

# PC WORLD



## Digital Focus

Dave Johnson's expert tips promise to enhance your expertise with your digital camera, scanner, printer, and image editing software.

## Digital Focus: Holiday Shopping Guide, Part 2

A photo morpher, the Lightsphere, and some shameless self-promotion.

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The holidays mean a lot to me: time with the family, a mouth-watering turkey dinner, delicious pumpkin chocolate chip walnut cookies (my very own recipe, in fact), and oodles of presents. And there's always a few digital photo-related presents under the tree at our house.

This year, as always, I thought I'd share some of the more interesting items on my wish list with you. I started this year's shopping guide [last week](#). If you missed it, you can catch up here. Now let's wrap up our look at cool presents for the digital photographer in your life.

### Morph It Up

Who says digital photography needs to be realistic--or even serious? [Morpheus Software](#)'s \$30 PhotoMorpher lets you transform one image into another using two or more digital pictures. (You can morph your own face into your dog's, for example.) Just click on important parts of each image to assign control points, then let the program work its magic. You can save your completed animation in a common format like Flash or Animated GIF. Last I checked, the program was about [\\$30 online](#).

### Back It Up

Backup software might sound like a bland gift idea--like a pair of tube socks or a socket wrench--but it protects all the memories you're going to create with that shiny new digital camera. [ProtectMyPhotos](#) is an automatic online backup service that helps safeguard your photo collection from computer failures, viruses, fires, floods, dragon attacks, and inevitable human boo-boos. A flat \$40 per year gives you 40GB of online backup. It seems like a great investment, no matter what time of year it is.

### Light It Up

Photographers are always on the lookout for ways to take better flash photos: Used on their own, camera flashes often result in flat, harsh lighting that is anything but flattering to your subjects.

Gary Fong's [Lightsphere 2](#) is a diffuser that dramatically improves photos captured with your digital SLR's flash. The Lightsphere is compatible with most flash units and costs \$50.

### Books, Books, Books

On Christmas morning, my house always looks like a bookstore--everyone in the family gets a stack of books to help them get through the dreary winter months. So not surprisingly, I have a few digital photo book recommendations.

If you or someone you know was lucky enough to get a Nikon D200 for the holidays, here's a slam dunk gift: Thom Hogan's *Complete Guide to the Nikon D200*. This [\\$30 e-book](#) comes in the Adobe PDF format and is very well-written. As a D200 owner myself, I highly recommend it.

Looking for a general-purpose book on digital photography? Then check out *How Digital Photography Works*, by Ron White. This full-color encyclopedia-like book explains the science and mechanics of your camera, exposure, photo editing, and more, for [about \\$30 on Amazon.com](#).

If you don't mind investing a whopping \$100, take a look at *Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer*, by Mark Sincevich. This unusual publication grabbed my eye because of its unique publishing model: You get a subscription, like software, and the book is updated throughout the course of the year with additional information. The author claims he'll save you money, take the place of photography classes, and show you how to do all sorts of additional things with your photos.

Last, but not least, this the one time of year when I get to plug what is surely the best digital photography book on the market: My own digital photo guide. *How to Do Everything with Your Digital Camera* is now in its fourth edition and has sold well over 100,000 copies. It's available on [Amazon.com](#) for about \$17.

### Hot Pics