

Hi!

A New Year! We certainly look forward to a better 2002.

Most of the questions we've been hearing lately concern digital photography, so here they are, along with the answers ...

What is digital "film"?

It isn't film at all. Film is made up of layers of silver salts which "tarnish" when exposed to light, and the "tarnishing" becomes visible after going through developing chemistry. With color films, dyes are added to show the colors. With digital photography, there is no silver emulsion. It is replaced by a light sensitive circuit, which magnetically records an image that is transferred from analog to digital encoding. This "digital image" is never visible, but must be converted back to an analog representation of the original image.

There is no long term keeping of any magnetic image, so the keeping capabilities of film far, far exceed that of the "digital negative". If the digital information is transferred to a CD-ROM, it becomes more permanent (?) than a negative (as long as there is some computer device to read it).

What is a pixel?

Pixel is an acronym for PICture ELeMent. It is analogous to grain in film. The more pixels you can fit on a chip, the greater the resolution of the photographed item. For most purposes these are referred to in terms of millions of pixels – Megapixels. The more megapixels a camera can record, the more information is put onto the chip, describing each picture element with greater precision, and also supplying more picture elements (pixels). The more pixels a camera can record, the greater the supply of information, and with that comes the ability to enlarge the images to larger print sizes. Below is a table that you can use as a guide as to how many pixels are need to make a good quality print.

1 megapixel	= 3 ½ x 5
1.3 megapixels	= 4 x 6
2.1 megapixels	= 5 x 7
3.3 megapixels	= 8x10 (almost)
4.3 megapixels	= 8x10 with the ability to crop
5+ megapixels	= 11 x 14 or the ability to crop dramatically

How do I see my pictures?

With most digital camera, there is a small TV (color LCD type) on the back of each camera. There is not much detail here, but there is enough to know whether the picture "came out" or not.

To get prints from the camera, you have several choices

1. You can print them directly to a color printer by taking your camera's memory card and inserting it into a dye sublimation or ink jet color photo printer and using photo quality paper.
2. You can bring us your memory card, and we will make prints for you. These excellent prints are considerably more expensive than what you are currently paying for prints from negatives or slides now.
3. You can copy the digital files, via your computer, to either a CD or floppy diskette. There isn't much room for information on a floppy, so this is only good for small prints. We can send this to Kodak for you, and in a day or so your prints are ready at the same prices you are currently paying for prints from negatives.

Who is Jay Pegg?

A .jpg is a file type that computers and digital cameras use to make a large amount of picture element information take up less room on your camera's memory card and in your computer. It was devised by the Joint Photographic Experts Group, and condensed from .jpeg to .jpg, which most computers recognize.

Is there a camera that takes good videos as well as still pictures?

Not yet. There are many digital camcorders with a still picture mode. When movies are being shot, it's not easy finding the spot on the tape where the still was taken, and when it's found, it cannot be printed well at all. The still image is very low resolution and designed for monitor use only. It's decent for email. Very new models can record on a memory card in the camcorder, with pixel counts up to 1.3 Megapixels. So far very few of these images have been printed, and the jury is still out about its success.

Several newer digital still cameras have a motion picture mode, with "movies" up to about 2 minutes. Some are sound, some are color, and all are very low resolution designed for viewing on a monitor. Using this mode causes intense battery drain in the camera.

Will digital cameras ever replace film?

Yes, for all practical purposes. Will we live to see it? Probably not.

Can I take my digital camera to the beach?

Yes, but you might as well leave it there. The salt air and moisture will do in the circuitry within hours. Buy a One Time Use camera.

Are digital cameras better than traditional cameras?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! Most \$200 film cameras are superior picture makers when compared to \$700 digital cameras.

What to do on long winter evenings? Organize your photos and negatives or slides into archival albums, storage containers, etc. Update your scrapbooks, projector trays and so forth. Your descendents will respect and admire you for doing so. The warmth you get in your heart when you relive the occasions you'll see will also lower your body's heating bill, and you'll probably sleep better too.

We have had server problems, so our websites look awful right now. This slower time of the year will allow us to improve them. If you haven't been to www.takegreatpictures.com lately, enjoy a visit there. It's a wonderful site.

Enjoy the cold weather. Take pictures and enjoy them too. Happy New Year!

Lynne and Jerry