

For the very first time, I (Jerry) took only a digital camera on a business trip last month. The brand and model is unimportant, but the experience of traveling with a digital camera only is quite different.

The differences started at the airport, where I had no film to worry about being ruined. The small memory cards are unaffected by the X-Rays. I did have to take my notebook computer, which more than compensated for missing the weight of the film and heavier camera. The camera I used took the new lithium CR-3V battery, which (thankfully) lasted through the 4 day convention we attended. I set up the camera on the flight down to Ft. Myers, Florida. I set the camera for the highest JPEG (compressed file format) because I didn't know how large I wanted the prints to be.

At the first night's reception dinner, I used up all my memory space. Upon returning to our room, I booted up my notebook computer and downloaded my files. There was a long, bright thunderstorm that night, and I tried to take pictures of the lightning. This was difficult with the digital camera because I couldn't dumb it down enough to do what I wanted. The ability to immediately view what I had just shot confirmed that. I was just wasting valuable battery power. I ended up keeping about half of the shots I took.

There were scenes I thought were good enough to enlarge, so I went into the camera's menu and set the resolution to TIFF (and uncompressed file). It seemed like forever for the camera to write the files, and I had to download very quickly (because of the large file size). I could easily see the improved quality in the TIFF files, but it took a long time before the camera was done writing it's file before another picture could be taken.

The results are OK – about the same as a \$200 point and shoot 35mm camera. The next all digital camera trip I make will include a higher resolution camera, a Sima Image Bank (a small, battery powered device for storing a large number of downloaded photos) or similar product so I could free up my memory cards without going back to the hotel room and downloading them into my notebook – which now could be left at home. I would also invest in rechargeable AA batteries – Not knowing how quickly my batteries would die was quite unnerving.

Our stores have invested in new printers for making enlargements up to 24" x 90" in 2 days or less. We will be able to print from traditional negatives, slides, prints or digital input. Our DSL line should be up and running by the time you read this, so you'll be able to upload your orders to us.

We have received some digital files from some of you via the internet for printing. While we can print from any size digital .jpg files, some are too small to yield even adequate results. This is frustrating to us all, so here's the poop, as simply as possible:

Every digital camera sold is rated by it's highest resolution, e.g. 3.1 megapixels. The camera can be set, however, for lower resolution in more than one way

Please remember not to take your family camera to the beach, on a small boat, etc. If salt water gets into your camera or camcorder, don't bother bringing it home. For such picture taking venues, we recommend getting a waterproof camera (\$29.99 and up) or single use cameras.

Our new web sites should be up and running by the time this letter gets to you. Take a look at <http://www.madisonphoto.com/> and <http://www.photosummit.com/>. We hope you enjoy them. If you want to read some earlier newsletters, they are archived on the site.