

## News Report and Technology Development



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**N**HK's broadcasting cannot yield results without its technical capability. This statement has increasingly proved true; in particular, coverage of recent disasters and emergencies would not have been so relevant if it were not for NHK's use of the very latest broadcasting systems.

For example, consider these cases:

- the skip-back recorder that recorded the moment that the first violent tremor struck during the Great Hanshin Earthquake nine years ago,
- the HDTV wireless camera that proved useful during Prime Minister Koizumi's surprise visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on New Year's Day in 2004,
- the nationwide integrated system of robot cameras installed at 450 locations across the country for broadcasting during typhoons or earthquakes.

These are only a few among a number of cutting-edge systems that have become indispensable for emergency news reporting.

This is a time when a single advance in broadcasting technology, when appropriately applied, can result in many lives being saved. I am keenly aware that the crews who report from sites of emergencies must be knowledgeable about technology to a much greater extent than others.

However, even a few years ago, I felt that good communications between the news reporting and technical sides of NHK were lacking. There were cases where workers in the field ignored innovative broadcasting systems much to the regret of both sides later.

To change this situation, we established the Study Committee for News Report Related Broadcasting Systems four years ago. Its participants are drawn from news reporting, technology, and programming fields, with the aim of us all sharing technical development

information to our mutual benefit. This is a forum for proposing ideas for new systems that meet the demands of the broadcasting field, or even ideas that sometimes sound impossible. It is also where people working on the technical side can explain and promote the uses of the latest systems as soon as they become available. So far, it has shown great results, with a succession of new systems having been put to use. Such systems reflect shared ingenuity and peer-to-peer cooperation beyond the traditional borders of broadcasting and technology.

Since its establishment in 1930, the Science & Technical Research Laboratories has always been at the forefront of television broadcasting technology, from black-and-white TV broadcasting and color TV to satellite HDTV broadcasting and digital terrestrial HDTV broadcasting.

In fact, it is not impractical to take a futuristic view of the world of broadcasting. As it stands, STRL's research and development reflects our dreams of future media; we only need look at the development of broadcasting based on home servers, which is expected to dramatically affect life in Japan or at the ultrahigh-definition video system with 4000 scanning lines, or at a three-dimensional TV system to see that this is true.

The following developments are highly anticipated by us:

- reduction of the size of the HDTV camera system, down to cellular phone size,
- development of a new, small transmission system the size of a cellular phone to provide live broadcasts of HDTV images without the need to use an outside broadcasting (OB) van.

Expectations are running high about STRL's research and development. The time might come when even a small camera will replace an OB van, enabling any of NHK's staff to be a reporter/cameraman/engineer.