

RAMpage

**Your questions answered by Mike Stoud,
Technical Director of the Digital Camera Company**

Casio-woe

Q I recently bought a Casio QV100 and found it to be lacking in numerous aspects so I returned the camera to the supplier. I am a student of architecture which means I have to take pictures of model buildings which I build. I also write essays and include these pictures so being able to place them into documents is very useful. I have to enlarge photographs to A3 on colour photocopies for my portfolio. I have included a disk with some photographs on it so you can see the results and have an idea of what I use it for. The computer I use is a Mac Power PC 7200/90 so they are in Mac format. With the Casio I found the model of the balsa wood bridge was always washed out even when I lit the model in daylight and with a projector. I found that the colour control depth and fuzzy blurred edges problematic which my examples will show. The macro features I found extremely useful for details of models also the LCD display for framing the picture. From many articles I have read it seems that the Olympus C-800L would be the best camera. Do you think it would fulfil my requirements and give me the results I need? I use an Epson Color Stylus 500 720dpi (printer), would I need a better quality (printer)? Maybe an Epson 600 1400dpi?

A Unfortunately, the diskette supplied was blank so I was unable to examine the pictures referred to but I will do the best I can. Finding the QV100 "lacking" would seem to indicate that your expectations were, perhaps, rather more than a 640x480, fixed focus, fixed focal length camera could deliver. It is possible that the washed out effect was due to over exposure. This could be improved by selecting the smaller (F/8)

aperture setting. Doing so would also improve the depth of field and help to reduce some of the fuzziness by bringing more of the subject into focus. It is worth noting that the relatively heavy compression applied by the QV100 will always result in some edge distortion. The Olympus C-800L certainly provides significantly higher resolution and has a high quality auto-focus lens which should return good sharp images. You may find, however, that the wide-angle lens (the equivalent of 36mm on a 35mm camera) will lead to the 'bending' of vertical lines, particularly on close-up shots. Have a close look at the new Kodak DC120 which is in the same price range and combines high resolution with, by virtue of the zoom lens, the longer focal lengths you will need for your particular subject matter. As far as printing is concerned, you gave no indication as to what use the A3 prints would be put. For close scrutiny you would need considerably higher resolution than any of the current sub £10,000 cameras could provide for printing A3 pictures. In terms of the printer itself, I would suggest you contact a local supplier and ask him to print one of your images on the printers which interest you and choose the one which produces the images you prefer. In the case of an inkjet printer, the higher the resolution the better but it is important to remember that you must use good quality paper in order to get the best output.

Photo-quality prints

Q I have a number of pictures which I would like printed on a photographic quality printer. These printers are well beyond my budget. Is there a company which provides a service for printing digital images at a reasonable cost?

A Kodak have a pilot scheme running which allows you to transfer your

images to them via the internet and they will send back high quality prints produced on their KDS8650 dye-sub printers. You will find the Kodak Internet Printing Service at www.ektranet.com.

How does a CCD work?

Q I am a student writing an assignment on the development of digital cameras. Where can I find out things such as the way a CCD works and technical details on how images are stored in memory?

A Once again, Kodak and the internet to the rescue! They have an excellent 'self study' section on their web site called the 'Digital Learning Centre'. Here you will find explanations of a lot of the technical stuff to do with digital imaging in an easy to understand format, complete with diagrams and pictures. Start at www.kodak.com and go via the 'Digital Photography' section.

Mike Stoud is happy to receive queries or details of problems about any aspect of digital cameras and related software applications.

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