

MicroFilmmaker Magazine

Articles & Interviews

Upcoming Technology For Your Stocking: A MicroFilmmaker's Wish List

by AJ Wedding



The Day of the RED Announcement, 4:38 PM PDT

Technology changes so rapidly nowadays that microbudget filmmakers have unprecedented access to quality tools that rival and will soon exceed what has been available exclusively to industry professionals for 50 years. The introduction of digital video recording and editing to the general public in the early 1990s spawned a bevy of microbudget filmmakers anxious to run and gun, creating their projects in increasingly higher quality with each passing year. Today, we have seen the image size and resolution of a digital camera surpass the level of 35mm film...and it increases exponentially with each passing year. Here is a brief look at what is becoming available in the coming months, though it is possible that by the time this article is printed, the information may already be out of date!



4k And Beyond

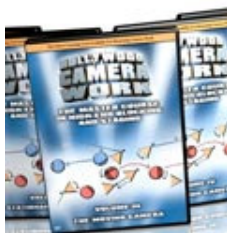
Dalsa created the first 4k, 8 million pixel uncompressed image sensor in the 1990s after successfully using their technology in film scanners that allowed for the restoration of countless classic films. This allowed them to pioneer the now-

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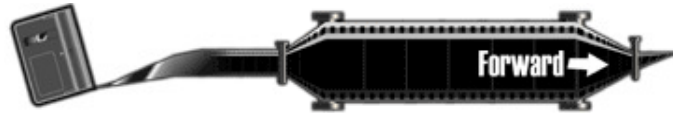
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standard digital intermediate process. Their Dalsa Origin 4k camera system was released in 2003, and has been going strong ever since. The camera was rather bulky and difficult to use in practical situations, so the Dalsa Evolution soon followed. The new camera was much smaller and easier to use, though the price tags on both cameras were out of the range of most filmmakers. Assuming their competition would come from Panavision, who developed a system called the Genesis, Dalsa set up shop in Woodland Hills, CA...right next door to their supposed rival.

Little did they know, a popular sunglasses manufacturer had decided that microbudget filmmakers should be given the same tools that pros use. Jim Jannard and his team worked with the best camera techs available and built the ever changing Red One, which has revolutionized the indie film world. Most people know that Red had plans to release a 5k Epic camera and a smaller, 3k prosumer camera called Scarlet in 2009...little did they know that their competition was about to change the game once again.



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A MicroFilmmaker's Wish List, Pg. 2

Red Camera lovers may have noticed that the “Coming Soon” signs that used to boast the Epic and Scarlet on the Red site have been pulled down, as they are both going through a redesign. Could that be because of this?

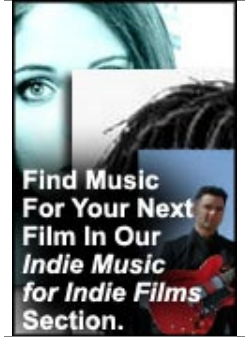


Canon EOS 5D Mark II

The sequel to the Canon 5D was recently announced as a 22 megapixel, Full-frame still camera. Why is that important? Utilizing its full frame capability (which allows true 35mm depth of field), the 5D Mark II can also shoot video in 4:4:4 color space with 4k image size, which gives you much more potential for color correction and image acquisition options. Additionally, higher color capture is very helpful for special effects, when the footage is minimally compressed. The 5D uses a form of H.264 compression, which reduces the quality of the footage from its RAW state and may prevent special effects from being significantly improved. With that said, however, the footage it has been shown to acquire is impressive from a filmmaking perspective and could make a lot of microfilm makers consider shooting a film with it. **[Editor's Note: To see exactly how well it performs in real world tests, camera reviewer Tom Stern will be reviewing the 5D Mark II in a future issue of MFM.-JH]**

Now, do I think that they will deck out the Mark II to shoot variable frame rates, and give it the technical capabilities of a Red One? Probably not. Currently, you can only shoot at 30 frames per second, and of course the flash cards you would shoot with are relatively small considering the amount of information captured in 4k moving images. However, with all of the excitement surrounding this new camera, I would not be surprised to see an announcement in the near future of a Canon XL-video camera that features a Mark II core...shooting in 4K at a price much closer to the current prosumer HD cameras on the market. With Canon and Sony catching up on this technology, Red will have to raise the bar once again in order to stay competitive in this quickly growing market. Even as I write this article, Red counts down to an

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announcement of their re-vamped Epic and Scarlet plans.

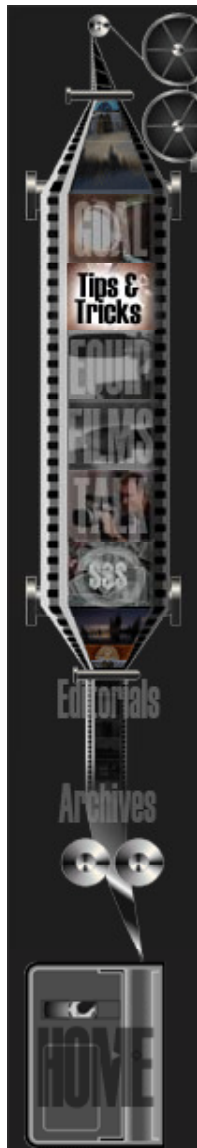


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A MicroFilmmaker's Wish List, Pg. 3

The Day of the RED Announcement, 5:08 PM PDT

And here we are, once again, finding the bar raised even higher. Red has announced a few amazing innovations that I will attempt to summarize. From Red's inception, their moniker of making "Obsolescence Obsolete" seemed funny, since anything digital is a year behind as soon as you buy it. But they have managed to find a way, at both the Scarlet and Epic price points. Both "cameras" are now released only as camera "brains."



This way, since you have to buy all of the peripherals to put your dream camera together, those peripherals never become useless. As the tech advances, you will simply swap out the brain for the more advanced one. If that wasn't enough for you, the brain can be used for both your cinema camera and your high resolution still camera! Current Red One owners will be allowed to return their camera body for a full refund credit towards the Epic brain, which is amazing. No word as of yet if the credit will continue to push forward as the 6k-9k-28k brains are released.

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With 3k Scarlet brains starting at \$2500, and 5k Epic brains starting at \$28,000, it's definitely an interesting time. Oh, and by the way, their dual brain set up also allows for true 3D.



Seven Days after the RED Announcement, 6:08 PM PDT

Without adding any conjecture, it has come to my attention that Dalsa has decided to get out of the digital camera business. They are in the midst of selling their camera development division to ARRI, which should help them get back into the digital race. Will Canon and Sony be able to step up their game even more? Will the Nikon D20 (a DSLR that also sports video capture technology) prove to be a useable tool for microbudget filmmakers? In the digital game, anything can change. The good news is, it only gets better for filmmakers like us.



AJ Wedding graduated from Western Michigan University in 2000, and headed out to Los Angeles. As an actor, he has played co-starring roles on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Drake and Josh, and most recently a TV movie, The Fall of Hyperion. As a writer/director, he has won awards from the East Lansing Film Festival, Houston Worldfest, and most recently sold a feature called The Disappearance of Jenna Matheson, set to release next year. He currently co-writes and co-stars in the web series Infamous, distributed by 60 Frames Entertainment.



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