



January, 2008

## Happy New Year! Let's Think Pictures!

December was certainly a busy, hectic month for us all, and your newsletter will reflect it. There have been so many newsworthy topics online, that this writer will act as editor and present them to you. Here they come, in no specific sequence:

### Celebrate Fake Web Reviews an Issue

According to a recently completed study by Burson-Marsteller, a growing number of consumers think that fake product reviews on Web sites or community forums, or positive comments added by corporations, are a problem, and 30 percent say they are a big problem. This issue of creating a fake buzz online through the use of "placed" product reviews or company-written blogs is hurting what had been considered a reliable online buying resource for consumers - peer product reviews. Several companies have been called out recently for attempts to create this fabricated buzz online, including Wal-Mart, which recently created a fake blog promoting a variety of the chain's products.

The study surveyed what they felt were the most influential consumers - those who are likely to recommend products to friends and family - and claimed many are now growing skeptical of the opinions they find on product review sites and community forums. The survey asked 1,000

of what they termed "e-fluentials" on their trust of online reviews. The study claims that compared to a similar poll conducted five years ago, an increasing number of consumers believed that fake reviews or positive comments left by corporations are a problem. About 30% said this is a big problem, compared with 20% in 2001. The study also revealed that 57% percent of these "e-fluentials" said they "would be less likely to buy a product if they suspected the company paid someone to write a positive review on an opinion site."

"There's now a skepticism of what is happening online and an expectation that if you're in a community site and a commercial entity is being discussed, there's someone paid to be weighing in," said Ame Wadler, a chief strategic officer at Burson.

The study also sites that several major corporations have simply made some missteps in recent months in an attempt to tap into the power of WOM and online buzz. The aforementioned Wal-Mart fake blog drew heavy fire last year and Microsoft was also recently criticized for sending bloggers free laptops to test Microsoft software.

In further defining the "e-fluentials" that participated in their survey, Burson cited that these consumers typically speak to 50% more people per day and are more likely to share opinions and experiences with others during their daily lives.

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January, 2008

## The more megapixels, the worse the image (on digital cameras)

**Got a eight-megapixel compact camera from Santa? Uh-oh.  
As some specialists explain, more is not always meaning  
better in this field.**

You got a eight-megapixel compact digital camera for Christmas? That's great. Only one thing: the pixel size might be so small that you'll not get any extra benefit from it - instead, it could create more noise, which will mean worse pictures.

That's the explanation from the the staff of Image Engineering, an independent testing laboratory that tests digital camera for the German magazines Color Photo and c't, besides others.

Quite a while ago we noticed that the image quality of digital cameras was getting worse instead of better. The reason is that today's sensors are divided into more and therefore smaller pixels. We want to clarify the consequences on this website.

And they go on..

The 8 megapixels devices released in 2005 showed extreme picture errors (so-called noise) under low light conditions and colour fringes in high contrast structures became visible. These problems have become even worse in today's cameras with 10 and 12 megapixels. Manufacturers have attempted to repair these problems with software for noise suppression and picture editing. Success is limited as can be seen by reviewing the sample images on this site and that's why today this is true:

The problem is that as the pixels themselves become smaller, you get diffraction effects which don't just cancel out any advantage, they subtract:

The result is a decrease in sensitivity of the camera and an increase in noise because the amount

of light collected by a single pixel is smaller. At the same time, increasing the number of pixels is supposed to lead to more details (resolution), but in order to achieve that better lenses with high resolution and a lower lateral chromatic aberration are needed. However better lenses are bigger and don't fulfill the requirements for 'small' cameras any more.

Their conclusion, though the site does give you lots of in-depth info that would be worth your while reading too:

Digital single lens reflection cameras (SLRs) basically show the same behaviour but the sensor of those cameras and the single pixel is much bigger. Therefore, the cameras have higher sensitivities and show less noise. The high quality lenses provide the necessary resolution and the cameras are designed for high pixel counts.

The best compromise for a compact camera is a sensor with 6 million pixels or better the size of a pixel with  $>3\mu\text{m}$ .

So it's all about the number of pixels. And their size. And whether you're using an SLR.

Charles Arthur, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>  
December 26, 2007 9:31 PM

(editor's note: Where the above writer is technically accurate, we must remember that we are all dependent on what products the camera makers manufacture. This could be a case of be careful what you wish for, cause you just might get it.)



January, 2008

## Travel Alert! Effective January 1, 2008, the Department of Transportation will prohibit loose lithium bat- teries in checked baggage.

Effective January 1, 2008, the Department of Transportation (DOT) through the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHM-SA) will no longer allow loose lithium batteries in checked baggage. These batteries may continue to be packed in carry-on baggage.

Under the new DOT rule, lithium batteries are allowed in checked baggage under one of the following conditions:

- \* The batteries must be in their original containers.
- \* The battery terminals must not be exposed (for example placing tape over the ends of the batteries).
- \* The batteries are installed in a device.
- \* The batteries are enclosed by themselves in a plastic bag.

Loose lithium batteries found in checked baggage may be removed.

You can learn more at <http://Safetravel.dot.gov>.  
Some Tips for Safe Travel With Batteries

\* Keep batteries and equipment with you, or in carry-on baggage - not in your checked baggage! In the cabin, flight crew can better monitor conditions, and have access to the batteries or device if a fire does occur.

\* Buy batteries from reputable sources and only use batteries approved for your device – avoid counterfeits! A counterfeit battery is more likely to cause a fire in your equipment – costing you more in the long run, and compromising safety.

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\* Look for the mark of an independent testing or standards organization, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

\* Do not carry recalled or damaged batteries on aircraft. Check battery recall information at the manufacturer's website, or at the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

\* Only charge batteries which you are sure are rechargeable! Non-rechargeable batteries are not designed for recharging, and become hazardous if placed in a battery charger. A non-rechargeable battery placed in a charger may overheat or cause damage later.

\* Only use a charger compatible with your rechargeable battery – don't mix and match!

\* If original packaging is not available for spare batteries, effectively insulate battery terminals by isolating the batteries from contact with other batteries and metal. Do not permit a loose battery to come in contact with metal objects, such as coins, keys, or jewelry.

\* Place each battery in its own protective case, plastic bag, or package, or place tape across the battery's contacts to isolate terminals. Isolating terminals prevents short-circuiting.

\* Take steps to prevent crushing, puncturing, or putting a high degree of pressure on the battery, as this can cause an internal short-circuit, resulting in overheating.

\* If you must carry a battery-powered device in any baggage, package it to prevent inadvertent activation. For instance, you should pack a cordless power tool in a protective case, with a trigger lock engaged. If there is an on-off switch or a safety switch, tape it in the "off" position.



## Lithium Batteries: Safety and Security

Image of a lithium ion battery. Lithium-ion batteries, often found in laptop computers, differ from primary lithium batteries, which are often used in cameras. Some newer AA-size batteries are also primary lithium.

While there is no explosion hazard associated with either kind of battery, the Federal Aviation Administration has studied fire hazards associated with both primary and lithium-ion cells, and their extensive research is publicly available. As a result of this research, the FAA no longer allows large, palletized shipments of these batteries to be transported as cargo on passenger aircraft.

The research also shows that an explosion will not result from shorting or damaging either lithium-ion or primary lithium batteries. Both are, however, extremely flammable. Primary lithium batteries cannot be extinguished with firefighting agents normally carried on aircraft, whereas lithium-ion batteries are easily extinguished by most common extinguishing agents, including those carried on board commercial aircraft.

TSA has and will continue to work closely with the FAA on potential aviation safety and security issues, and TSA security officers are thoroughly and continually trained to find explosive threats. TSA does not have plans to change security regulations for electronic devices powered by lithium batteries.



January, 2008

## Kodak to End Production on Infrared Film, Some Pro Films This Month

Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, N.Y., citing declining sales of the product, plans to quit manufacturing and distributing Kodak HIE-135 infrared film after this year, the company said in a release. There is no suggested replacement for the HIE-135 film. Infrared film is used mainly by the scientific community for capturing objects using infrared light, but fine-art photographers also use the film due to the striking black-and-white images it creates.

The company said in a release: "Demand for these products has been declining significantly in recent years, and it is no longer practical to continue to manufacture given the low volume, the age of the product formulations and the complexity of the processes involved."

Kodak also said in the release, it will discontinue the Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film and Kodak Professional Ektachrome 100 Film in addition to the Kodak Professional High-Speed Infrared Film / 135-36. The discontinuance is effective at end of this month. These discontinuances are effective in all countries worldwide, with one exception, said the release, Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR will continue to ship to Japan beyond 2007, said Kodak.

The following products are being discontinued: Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR 120, Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR 135-36, Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR / 6117 / 10 sh 4-by-5-inch, and Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR / 6117 / 10 sh 8-by-10-inch. Kodak said the suggested replacement for Kodak Professional Ektachrome 64 Film / EPR is Kodak Professional Ektachrome Film E100G or E100GX.

Chronicle. Williams has contacted professional photographers worldwide through e-mail and messages left on electronic bulletin boards, asking them to lobby Kodak to keep making the infrared film.

Williams has posted some examples of his HIE-135 infrared film photos on Flickr. Williams is also part of a group on Flickr called "Kodak HIE High Speed Infrared Film."

"I understand Kodak has its challenges with ... making their shareholders happy and maintaining a good business profile in a difficult environment," said Williams, who lives in Winston-Salem. But the company that popularized photography, he said, also has a responsibility to the art form it made possible. "They're responsible for an art form, and they need to understand they are affecting an artistic outlet."

Kodak declined to make someone available to the Democrat and Chronicle to respond to the lobbying effort. But in a statement, the company said: "We very much appreciate the correspondence we've received from some photographers who use our infrared film and would like to be able to purchase it in 2008 and beyond. However, the fact is the decline in use of infrared film has been so substantial over the years that it is no longer practical for Kodak to continue to manufacture this product, given the extremely low demand and volume, the age of the product formulations and the complexity of the processes involved."

Kodak's infrared film usually has to be special-ordered from photography supply shops, with rolls costing \$13 to \$15 for 36 exposures, says the Democrat and Chronicle. The film also requires special handling because of its sensitivity to infrared light, with rolls needing to be loaded into and unloaded out of cameras in complete darkness.



## Snap Shots

Both stores welcome our new customers who formerly shopped at Denville Camera and Dover Photo. Thank you for joining our photographic family. Many of you who are reading this newsletter for the first time aren't aware that our previous issues are available online at <http://www.madisonphoto.com> or <http://www.photosummit.com>.

It's Back to School Time again. Attached to this newsletter is our winter class schedule. We have changed which night several classes are held in an attempt to make your life easier. Please note that there will now be a surcharge for not prepaying when reserving your seat.

Secure Digital (SD and SD HC) memory cards hold the lions' share of sales for all digital cameras. As a result, expect to see prices increase for Compact Flash (CF) cards. Coupled with increased shipping costs due to the escalating price of oil, the increases may be quite substantial. If you are a multi card user, you may want to get a couple before they go up.

Speaking of memory cards, remember that they are susceptible to static electricity. As our weather is drier this time of the year, people lose data on cards accidentally when walking across a carpet and touching the lamp, doorknob, etc. at home. Rubber lined cases are available for your cards at very reasonable prices. (When static wipes out your cards, the images are NOT recoverable.)

The PMA Show is very early this year, in late January instead of late February - early March. This will delay the February newsletter for a few days and the issue will include first hand coverage of the event. It is certain that there will be many new cameras, lenses, software, etc. to report on.

Take advantage of these long, lonely evenings by organizing your images, making prints, putting them in albums, burning CDs, etc. You'll feel great when you've done it, and your descendants will **really** appreciate it!

Enjoy winter! Hope to see you all soon.

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