

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		LCD size		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 • 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 such as the autofocus illuminator and infrared night mode are excellent additions.										
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED 2	 Canon EOS-10D 08705 143 723 www.canon.co.uk/ eoscameras Last month 2	• £1,499 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 860g • First review Sep 03	6.3Mp	no lens supplied n/a	depends on lens	SLR 1.8in	1/4,000 to 30 secs	CompactFlash 0MB	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 • 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 that 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.										
4	 Minolta Dimage 7Hi 01908 200 400 www.minolta.co.uk Last month 4	• £999 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 639g • 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
The Minolta 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.										
5	 Sigma SD9 01707 329 999 www.sigma-imaging-uk.com Last month 5	• £1,299 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 835g • First review Aug 03	3.5Mp	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.										

	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	f1.8	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.										
PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED 2	 Sony DCR-TRV33E 08705 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	10x 120x	f1.8	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	• £400 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 520g • First review Aug 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	18x 360x	f1.6	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	• £550 inc VAT • 1-year warranty • 440g • First review Aug 03	1/6in CCD	800,000 pixels	16x 700x	f1.6	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	f1.6	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

Professional digital cameras

- **Megapixel rating** When you're paying over £700 for a digital camera aim for 5Mp (megapixels) or more. Pay over £1,500 and you'll get a model offering 6Mp or even 7Mp.
- **Storage** Even at this high price point we're seeing a pitiful amount of bundled storage media. Some cameras

are coming without any storage at all, and even the best models are only being supplied with 32MB memory cards - this simply isn't enough to get the most out of such high-end models. Remember, the higher the megapixels, the more storage space you'll need for each shot. CompactFlash and Memory Stick are still the most popular formats, but newer flash memory types like Secure Digital and xD-Picture cards could take over in the future.

- **Peripherals** Rechargeable batteries (and the necessary charger) will save you pounds in the long run. USB 2.0 or FireWire support should prove their worth and some cameras have hotshoes, allowing you to connect such accessories as lights and external microphones. For software opt for Adobe Photoshop Elements if you can.
- **Zoom** A 4x or 5x optical zoom is reasonable, but shop around and you might track down an 8x optical zoom.