











Top 10 Professional digital cameras & Digital camcorders

			Professional digital cameras	Actual sensor	Optical zoom	Max aperture range	Viewfinder type	Shutter speeds	Storage media	Closest focus distance (macro)	Accessories
					Equivalent range				Supplied media		
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1		Sony Cybershot DSC-F717 08705 111 999 www.sony.co.uk Last month 1	• £699 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 659g inc battery • First review Dec 02	5Mp	5x 38-190mm	f2.0-2.4 1.8in	EVF to 30 secs	Memory Stick 32MB	2cm	Hotshoe, sync plug
	The F717 remains an impressive Best Buy, producing the most detailed pictures we've seen from any professional 5Mp model. Its bright optical aperture means that faster shutter speeds can be used under dim conditions, while features like the autofocus illuminator and infrared night mode are excellent additions.										
	2		Canon EOS-10D 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk/ eoscameras Last month 2	• £1,499 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 790g ex battery • First review Sep 03	6.3Mp	no lens supplied n/a	depends on lens 1.8in	SLR to 30 secs	CompactFlash OMB	depends on lens	Hotshoe, sync plug
	With its tough magnesium body, many impressive features and RRP of £1,499 (street prices should be around £200 lower), the EOS-10D is Canon's most affordable and impressive digital SLR yet. It's a shame there's no support for FireWire or USB 2.0, but there is a TV output which is unusual for a digital SLR.										
	3		Nikon Coolpix 5700 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk Last month 3	• £899 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 512g inc battery • First review Oct 02	5Mp	8x 35-280mm	f2.8-4.2 1.5in	EVF to 8 secs	CompactFlash 32MB	3cm	Hotshoe
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	4		Minolta Diimage 7Hi 01908 200 400 www.minolta.co.uk Last month 4	• £999 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 639g inc battery • First review May 03	5Mp	7x 28-200mm	f2.8-3.5 1.8in	EVF to 15 secs	CompactFlash 16MB	25cm	Hotshoe, sync plug
	The Minolta is one of the best-featured high-end digital cameras on the market. The Diimage's 7x optical zoom is operated by a mechanical ring, which makes for a more responsive experience. On the down side, the 7Hi is costlier than most of its rivals and you must purchase more memory from day one.										
	5		Sigma SD9 01707 329 999 www.sigma-imaging-uk.com Last month 5	• £1,299 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 803g ex battery • First review Aug 03	3.5Mp	no lens supplied n/a	depends on lens 1.8in	SLR to 30 secs	CompactFlash OMB	depends on lens	Hotshoe
	Sigma's SD9 may only have 3.5Mp, but its X3 technology matches the detail captured by 6Mp rivals. It doesn't generate Jpegs, forcing you to process RAW images using PC software, but it's by far the cheapest digital SLR available. The SD9 is good value for money – if you're happy with its unique way of working.										

			Digital camcorders	Image processor	CCD	Optical digital zoom	Max aperture	Horizontal DV resolution	FireWire in/out	Focal distance range	Multi-media card
PC ADVISOR BEST BUY	1		Panasonic NV-GS50 08705 357 357 www.panasonic.co.uk Last month 1	• £699 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 435g • First review Aug 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	10x 500x	1.8	500 lines	yes yes	2.3-23mm 8MB
	The NV-GS50 may be compact and lightweight, but that doesn't mean it lacks features. It's easy to use, comfortable to hold and ready to record in just 1.3 seconds. Although not the cheapest model in the chart, the Panasonic offers good value for money and is a worthy winner of our Best Buy award.										
	2		Sony DCR-TRV33E 08505 111 999 www.sony.co.uk Last month 2	• £729 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 630g • First review Aug 03	1/4.7in CCD	1.07Mp pixels	10x 120x	1.8	520 lines	yes yes	3.7-37mm 8MB
	Sony's DCR-TRV33E is extremely easy to use and incredibly responsive. The autofocus and 10x optical zoom are fast and the unit reacts well to light changes. At £729 the Sony loses out on value for money, but if you've got the cash and want a compact and capable camcorder then this is certainly a contender.										
	3		Canon MV600i 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk Last month 3	• £550 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 520g • First review Aug 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	18x 360x	1.6	500 lines	yes yes	2.8-50.4mm n/a
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED	4		JVC GR-DX25EK 0870 330 5000 www.jvc.co.uk Last month 4	• £550 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 440g • First review Aug 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	16x 700x	1.6	520 lines	no yes	2.7-43.2mm n/a
	Like the MV600i, the small and lightweight JVC concentrates on camcorder functionality rather than added extras. The lack of a FireWire-in option is disappointing, however. It means that if you want to do any video editing then you can't digitally transfer your edited footage back to tape once you're finished.										
	5		Canon MV650i 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk Last month 5	• £651 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 520g • First review Jul 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	22x 440x	1.6	500 lines	yes yes	2.8-61.6mm 8MB
	The MV650i is an easy-to-use, reasonably sized and affordable camcorder. We did have a couple of problems with autofocus at the maximum zoom, but other than that it performed well. If you're looking for your first camera but don't want to break the bank then the MV650i is a worthy contender.										

Buying advice

Digital camcorders

Image quality is not as easy to gauge with digital video as it is with stills. When a manufacturer slaps '800,000 pixel CCD' on the side of the box, this refers only to the resolution of the still pictures it produces, not video.

Furthermore, DV camera resolutions tend to be much lower

than those of digital cameras: camcorders offering 1Mp (megapixel) quality are still in the minority and only one of the models in our Digital camcorder chart tops this.

Video resolution is given as a horizontal and vertical resolution for the number of lines of colour that go to make up the picture on your TV screen. But many cameras do not advertise this. The vertical resolution for DV camcorders is

usually 540 lines – the theoretical limit for PAL, the UK's video format. The horizontal resolution will vary between models, but the higher the number of lines the better the video quality is likely to be.

To edit your video footage on your PC you will need FireWire in and out so you can record the final version from the PC to a MiniDV tape in your camcorder without any loss of picture or sound quality.