

The Camera – Computer Interface

How to get photos from the camera to the computer

The first step in getting your photos off of your camera and onto your computer is to **read the manual**. No, that's not meant to be funny. You must read the manual because you need to know what kind of memory storage media your camera uses. Most cameras use either SD media or CF media. See the photos below.



SD (Secure Digital) Media



CF (Compact Flash) media

The manual for your camera will explain which type of media it uses, where this media is installed and how to remove it. Notice in the pictures above, one of these items is labeled 8gb and the other is labeled 16gb. These numbers refer to the storage capacity of the individual media card in Giga-Bytes. It is important to know what the maximum media storage size is that your camera can address. This is most important with SD type media because cards with larger storage use a different storage method. Also, if your camera can only address 2gb of media storage, there is no reason to spend the big bucks for an 8gb media card. If you must purchase media for your (DSLR) camera, go to Rob Galbraith's site and follow the instructions to determine which brand works fastest in your camera. The site address is:

http://www.robgalbraith.com/bins/multi_page.asp?cid=6007

Now that you know what kind of media your camera uses, you will need to buy a card reader for that media type. It is best to buy a card reader that is specific to your type of media. If you buy a multi-media card reader, it will be possible to insert the card incorrectly and thereby destroy your expensive media card and consequently lose your photos. Media card readers can be purchased for as little as \$7 or \$8 for SD readers at places like Wolf Camera and Target. CF card readers are more expensive.



SD card Reader



CF Card Reader

These devices are designed to connect to your computer, either directly or via a provided cable and they connect to what is called a **USB Port**. USB stands for Universal Serial Bus which

simply means that almost every computer has at least one of these connections. The symbol for this port may be found next to it and looks like this.



Now you have everything you need to save your photos to your computer.

How to do it.

1. Attach your card reader to your computer.
2. Turn off your camera and remove the media card.
3. Insert the card into your card reader.
4. Windows
 - a. Important: ignore (close) the autoplay suggestion that pops up in Windows.
 - b. Open Windows explorer.
 - c. Create a directory (folder) on your hard drive called Photos and then select it.
 - d. Create a sub-directory named for the date you took the pictures. This will help keep them organized. For example: 2008-02-16 would be a directory for pics taken on the 16th of February of 2008. If you place the year then the month and then the day, the directories will sort in date order. (Organizing your photos by subject requires special software and is way beyond the scope of this article.)
 - e. Copy the photos from your media card (which will show up in Windows Explorer as another hard drive) to the new directory you have just created. Voila! Your photos are now on your hard drive in a folder you named and can be opened and altered using Photoshop or any other photo software you choose. It is a good idea, however, not to change the original photo but save any changed photo with another name so that the original is always available in case the photo software gets much better in the future.
 - f. Close Windows Explorer.
5. Macintosh
 - a. IPhoto should open automatically
 - b. Select "Import Photos"
 - c. Typically, you can let IPhoto delete the photos from your card when it asks. You now will have a gallery with your photos.*
 - d. Either close IPhoto or, if you want to stay in IPhoto to work on your images, unload the card (click the small black circle next to the card in the left hand menu)
6. Remove the media from the card reader and return it to the camera.
7. Turn the camera on and go to the menu and format your media card.
8. **Important:** Go to the menu and format your card **again**.

You now have an empty card in your camera so you can take more pictures and you have all of your pictures on your computer ready for processing.

** Note to Mac users – If you don't want to use IPhoto, your system can be configured to accept photos in a similar fashion to the Windows procedure above or it can be configured to import directly into Adobe Bridge.*

