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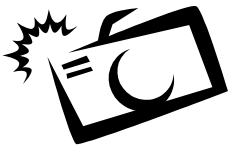

Where have all the photos gone?

Have you joined the digital camera revolution yet, or are you still waiting for your films to be processed? With a digital camera, it's great to be able to see your photos immediately and delete the worst shots, without paying for them to be printed first.

The most common digital cameras are very 'automatic', with pre-programmed settings to optimise your portrait, landscape or low-light shots. The camera turns the image into a digital file, which is displayed on your viewing screen and stored on a 'memory card' or CD. Different camera manufacturers use different memory card formats, so you may want to investigate what technology the other people in your family have, if you'd like to keep them all compatible. This makes it easier to share photos (and spare memory cards!).

Digital cameras are often referred to with 'jargon' from both the computing and photographic worlds, for example:

- Optical zoom: uses the mechanics in the camera's lens to magnify your image.
- Digital zoom: uses the camera's computer to enlarge the image, 'guessing' how it should look by throwing in more pixels (which can sometimes lead to degradation in the image quality).
- Pixel: computer term for a 'dot' on a screen - the more dots (pixels), the better quality and more detailed the image will be. Imagine creating a drawing of your face using only 6 coloured dots. Now imagine that same picture if you could use 60, 600, 6,000 or 6,000,000 dots.
- Megapixel: one million dots - a 4 megapixel camera uses 4 million dots to make up each picture.

Prices have decreased significantly since their first release, whilst the quality has increased. Look for the highest megapixel camera in your budget range, with the highest optical zoom rating. Don't be blinded by all of the additional features and also take into consideration the cost of extra memory cards.

For long-term storage of the digital files, you can move them from your camera's card onto your computer. Depending on your computer's current capacity and the amount of photos you take, you may need to increase the size of your computer's hard disk. You can also 'burn' the photo files to CD or DVD.

Turning those files back into real photos for framing can be done at most camera shops on a 'price per print' basis. You may also wish to consider investing in your own photo-quality printer, which have also come down in price.

Talk to your local Computer Troubleshooter about your digital photography needs - they can advise if your computer is up to the task.

Contact your local Computer Troubleshooters

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