

Step-by-Step

Using Digital Still Cameras

GENERIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIGITAL CAMERAS

Every make and model of digital camera has a distinctive way of taking pictures, storing them, and transferring those pictures to your computer. Here are a few of the most common instructions for digital cameras other than the Sony Mavica.

1. Most digital cameras use a type of removable media to store the pictures. For example, some Sony models use the memory stick, and other companies use Smart Media Cards and another common media is the MultiMedia Card.
2. Most digital cameras have an interface to connect the camera directly up with your computer either via Serial Bus, or USB (Universal Serial Bus).
3. If the camera does not have an interface to connect to the computer, or it has an interface that is not compatible and has removable media then you must have a reader to access your pictures.
4. Depending on the manufacturer of the digital camera, there are many programs that allow you to view your pictures and/or download them to your computer. You should read the manual that comes with the digital camera.

Megapixel / Resolution / Size

When using a digital camera, you will need to decide what quality picture you want. Most cameras allow you to change the resolution of the picture to a lower quality so that you can store more pictures on the camera media. Likewise you can increase the resolution for a better quality picture, but fewer photos can be stored.

Megapixel: The term megapixel means 1,000,000+ pixels. More pixels mean higher resolution, better quality, as well as a physically larger picture and a file that takes up a large amount of disk storage space. Older Sony Mavica cameras take pictures in 640 x 480 mode, which is 640 pixels wide and 480 pixels high (307,200 pixels or .3 megapixels). Computer screens normally display at 72 pixels per inch whereas most printers print at 300 dots per inch. The Mavica's lower resolution means that you cannot print a nice looking 8"x10" photo with this camera, although the images look fine on a computer screen.

Resolution/Size: Resolution means the quality of the photo that you are taking. DPI, or Dots per Inch, means how many dots of color per square inch are on your photo. The higher the DPI the clearer the photo and larger the file size. Using low-resolution pictures on the Internet (or in an electronic portfolio) are fine with a DPI of 72-100, since the primary display medium is the computer screen. When storing images on a CD or diskette for personal use a DPI of 150-200 is more than adequate. Some schools have the higher megapixel digital cameras. When taking pictures with these cameras, bring the images into a graphic editing program and reduce the resolution to 72-100 DPI before inserting the image into the portfolio. The most common graphic editing programs include Adobe PhotoShop, Adobe PhotoDeluxe and Graphic Converter (shareware).