

The Rush to New Technology

Written by Pedro Meyer



One of the fascinating aspects of what is going on at present in this ever changing landscape of

photography is that we are moving both forward and backward at the same time. The improvements of what all these new technologies have to offer, certainly do not bring only benefits. I am obviously a great enthusiast for using and exploring all that the digital revolution has been able to bring us, but I am also quite critical of those matters that hold us back needlessly and dissipate our limited resources for no good reason at all.

Nikon

One such instance of moving both forward and backward at the same time, is what has just happened with the new Nikon D70 camera, released just a few days ago on March 26th. This is a totally new camera that is cheaper than previous models while sacrificing very little, and offering a slew of very worthwhile improvements especially in the speed of operation. All of which is to be appreciated for sure.

But when you go and spend more than a thousand dollars for a new camera (just the body with no lens) you would expect such a camera to be compatible with the basic digital tools that photographers have been using before, namely Photoshop. Or contrary to that, bring to the attention of the consumer who is about to make such an investment, that the RAW file format that this new camera produces is a different one to any previous Nikon model, and therefore still incompatible with all other software in the market other than Nikon's own proprietary offerings. Why should I have to spend additional money to buy their software just because of this incompatibility?

I am going on the assumption that most photographers will want to shoot in RAW file format given the noticeable benefits over other formats (more about that later). Unfortunately the D 70

Raw file format is at present incompatible with other software other than Nikon's. You can't even download to your computer with anything other than Nikon software without corrupting those files, unless you do so directly from the memory card. But having to purchase in addition to your Photoshop software the Nikon Capture software, just because it is incompatible at present seems to me unfair, given that the consumer is not given any warning about these present incompatibilities. In time I am sure these issues will be resolved, but why do I need to wait three or four months to get back to my normal work flow, for Nikon to resolve something that should have been functional from the outset? Why do I need to invest in additional software from Nikon if I can use the software I already own? Sorry Nikon, you got this one all wrong and you should make the consumers know when you change the specs on a file format making it incompatible with anything that preceded it.

Lensbabies



The picture of this months' cover in ZoneZero was taken from my car with the Nikon camera and a lensbaby. While at the i3Forum, my good friend Dan Burkholder was playing around with a new lens on his digital camera, a lens called the "lensbaby". I could not believe what I was looking at. Here he was using a lens very much like an old fashioned bellows camera and an up-tight tilt-shift lens, providing the look created by the Holga camera, but produced with a digital camera. These lenses fit all Nikon and Canon cameras with interchangeable lens possibilities, and they cost less than one hundred dollars. You can visit lensbabies.com and see for yourself. Dan was generous enough to sell me his own lens, as I was leaving the country the next day and I was not going to have the opportunity to get one in time to write up a report for you as I am doing now. So thank you Dan... (we are looking forward to your images for a Gallery of your work, very soon!).

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Can you see how we move backwards and forwards in dealing with these new technologies? In some ways aesthetics are retro and technologies are avant-garde. This is where we have to question ourselves how much we can tilt forward to fully benefit from technology. The image on the cover for instance. I never would have been able to achieve it without having access to all the tools in my digital set up. The file was a RAW file which ended up becoming a 100 megabyte file, enough to make a huge print. The manipulation of the colors and shadows was the result of enhancing the information that the camera was able to capture, but above all else, I was able to see while I was taking the picture, that I got what I wanted. The benefit of having a constant feedback on the creative process is something that has not been written about enough.

Moblogs!

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<http://www.xdcha.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=2461>

