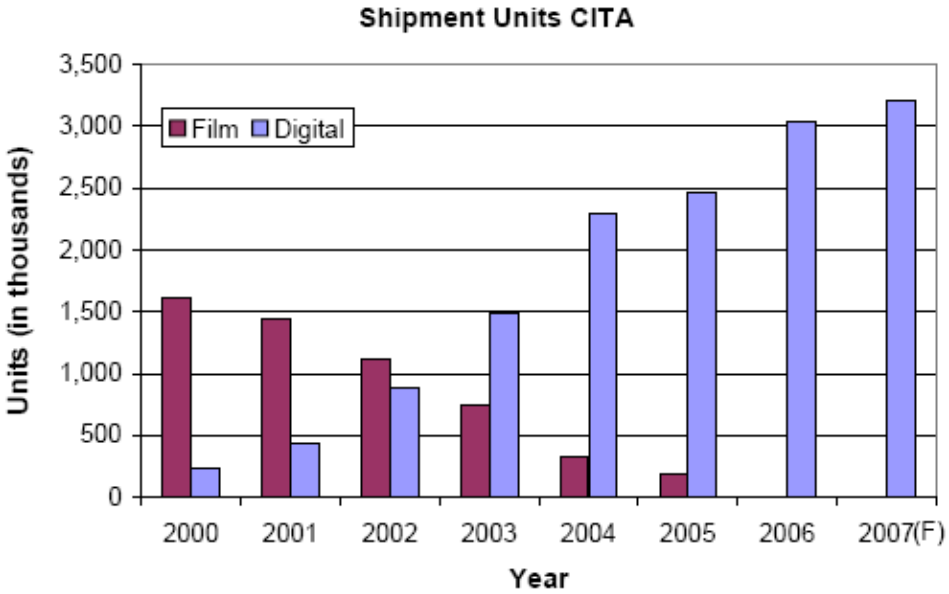
Digital Cameras vs Film: the Collapse of Film Photography

- Can Your Digital Camera reach Film Photography Performance?
- Film photography started in early 1800's – almost 200 years
- Commercial Digital Cameras started late 1995
- By 2000 digital "point & shoot" fell <$400
- Digital Single Lens Reflex Cameras (Nikon D1) appeared in 1999 at $10,000
- Cannon 10D first semipro DSLR <$2000
- Digital Rebel in 2003 first <$1000
- By 2006 film camera almost stopped



Why Digital Cameras Succeed

- Digital has clear advantages in many areas
- Immediate image view – can correct picture
- Film hours/days (or minutes with polaroids)
- Cost: Film >50¢ photo,
- Storage – film bulky, digital 4GB cards now $40, <0.1¢/photo
- If use DVD 4GB disk cost 25¢, holds ~4000, 0.006¢/picture
- Digital SLR's now near film in price

EOS Rebel K2 ~$400

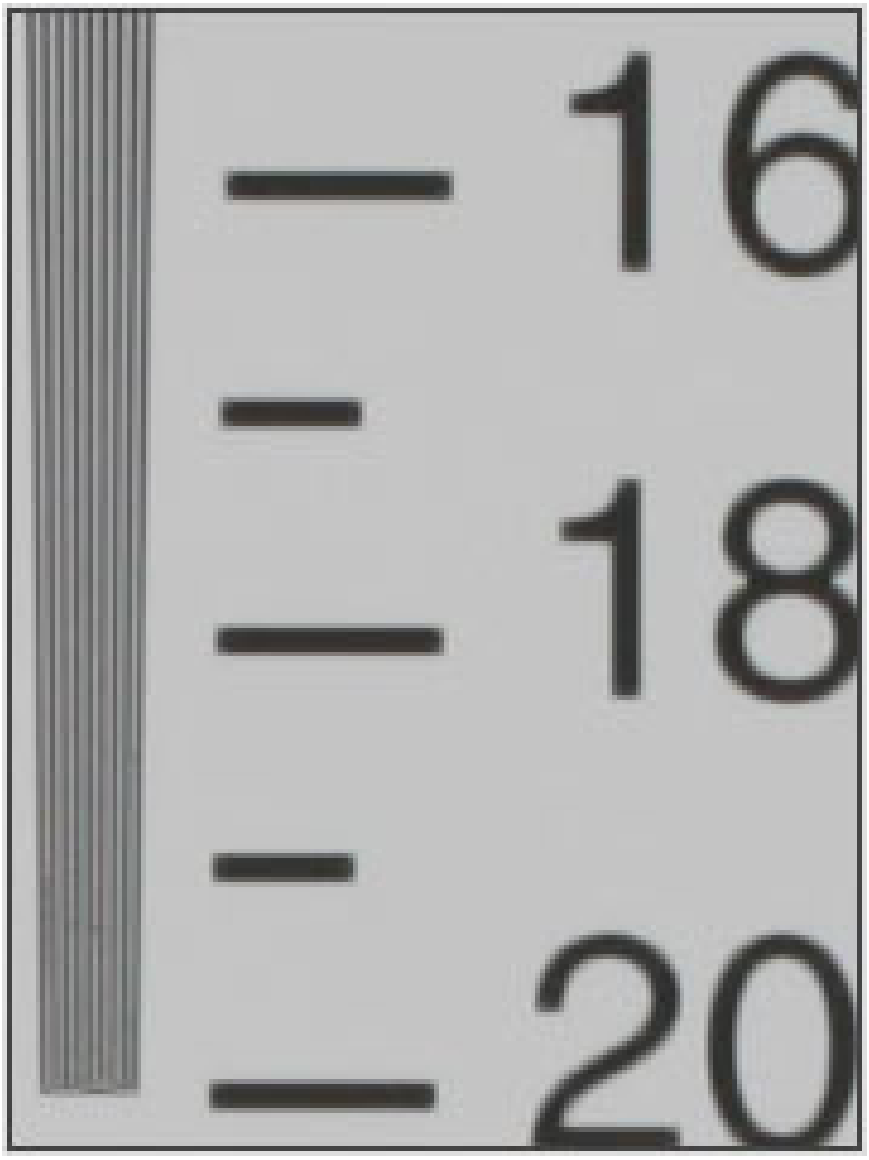
Digital Rebel XTi ~$800

Why have Pro Photographers not Fully Converted

- Journalist & sports professionals photographers have converted
- Need rapid turnaround of pictures
- But Portrait, high end, advertisement have not fully – Why
- Film still has advantages in several area:
- Resolution
- Colour accuracy
- Dynamic Range
- Special photographic conditions eg. Cold climates
- Let us look at why & where digital is responding

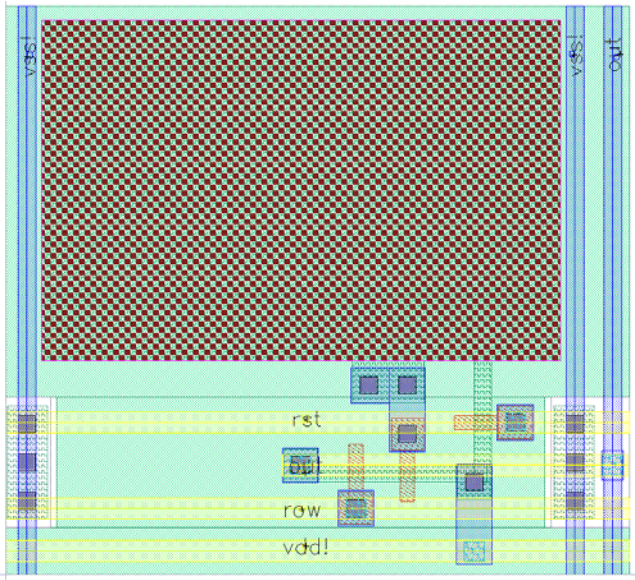
Resolution Measurements

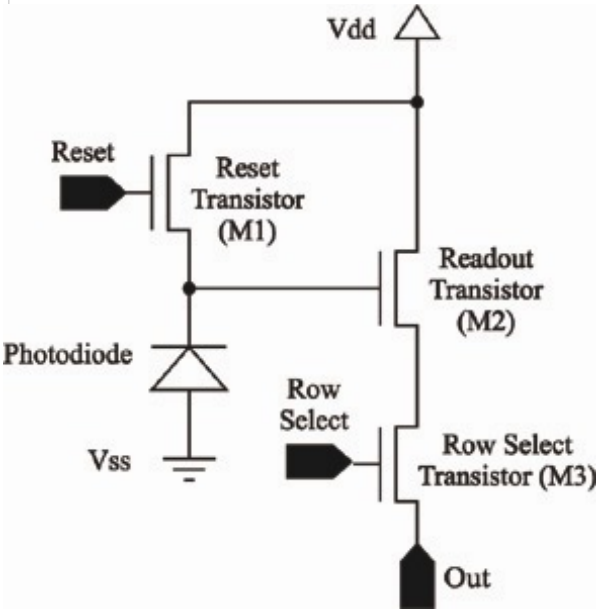
- Measure resolution in line pairs per millimeter (lp/mm)
- This is called MTF type measurement
- One line and space per line pair
- Nyquest theorem: need minimum of 4 pixels per line pair
- So size of pixel limits resolution

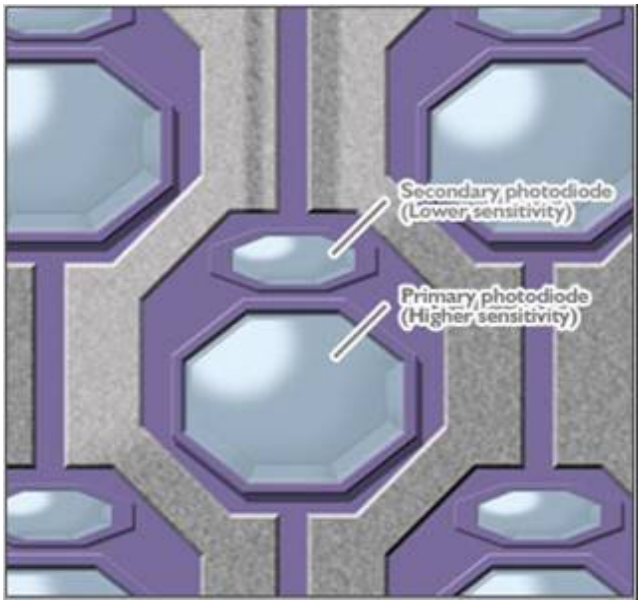


Digital Resolution

- Digital sensors of two types
- CCD: Charge Coupled Device
- Active Pixel Sensor (CMOS) resolution set by pixel size
- Typical size 5-10 microns
- Sensor area (fill factor) ~25%-50%
- Use microlenses to get closer
- Best Digital resolution ~35 line pairs/mm
- Smaller pixels do not generate better resolution
- Digital noise/spread limits resolution

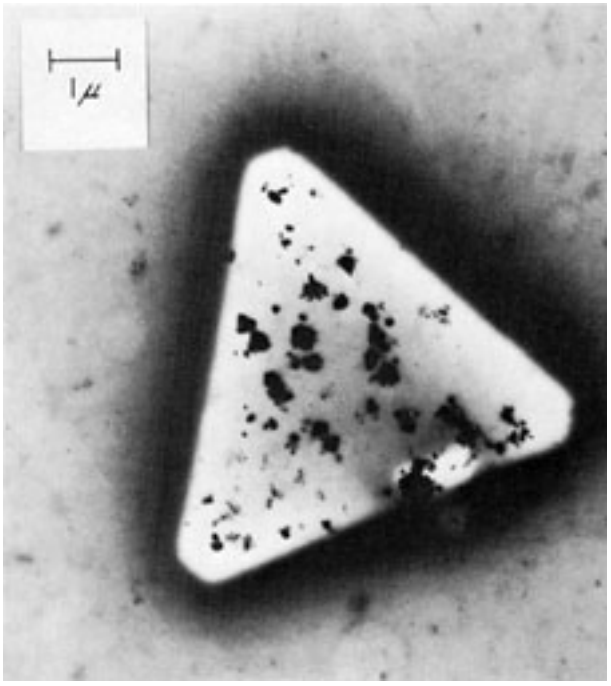


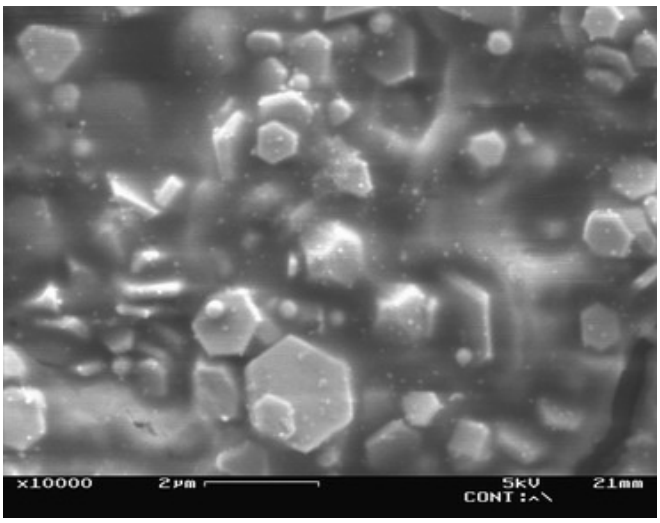


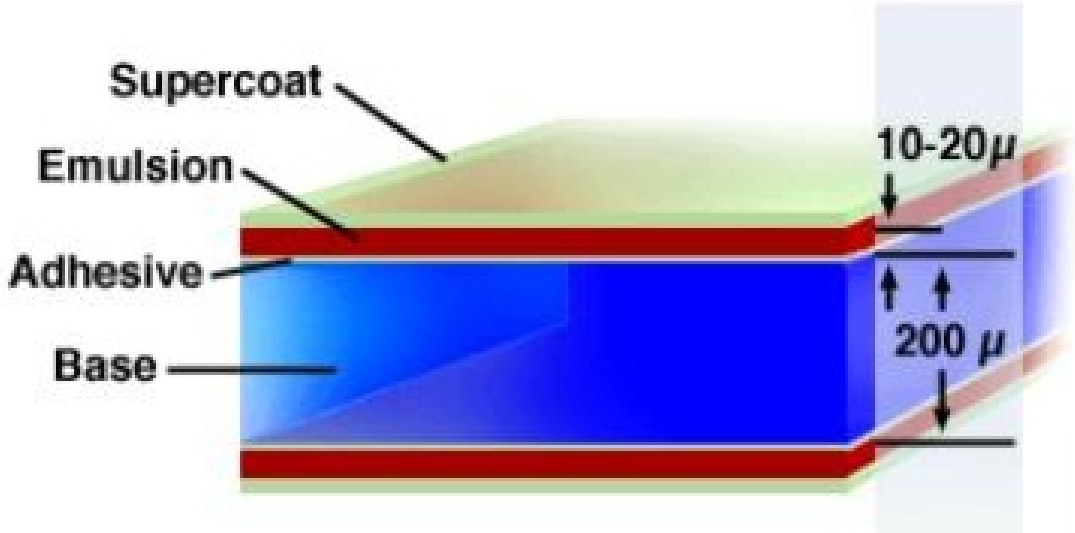


Film Resolution set by Grain size

- Film sensor is silver halide grains in emulsion layer 10-20 μm
- Resolution in film set by silver halide grain size
- Typical grain is ~1-2 um
- Large grain ~20 um
- Ultra fine grain 0.015 um
- Single photon activates all the silver halide in a grain
- Thus larger grains more sensitive, smaller less sensitive
- Creates Latent Image – can be stored for years before fading

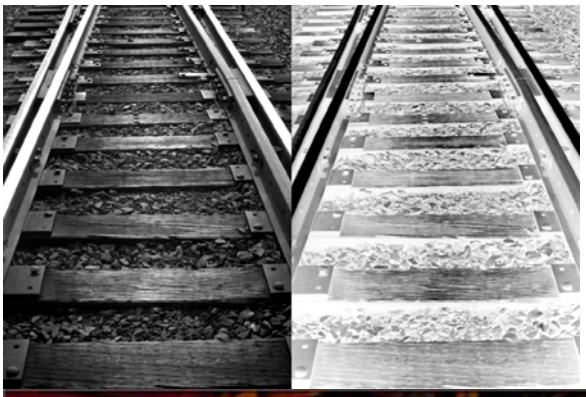


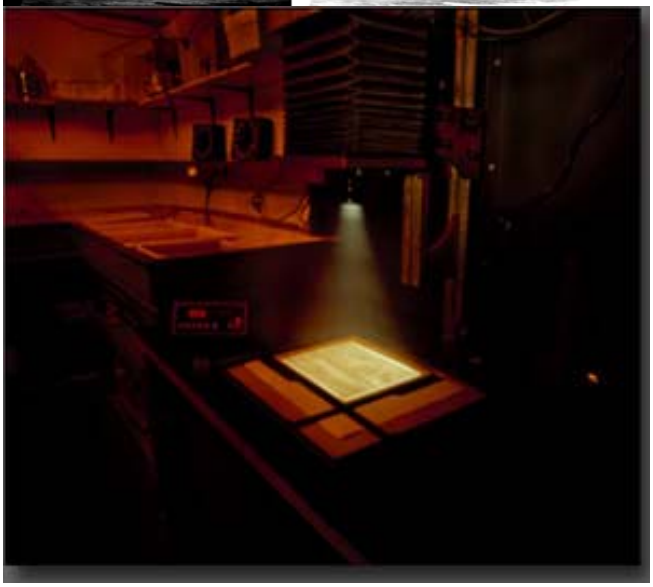




Photographic Process

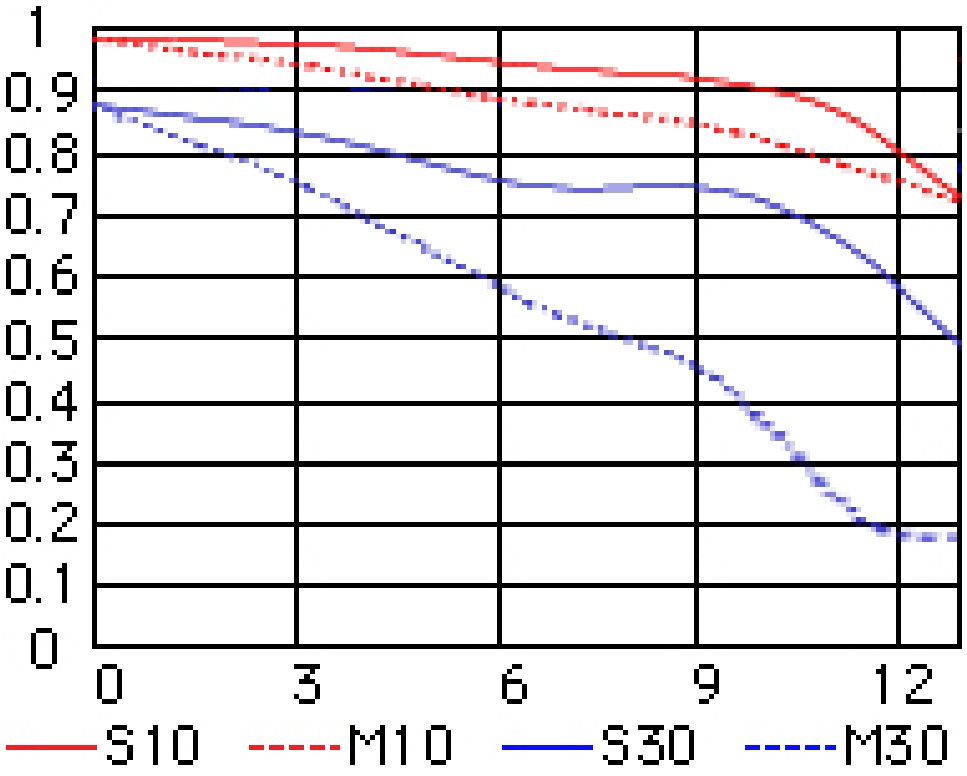
- Development process (done in dark or container)
- Film placed in developer solution
- Developer eg Metol and hydroquinone in high pH solution
- Put in developer for ~1-3 min: agitate to move solution over film
- Reduces the activated grains leaving metallic silver (black)
- Thus image is negative: exposed area black
- Then put in a “Stop Bath”, e.g. water: to stop the reaction (30 sec)
- Then in fixer: sodium thiosulfate (hypo) or ammonium thiosulfate
- After ~5 min removes unexposed silver halide: leaves black silver
- Removed grains leaves transparent film
- Then final wash in water to remove all chemicals ~ 10 min
- Print uses then uses paper covered with emulsion
- Project negative on paper & develop to get image





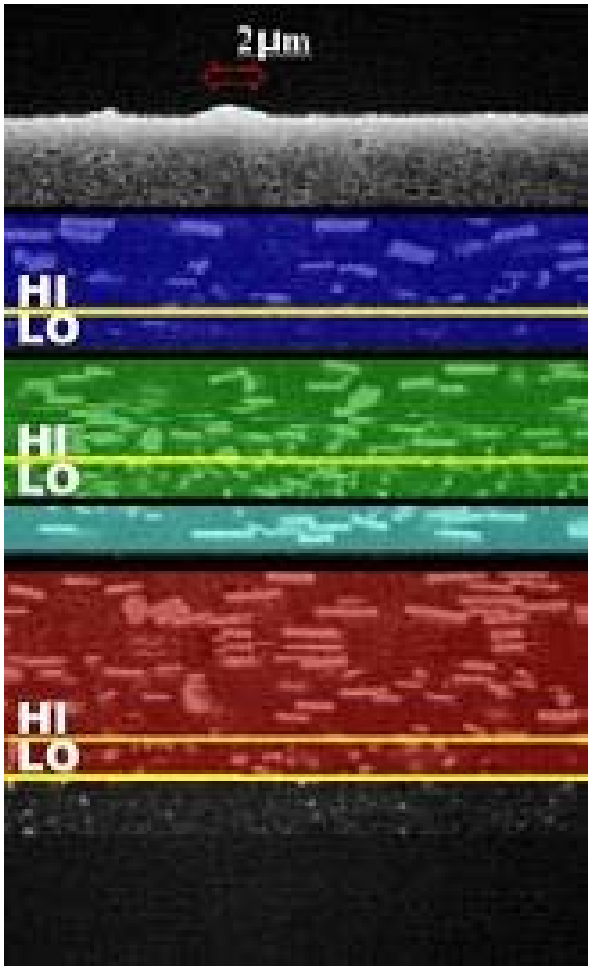
Resolution Limit by Lens

- Best resolution is usually limited by the lens
- For digital point and shoot lens and imager about same resolution
- But for DSLR lens still better than detector
- Resolution limit of fines lenses 200 lp/mm
- Requires at lest 1.2 um pixels
- Top Digital end 21 Mpix (~5600x3700 pix)
- Film limit on 35 mm ~29,000x19,000 pixels = 552Mpix



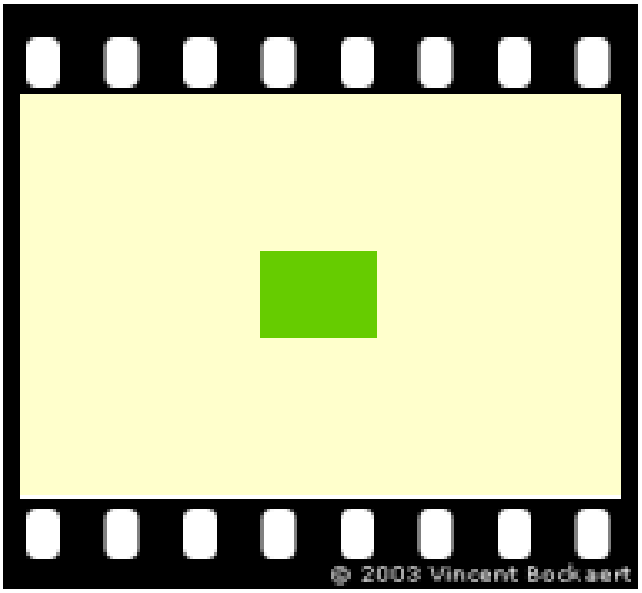
Film Resolution

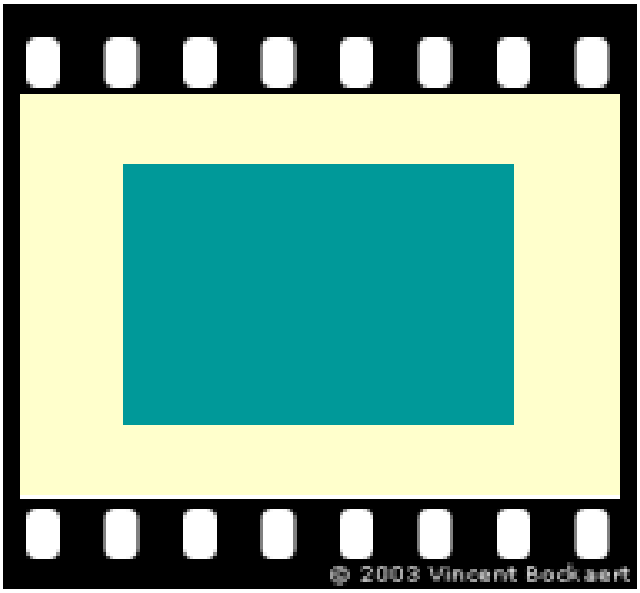
- Film has many layers of gain, and may have several sizes
- Often have course layer & fine grain layer
- Grain size also distributed in film
- Resolution also set by developer:
- fine grain developer better resolution for same film
- Typical film has 80-100 lp/mm
- Ultra fine grain films very high
- Panatomic Areographic
- Regular developer 120-200 lp/mm = 1.25 um pixels
- Fine grain developer 400-500 lp/mm=0.5 um pixels
- Best films 1000-2000 lp/mm =0.25-0.12 um pixels



Sensor Size

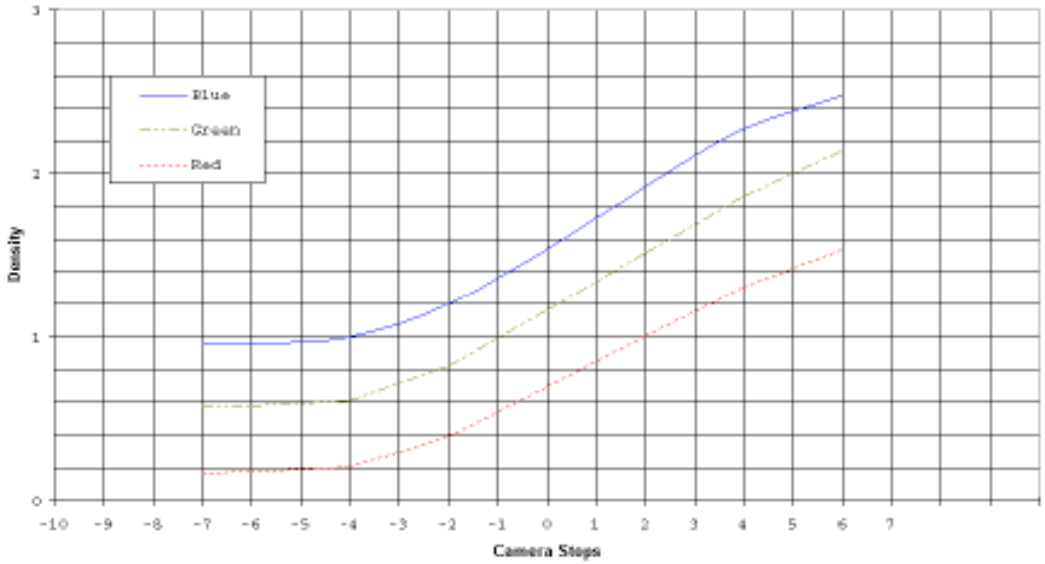
- Typical film 36x24 mm
- High end 57x57 and 100x127 mm but really no limit
- Some camera film 60x100 cm
- Digital point & shoot about ~3-5 mm
- Semi pro 24x15 mm
- Full pro 36x24 mm (but ~$3K cost)
- Best Digital Hasselblad 35x54 mm (but large pixels)



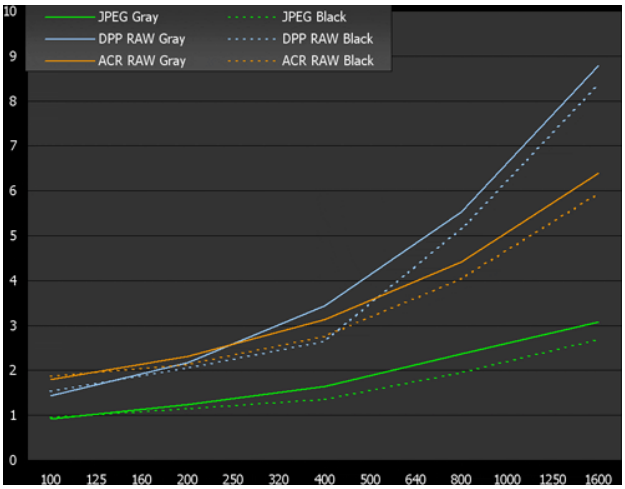


Dynamic Range

- Digital 8 bit (256 levels)
- Digital cameras do have 10-14 bit conversion
- But noise limit is about bit 8
- Film records a dynamic range of 50,000 (~16 bit)
- Top and bottom saturation
- Comes from distribution of grains
- At most sensitive end film has some large grain halides
- This extends sensitivity at low exposure end
- Similarly distribution of small grains
- Hence extension of sensitivity at high exposure end

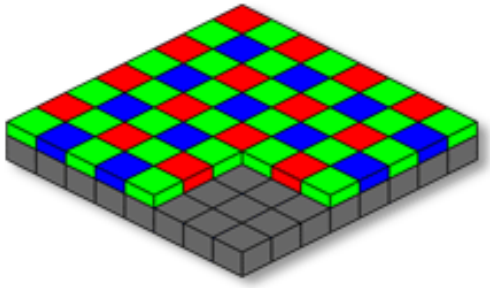


Notice: While the data presented are typical of production coatings, they do not represent standards which must be met by Eastman Kodak Company. Varying storage, exposure, and processing conditions will affect results. The company reserves the right to change and improve the product characteristics at any time.

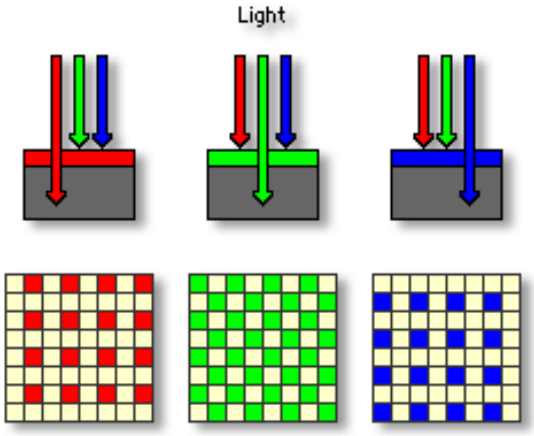


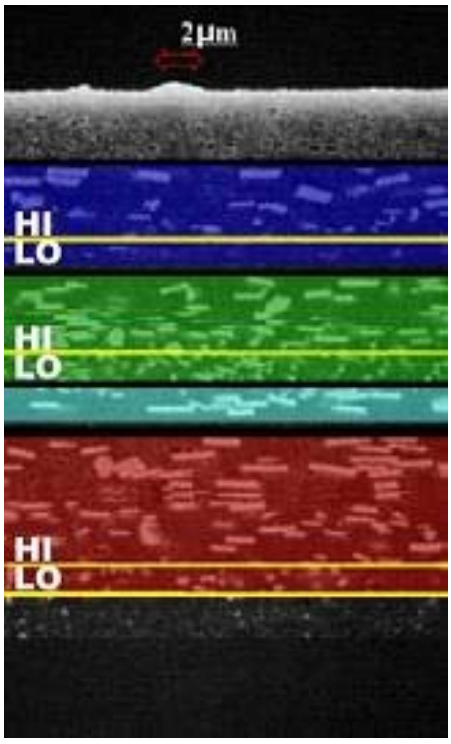
Colour Limits

- Digital uses Bayer colour filter
- Algorithm interpolates colour between pixels called Demozaicing
- However if pattern changes rapidly produces colour error
- Film does all 3 colours at same spot
- Better colour resolution
- Also problem with colour balance: getting the whites correct
- In digital if use jpg balance calculated in camera but frozen in
- Shoot Digital Raw (pure sensor data): can do balance after



Color Filter Array Sensor



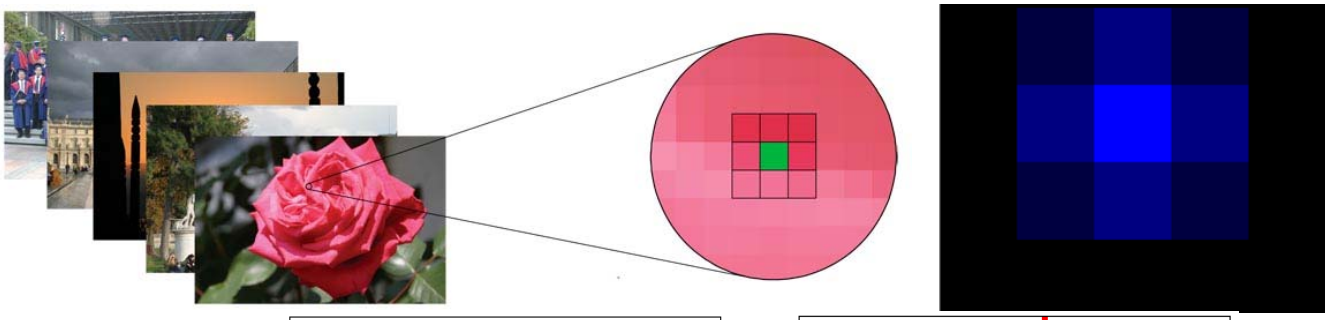


High Dynamic Range Photos

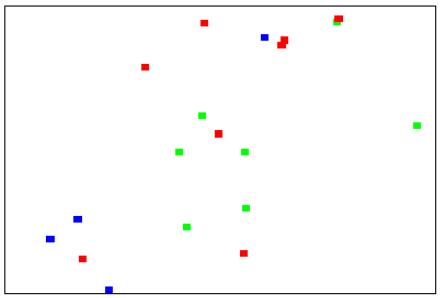
- Take several pictures:
- usually 3 spaced at -2, 0, +2 f stops
- Extends Dynamic range to about 1000
- Possible now in photoshop CS2

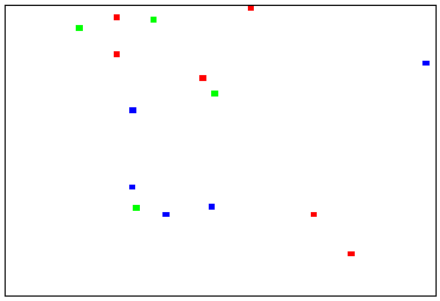
Defects and Film or Digital Imagers

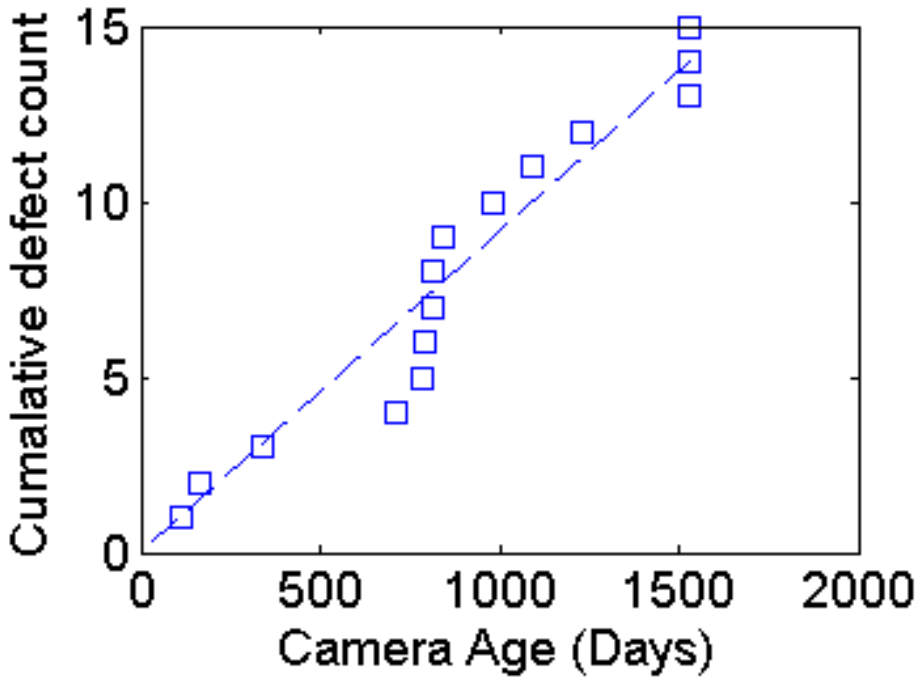
- Film is constantly changed: only slow deteriorates with time
- One frame or roll may have defect but others will not
- Defects accumulate in digital camera
- Demozaicing spreads defects from pixel point to nearby pixels
- Grow at about 3.5-6 defects per year in DSLR cameras
- CCD grow ~2x faster than CMOS
- Defects are randomly distributed spatially in sensor
- Probably cause – cosmic rays which damage photodiodes



Camera Fault Locations







Defects in Digital Imagers: Hot Pixels

- Measurement of defect development in cameras at SFU
- 9 of 11 cameras developed significant faults after few years
- Total: 101 faults
- 3 – 26 faults per camera
- All hot pixels
- No stuck pixels or abnormal sensitivity
- Contrary to user reports
- Found partially-stuck hot pixels
- Offset independent of exp. time
- May be source of user-reported stucks