a better memory of the children's statements than video observers, and they also showed a significantly better memory performance. In **Study III** truth-telling and lying children were viewed and assessed by adult mock jurors ( $N = 240$ ) either live, via two-way closed-circuit television (CCTV), or via pre-recorded video. The mock jurors rated their perception of the children's testimonies and assessed the children's veracity. The results showed that live observers perceived the children in more positive terms than did the CCTV observers, who in turn perceived the children in more positive terms than did the video observers. The observers' overall deception detection accuracy was mediocre (58.3%). **Study IV** investigated the effects of different camera perspectives on adults' perception and assessment of videotaped child testimonies. Truth-telling and lying children were interviewed and videotaped simultaneously by four cameras, each taking a different visual perspective (close-up shot/child only, medium shot/child only, medium shot/child and interviewer, long shot/child and interviewer). Mock jurors ( $N = 256$ ) rated their perception of the children and assessed the veracity of the statements. Children seen in long shot were perceived in more positive terms, and children seen in close-up were perceived as having to think harder. The adult's deception detection accuracy was at chance level. Taken together, the results showed that the presentation mode affected the observers' perception of the witnesses' testimonies. Thus, the thesis suggests that legal policy-makers should consider the outcome of psycho-legal research on different presentation modes when establishing and/or reforming standards for police interviews and courtroom procedures.

Key words: Presentation Mode, Live, Video, Two-way CCTV, Deception Detection

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