

reviews hard and software

Kodak DC265

Kodak's new digital camera packs a real punch – but is it a knockout blow?

price
£750

telephone
0800 281 487

company
Kodak

web
www.kodak.co.uk

Kodak's new DC265 is an enhanced version of the DC260 model, sharing the same 1.6 megapixel resolution. But it offers improved performance, including, it's claimed, improved battery life. However, the DC265's battery indicator decided that the fresh set of Duracells in our test camera were wearing thin after just a handful of frames. NiCads seem to cope a lot better, though.

The resolution race is hotting up, and while megapixel cameras were big news last year, 2.3 megapixel models are now appearing. This means that Kodak's DC265 isn't quite cutting-edge, despite the lofty price tag. You do get a decent

new for PC **new for mac** optical zoom range, the equivalent of 38mm-115mm on a 35mm camera, and the 16MB memory card supplied can store up to 120 images at low resolution. If you want high-resolution images, however, expect to store no more than around 30 before you have to download them.

Auto-exposure and auto-white balance are supplemented by a fair amount of manual control. The focusing range is also good, and the built-in album-organising tools will appeal to digital photographers who don't use computers. For those who do, a USB port provides vastly superior speed and convenience over an ordinary serial connection. You also get a built-in



Background illustration by: Georgina Hinton f 01225 462 922

The DC265 camera has a cutting-edge price tag, but without cutting-edge resolution.

microphone for audio notes and infrared control options, and the camera can take a variety of extras, including wide-angle or telephoto lens adaptors.

These features are fine, but the DC265 is difficult to pick up and hold without pressing one of the many buttons, sticking your thumb on the LCD display, or covering one of the various sensors on the front. The LCD display

itself is bright and sharp, but becomes blurry if the camera's moving at all.

All in all, then, the results are good, but the overall experience isn't so good, especially at this price. **ca**

Verdict



LightWave Shaders

Over 100 shaders to create textures and surfaces in *LightWave* and *Inspire 3D*...

price
\$103

telephone
Buy on-line

company
IFW

web
www.shaders.org

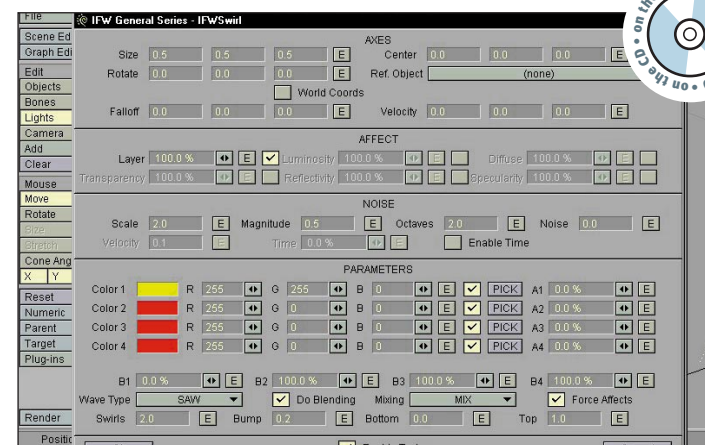
IFW Shaders is a set of over 107 procedural texture plug-ins for *LightWave* and *Inspire 3D*. The shaders are sold as 11 plug-ins (though all 107 shaders show up in *LightWave*'s Plug-in pop-up), offering styles from space and special effects to stone and organics. They all share a common interface, so once you've learned what all the parameters do, you should find it easy to get the results you want.

However, these aren't the easiest parameters to decipher, and fiddling can produce unpredictable results. The sparse on-line manual doesn't help much but, nevertheless, the vast range of textures and surfaces you can achieve means you'll want to spend the

pc only time learning how these shaders work. To get you started, you get 700 preset surface files.

Some of the shaders produce a 2D texture, while others are 'solid' 3D. The interface gives you the option of various projection modes for the 2D variety. The whole collection offers great variety for surfacing, featuring shaders like Anisotropic and Z Buffer through to Hull (for metal plates) and Dinosaur Skin. And by altering the default settings for each, you can achieve startlingly different looks.

A shader can be applied to any of the texture channels independently, and many have a bump parameter too. You can also blend shaders with the object's underlying surface using a



The interfaces for the shaders can be a little daunting, but the first three sections are common to all of them. The Parameters section is shader-specific, but many other features are still shared.

percentage, and many of them give you the option of the apply modes Add, Subtract, Mix, Multiply, And Or and XOR. You can also use up to four shaders in *LightWave* (or two in *Inspire*) and blend between them. For example, you could apply the Metal shader together with the Anisotropic and Scratched shaders to build a surface, and blend between them to get the right effect. Almost every parameter is animatable, via a

standard *LightWave* envelope. This adds another dimension to an invaluable collection.

While the interface is daunting, *IFW Shaders*' results are excellent, and the overall quality is high. **ca**

Verdict

