

TOP 10 PRO DIGITAL CAMERAS & DIGITAL VIDEO CAMERAS

		Pro digital cameras	Actual sensor	Optical zoom Equivalent range	Max aperture	Viewfinder type LCD size	Shutter speeds	Storage media Supplied media	Closest focus distance (macro)	Accessories
	1 Sony Cybershot DSC-F717 08705 111 999 www.sony.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £596 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • 659g inc battery • First review Dec 02 	5Mp	5x 38-190mm	f2.0-2.4	EVF 1.8in	1/2,000 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 Nikon Coolpix 5700 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £766 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • 512g inc battery • First review Oct 02 	5Mp	8x 35-280mm	f2.8-4.2	EVF 1.5in	1/4,000 to 8 secs	CompactFlash 32MB	3cm	Hotshoe
Nikon's Coolpix 5700 boasts a 5Mp CCD, flip-out and twist LCD screen and a 32MB CompactFlash card which stores up to 20 best-quality Jpeg images (although we'd prefer slightly less compression on these). Its giant 8x optical zoom is equivalent in coverage to 35-280mm, which makes it top dog for focal length.										
	3 Nikon Coolpix 5000 0800 230 220 www.nikon.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £681 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • 414g inc battery • First review Jul 02 	5Mp	3x 28-85mm	f2.8-4.28	optical 1.8in	1/2,000 to 60 secs	CompactFlash 32MB	2cm	Hotshoe
The compact 5Mp Coolpix has plenty of features to keep professional shooters happy. It delivers 2,560x 1,920 pixel images and the lens offers very wide angled shots.. Choose between manual settings or foolproof automatic modes – there's even a movie option that captures 60 seconds of basic video.										
	4 Sigma SD9 01707 329 999 www.sigma-imaging-uk.com NEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,106 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • 414g inc battery • First review Aug 03 	3.5Mp (X3 sensor)	no lens supplied n/a	depends on lens	SLR 1.8in	1/6,000 to 30 secs	CompactFlash 0MB	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.										
	5 Minolta Dimage 7Hi 01908 200 400 www.minolta.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £935 ex VAT • 1-year warranty • 639g inc battery • First review May 03 	5Mp	7x 28-200mm	f2.8-3.5	EVF 1.8in	1/4,000 to 15 secs	CompactFlash 16MB	25cm	Hotshoe, sync plug
Minolta's 7Hi is one of the best-featured high-end digital cameras on the market. The Dimage'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.										

		Digital video cameras	Image processor	CCD	Optical digital zoom	Max aperture	Horizontal DV resolution	FireWire in out	Focal distance	Multi-media card
	1 Panasonic NV-GS50 08705 357 357 www.panasonic.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £595 ex 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £620 ex 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 £620 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £468 ex 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
The MV600i is a robust camcorder ideal for the first-time buyer. If you're just starting out or aren't bothered about extras like still-picture capture and USB connectivity then it offers the essentials at a great entry-level price. It hosts a powerful 18x optical zoom and its picture quality is perfectly sufficient.										
	4 JVC GR-DX25EK 0870 330 5000 www.jvc.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £468 ex 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £554 ex 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 the MV650i is a worthy contender.										

Buying advice: pro digital cameras

When you're paying over £700 for a digital camera you expect to get a good product in return. Obviously if you pay up to £2,000 you can find models in excess of 7Mp (megapixels). Around the £1,000 mark you should expect a 5Mp CCD (charge-coupled device). Professional digital cameras cover all aspects of

photography. You can set most cameras to automatic but anyone willing to pay this much money for a camera wants total control over their photography.

Even at this high price point we're still seeing a pitiful amount of storage bundled with cameras; manufacturers expect consumers to pay out for better cards. Standard storage is 32MB but the higher the megapixels the fewer shots you

can get on a storage card so you'll need much more than this to truly get the best out of your camera. A 4x or 5x optical zoom is reasonable, but shop around and you might track down an 8x optical zoom.

In terms of bundled extras, rechargeable lithium batteries with an adapter and decent software are standard on Professional cameras – opt for Adobe's Photoshop Elements if you can.