

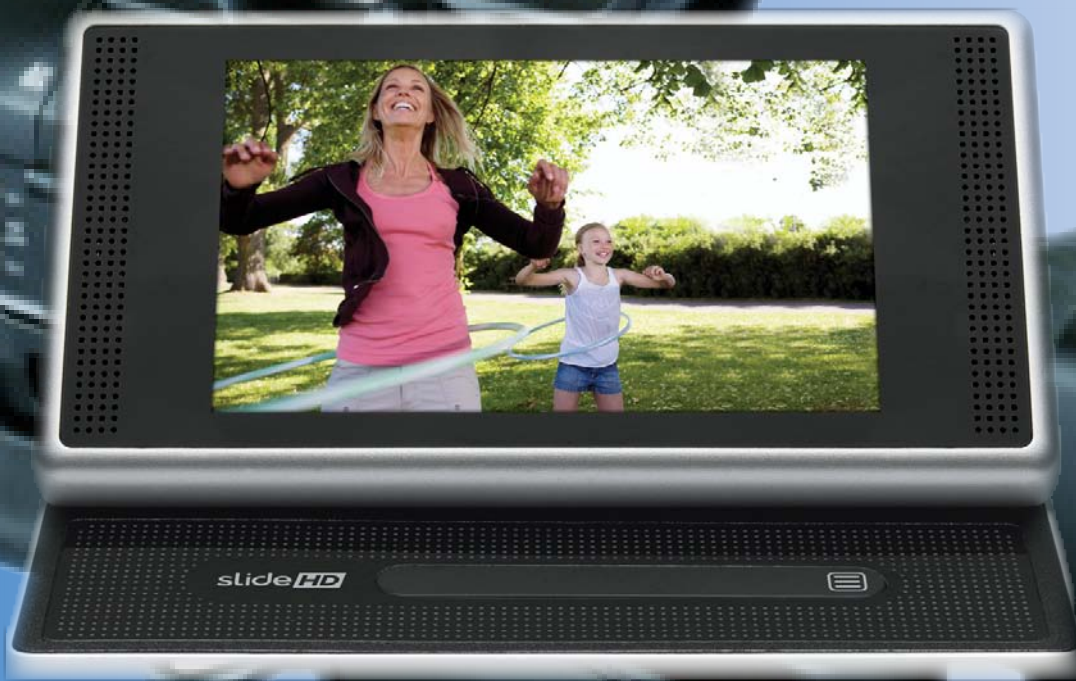
The 6sight Report

THE FUTURE OF IMAGING

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Shoot and Share Camcorders evolve and improve



- **Interviewed: Flip, Kodak, and HP**
- **All the latest video cameras**

Many Millions Making Motion Pictures

Last issue we reported on all the new cameras released so far in 2010. Amidst the wide array of features, one is a near-constant these days — one that a few years ago was on only a few still cameras.

That feature of course, is high-quality motion picture capture. While low-end video came to compact cameras more than a decade ago, it came in an unusable form: low-resolution screen sizes and low frame rates yielded stuttering postage stamp video.

In recent years, quality standard definition video capture became a de facto standard on, at least, all mid-range and higher cameras.

Then HD hit — first as a premium feature in only the priciest cameras, and then, all too soon, as an expected — no, required feature on all but the cheapest models.

So if still cameras are still selling in the millions, and almost every still camera captures HD video — if even many a mobile phone captures HD! — why would *anyone* buy a single-function device, one that does nothing but record video? More to the point, why would *millions* of people do that?

Millions of people bought Flip video cameras in just the last few months, actually. When we spoke to the company last Fall, their overall sales tally was around 2 million units. Today it is more than 4 million!

And the company, now a division of Cisco, is no longer the sole provider of the simple pocket cameras it pioneered: Kodak has marketed models for years and continues to innovate there, and, among many other players large and small, one the world's top technology corporations is

also entering the fray: HP.

Among the primary reasons cited by everyone for the success of single-function camcorders are affordability, durability, convenience, and simplicity. However, we think "simplicity" only begins to touch on the user experience that most consumers love about the devices.

Take, for example, the regular occurrence of a birthday party: A true photographer makes it a point of pride to capture that perfect moment — the split-second the child blows out the candles.

Most of the rest of us, however, want to be in the moment, not in the camera — and so we are more than happy to push the record button and rest assured the simple device is capturing the entire action, perfect moments and all. Even if we are hand-holding the

tiny camcorder, with a large LCD that lets us frame the shot at arm's length, we are still in the scene singing along with everyone, still interacting with friends and family — not hidden behind a viewfinder.

That's not the only reason for the continued success of camcorders large and small, of course. They are hitting the market in a bewildering bevy of capabilities, sizes, shapes, weights, and more — all presented in our round up this issue of 2010's new models, from the lowest-end pocket shooters to pricey products aimed at feature film production.

One last statistic to keep in mind: research firm IDC reports nearly 45 percent of all camcorders shipped in 2009 captured HD; that's expected to rise to 60 percent this year.

Inside this issue:

Simplicity Sells Camcorders

Pure Digital launched a new market with the Flip pocket camcorder. Now part of Cisco, the company has sold more than 4 million units. Page 2.

Competition in Camcorders

HP, Kodak, and Flip debate the market drivers. Page 7.

Still shooter on video

Nikon's Steve Heiner captures motion with SLRs. Page 18.

Camcorder Latest Models

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Bob McKay's insider's view.

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