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## **Digital Photography Management**

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The following is a brief on what I consider to be a good way to approach what I call your Digital Photography Management. This is the way I have set up my computer. It has worked well for me, given very few problems and allowed me to concentrate on processing my images without the hassle of continuous computer problems.

Believe me, if you are going to take, process and store digital files, the better you are prepared to start with will be of huge benefit when those large quantities of digital files start being placed in your computer.

### **So what is Digital Photography Management?**

This is the combined process of taking images, the setting up of your computer to accommodate the vast number of digital files and software programmes that you will accumulate. The processing of these digital files and the eventual printing.

You need to be properly organized, otherwise the location of what you require to access will lead to frustration and a lot of wasted time and energy.

While I have broken the Digital Management into four areas, I will be focusing only on one of these as I consider this to be the most important when first setting up. This I will call, Computer Management.

### **1. Computer Management**

Most computers are sold with one hard drive from which all your software and other information is stored. This is called your systems drive. The systems drive has all the workings for running your computer and really should be kept separate from your Digital workings.

The working and storage of digital images can consume a lot of memory in a very short time. If you have not made provision for this extra memory you can very quickly put your system under pressure to perform. Not only do you have memory to look after but also to watch that conflict with other programmes is not taking place. Children's programmes and the like should be kept separate.

Look at the difficulty when you try to find something if you need to repair or make a correction. You have a vast number of folders and subfolders. It can be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Then you have got the inevitable programme conflict to say nothing about a virus attack. With everything crammed into one Hard-Drive it can be a potential nightmare. Over time you will install a large amount of Digital information in the form of software programmes and all the add-ons that are associated with the Digital process. It makes sense to have all this properly organized so that you can put your finger on the area that you need to access.

## **What's the solution?**

Partitioning your Hard Drive

### **2. Partitioning the hard drive.**

This has a downside for existing comp users. You need to have a blank HD. This is done when the computer is fitted with a new drive, or the original drive is re-formatted. The partitioning process is a simple software programme, usually performed free, at the time of purchase.

Partitioning is the dividing of your hard drive into smaller independent sections, e.g. take an 80GB Hard Drive and partition (divide) say into the following suggested named divisions.

C: Systems = 10GB, D: Swap = 10GB, E: Utilities =5GB, F: Word=5GB, G: Graphics=5GB, E: Images= 45GB (Totals 80gb)

What you now have is the basis of what we will call Computer Management.

System C: can be used for all that's involved with running the computer operating system.

D: Swap: is a space that is always kept free for that overload of image memory when working on Digital files.

E: Utility: programmes like Anti Virus, QuickTime, Macromedia, etc.

F: Word: programmes, Acrobat, email saves, bookmarks, Mozilla or Outlook Express etc.

G: Graphics: Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, Painter, PS Elements etc.

E: Images: all the folders containing your images.

Now you have an organized set-up to handle all software with your images being installed into your computer, you are able to access all information quickly and easily. You are now ready, to download images from your digital camera, or scanned images from your slides.

You now know that if you need to upgrade your Acrobat Reader, you go to F: Drive, access the Acrobat folder and proceed. The same when installing a new software programme, e.g. Paintshop Pro. You go to G Drive, create a new folder and install the programme in that folder.

If you need to install a new plug-in for Photoshop, you go to G Drive, open the Photoshop programme, select plugins, create a new folder, name the plugin and install. Selecting an image, you go to Drive E, open the appropriate named folder and click on your image. You will soon get used to the easy way partitioning allows you to move round your computer without the frustration that a single congested drive can give.

Digital files are getting bigger and your computer needs to be able to accommodate them. My recommendations are for a minimum of between 500mb-1gb of RAM. As stated, for general set-up, 80gb of hard drive, with provision for another 80gb for images only. This may be too high for some and too little for others, it is only a suggestion. From experience, too much has proved to be better.

### **3. Learning.**

Now you have set up your computer to handle all your images and software in an easy and manageable way, you are now ready to go to the next stages of putting your images into folders and processing them.

This takes us into a wide range of options that need to be dealt with individually. You need to be comfortable with what digital process you are going to use to get your image into your computer, scanning from film, Digital camera or both. Once you have done that, what programme are you going to use to process your images?

I found, that deciding what image-processing programme I was going to use needed to be decided right from the outset. What was the use of having images on screen and not be able to work on

them. So after you have decided this you must then learn the basics of the programme you have selected and then move on to the more advanced learning.

Most of my Digital Image software learning came from two sources, books and on-line Tutorials. I chose to use Photoshop as my main image adjustment programme. On-Line Tutorials I found to be of most instant benefit as communication with the Tutor and other students was possible. I was able to ask questions that were always answered, so made reasonable progress as I could also download the hard copy of the Tutorials I was able to make reference at a later date in areas that I may have partly forgotten. The uploading of my weekly image to a classroom for comments by the Tutor and other students went a long way, to improving my Digital skills.

On-Line Tutorials is an area I would strongly recommend as a good way of starting your Digital learning. Listed below are the two places that I have used. You will see that they cover most Software imaging programmes and the learning is at different levels of expertise, from beginners to the experienced.

1. <http://www.lvsonline.com/update.shtml>  
or if you prefer text format <http://www.lvsonline.com/update.txt>
2. <http://www.eclecticacademy.com/>

At around US\$25 for a six-week course, these two areas of learning represent great value. It is at this stage serious consideration needs to be given to your wants and needs from your Digital work. What sort of camera do you want to fit your needs? Do you want to print your images and to what size and to what level of quality? Do you want to process colour as well as B&W?

Each of these areas require a lot of learning and dedication to achieve a high standard of work. However, this is no more than all hobby interests. If you want to reach a certain level of expertise it is up to you.

Digital Photography is at a very exciting stage. Prices on most equipment have more than halved from 3years ago. Most information on the Digital process is readily available. What excites me, about Digital is that I am in complete control through the total process. While this may not be for everyone, you at least can have control to the stage you want, which may be up to the print stage. It is up to you, but as I said earlier, you need to decide, so you can plan, have fun and enjoy your images and Photography as a whole. The Digital process, was introduced to me 3½ years ago, until then, I was a point and shoot photographer with no real interest in doing much else with the camera.

Digital Photography has given me the opportunity to have a wonderfully exciting hobby interest. The technology is amazing, the learning takes you into a vast network of information.

I hope I have assisted in some way in starting you down this exciting road of Digital learning and given you an insight to what I call Digital Photography Management.

This PSNZ help sheet was written by: **Peter Mc Mahon FPSNZ**

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