

Digital cameras – getting in the picture

The basics

The principles of how to use a digital camera are the same as for traditional cameras; you press a button and take a picture. However the pictures on a digital camera are stored on a memory card rather than a camera film so you can go back, view the images and make changes.

- **Take as many pictures as you want** - have you ever run out of film on your holiday just when you wanted to take a picture? If you use a digital camera you won't have to buy another roll of film. The pictures are stored electronically on reusable memory cards so you can take as many as you want.
- **Delete it if you don't like it** - you don't need to worry about wasting your film on an unsuccessful photo as you can view and delete it from the actual camera. If you have just taken a picture which you're not happy with you can keep taking new shots until you get a perfect one.
- **Keeping it safe** – you never need to worry that your only copy of a precious photo might fade or get damaged. If you store your digital pictures on your computer they are always available.
- **Share your photos** - if you store them on your computer then you can email them to friends or relatives.
- **No need to keep negatives** – enlarge and print as many copies of a picture as you want directly from your camera.
- **Fix it up** - you can improve your pictures using editing software to change the composition, colour, brightness or remove an unwanted object.

Understanding digital photography

Viewing - once you have taken a picture you can view it on your camera screen using the 'playback' facility. If you're unhappy with your picture you can delete it and take new ones until you get the perfect one that you want to keep.

Printing - once you're happy with your images you can either take it to the shop to get it printed or use your own computer and printer.

In order to transfer the pictures into your computer you need to:

- Install the software programme provided with the camera. (It will come in a CD-ROM in the pack).
- Attach the camera to the computer.
- Your images will be displayed as files and will be accessible from your desktop.
- Save your image files on your computer with distinct names so you can easily find them.

You can now print your pictures using a home printer.

Editing - once you have the image as a file on your computer, with the appropriate software, it allows you to edit it, so you can crop the image, remove red-eye errors or change the lightness of the image.

Memory - the number of pictures saved on your camera depends on how much memory you have available. Most cameras have a small amount of built-in memory which will allow you to store a limited number of images. However to increase the available memory you can use small detachable memory cards which are fitted into the camera and record the images that you take.

Resolution - if you take a picture at a high resolution it will use more memory. This is because a sharper image is composed of more dots measured as 'pixels' and therefore contains far more detail. The more pixels in an image the higher its resolution and the more memory it will occupy. If you want to enlarge an image (for example to make a poster) then you would want the image to be at a high resolution. Otherwise it won't retain sufficient detail and its edges will appear coarse and less true to life. However, if you are only taking a picture to be used as an image on a computer screen, you can use a much lower resolution.

Format - many cameras will also allow you to choose the type of file format you want to use to store your images.

TIFF images are less compressed than JPEG images so retain more quality but, as a result, also take up much more room. If you want to store more images it is best to use a JPEG setting in order to maximise the amount of memory being used.

Detailed information on how to take pictures, connect the camera to the computer and download the photos will be in your camera's instruction manual.

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