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Choosing the Right Digital Camera

By Todd Nelson

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by: **Todd Nelson**

Choosing the right digital camera for general use can be more challenging than actually taking a good picture. Like all things technical, digital cameras come in a vast array of styles, sizes and abilities.

However, you don't have to research in great depth to make the right choice -- you need only know what you want your camera to do for you. You'll need to consider your own skills, your budget and how you will use your photographs.

Regarding your skill level, first consider your willingness to learn the technicalities of photography. Do you simply want to point and shoot? If so, there are plenty of automatic cameras made to do just that.

Or, do you want to be creative -- experimenting with self-timers, flash, shutter speed, lighting, and photo enhancement features? To fulfill these creative desires, you'll need a camera with a full range of manual controls.

Of course, with the hundreds of digital cameras that are on the shelves, you don't have to make a commitment -- many cameras have both automatic and manual settings. It all depends on what you want to spend.

Speaking of budget, you should know what you want to spend before you shop online or in a store. Then, only look at the cameras that match the amount that you came up with -- it will keep you from suffering buyer's remorse later.

In addition to your skill and your budget, consider how you will use the camera. Are you planning to email more pictures than you plan to print? Are you uploading them for online auctions or to share with your best friend who lives miles away? If so, carefully consider whether the pictures need to last for the next 100 years, or just until your online auction expires or your friend gets a chance to take a look at them.

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If you are looking for professionally finished prints, brilliant color and a sharp image, you will need a camera with high image quality. The quality of an image is directly related to how many pixels it can capture horizontally and vertically. To print quality standard sized photos that will last, you'll need a minimum of a 1–2 megapixel digital camera. Larger photos will require 3 megapixels to get the same quality. With at least 4 megapixels, 11 x 14 enlargements will look sharp.

Zoom lenses can also play a key role in the appearance of your photos. Many cameras will have zooms, but the size and type of zoom are important to consider. The larger the zoom (a 3x would be average and 10x large), the closer you will be able to get to subjects like sporting events and wildlife. But for good quality photos, be sure the camera has a true optical zoom rather than a digital zoom, which merely enlarges the center of the basic image.

Also, be aware that not all cameras with the same megapixels are created equal. Some have better

optics and better zoom lenses. Some have more features such as the ability to make short videos. Some have better LCD screens for reviewing photos. Some have batteries that are proprietary and expensive to replace. Some are more prone to needing repairs.

So before heading to the store or to your favorite online site, check out the reviews for the models that interest you. Simply state your need at a search engine — something like 4 megapixel digital camera+review.

There is no need to spend hours researching every term and every available feature. Simply familiarize yourself with basic terminology, know your needs and know which models have the best ratings in your price range. Armed with this knowledge, you'll be more satisfied with your investment.

Todd Nelson is webmaster at Triple Exposure Photography. Visit

for the

large photography resources or to register for the free Photo Age newsletter.

Choosing A Digital Camera Printer

By Steve Gargin

There are so many types of digital camera printer on offer that finding the right one for your personal and business needs can be a very daunting task. However, there are a few main points to consider when choosing a digital camera printer that will help make the process a little easier.

It isn't necessary to have a high-resolution digital camera printer to make great pictures. The higher the printer resolution you use, the more pixels you'll need in your original image file to produce a decent size print with your digital camera printer. The actual file size (in pixels) of the image from your camera, divided by the printer resolution (in dots per inch), determines the final print size. So, if the image file

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size is 1,478 x 1,280 pixels, and you print the file at 163 dpi with your digital camera printer, the final print size will be 9 x 7.8 inches.

If your digital camera printer resolution is 300 dpi, then you will have a higher resolution with more dots per inch laid down on the paper but a smaller print size. It is therefore important to ensure that you have the image file size to support the resolution of your digital camera printer.

The price of a digital camera printer is lowering whilst the quality is increasing. If you choose the right digital camera printer you can have your own photo lab, greeting card designing and sign making department with just your digital camera, some software and a printer.

The aim of having a digital camera printer is to produce photographic prints that look as close to real photographic prints as possible. This type of digital camera printer was once very expensive to buy and run, but technological advancements and competitive pricing have made them much more accessible to the average buyer. Ink-jet printers are now available that can produce excellent prints and a near photo-quality printer is much easier to find for people with a small budget. You will probably want to have a digital camera printer with a scanning feature built-in. If you want to produce same-size scans of photos you don't need scan resolutions higher than 300 samples per inch for the scanner.

Your digital camera printer should also have the same interface that you already have on your computer. So if you have USB, then get a digital camera printer with USB, a Firewire printer if you have Firewire or a SCSI printer if you have SCSI. There should be no need to buy a digital camera printer that requires a different interface to the one you already have on your computer or it will cost you more to upgrade if necessary.

Steve Gargin is the administrator of

which is

a great website dedicated to giving free advice on Digital Cameras.

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