

Reviews & Analysis by Callum Laing

tera-BYTE me!

Whether it's our mobile phones, a video camera, an MP3 player, or some gadget that hasn't even been conceived yet, it seems our insatiable appetite for digital memory shows no sign of abating.

The so called 'Terabyte Lifestyle' is a reflection and reaction to our never ending requirement to store more and more data. Only a couple of months ago, 'Moore's Law' reached its 40th anniversary. Gordon Moore, co-founder of Intel, the biggest chip maker in the world, had predicted that the speed of computers would double every 18 months.

This has turned out to be true, and so the requirement to store ever more data has also increased. We are familiar with buying computers with tens of gigabytes of hard drive space, but as we continue to store data, especially multimedia data, that requirement is now edging toward the terabyte world. One terabyte (1,024 Gigabytes) is around 240,000 songs at today's compression rates, but the reality is that as digital video cameras (see the Sony review, right) fall in price and many mobile phones start to include video technology, we are becoming a society enraptured with capturing and storing as many experiences as possible.

Go to any concert these days and a sea of cycloptic camera phones are all aimed at the stage. Already several of the top phones can record 10 minutes of video; but how long will it be before that seems woefully inadequate?

Apples' iPod was the first to bring mini-hard drives into the mainstream, but a push for ever more data means the trend is continuing. It will be interesting to see how our own internal hard drives cope with an ability to access ever more memory sources. In the space of less than a decade, we have already lost the ability to remember phone numbers. Instead, the challenge is simply to keep our phones with us at all times. What comes next in the terabyte lifestyle?



my little friend

The ultra slim Sony DSC-T7 Cyber-shot is so sleek and handy that it would be rude not to have it in your bag at all times! With 5.1 mega pixels and a 3x optical, as opposed to digital zoom, this tiny toy delivers high quality photos. The large 2.5' Hybrid Clear Photo LCD delivers images without distortion and prevents light from interfering with the displayed image, reproducing an accurate picture without dark spots. Also, the enhanced power management system allows extended shooting time. With just a few simple buttons, you will be surprised by what you and this little darling can achieve. - VW

www.sony.com

capture the latest



It was five years ago that I bought my first handheld Sony video camera, one of the original handy-cams. Over the years, it has been snowboarding, toured Europe, been shopping in New York and accompanied me to more parties than I can remember. More recently, it has been leading a more sedate life doing training videos for my day job. Of course, for the most part, filled video cassettes get neatly filed away in a drawer and forgotten.

However, with advances in computers and software, it has become much easier to edit those tapes, cut out all the dross, insert music over the most excruciating parts and even add subtitles.

It was with great excitement that I tore into Sony's new DCR-PC55 box, keen to see what advances had come along in the camera market. The first impression is of a very good looking gadget indeed. Designed for the WOW factor and finished in white, red, black or silver, this model is noticeably smaller than my original (probably around a 25 percent reduction in size), but still managed to deliver a glorious three-inch, rotating-tastic viewing screen that captures the target to perfection.

All the improvements one would expect are there, the zoom is much better; 10x optical zoom (120x digital). The image stabilisation has improved and the software on the touch screen is intuitive and retains Sony's spinning wheel concept which Sony PC users will be familiar with. The only real gripe I had was the plastic casings felt a bit cheap. www.sony.com



size doesn't matter

Portable media players are now competing on how small they can go. MPIO (pronounced "em-pee-oh") recently launched MPIO-One, acclaimed as the world's smallest portable media player. With a sleek design, 65K colour OLED LCD, and supporting all standard video and audio formats, one can also tune to FM stations or use the voice recording function. Plus, the rechargeable batteries last for 15 hours (video for two hours) which comes in handy for lengthy travelling jaunts. - JD www.mpio.com