Digital Camera Tips

Camera Resolution In Megapixels (MP)	For Web & Email	For Printing Photos		
		4"x 6"	5"x 7"	8"x10"
< 1 MP	PQ	Accept.	Poor	NA
1 MP	PQ	NPQ	Good	Poor
1.3 - 1.5 MP	PQ	PQ	NPQ	Accept.
2.1 - 2.3 MP	PQ	PQ	PQ	Good
2.5 MP	PQ	PQ	PQ	NPQ
3.1 - 3.4 MP	PQ	PQ	PQ	PQ

Legend

Rating:	**Interpretation:**
Poor	Not acceptable. Noticeably Grainy.
Accept.	Acceptable Quality. Obviously not a real photo.
Good	Good Quality. Can tell it is not a photo at normal viewing distance.
NPQ	Near-Photo-Quality - Difficult to tell from real photo at normal viewing distance.
PQ	Photo-quality. On a photo-quality printer, the human eye should not be able to tell the difference at a normal viewing distance.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why is the file size of my pictures taken at high quality setting so big?

A: This is the most important thing to remember about digital cameras. The higher the quality setting the bigger the file size will be. Then taking pictures for web use or to put in publications you should use a lower quality setting (usually the first level should do). If your intent is to print the image so it looks like a "real" picture when you should use the highest quality setting.

- For a 4 x 6" print, the image resolution should be 640 x 480 pixels minimum
- For a 5 x 7" print, the image resolution should be 1024 x 768 pixels minimum
- For an 8 x 10" print, the image resolution should be 1536 x 1024 pixels minimum
- For a Wallet-size print, the image resolution should be 320 x 240 pixels minimum

Refer to your camera's instruction manual to see what pixel resolution is achieved at which quality level.

Q: Does higher resolution mean a sharper image?

A: Not always. All other things being equal, you should be able to get more detail from a higher resolution camera. But, like any camera, the lenses and film make a big difference. Obviously, digital cameras don't use film. They use image sensors (usually "Charged Couple Devices" or CCDs). Like film, the quality of a camera's CCD can make a big difference in the image quality. The biggest importance of higher resolution is to allow you to print your photos at larger sizes without sacrificing quality.

Q. I just want to share photos on the web and over e-mail. What kind of camera should I buy?

A. If you are positive that you will not want to print your pictures, then almost any digital camera will do - as far as resolution. A 1MP camera is perfect for you. But, make sure the camera has the other features that you require, including zoom lenses, macro capability, suitable storage capacity, optical viewfinder, etc.

Q. Why do you only need a low-resolution camera for the web or e-mail?

A. Basically, computer monitors are very low resolution devices. Most monitors have one of the following resolutions: 640x480, 800x600, or 1024x768 lines. When you compare that to a 1 megapixel camera, which produces images with slightly larger resolutions (say 1152x864 for example) you will actually have images larger than can fit on your screen. The average computer monitor is actually less than 1MP in resolution.