



# Using Digital Cameras



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**The key difference** between a digital camera and a film-based camera is that the digital camera does not use film or require a darkroom to process prints. It uses a sensor that converts the light into electrical charges that records the image in digital form and is saved in the camera or memory card. This digital image can be downloaded to a computer so then it can be emailed to friends, put on a website, inserted into a newsletter, brochure, slide presentation, or multimedia project. If you know how to use a traditional camera, you can use a digital camera. This Guide will cover some of the terminology, different formats to save images, how to set up the resolution for best output, best type of camera for specific needs, and the steps to capture and download images.



### Reference!

**Pixels** are tiny squares that make up the image.



### Reference!

**Megapixel** refers to one million pixels or more per image which is the number of horizontal by vertical pixels that equals at least a million. A 2.1 megapixel camera means there are at least 2,100,000 pixels captured on the image.



### Reference!

**Resolution**, the quality and sharpness of an image, measure the number of horizontal and vertical pixels. A 640 by 480 pixel camera is low resolution and best used for capturing images for the screen only. 1920 by 1600 pixels is very high resolution and good for prints.



## Choose the Best Digital Camera for Your Needs

Which camera is the right one for you? The type of camera depends on how you want to use the images and the computer you use.

1. If you want to do prints with high resolution, use a more expensive camera that captures more megapixels and more compression of images.

2. If you only want images for the screen, email, the Internet, and not for printing, use a camera with low resolution.

3. Some cameras can only store one image at a time where others can save up to 1,000s of images either in the camera or on a memory card.

4. Optical zoom takes better pictures than a digital zoom which crops the image down to a smaller size and adds pixels that were not there in the first place. Optical zoom captures the actual image.

5. Some cameras work with both PCs and Macs, but there are some that only work with one or the other platform.

6. Check the cable used with the camera and if your computer uses USB, serial, or other cable. Some cameras save to floppy disks which need a floppy disk drive, or to CDs which can work with most later model computers. Most new cameras have removable storage devices.

7. Some cameras will not work with some computer operating systems. Check which system you will be using when uploading images to your computer.

8. Check how much memory is on your hard drive. Each camera lists how much memory you will need to download images.

9. Consider the type of batteries the camera uses. Lower priced models use AA batteries. If this is the case, you may want to invest in rechargeable batteries.

