

# TWO IN A MILLION

Two 1m-plus pixel cameras, both under £400, tested, compared and rated by us

WORDS & PICTURES RAY ALLEN



## Features *What do the cameras offer?*

### Fuji MX-1700 zoom

The 1.5 million pixels will resolve a 1280x1024 image, which is higher than Kodak's 1.3 million pixels 1280x960. Inside this tiny aluminum-magnesium body you get a true 3x optical zoom, a convenient built-in lens cover and a metal tripod mount. The zoom lens has a range of 6.6-19.8mm, equivalent to 38-114mm on a 35mm camera, and an aperture range of f/3.2-f/7 at wide-angle and f/5-11.5 on telephoto. Exposure is controlled by auto TTL metering with 64 zones and a number of useful manual overrides. Round the back there's a high-resolution 2in polysilicon TFT screen. Both cameras have the same size viewfinder but the MX-1700 seems a little clearer. Neither have diopter adjustment for the eye-pieces, but this may not be a major concern.



Contrast is excellent from the Fuji, you can't fault it for the price.

### Kodak DC240 zoom

While Fuji use SmartMedia cards, Kodak prefer CompactFlash. The 3x zoom lens has a focal length of 39-117mm (35mm format) and an f/2.8-4.5 aperture. Zoom speed is quick compared to the Fuji, video output is PAL & NTSC (the Fuji is PAL only) and it weighs 328g compared to Fuji's 230g. The smaller 1.8in LCD screen features Kodak's bright colour interface. This gives it that wow factor when you switch it on. Build quality on both cameras is very high, but the Kodak has a slightly more solid feel, which is helped by its size and the rubber-style hand grip.



Not a bad result from the Kodak – a little soft and slightly over-exposed.

## Handling *How easy are they to use?*

### Fuji MX-1700 zoom

At first glance this small camera looks as though it could be fiddly to use, but it's not the case. You soon become accustomed to the size and familiar with the layout. Start-up is quick – around 2.5 seconds – and it's ready to go. Saving images takes around three seconds, so it's a little faster than the Kodak. Zoom is smooth but not as quick as the Kodak.

Focus is fast and locks onto the subject quickly.

The small size makes it truly portable, you can stick it in your pocket or bag with no problem, so you're more likely to take it out with you. Battery consumption is good and you could go on for a couple of days and get some good pictures without worrying about battery life.

### Kodak DC240 zoom

While bigger than the MX-1700, handling is still very good and button layout is excellent. The two main buttons you need – power and mode selectors – can be easily operated with your thumb. Adjusting the brightness of the LCD screen is done via a thumb wheel underneath the camera body. Start-up time is almost the same as the MX-1700 at around 2.5 seconds with recording time at around 3-4 seconds. Manual exposure controls are accessed via an on-screen menu. This is more fiddly than the Fuji with its dedicated manual mode settings via the main control switch. The DC240 takes twice as long as the MX-1700 to focus at around one second. Having to remove the old style clip-on lens cap when you want to use the camera is also slow in comparison with the slide-over cover of the MX-1700.



Impressive colour reproduction from the Fuji, giving accurate pictures every time.



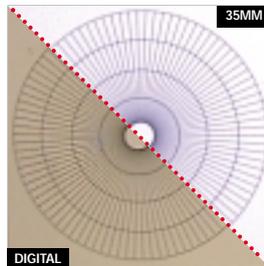
Colour is on the warm side with a slightly softer feel to the image.

## Test pictures *What is picture quality like?*

### Fuji MX-1700 zoom £399



The better lens of the MX-1700 shows its strength over the Kodak in this house shot. The extra pixel power of the Fuji over the DC240 is seen in the close up, below which ultimately portrays a more accurate and natural picture.



Superb levels of detail from the Fuji, very good contrast and exposure. But watch for lens distortion at the edges as our test card shows.

The best-looking camera out of the two, small, light and beautifully made. There are plenty of manual overrides if you need them and some nice image effects built in.

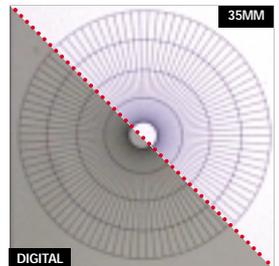
Shots taken on this little baby give bags of detail and contrast which are sharper and better-exposed than the DC240. Colour is neutral and accurate.

The only thing wrong with images is the lens suffers from pronounced barrel distortion at the extreme of the zoom, which may be why the MX-1700 switches to 55mm focal length as default when powered up! The flash lacks in distance compared to the DC240.

### Kodak DC240 zoom £399



Very good focus from the Kodak, but colour balance has lost the warmth of the low sun in this shot. This can, of course, be fixed in the computer along with the exposure. The resolution is let down by Kodak's lens which isn't as sharp as Fuji's



Our test card shows good white balance, but sharpness is let down by the quality of the lens. But as you can see, image distortion is less than the Fuji.

Easy to use with the buttons in all the right places. Pictures are captured well, but slightly on the soft side when you view them at the side of the MX-1700.

Exposure is on the bright side and colour rendition is a tad warm compared to the MX-1700. Everything appears in sharp focus and very little trips this camera up.

The area where it excels over the MX-1700 is barrel distortion which is almost invisible, but flash can be overpowering in some shots. Both cameras struggle to focus quickly in low-light indoor situations, but most of the time this isn't a problem.



## WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX?

### Fuji MX-1700 zoom

The MX-1700 comes with a rechargeable Lithium-ion battery which is good for about 150 shots and an AC adaptor that doubles as the charger. It takes around five hours to charge the battery. An 8Mb SmartMedia card, serial cables for Mac and PC, video cable, wrist strap and owner's manual are also supplied. Fuji software CD has Adobe

PhotoDeluxe, Fuji's own Picture Shuttle transfer software and

TWAIN drivers. No USB cable is provided, but Fuji make an optional USB SmartMedia card reader (SM-R1) which has an eject button.

### Kodak DC240 zoom

You get an 8Mb CompactFlash card, lens cap, USB cable, serial cables for Mac and PC, video cable, 4 x Ni-MH (1450mAh capacity) rechargeable AA batteries that should give around 150 pics, charger (eight hours to fully charge batteries), wrist strap and user guide. Software includes Adobe PhotoDeluxe, PageMill, Kodak's picture management software and TWAIN drivers. An AC adaptor and carry case are optional.



## ★ OVERALL VERDICT ★

Both cameras are easy to use and are responsive when out and about, but the Fuji has the edge when it comes to image quality. The Kodak is let down by its slightly soft results. Considering the size of the MX-1700 you can get some great images from such a small camera. Overall a truly pocketable digital camera that gets the Digital PhotoFX vote of confidence.



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