

DIGITAL CAMERAS and scanners are wonderful things, but what happens to the images once you've finished with them? With prints, a photo album or even an old shoe box work fine, but storing and keeping track of digital images can be a challenge.

When the *South China Morning Post* converted its photo department from a wet darkroom to scanners and computers, getting the archiving system up and running was the priority. For amateur photographers shopping for a shiny new camera, storage and retrieval of photos is usually an afterthought.

You might think this discussion should begin by looking at what type of software you will need. However, the first thing to consider is where you want to put your photos. Hard disks are huge and cheap these days, but I still prefer to keep my photos on CDs. They are more mobile and easier to move should I decide to buy a new computer.

If you choose to save your photos on CDs, it is



important you make the decision before putting anything into your electronic album. If you put a photo on your hard disk, upload it to your photo database and later move the photo to a CD, the database will not know where the picture is. That is going to become a big problem three or four CDs down the road. Best to burn the CD first and upload the pictures afterwards.

The biggest issue is compatibility. You want to manage your images in a way that will work with any database program. If for some reason your needs change and you require a new database program, it's important to be able to move your pictures without having to re-enter data, such as the subject and the date the photos were taken.

With high-end databases, this is a fairly simple project. Photographs can carry embedded caption information called IPTC data that these databases can read and modify. If you change something within the database, such as the spelling of someone's name in a caption, the new information is written into the original photo. If later you decide to change to a different program, you simply reload all of the photos, which automatically uploads the amended data.

Sadly, this is not the case with most inexpensive programs. Any caption information you write is often kept only within the database, which means moving your photographs to another program is going to be a hassle unless you plan well.

This starts with using the file name. Copy the file from your camera to your hard disk and name it something like "Dad's Birthday". Check the creation date on the file. If it is the same as the day the photo was shot there is no need to add a date to the file name. Simply upload photos to your electronic album and you can search by the file name or the creation date. No more work is required.

Make sure that if you alter the file (you might use Photoshop to give Dad a moustache) you do not save the changes. Save a copy of the file

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If you are a highly capable may consider database for a few bucks, (HK\$390) IMA that can read is Canto Cum on both Mac a it is a bit more sells for a rel

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The power nap has recently become a bit of a fad in the United States. Proponents claim a short nap of 15 to 20 minutes leaves them better able to take on the rest of the day. The problem is in the timing — too short a nap and you lose all the benefits, sleep too long and you're more likely to wake groggy than refreshed.

But with the JETLOG 24x7 PowerNap expansion module for the Handspring Visor, the perfect power nap is in the palm of your hand. Hold your Handspring with your thumb on the module and the module monitors your muscle tension. The sensor modules determine when you fall asleep and wake you before you slip into a deep slumber. The JETLOG is available from Handspring's website (www.handspring.com) for US\$49.99.

