

Digital Capture and the All-Digital Workflow

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Workflow refers to the entire process of capturing, processing and printing a fine art photograph. Although similar to a conventional workflow, the digital workflow introduces some changes and new considerations.

The digital workflow has six stages:

1. Prepare

Batteries charged, spares/replacements available

Storage media reformatted

Camera's clock set

2. Capture

Choose your "film"

- Set effective ISO
- Set white balance (warming/cooling filter effects)
- Set special controls: contrast, saturation, sharpening
- Set color space (sRGB, Adobe RGB 1998)

Choose JPEG or RAW storage

Set exposure – shutter, aperture, compensation

Post-exposure:

- Review images: save, re-shoot, discard
- Review histogram and highlight warning (exposure)

No "using up film" worries – shoot with abandon!

"Sheet film" effect – single image immediately available

3. Post Capture

Move digital files to field storage

Options:

- Media chips – expensive
- Laptop – bulky to carry but large hard drive and ability to edit
- Digital wallet – smaller to carry, relatively expensive, in-field review

4. Post Process

Load files into editing computer

- Direct from camera (USB2 or FireWire for speed)
- Card reader or PCM-CIA adapter for laptop

Review and cull images and EXIF data

- Windows XP: thumbnails, filmstrip, view as slide show (power toys)
- Image management program: ACDSSee Classic, many others
- Photoshop File Browser
- Canon FileViewer, ZoomBrowser (Nikon, etc. equivalents?)

Process images – resize, histogram compensation (levels), contrast adjustment (curves, other operations), color adjustments, local controls

Save master image file – Photoshop psd file with layers

5. Print

To be safe: copy master file

Make specific changes based on paper and ink choice

Set output size and resolution

Sharpen

6. Archive

Save camera files, especially “camera raw”

Save master image files

Storage options:

- external hard drive (cheapest \$/megabyte)
- removable magnetic media (Zip, Jaz – becoming obsolete)
- CD-ROM (cheap, small capacity, ubiquitous)
- DVD (better capacity, compatibility issues)

The great unsolved problem: long-term availability

- file format
- media format
- media longevity