

## “This Brave New Digital Age!”

The whole world seems to be going “digital”, and for those of us of a certain age this presents some challenges! For a start, many on-site managers over the age of 45 don’t even understand what the word means!

It is not my purpose here to discuss the technicalities, but rather address in practical terms an aspect of the digital age that increasingly impacts on many RUMs --- the use of digital cameras to record damage by tenants, send photographic updates to owners and post vacancies etc on the Web.

The Internet is fast becoming the medium of choice for promoting our properties for rent and properties for sale. Email is becoming the most popular means of transmitting messages and images around the globe. All **RAAS** members have free access to [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au), [www.domain.com.au](http://www.domain.com.au) and [www.raas.com.au](http://www.raas.com.au) and use them constantly. The only glitch that arises in an otherwise simple procedure is a lack of understanding of digital images.

Has this happened to you! You have just bought a “you beaut” little 8 mega-pixel digital camera, taken 50 photos of your new grandson, and tried to email them all to your sister interstate. Your computer seizes up, all subscribers to your Internet Service Provider around Australia crash their connections, and communication satellites start falling from the sky!

Only kidding!

It mightn’t be as bad as that, but I doubt your email went anywhere, because the combined

size of all the digital data in those 50 photos could be about 160 Megabytes and your email account probably has a limit for attachments of 2MB to 5MB.

Photos that you intend to use on your own complex’s website or the major real estate promotional websites must be much, much smaller in digital file size than even that! Speed of transmission is everything on the Net! Your viewers are an impatient lot and if your photos take too long to download, they will pass over your offering to something else. There are many programs that allow you to quickly resize and optimize your photos for the Internet, but my personal choice is Photoshop Elements by Adobe. This is the little brother to the famous Adobe Photoshop, and Elements (now at Version 6) represents unbelievable value for somewhere between \$140 and \$190.

With a few clicks of a mouse this program will fix your errors, produce tiny downloadable files, and make you look like a real pro --- even without understanding much at all about how it all works!

But let’s say you own a complex and you are about to buy your first digital camera. What should you be looking for? This is such a big topic it can’t be fully covered here, but I will try to give just a few pointers. I am writing a more comprehensive report on many aspects of digital photography which I hope to have available to managers in a couple of months.

If you would like to receive a FREE copy of this report, please send your request by email to [mike@raas.com.au](mailto:mike@raas.com.au) and I will see that you get it.

There are two types of digital camera that I think will serve your purpose. The first is a “point and shoot” camera with wide-angle and zoom capabilities; the second is a digital SLR (single lens reflex); and the choice really depends on just how seriously you might want to pursue your photography in the future. A critical feature to look for in a camera for real estate is “wide angle”. This enables you to take those internal shots that escape the normal camera. To be called wide angle the camera at its widest viewing angle should be the equivalent of 28mm or less. Don’t worry about what that means. Just be sure to tell the salesman that it is what you want!

Probably the best camera in this class is the Ricoh Caplio R7. I bought my wife one for Christmas and it is not only brilliant, but just about foolproof! You should pay between \$420 and \$450 for the genuine Australian Warranty product.

The SLR is the more expensive choice but allows for substantial upgrading as your skill level and interest increases. SLR’s have interchangeable lenses and there is no limit to their versatility. A fantastic entry level SLR is the Nikon D40x. It comes as a kit with a suitable Nikon lens and full Australian Warranty for under \$900.

Don’t forget to order my Digital Photography report. Happy snapping!

*If you would like to comment on anything you have read in **The RAAS Report**, please write to us at PO Box 1325 Sunnybank Hills Q 4109 or send an email to [mike@raas.com.au](mailto:mike@raas.com.au).*



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