



The latest air quality monitoring equipment from the company Air Monitors has been used extensively by a variety of news channels to support the ever-growing media attention being given to urban air quality. “In contrast with the air pollution of the 1950’s, the problem is no longer visible,” says Managing Director Jim Mills. “It used to be possible for city dwellers to see the smog, but monitoring technology is necessary to highlight today’s invisible threats; which are mainly fine particulates and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

“We have been happy to support the media in its efforts to highlight the problems that exist in our towns and cities, because the public needs to be made aware of this very serious threat, and because the development of lightweight, accurate air quality monitors has meant that it is now possible to identify the precise location of pollution hot-spots.

“The use of our instruments on TV news channels reinforces the public health dilemma that we face; by showing the problem on the streets, where people live and breathe. This helps those that live in towns and cities to understand that air pollution affects them, their lives and the lives of their children.”

TRT World is a 24 hrs/day news channel focusing on global issues. Their Sara Firth recently used the Fidas Frog from Air Monitors to highlight the fine particulate problem on London’s streets. She also interviewed Steve Hoskin from Air Monitors who showed the film crew how to operate both the Fidas Frog and a new portable, wireless NO₂ monitor. Sara said: “We were obviously aware of the ambient air quality problem, but talking to Steve we were alarmed to learn that indoor air quality can be significantly impacted by outdoor pollution.”

Employing the same technology as the Fidas 200, which is increasingly used in reference monitoring stations, the Fidas Frog provides simultaneous measurement of PM₁, PM_{2.5}, PM₄, and PM₁₀ particle size distribution in a portable, wireless, battery-powered instrument.

Following Sara's report, TRT World interviewed Simon Alcock from ClientEarth who explained that in urban areas diesel vehicles are the source of the air quality problem which imposes an enormous burden on health and the economy.

For a week in March 2017, the BBC broadcast a special series of stories titled 'SoICanBreathe' which looked at the air pollution problem. For example, in the BBC's Inside Out West programme, Seb Choudhury revealed the shocking results of air quality tests in Bath using an AQMesh from Air Monitors. Data from an AQMesh monitor on a bicycle was compared to another inside a taxi. Interestingly, the data showed much higher levels (exceeding World Health Organisation limits) inside the taxi compared with the bicycle data.

Looking forward, Jim Mills says: "Air pollution will remain in the headlines until the measured levels of air pollutants remain below the limits set by the WHO and the European Union. Clearly, the UK's exit from the EU presents a threat to the environmental regulations that have highlighted the problem and enabled ClientEarth to take the government to court. However, I believe that the number of premature deaths, coupled with the enormous costs to the NHS will be too great to ignore.

"It is also clear that recent advances in technology are making it possible to measure local air quality in an enormous number of locations, and this will have a major impact on people's lives. The availability of local air quality data will mean that air quality will start to affect house prices and even the choices that people make when selecting a school for their children.

"Inevitably, there will be more low emission zones and further initiatives to reduce the number of diesel engines in urban areas. However, indoor air quality is becoming an increasing concern and again monitoring technology will perform a vital role in helping to identify problems and as part of effective building management systems."

Visitors to AQE 2017 will have an opportunity to see the latest air quality monitoring technology from Air Monitors on stands 3 & 4. Registration for the Telford event (24-25 May) is now open at www.ageshow.com .