

Options wide in photography

Variety of techniques offer chance to tweak outcome of pictures

Through the development of cameras, one thing has remained constant; a good photograph begins with a good exposure. This is true with digital just as is with film.

A good exposure is comprised of how long light is let into the camera, referred to as the shutter speed, and how much light is let into the camera through an opening in the lens, called the aperture.

The simplest of cameras, like a one-time use camera, may only have one setting for each controlling factor, which often times provides mediocre results. However, the more sophisticated the camera, the more options the photographer has in controlling the exposure. Having control over the shutter speed and the aperture not only gives you control of the brightness of the image it also effects how the subject in the photograph appears. Shutter speeds can stop action, like freezing a ball in mid-air, or can blur moving objects to convey speed, like a car zooming by. The aperture can control how much of the image appears in sharp focus. Through aperture selection the photographer can make everything in sharp focus like which would be desired in a landscape photo or the choice can be made blur areas to draw more attention to what is important, like you might see in a portrait. The total amount of area in sharp focus is called the depth of field. Understanding the relationship between shutter speed and aperture is key to becoming a good photographer as the two work together in a reciprocal relationship.

Years ago, the photographer would have to measure the light with a separate light meter and then manually adjust the camera's shutter speed and aperture settings. This often was not a fast process and took some of the spontaneity out of photography. The process for getting a properly exposed image has become easier with integrated light meters and the camera automatically setting the exposure, allowing the photographer to concentrate on capturing the image. However, the auto settings are programmed to give good results for average pictures. An experienced photographer knows there are times you need to take control of the camera's settings to get a desired result.

Through camera development, manufacturers have developed ways to assist the photographer in getting the types of images desired through what are called program exposure modes, an alternative to setting all the exposure settings manually. Two of the first program modes were called Shutter and Aperture Priority. With either of these two modes, the photographer would set one of the desired camera exposure settings, shutter speed or aperture, and the camera would set the correct corresponding setting.

Now, most cameras have multiple program modes. It is now common to see programs for Portraits, Sports, Landscapes, Macro, Depth of Field, Beach/Snow, Night Time and Fireworks. No matter how many program modes a camera may have, they are basically derivatives of the Shutter and Priority modes and are geared towards special photographic situations. Portrait modes would favor narrow depths of field to help make a subject stand out, while Sports



WAYNE PALMER

Bits & BYTES



The selection of shutter speed can stop action, left, or can cause it to blur, right. Either result can be advantageous depending what the photographer is trying to convey.



The selection of aperture can make everything to appear in sharp focus, left, or be used to blur out the background to draw attention to the subject, right.



PHOTOS PROVIDED



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Digital cameras offer photography-lovers new features

As the holidays will soon be upon us, a digital camera may be on the wish list for a number of Christmas gifts. The good news is that cameras have come down price and are packed with more and more features. If you haven't taken the plunge into the digital world, it's certainly a good time to do so.

Here's a roundup of some of the new features found in the current crop of cameras.

12 megapixel is here. modes would concentrate on using faster shutter speeds to capture action.

All of these modes were designed to help you get the pictures you want without having to do an in-depth study of photography. So if photographic jargon like f11 at 1/125th of a second makes

your eyes gloss over, keep in mind that you can still take great shots without having to speak "photography-geek." Just investigate what the different program modes do and use them. And with digital, it doesn't cost any more to explore and experiment with your camera.

Although most users seldom use the full resolution of their current camera's capture capabilities, the megapixel race marches with 12MP being the new boasting number.

Facial recognition is a new feature in a number of cameras that has the ability to actually recognize faces and focus on the greatest number of faces.

LCD viewing screens are now reaching 3 inches, which not only makes it easier to see what you are

recording, but it also makes it easy to show your images to others without needing any other devices.

Zoom lengths are now reaching 18X an unheard of range for a SLR.

Image stabilization, or the ability for the camera to offset camera shake, is now becoming a standard feature.

Touch screen control, similar to that of the iPhone, is now showing up on cameras negating the need for all those little buttons.

For SLR users, live pre-

view through the LCD screen has become a reality. Previously this was impossibility due to the mechanics of the camera, but new breakthroughs have made this long awaited feature possible.

Also for SLR users some cameras are increasing in the bit depth now reaching 14 bits, which increases the amount of exposure range in color range that the camera can record.

What ever you decide upon this season, keep in

mind your dollar goes a lot further than just a few years ago. One area of savings is in the media cards you use to record the images. Compact Flash and Secure Digital are selling for 1/3rd their price of two years ago. If prices keep going down, it might be feasible to just keep your images on your card and buy a new one. Just think, you could store a nearly a lifetime of images inside the area occupied by a 35mm film box.

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Startup monitors traffic via Web providers to refine ad data

By BRIAN BERGSTEIN
AP Technology Writer

As Internet advertising is increasingly precisely targeted to meet consumers' presumed desires, the trick for advertisers is to sniff out people's interests and needs without riling their privacy defenses.

Silicon Valley startup NebuAd Inc. believes it has reached this balance with a new ad-serving system — even though its system of peering inside Internet traffic might seem ominous.

NebuAd's system is designed to improve on Web sites' long-standing practice

of dropping tiny tracking files known as cookies on visitors' computers. When those cookies indicate enough about a Web surfer's interests, related ads can be made to appear.

But the fact that you visited a site doesn't say as much about your interests as knowing what you did there and afterward. Did you read several articles or quit halfway through one? Did you leave the site to research the topic further on a search engine?

To glean those deeper insights, NebuAd installs equipment inside the facilities of Internet service providers (ISPs), which see everything their customers do

online. NebuAd's boxes examine many of the sites people visit, what they do there and what they hunt for on search engines.

While some tracking mechanisms can ferret out an interest in travel or the outdoors, NebuAd says it can tell whether you are in the market for a trip to the south of France or snowboarding gear.

The company won't say how many carriers or advertisers it works with, though CEO Bob Dykes said Internet providers representing millions of customers run NebuAd's system to let it gather information. In return, they get a share of the revenue

from advertising NebuAd places.

The only ISP known to be working with NebuAd is Monroe, La.-based Century-Tel Inc., which has 530,000 broadband subscribers scattered throughout the country. NebuAd says some of the largest ISPs are at least testing the service.

Aspects of NebuAd's technique are already in play. For example, besides cookies, many online retailers deploy "clickstream analysis" tools that monitor what customers do on a given site — what they browse, what they read, which items they put in their shopping carts but fail to buy.

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