

Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer.

Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer, version 1.4

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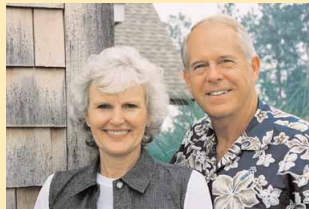


# SNAP:



the ultimate guide to  
**digital  
photography**  
for the consumer

version 1.4



**Mark Sincevich**  
Executive Director  
The Digital Photography Institute

**Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer**

*version 1.4, October 2006*

*by Mark Sincevich, Executive Director, the Digital Photography Institute*

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2006909241

10-Digit ISBN: 0-9662173-1-4

13-Digit ISBN: 9780966217315

The Digital Photography Institute (DPI) is a part of Staash Press, LLC. More information about the DPI can be found at [www.digitalphotoinstitute.com](http://www.digitalphotoinstitute.com), 301-654-3010 or [info@digitalphotoinstitute.com](mailto:info@digitalphotoinstitute.com).

Book designed in Microsoft Word.

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The author and the publisher have made every attempt to provide as much information as possible for consumers, aspiring photographers and photography enthusiasts to learn and understand how to better use digital cameras and the digital workflow. The book is also designed to help these same photographers save money.

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***This book is dedicated to all of those consumers and photography enthusiasts who want to know more about their equipment and about the world through the eye of their camera lens. May this book teach and inspire you to both take more photographs and to have more control of your final product. I also want to thank my wonderful wife Linda who has supported me with her love, wonderful meals and encouragement throughout the writing and production of this book.***



"As an instructor, I truly appreciate the effort that you put in preparing and presenting material that can be daunting for beginner photographers like me. In my opinion, you succeeded in making the subject of digital photography approachable and exciting for both novice and more advanced photographers."

**Ludmila Guslistova**

Professor, [George Washington University](#)

"We have been privileged to work with the best of the best in this field. Mark Sincevich's work has a depth and quality that is outstanding. Technically and artistically."

**Carol Ann Boyd**

General Manager, [Dodge Color, Inc.](#)

"In all the years I've worked with photography, be it trying to teach myself or attending classes at various colleges, *I've gained more knowledge with Mark as a personal instructor than all of the teachings and colleges combined.* I'm very impressed with his knowledge of the most simple to the most complex of situations photography has to offer. His recommendations, patience and business savvy have helped me improve not only my business, but product results have been outstanding by way of my own customers' testimonials. I'm looking for that big editorial spread in my favorite fashion magazine, and when that day comes, I will have Mark to thank for that push."

**Beverli Alford**

Fashion Photographer and CEO, [PhotoPlay Dzigns](#)

"Thank you for a wonderful presentation. I've attended at least three photography workshops in the last several years. Your presentation was the best in terms of knowledge shared and the skill with which it was presented."

**Jim Core**

"I liked your ideas for best preserving my budget and where equipment money is best spent. I liked the focus on the whole system from image to print."

**Lanny Hartmann**

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## Foreword

Digital cameras across the board are becoming more sophisticated. Everywhere you turn, somebody has the latest digital camera. Yet, having the camera is less than half of the challenge as you need to know about the digital workflow that includes your computer, software, printer and how to make and share your photography.

Manufacturers are coming out with new models every 12 to 18 months and this timeline is under increased pressure to be shortened in order to drive profits. What this means to you is a dizzying array of new features, a misplaced momentum for more mega-pixels (MP) and pressure to purchase such items as the fastest memory card and latest lens.

The concepts and principles contained in this book have been field tested over the last four years. Whether I have implemented them in an architectural, editorial, event or travel photography assignment, in my speaking programs, or in my own digital darkroom, I have made sure that they work and are of value to you.

In addition to being a professional photographer, I am a former computer industry veteran. Having 13 years of computer hardware and software sales and marketing experience gives me unique insight and application into the world of digital photography. I have found that there are many similarities between the computer field and the digital photography field.

The primary one being that manufacturers continue to release updates and product enhancements without paying attention to some basic core principals that are timeless. Also, this core information is lost to the consumer as all aspects of digital photography are becoming commoditized. There simply isn't enough of a profit left over to properly educate you.

The use of the gray card has been a given in photography for generations. When the card is placed in a photograph, the photographer and printer know what is 18% gray. Since they know what is the constant in the scene, that the rest of the image can be corrected based on this constant. The advent of digital photography means that this constant has shifted to White Balance. Now you can tell your camera what is 100% white and everything in the scene shifts in reference to this constant.

However, both the gray card and White Balance are constants from the skill level side of photography. This book gives you the constants that are timeless from the consumer perspective, so that you can make the best decisions about your entry into the digital photography world.

What I do know is that there is a tremendous amount of disinformation on the market. This subject was brought home to me again when I visited a photographic retailer and overheard the sales clerk touting the latest digital camera without really asking what the

customer wanted. More importantly, the camera and accessories being ‘pushed’ were not the ones that best matched the consumer’s values and needs.

I have met countless consumers in my digital photography speaking programs over the last four years who have felt misled about the camera they are currently using. Many of these same people end up going out and buying the right camera and accessories after they are armed with better information. The sad part about this process is that a lot of money is wasted. This book is about to change your experience in digital photography from an ongoing expense to an ongoing investment.

This disconnect from what people learn in my programs versus what the market is teaching them kept weighing on my mind. I literally woke up in the middle of the night about a year and a half ago with the subconscious suggestion that I needed to write this book. It’s the only digital photography book that has a user personality test, is going to be updated like software (this is version 1.4), guides people through the entire digital workflow process, and can save the user (that’s you) thousands of dollars over the life using your camera and other equipment!

I also get a lot of satisfaction from helping others improve their photography from both a technical and practical point of view. The study and practice of photography is really a study in awareness. Photography is a great tool for paying attention to the world around us, and I take great satisfaction in helping others to increase their awareness through the use of photography. Also, by using the tips and techniques contained in this book, you will be able to spend more time taking photographs and less time behind your computer monitor.

May you use this book to save money, increase your confidence and give you the peace of mind knowing that you are making the best investment in each area of digital photography for your budget.

If you have any suggestions on this book or questions, you can contact me at one of the following places, <http://www.digitalphotoinstitute.com/> or <http://www.staashpress.com/>. Remember to make the time to take new photographs and to share your creative vision with the world. This book will show you how.

Sincerely,



Mark Sincevich  
Executive Director  
Digital Photography Institute

## Introduction

### ***Why You Need to Read This Book***

It's becoming more difficult to make your foray into the world of digital photography without making a misstep. This misstep could be in the form of purchasing the wrong digital camera, getting a memory card that is too powerful for your needs or not paying attention to your paper and inks and realizing that you have spent a fortune on supplies. It is also in your best interest to be armed with plenty of information before your purchases.

The average consumer digital camera and accessories are priced in the neighborhood of \$500. This does not include the accessories needed for your digital workflow. If you purchase the wrong camera, you might have to start over in your entry or re-entry into the digital marketplace. This book was written to help you make the best decision based on your use and application. My goal has been to view each product in your own digital photography world as an investment. I would like to see you to continue to use each piece of equipment for as long as possible and most likely beyond the life of your current consumer-based or DSLR (digital single lens reflex) digital camera. This book has the following benefits for you.

- Save between \$300-\$700 or more by implementing the tips & techniques now!
- Continue to save thousands of dollars over the life of your camera
- Take the digital camera personality test for the best camera & accessories
- Discover over 140 web sites to help improve your digital workflow skills
- Increase your knowledge and understanding in all areas of digital photography
- Save valuable time by reading this manual versus attending multiple courses
- Make, share and sell your photography for satisfaction and profit
- Receive informational updates to keep your information current

“Snap: the ultimate guide to digital photography” is the only book that has a personality test designed to guide you to the best possible camera for your needs. It has detailed buying guides that have been partially completed to help speed your entry into the digital world. It is also the only digital photography book that is being released as software and will continue to be updated one to two times a year based on your support plan.

The book is divided into two major sections, Digital Camera and Digital Workflow. It also has a logical flow based on an ‘Eight Step’ program that ranges from Selecting the Best Camera and Accessories to Making an Impact with Your Art.

I have listed countless Internet addresses that will allow you to pursue material contained in the various sections in a new direction based on your interest and skill level. At the end of each section, recommendations are highlighted in a blue text box and where appropriate a green text box indicates your potential savings. Enjoy your investment in the world of digital photography and watch your savings grow as your knowledge increases.

## **State of the Industry**

It's obvious that digital cameras are here to stay! For the last three years (2003, 2004 and 2005) digital cameras have more than outsold film cameras and there is no end in sight. Manufacturers love the fact that consumers upgrade their cameras about every two or two and half years. This is at least three times as often versus their film-based cameras. I had a fully manual Olympus OM-1 camera that lasted from 1977 until 1999 (25 years including a few years that my Father used the camera) and many photographers using film cameras report similar results.

New sales of digital cameras mean stronger balance sheets for the companies making the products and this tends to push the release of yet another model with similar features. Manufacturers want and are coming out with new models every year or even sooner. Just think how often the upgraded model of your DVD player gets released and you'll understand what I mean. Varieties of new products released on a regular basis create confusion amongst the masses. If you want an idea of what I mean, take a look at the consumer digital camera offerings from Canon. They have 15 consumer cameras on the market and this doesn't even take into account the number of designer colors that some of the models are available. What this means to you is that consumer cameras have become a commodity.

As soon as I hear the word, 'commodity' I immediately want to rely on my own research and knowledge instead of trusting the sales person at a camera or electronics store. There is a basic reason why you need to rely on your own knowledge and understanding. When a product becomes a commodity, there is not enough margin or profit to train the sales people on unbiased advice to the consumer.

There are also SPIF's (special price incentive funds) that reward sales people for recommending one digital camera over another one – even if the camera being recommended isn't necessarily the best one for your needs. SPIF's are just a part of many industries, but you need to be aware of them in order to make better choices about the products you are purchasing. Just don't take the sales person at your local photographic retailer at their word. You'll need to do some investigation first! Aren't you glad that you are 'armed' with this book?

Yes, there will be no more developing and printing costs and this can save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year. In one year I saved over \$2,500 in developing costs! Just keep in mind that the money you save from one 'pot' will be spent in other areas such as the price of your new digital camera, memory cards, batteries, an external hard disk, software, and the time learning how to use various computer packages to refine your photographs. Sometimes your time is worth some amount of money.

I like to ask what a person's budget is for purchasing a digital camera. When I hear \$300, I have to remind the person that the final amount spent is going to be closer to 50-65% more. This means that a sum of about \$450 is needed when you add up all of the

accessories. My goal through all of your purchases is to keep you from having to spend additional funds when you upgrade from one digital camera to the next. In other words, I want you to use the same batteries, memory cards, cases, lenses, etc. so that your budget is the smallest possible each time and over the life of using your photography equipment!

When you purchase a digital camera, you also get a portable teacher. This is an immediate benefit to you the consumer. However, you need to get the camera out of 'P' or program mode or 'Auto' mode. The trend has been that cameras are getting smaller with less control. I find it absolutely appalling that some of the slimmer cameras don't even have optical viewfinders. You'll recognize this lack of a feature when you see people holding their cameras about two feet in front of their eyes when they are lining up their family members for a photograph. By relying on the LCD screen exclusively, you will chew up precious battery time and you may not be able to see what you are photographing properly as the LCD screens become blank in bright sunlight.

Over the next few pages, I am going to be discussing the main benefits (the pro's) and the main drawbacks (con's) of going digital. You need to know exactly what you are getting yourself into.

## **Biography of Mark Sincevich**

Mark Sincevich is the Executive Director of the Digital Photography Institute (DPI). The mission of the DPI is to educate consumers and photography enthusiasts in order to become better photographers and to help them save money. Mark is also the founder and Chief Perspective Officer of Staash Press.

Mark's first camera was a Kodak 110mm model in the early 1970's, but he soon inherited his Father's fully manual Olympus OM-1 in 1977 at the age of 12. For years Mark took photographs with his trusty f/1.8 50mm lens permanently affixed to the body of his OM-1. He likes to think of this experience in the same vein as Jack Nicholas having to play round after round of golf with one type of iron.

Mark has always had a knack for photography and computers. In addition to receiving a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a second Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Maryland at College Park, he spent 13 years working in the computer field in sales and marketing for such companies as Apple Computer and BakBone Software.

He earned the President's Club for sales excellence four times and was exposed to many different sales and technology training courses. He also had to understand technology and explain it to the consumer. During this time he continued to take photographs and to educate himself about photography.

Mark realized in the late 1990's that he wanted to pursue more photography, so he quit his well-paying position in the computer field and started to take additional classes in photography. He augmented his 50mm lens with a 28mm and a 105mm fixed lens and set off to Paris to further practice his photography and writing. In the gray skies of Paris, Mark was able to capture some amazing black and white images, many of which are highlighted in his collection.

The methodology that Mark has written about in this book was inspired by his experience of taking complicated technical subjects and making them more understandable in front of an audience. The information contained in this book continues to be 'field tested' from his numerous photography and speaking assignments.

Mark specializes in four areas of photography, architectural, editorial, event and travel, and his style is best described as photojournalistic. He is always looking for that unplanned magical moment. Mark creates fine art images mostly from his personal travel photography archive and has sold them to collectors all over the world.

In addition to having his photography available on his web sites, Mark continues to have a yearly solo photography show. His most recent show entitled "This is My Place" had 62 photographs on display and drew hundreds of people to the 6-week event. It was sponsored by 10 companies and organizations and helped raise money for the Washington School of Photography's scholarship fund.

A self-taught photographer, Mark has studied with many professionals including a few from the *National Geographic Society*. He was an official photographer at George W. Bush's second inauguration and he is frequently quoted in the media by such organizations as the Associated Press (AP), MSNBC and *Spirit* (Southwest Airlines In-flight Magazine).

He is a member of the ASMP (American Society of Media Photographers) and a former instructor at the Washington School of Photography. His photography and writing have been published all over the United States in such places as *The Washington Post Magazine*, *AAA World Magazine* and *Washington SmartCEO Magazine*. Mark is frequently interviewed on the radio and was a recent guest on *Shutterbug Magazine Radio*.

Mark believes in the power of photography and its ability to increase perspective and awareness. He incorporated his photography background and the experience of working for other organizations to create the Staash Perspective System (SPS). The SPS teaches that simplicity leads to more powerful communications. Mark is also a member of the National Speakers Association (NSA) and the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

Some of his customers include Bank of America, Sheraton Hotels, Iceland Air, the Arthritis Foundation, SAIC and the Greater Washington Initiative. In between his photography and speaking assignments, Mark can be found spending time with his family or writing in cafés with character.



# SNAP: the ultimate guide to digital photography for the consumer



Are you tired of purchasing digital cameras you don't like and equipment you don't need? Do you want to become more confident about your knowledge of the digital workflow process? Are you frustrated getting recommendations from people who don't take your best interests to heart? With so much confusing and conflicting information how can you make the best decisions? *Snap* was written to give you proven results.

*Snap* is the only digital photography book that has a personality test to help you select the right camera and accessories and an 8-Step program to further your understanding of the digital workflow process. *Snap* is designed for frequent updates to bring you the latest technology, presents timeless tips and techniques, and lists over 140 hard-to-find websites. All of this vital information is conveniently contained in one place saving you valuable time. *Snap* will increase your knowledge, improve your photography experience, and can save you hundreds of dollars!

*"As an instructor, I truly appreciate the effort that you put in preparing and presenting material that can be daunting for beginner photographers like me. In my opinion, you succeeded in making the subject of digital photography approachable and exciting for both novice and more advanced photographers."* —Ludmila Guslistova, Professor, George Washington University

*"In all the years I've worked with photography, be it trying to teach myself or attending classes at various colleges, I've gained more knowledge with Mark as a personal instructor than all of the teachings and colleges combined. I'm very impressed with his knowledge of the most simple to the most complex of situations photography has to offer. His recommendations, patience and business savvy have helped me improve not only my business, but product results have been outstanding by way of my own customers' testimonials. I'm looking for that big editorial spread in my favorite fashion magazine, and when that day comes, I will have Mark to thank for that push."* —Beverli Alford, Fashion Photographer

*"Thank you for a wonderful presentation. I've attended at least three photography workshops in the last several years. Your presentation was the best in terms of knowledge shared and the skill with which it was presented."* —Jim Core

*"I liked your ideas for best preserving my budget and where equipment money is best spent. I liked the focus on the whole system from image to print."* —Lanny Hartmann, Fox Fire Media



Mark Sincevich is the Executive Director of the Digital Photography Institute (DPI). The mission of the DPI is to educate consumers and photography enthusiasts to become better photographers and to help them save money.

Mark developed *Snap* from presenting his speaking programs on digital photography to consumers and photography enthusiasts for over four years. The book was further influenced from his numerous photography assignments and by his 13 years in the computer field where he presented and made technical subjects easy to understand.

A self-taught photographer, Mark has studied with many professionals including a few from the National Geographic Society. He is frequently quoted in the media by such organizations as the Associated Press (AP), MSNBC and *Spirit* (Southwest Airlines In-flight Magazine). Mark is a member of the ASMP (American Society of Media Photographers), the National Speakers Association (NSA) and he is a former instructor at the Washington School of Photography. His photography and writing have been published in such places as *The Washington Post Magazine*, *AAA World Magazine* and *Washington SmartCEO Magazine*.

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