



**PHILIPS**

Dictation

Success story

An excellent  
tool for **private**  
**investigators**

In 2018, private investigator Bernhard Maier became the first Austrian ever to receive the award “Security Professional of the Year” by the World Association of Detectives (WAD). He has tested the brand-new Philips VoiceTracer thoroughly and is convinced that the recording device is perfectly suited for the work of private investigators.

## The facts

### Client

Mag. Bernhard Maier, owner of the private investigation firm BM-Investigations e.U., Vienna, Austria  
[www.bm-investigations.at/de](http://www.bm-investigations.at/de)  
[www.atv.at/betrogen](http://www.atv.at/betrogen)

### The solution

Philips VoiceTracer audio recorder DVT7110

Mag. Bernhard Maier, MA, CFE is the owner of the detective agency BM-Investigations e.U. and has worked as a self-employed private investigator for more than 20 years. He studied Political Science and Security Management in Vienna. His clients include banks and insurance companies for which he carries out fraud investigations. Since autumn 2018, Austrian television channel ATV has aired the reality soap ‘Betrogen’ (Defrauded) that shows the real investigations of Bernhard Maier.

Private investigators rely on recording devices such as the Philips VoiceTracer primarily for 2 areas of their work: observations and questioning. “During an observation assignment, it is normally not possible to take notes. A dictation device is used for documenting occurrences and the courses of events. After the assignment, I use the audio notes to prepare a detailed report,” Bernhard Maier explains. He continues, “On the other hand, it is frequently required to conduct questioning as part of the investigations. Writing down notes during questioning often has a counter-productive effect on the flow of speech of the interviewed person. Recording these interviews makes my work much easier as I can fully concentrate on the conversation.” To this end, he has always relied on dictation devices, using tape recorders in the past, and today digital audio recorders, such as the Philips VoiceTracer (DVT7110).

### Intuitive operation and quality are vital

Private investigators have special requirements as far as documentation is concerned. Intuitive, “blind” operability, ruggedness and quality are all vital features. Bernhard Maier explains: “Often, we dictate while on the move, thus while walking or while driving. Our attention is always on the target. It is therefore crucial that the device works reliably and can be operated by a few simple clicks. In addition, it must be robust. It has happened to me more than once that the device slipped out of my hands during an observation assignment. If it then falls apart into umpteen individual pieces, I have a problem.”

As far as questioning is concerned, the important aspects include the sensitivity of the microphone, the battery life and the storage capacity, and the handy size of the device. It should be as small and as inconspicuous as possible.

He can unreservedly recommend the tested Philips VoiceTracer (DVT7110) to his colleagues in the industry: “The device is perfect for use by private investigators because it meets the requirements of our job and is a quality product,” Bernhard Maier states. Also the initial operation worked smoothly. “Starting up the device was as easy as pie. Its handling is highly intuitive. Basically, you can start working immediately, without long and cumbersome preparations. Menu navigation is self-explanatory. Anybody who has worked with a dictation device before can use the most important functions of the device immediately,” as Bernhard Maier describes his experience.

### Data transfer via the app – no annoying entangled cables

The new generation of the Philips VoiceTracers became available on the market in September 2019 and comes with its own impressive VoiceTracer app that permits remote control of the device and data transfer without connection to a computer. Another very useful feature is the VoiceTracer speech recognition software that permits automatic transcription of VoiceTracer recordings on the PC. These functions also impressed Bernhard Maier: “Firstly, it can be operated using an app and therefore permits data transfer without annoying entangled cables. Secondly, the recordings are compatible with a speech recognition software. This helps me when I dictate reports. Previously, I only had speech recognition software installed on my desktop

PC or laptop. Now, I am no longer dependent on these devices and can use the Voice Tracer from any location to dictate my reports. Thirdly, I was impressed by the long battery life of up to 36 hours.”

### Excellently suited for private investigators

But which features are particularly suited for the work of private investigators? According to Bernhard Maier, these are first and foremost the features that assist with assignments where conversations must be recorded in a concealed manner: “Here, several features play a role, namely silent recording, the long battery life and the long recording time. In addition, the sensitivity of the microphone is very good. Even when the recorder is worn on the body, concealed by clothes, the recordings are clear and usable.” But this is not the only area of use: “As far as room surveillance is concerned, the most



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Owner of the private investigation firm BM-Investigations e.U.

essential features are the auto-off, timer function and voice activation. In this area, it is crucial that the audio recorder works reliably, meaning that it actually starts and ends the recording at the right time, and that voice detection is sensitive and starts at a low volume. The VoiceTracer has proven an excellent tool when tested under practical conditions.”

Naturally, there are also a few aspects where the Philips VoiceTracer could be adapted even better to the needs of private investigators. These are, firstly, its size. “Especially when working with concealed recordings, the smaller the better. From a technical perspective, I believe that the Voice Tracer could be much smaller. Of course, I am aware that, in this case, the handling would become more difficult as the device would not fit as snug in your hand,” Bernhard Maier says. Also, enhanced ruggedness would be desirable, as it is available for mobile phones, for example in outdoor phones.

**More efficiency saves costs for the client**

At the end of the day, private investigators need to ensure that their clients and customers are satisfied: “The recordings are clear and audible, even when the speech volume is low. The Voice Tracer says “good-bye” to recordings with unintelligible mumbling and static noise. In addition, the recording timer feature permits more efficient work as recordings can be started and ended at exact times. This efficiency speeds up the workflow, which at the end of the day, my clients will benefit from as it will be easy on their wallet,” Mag. Maier explains.



