

Don't get stuck with a full digital camera memory card on your trip

Pack an extra, or use one of these ways to download and reuse

By Jefferson Graham
USA TODAY

People who sign up for Andy Biggs' photographic safaris to Africa always ask him the same question: How do we save our digital pictures and clear our memory cards while away?

It's a common concern, not just for digital shutterbugs shooting lions, cheetahs and zebras in Tanzania, but also for vacationers this summer from Disney World to Alaska.

Digital cameras are projected to be in 42% of homes by the end of the year. That means more travelers than ever will have to contend with memory backup issues.

A host of products have recently been introduced to solve this problem. Photographers are pitching in, too.

"We spend a lot of money on our trips to go places," says Biggs, a photographer based in Austin. "If we can afford the time and money, we should take care to pack a device that makes sure our images are safe, too."

In the pre-digital days, travelers brought extra rolls of film or purchased them on the road. With digital, photos are stored on little memory cards that can be re-used after pictures are transferred, usually to a PC. Traveling with a laptop isn't an option for everyone, and many people forget to bring an extra memory card and refuse to buy one on the road due to hefty prices. They cost \$50 to \$200, de-

pending on capacity.

Biggs doesn't usually take a laptop to Africa. Instead, he packs a small device called the Tripper. It's a portable hard drive that operates on batteries or AC and has a slot for a memory card. Pictures can be transferred to the Tripper, and at home, moved to the PC.

The Tripper starts at \$219.99 for a 20-gigabyte unit. An 80-GB version is \$359.99.

It's just one of many new similar "image tank" possibilities. Others include a portable CD burner that records images directly from the memory card (the \$269 RoadStor from MicroSolutions). And there's a unit that records CDs and plays DVDs when connected to a TV: Addonics' \$235 Multi-Function Recorder.

If you own an MP3 player with an internal hard drive, such as an Apple iPod or Dell DJ, you already own a backup device with 15 to 30 gigabytes of hard drive space.

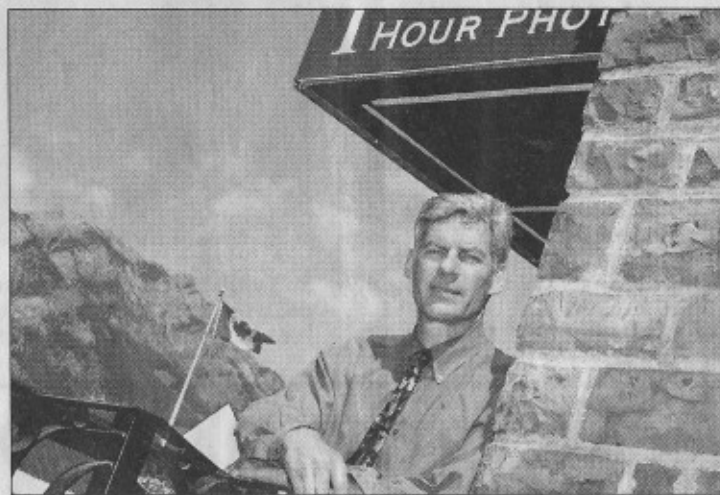
In the past, there was no way to get pictures onto the hard drive. But now you can.

Tech accessory company Belkin just introduced Media Reader for iPod, a \$90 device that clips into iPods sold after April 2003. Insert the memory card into the reader, and the reader into the iPod, and the pictures can be stored until you're ready to move them to the PC or Mac.

Delkin Devices' \$69 "USB Bridge" works with iPods, other MP3 players, external hard drives or even little flash memory key-chain devices. It will directly transfer data from the memory card via the camera to another USB device.

Some other options:

► **Photo labs.** John Seigner expects to make many back-up CDs



By John Jacobbi for USA TODAY

CD burner: John Seigner expects his film lab near Banff National Park in Alberta to burn thousands of CDs for tourists this summer.

for tourists this summer at his Banff Film Lab near Banff National Park in Alberta.

"It's so beautiful here, people end up taking more photos than they think they will," he says. "Their cards get full really quick."

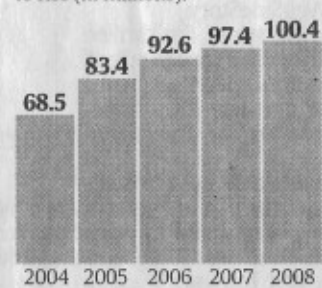
For around \$6, he'll clear the card and put the images onto a CD. He promotes the service heavily in his store to alert travelers. He expects to do "thousands" of CDs this summer vs. a "couple of hundred" last year.

You may not find an outlet like Seigner's willing to make CDs for you if your travels take you to really remote spots. But about 21,000 locations in the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland are now fully digitized and can offer such services.

The trade group Photo Marketing Association International just set up the prints-are-memo-

Digital increase

Sales of digital cameras are expected to rise (in millions):



Source: IDC projections

By Alejandro Gonzalez, USA TODAY

ries.com Web site to help consumers find labs. Plan-ahead types can type in a city they are visiting for a list of labs before they leave home.

National retailers such as Wal-Mart and FedEx Kinko's offer in-

Get lots of batteries before you go

In the film era, shutterbugs were advised to pack extra film and batteries before leaving home.

For digital photographers, film is no longer a worry. But batteries are more important than ever. Rechargeable batteries that come with cameras last only an hour or two, replacements are expensive (\$40 to \$60) and they're rarely found on the rack at the out-of-town drugstore.

What to do:

► **Buy ahead.** An online search for "digital camera batteries" isn't very effective for specific cameras. Try Amazon.com or camera maker accessory sites like Canon's www.canon.companystore.com or Nikon's www.nikonmall.com.

Some retailers are beginning to stock replacements from third-party manufacturers. Delkin (www.delkin.com) sells batteries that fit cameras from Canon, Sony, Nikon, Kodak and others at prices from \$29.99 to \$53.99.

► **Read the fine print, ask questions.** Some cameras come with rechargeable batteries, but the manufacturers don't always tell you that they can be replaced easily at the drugstore. Nikon Coolpix 4200 and 5200, and Hewlett-Packard's Photosmart R707, for instance, both ship with proprietary batteries but also work with Duracell's new CP1.

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stant CD burning as well. Wal-Mart charges \$3.84 for CDs at all its 3,041 stores. Kinko's has a \$7 service in 900 of its 1,100 stores.

► **Hotel services and Internet cafes.** Many hotels have business centers. Bring along a card reader and blank CDs and transfer the media by plugging into the hotel PC. You can also do this at Internet cafes.

► **Buy extra memory cards.** This is the easiest option, and it won't require any cables, futzing around in your hotel room or searching for retailers.

For considerably less than the cost of an external device, you can leave home with peace of mind.

Memory cards come in different formats. Compact Flash, used on

Nikon and Canon digital cameras, is the most economical. A 512-megabyte compact flash card — the equivalent of about 14 36-exposure rolls of film — starts at around \$80, down from around \$125 last summer.

If your vacation is planned for September, be on the lookout for a major savings in a new hard drive for cameras from Seagate. The \$199 5-gigabyte drive will fit in Compact Flash slots and offers much more memory — at a lower cost — than photographers have ever seen. With room for about 5,000 photos, or 150 rolls of 36-exposure film at medium resolution, you shouldn't worry about finding extra space to shoot more pictures.