

## **Wait! Don't Throw Your Film Camera Away**

*'10 Reasons Why Your Film Camera is Still a Great Investment'*

By Mark Sincevich

There is so much hype out in the market about the number of mega-pixels, the largess of your digital zoom and if you're shooting in RAW format that we've actually lost sight of the most important thing, the finished product (the final photograph)! I recently had somebody come up to me on an assignment and wanted to know if I was using a digital camera period. It seems using a digital camera had somehow superseded my photographic knowledge and many of the considerations I make when working with customers or taking my own photographs. It just so happened that I was using my film camera, but I use my digital camera on a regular basis too. Why on earth do I still use a film camera? Here's why you should still use one too.

**(1) Saves You Money** – you can purchase a new or used film camera for the price of an entry-level digital camera. The photographs will be sharper and you'll have better control over the light. Film cameras can continue to work for dozens of years but in three years, your digital camera will either be obsolete, damaged or an underappreciated paperweight. Also, the higher-quality lenses you purchase now can be used in conjunction with a digital single lens reflex (DSLR) later.

**(2) Higher File Size** – If you want to enlarge a print from a slide or negative, you can scan the image, equivalent to 21-24 mega-pixels (MP), at a high-end photo lab and then either print the image yourself or have the lab print the image and give you back the CD of the scan. You will also be able to crop your image and then enlarge the finished product in sharp focus. The highest capture rate of a 35mm digital camera on the market today is 16MP, but it costs \$8,000. With film, you have the best combination of maximum file size for the lowest cost.

**(3) More Shock Proof** – What happens when you drop your digital camera that costs more than some automobiles? You start to worry. Digital cameras are computers in a compact package and they are very affected by bumps and drops. Sure, some high-end models have extra shock absorbency, but your film camera is going to continue to work in many more situations over a digital camera under normal or extreme conditions (high altitude or very hot or cold temperatures). Plus, it's a lot less expensive to get a part replaced in your film camera.

**(4) Film is Widely Available** – If you are on a once-in-a-lifetime African safari or in your hometown photographing your child's soccer game and you run out of film, chances are gift shops at either location will have film of some type. You can purchase a few rolls and keep on taking photographs. You could even purchase a used film camera on location for a lot less hassle and money. If you run out of space on a memory card, you're out of luck. You might say that you can lug along your laptop, but who wants to be backing up images in a tent on the Savannah?

**(5) Low Power Consumption** – Digital cameras and computers are notorious power hogs. If you don't use lithium-ion or NiMH (nickel metal hydride) batteries, you will only be able to take a few images until you have to replace your batteries. Film cameras require much less power in part because there isn't an LCD viewfinder. I bring two spare sets of batteries for my film camera and this allows me to keep on taking photographs without worrying if I'll need to get replacements.



**(6) No Computer Knowledge** – besides not having your laptop on a safari, you won't have to worry about using image manipulation or database software programs and having an advanced degree in your operating system. When you take a photograph, you will have captured all of the information you will ever need. However, if you decide that you want to continue your computer training, make sure you scan in your images at the time of developing.

**(7) Similar Advantages to Digital** - If you get your photo lab to scan in your slides or negatives at the time of developing, you will have all of the advantages of a digital camera because now your images can be loaded into your computer. Plus, you will have an extra layer of backup protection in case your computer crashes; you'll have the CD from the lab and the slide or negative backups.

**(8) Extra Backup Protection** – Most people don't practice proper backup techniques and their negatives or slides are stored in shoeboxes along with their photographs. However, if the location of your slides or negatives is kept at a consistent cooler temperature, the slide or negatives can last for generations. You should at least put your slides or negatives in acid-free storage sheets. A CD is only rated to last for 30 years and if your photograph is not printed on a proper combination of paper and inks to give it maximum longevity, you're family memories will simply fade away.

**(9) Better in Low Light** – Some of the best photographs are taken at first light or during the limited light at the end of the day. Also, there are also some great photographs waiting to be taken at night with the ambient light of neon signs in the background. Both of these sorts of conditions need fast film with a high ISO number. Many digital cameras produce poor results beyond ISO 400. Even the higher end DSLR's won't be able to go beyond ISO 1600. You'll capture much more interesting photographs with fast film over digital cameras that automatically fire the flash at night.

**(10) Immediate Capture** – When you press the shutter of a film camera, you capture that moment in time immediately. Capturing 'the moment' is one of the most important tenants of photography and of your role as family historian. A great deal of confidence comes with the knowledge that what you saw you will have preserved. With digital cameras you have both a 'power on' delay and a 'shutter delay' that prevents you from capturing the moment by 1-4 seconds.

Start taking photographs of the things and people that you really want to remember now with your film camera, and stop worrying that you need to keep up with your neighbor's mega-pixel count. The more you use your film camera, the more your photography will improve. By having the original film negative or slide, you will have better quality images and stop your memories from fading away.

### **About the Author**

Mark Sincevich has been practicing photography for over 21 years. He is an instructor at the Washington School of Photography and a member of the Professional Photographers Association (PPA). Mark was an official photographer at President George W. Bush's Second Inauguration, he is frequently quoted in the media, and his photography has been featured in numerous newspapers and magazines. Mark is also an active member of the National Speakers Association and regularly delivers professional speaking programs on photography, creativity, leadership and balance. In addition, he has an active photography consulting practice where he helps accelerate his customer's knowledge and application of photography. He is the author of two books including "The Real Ideal" and numerous articles. He can be contacted at 301-654-3010 or [www.staashpress.com](http://www.staashpress.com).