

PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAMERAS AND CAMCORDERS

Details	Professional digital cameras	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Actual sensor	Optical zoom/ equivalent range	Maximum aperture	Viewfinder/LCD size	Shutter speed	Storage media/supplied memory	Closest focus distance (macro)	External flash	Weight (inc battery)
 1 Nikon Coolpix 5700 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk	NEW	Oct 02	£850	5Mp	8x/35-280mm	f2.8/4.2	EVF/1.8in	1/4,000 to 8 secs	CompactFlash/32MB	3cm	Hotshoe	512g	
 2 Nikon Coolpix 5000 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk	1	Jul 02	£765	5Mp	3x/28-85mm	f2.8/4.8	optical/1.8in	1/2,000 to 60 secs	CompactFlash/32MB	2cm	Hotshoe	414g	
 3 Sony Cybershot DSC-F707 08705 111 999 www.sony.co.uk	2	Jul 02	£743	5Mp	5x/38-190mm	f2.0/2.4	EVF/1.8in	1/1,000 to 30 secs	Memory Stick/16MB	2cm	Sync plug	667g	
 4 Olympus Camedia E10 0800 072 0070 www.olympus.co.uk	5	Jul 02	£851	4Mp	4x/35-140mm	f2.0/2.4	SLR/1.8in	1/640 to 8 secs	CompactFlash, SmartMedia/16MB	20cm	Hotshoe, Sync plug	1,170g	
 5 Canon EOS-D60 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk	4	Sep 02	£1,872	6.3Mp	any Canon EOS lens	dependent on lens	SLR/1.8in	1/4,000 to 30 secs	none	dependent on lens	Hotshoe, Sync plug	855g	

Details	Digital camcorders	Last month's position	First reviewed	Price (ex VAT)	Warranty	Image processor	CCD	Optical/digital zoom	Max aperture	Horizontal DV resolution	FireWire in/out	Focal distance	Weight	Multimedia card
 1 JVC GR-DVL767EK 0870 330 5000 www.jvc.co.uk	1	Jul 02	£680	1-year	1/3.8in CCD	1.02 megapixels	10x/500x	1.8	530 lines	yes/yes	3.8-38mm	567g	8MB	
 2 Sony DCR-TRV18E 0870 511 1999 www.sony.co.uk	2	Jul 02	£570	1-year	1/4in CCD	680,000 pixels	10x/120x	1.7	500 lines	yes/yes	3.3-33mm	705g	8MB	
 3 Samsung VPD77i 0800 521 652 www.samsungelectronics.co.uk	3	Jul 02	£495	1-year	1/4in CCD	800,000 pixels	22x/500x	1.6	500 lines	yes/yes	3.6-79.2mm	590g	8MB	
 4 Canon MV550i 0870 514 3723 www.canon.co.uk	4	Jul 02	£850	1-year	1/6in CCD	680,000 pixels	22x/440x	1.8	500 lines	yes/yes	2.8-61.6mm	530g	8MB	
 5 Panasonic NV-DS29B 0870 535 7357 www.panasonic.co.uk	5	Jul 02	£499	1-year	1/4in CCD	800,000 pixels	10x/500x	1.8	500 lines	no/yes	3.6-36mm	510g	N/A	

PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAMERAS

1 Nikon Coolpix 5700

 Nikon's Coolpix 5700, our new Best Buy, has much in common with the earlier Coolpix 5000 including the 5Mp (megapixel) CCD (charge coupled device), the flip-out and twist LCD (liquid crystal display) screen and a 32MB card which can store up to 20 best-quality Jpegs. The major difference between the two cameras is the lens: the 5700 boasts a giant 8x optical zoom, compared to the 5000's 3x. Equivalent in coverage to 35-280mm on a 35mm camera, this makes it top dog for focal length against its 5Mp competitors.

A large lens doesn't result in the 5700 being unwieldy, though, with the Coolpix measuring a compact 108x76x102mm, and weighing just 512g with its rechargeable lithium-ion battery. As with other long zoomers, the optical viewfinder has been replaced by a camcorder-style, electronic viewfinder. Image quality is superb, although we'd have preferred the best-quality Jpeg mode to employ less compression. The bottom line is that Nikon has produced the best professional digital camera we've tested so far.



DIGITAL CAMCORDERS

1 JVC GR-DVL767EK

 The entry-level GR-DVL767EK is a long yet compact camcorder that is comfortable to use, with zoom and record controls within easy reach. The JVC has a side-loading tape mechanism, so that you can replace tapes when shooting on a tripod, and an articulated viewfinder. The 10x optical zoom is smooth and we only noticed grain at around 8x magnification. JVC claims a figure of 500x for the digital zoom and the GR-DVL767EK is capable of higher magnification than the Sony. Its 1.02Mp (megapixels) CCD (charge-coupled device) can capture high-quality stills that can be stored on an 8MB multimedia card. Video quality was also excellent and footage was bright whether shooting indoors or out.

Connectivity on the JVC is second to none. It features a bi-directional DV (digital video) port to transfer your footage to a PC for editing and record your final cut back to a tape, AV inputs and outputs, S-Video and USB. The JVC's price may be one of the highest in the chart, but it's certainly worth the extra premium.



PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAMERAS

2 Nikon Coolpix 5000

 This compact professional digital camera offers 5Mp (megapixel) resolution, delivering 2,560x1,920 pixel images with sufficient detail to make 13x10in inkjet prints. The 32MB CompactFlash card can store 20 high-resolution Jpeg images. The 3x optical zoom has an equivalent range of 28-85mm, which offers much wider-angle shots, while the macro focuses at distances of just 2cm. There's a range of manual settings for exposure, focusing and metering, as well as automatic modes.



3 Sony Cybershot DSC-F707

This device has 5Mp (megapixel) resolution, producing images measuring 2,560x1,920 pixels with enough detail to make 13x10in inkjet prints. The Cybershot's lens barrel houses a pop-up flash and an impressive 5x optical zoom. The macro performance is also good, getting as close as possible to 2cm. Composition is with a 1.8in LCD (liquid crystal display) or an EVF (electronic viewfinder). Battery life is excellent, and Sony's info-lithium pack displays exactly how many minutes are remaining onscreen.



4 Olympus Camedia E10

The 4Mp (megapixels) E10 features an optical SLR (single lens reflex) viewfinder. This allows for more precise focusing than the LCDs (liquid crystal displays) and EVFs (electronic viewfinders) on cheaper devices. Images on the Camedia have 2,240x1,680 pixels and make great-looking 11x8in inkjet prints. The 4x optical lens is equivalent to 35-140mm and zooming is performed with a mechanical ring that is preferable to motorised control. There's also a pop-up flash and a sync plug for proper studio lighting.



5 Canon EOS-D60

The D60 is a digital SLR (single lens reflex) device which can use Canon's vast range of EF 35mm lenses although, like most digital SLRs, their effective focal length is multiplied by 1.6 times. It boasts 6.3Mp (megapixel) resolution, delivering images good enough for A3 inkjet prints. Best-quality Jpegs measure 2.5MB each, so you'll need plenty of memory to store your images. The Canon doesn't come with any supplied RAM, but most professional photographers will own a large storage card or Microdrive anyway. Shame the PC interface isn't USB 2.0 or FireWire, though.



DIGITAL CAMCORDERS

2 Sony DCR-TRV18E

 Sony's DCR-TRV18E hangs on to its Recommended award for another month due to its combination of excellent performance and professional add-ons. The DCR is comfortable to handle, with zoom and record controls within easy reach of a thumb and forefinger. It features a f/1.7 lens and a 10x optical zoom. Don't be put off by the 120x digital zoom; this figure may be lower than other chart entries, but the Sony doesn't get fuzzy when you push its zoom to the limit. The 1/4in 680,000 pixel CCD (charge-coupled device) captures good-quality stills and stores them on an 8MB Memory Stick. This Recommended camera boasts great video quality, too, with colour-rich sharp pictures.



3 Samsung VPD77i

The VPD77i is a compact and ergonomic unit with a side-loading tape mechanism and easy-to-operate controls. However, as with the JVC, the fold-out LCD (liquid crystal display) lacks clarity and detail. In its favour, the Samsung's 1/4in, 800,000 pixel image processor captures high-quality images and is suited to shooting in low-light conditions. The 22x optical zoom is impressive, but the picture became fuzzy when using the 500x digital zoom. Autofocus took far too long to adjust when the Samsung was pointed at different objects and the digital image stabiliser failed to clean up shaky camera work. Connectivity is up to scratch, though, with support for USB and S-Video AV (inputs and outputs), and it also has a bi-directional FireWire connection.



4 Canon MV550i

Canon's MV550i has a sleek, attractive design and plenty of features – but at £850 it's the most expensive camcorder the chart. While it has a surfeit of add-ons, the Canon lacks some key requirements. The 680,000 pixel, 1/6in CCD (charge-coupled device) captured pictures that lacked detail and were drained of colour. The auto-exposure also coped badly during transitions from low to bright light. Transferring footage via the DV (digital video) port was easy, though, and there are some useful inclusions, such as a bi-directional DV connection.



5 Panasonic NV-DS29B

The NV-DS29B failed to impress us, despite its bargain price of £499. Image quality was good, though, with sharp detail and bright colours. There's a smooth 10x optical and a 500x digital zoom, too, and something we've not seen elsewhere: a tape loader hidden behind the fold-out LCD (liquid crystal display) panel. However, there's a serious lack of features: there are no special effects other than the ability to fade between shots, and DV is out only, so you can't record back to a MiniDV tape. There's also no USB.

