



April, 2009

Memory Cards

Just as all film was not created equal, neither are memory cards. This month we'll look at the care and feeding of memory cards and how they can affect your camera and pictures.

Like film, there are different size and shape memory cards. Rarely does a camera accept more than one size card, just like a 35mm camera could not accept 120 or APS film. Also, like film, each different memory card size can come in different capacities. In film this was rated by how many pictures you could get on a roll - with digital cards the capacity is measured in bytes of data.

The different shapes & sizes available today are

- secure digital (SD)
- secure digital high capacity (SD HC)
- secure digital extreme capacity (SH XC)*
- mini SD
- micro SD
- compact flash (CF)
- xD Picture card
- memory stick pro duo
- multimedia card (MMC)

Each of these shape cards are (or have been) available in different capacities, such as :

64Mb	128Mb
256Mb	512Mb
1Gb	2Gb
4Gb	8Gb
16Gb	32Gb

etc.

Each of these cards are also rated by how quickly they can record (input) data (write speed) and replay data (read speed) (output). The better the camera, the larger the picture file, the faster the necessary speed.

Just like old fashioned floppy disks, memory cards need to be formatted in the camera they in which they will be used. Do not format the card in your computer, only in the camera. Failure to format a card can cause file corruption and permanent loss of images. Take note that when you format a memory card, you are erasing all the information on that card, so format every new card immediately upon putting it into the camera. Many photographers also reformat their memory cards every time they remove all the images from the card.

The number of images you can fit on a card depends on how each specific camera is set up as well as the capacity of the card. How much capacity is correct is a difficult question to answer. Some people prefer a massive capacity so they never have to change cards while others prefer using several lesser capacity cards. One could argue that the best pictures come along while the photographer is out of space on the card, so using a larger than necessary card helps prevent this. Others contend that if there is a problem with a card, or it is lost, or it is damaged, then only some of the photos taken will be lost.

If while taking pictures the card or camera malfunctions, **do not take any more pictures using that card until the problem has been solved**. Turn the camera off. Check to be sure no lights are lit anywhere on the camera and then open the door and remove the card. Close the door and turn the camera back on. If anything is not right, turn the camera off and bring it in for servicing.

Avoid using the download cable that came with your camera - it is not always safe to use it. As an example, should the camera's battery die while downloading, the memory card will be fried and the photos lost forever. Although infrequently, cameras have been damaged at the same time. The camera makers pack these cables with new cameras because there is no less expensive way



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to download images. Please - use a card reader instead! When using a computer with a built in card reader, use it.

When the card is in the computer, decide which images should be deleted (if any). There is some discussion regarding a memory card's useful life being shortened the more times data is added to or removed from it. It is safer to download all the images onto a hard drive and then deleting any faulty shots at one time. Even better, immediately burn ALL images to CD(s) and then delete whatever is necessary.

There is always the possibility of damaging a memory card if it is inappropriately removed from the camera or computer. When removing it from the camera, be certain the camera is off. When removing it from a PC computer, use the "safely remove hardware: option located in Windows' System tray. If using OSX (MAC) right click the drive assigned to your card and hit "eject".

Do not turn the camera off immediately after snapping a photo. The camera could still be writing the image to the memory card, and the voltage change could destroy the photo or the card. Expanding on that concept, never let your battery die during use. If, say, the battery dies while the camera is performing a function such as retracting its lens, writing a file, building a panorama, etc., the camera's logic circuit could be corrupted. The next time the camera would be turned on, there's a good chance nothing at all would happen. Replace or recharge your battery(ies) before they die!

Just like a microwave oven or a car, a memory card will not last forever. Especially if there is an upcoming special occasion or event, replace a card. Replacing a failed card will never be a substitute for the photos lost.

One photographer lost her memory card after shooting a job. Fortunately, it was a job she could and did reshoot, so there was no permanent damage or monetary loss. Since then, she takes a picture of herself and her business card as the first 2 shots on each card, electronically "locks" them on the card in hopes that if lost, the cards and images would be returned to her. Obviously, she hasn't lost a card since then.

Cruisin'

Last month Lynne and Jerry took a long needed vacation - a Caribbean cruise. The ship had some 700 staterooms translating to about 1900 passengers with a crew of about 1400. Together there were about 3300 people onboard. As you might imagine, both Jerry & Lynne pay attention to what photo gear people around them are using. Jerry noticed one man using a Kodak Advanced Photo System camera. That was the only film camera seen on the ship. There were a few One Time Use cameras, predominantly for underwater use. Everything else they reported to be digital, of which about 30% were SLRs.

The only film on sale in the ship's store was Kodak 35mm, 24 exposure rolls of 400 ISO color print film. There were Nikon and Olympus point & shoot digital cameras available in the duty free shop at prices slightly higher than back in the States. There was no video tape or blank DVDs of any size or camera batteries to be found.

Based on this observation, this newsletter will now concentrate entirely on digital photography, unless it overlaps with film technology.



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Earth Day

Earth Day
Specials
Today
through
April 22!

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY!

FREE
Recycled Reusable
Shopping Bag
with any purchase!
(while supplies last)

Bring in any
broken digital camera
and get \$10 off any
camera!*

Bring in any
empty ink cartridge
and get \$1 off any
new cartridge!*

10% off
any NiMH
Battery Charger
and Batteries!

We accept for recycling:

**Batteries - Alkaline, Lithium,
Digital Camera, Cell Phone,
Camcorder, NiCd, NiMH**

**Old & Broken Digital
Cameras**

Printer Cartridges

**One Time Use
Cameras**



MadisonPhotoPlus
the Photo Summit



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Taking you into the light!



schedule attached

B.I.P.S. Special Offers

The first 6 people to en-
rol in our
Macro Photography
Workshop will receive a
SystemPro Lite House
for shadowless flash

FREE!

Everyone attending the
Travel Workshop
will be
eligible to purchase an
Enhancing and/or any
Circular Polarizing filter
at

15% OFF!



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We hope you found this issue to be informative and enjoyable. Enjoy your picture taking and remember to learn from your mistakes. There's something to be learned from every photo you take, which is a good thing. With this outlook, there's no such thing as a bad picture. Don't be afraid to learn.

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the Photo Summit

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