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## Is your digital camera cleverer than you are?

Digg [submit](#)By [Jenny Stocks](#)

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They say the camera never lies . . . but don't be so sure. In the digital age, cameras are developing a host of functions to improve your picture, from making you look slimmer to smoothing out skin tone or waiting until you smile to take a shot.

Here Nigel Atherton, editor of What Digital Camera magazine, looks at the new breed of smart camera...



The Sony TX1 and WX1 sits in a docking station and takes photographs

### Recognises your family and friends

Facial recognition has been developing over recent years. First, cameras were able to make out a face due to the position of eyes, nose and mouth.

But the next generation of Panasonic cameras can not only see faces, but quickly learns who they belong to by recognising facial features.

Nigel says: 'If you keep taking photos of Bob, for instance, you can put a tag on him and it will start recognising who Bob is when you take more. It's clever, as it then allows you to search for pictures of a specific person through the camera's history.' Panasonic DMC-ZX1 (£264, Jessops)

### The smile detection

Another step on from face detection is the camera that always captures your smile. This function was dreamed up by Sony. After the shutter is pressed, the camera focuses on a face and waits until you smile to take the picture.

Nigel says: 'It seems to work quite well - it senses the widening of the face, so it takes the photo whether or not you smile with your teeth.' Sony W270 (£195.86, Dixons).

### Acts as a personal party photographer

This new invention, announced only last Friday, could revolutionise party and family photography. It's a docking station, designed for use with the upcoming TX1 and WX1 Sony cameras, that simply has to be set up on a table somewhere in the room, and it takes care of the photographs all night.

'It's like a little robot,' says Nigel. 'Using face recognition and smile shutter technology, the camera happily turns in the dock, zooming in on people and taking what it recognises are the best pictures.' *Sony Party-Shot IPT-DS1 (available in September, approx, £130).*

### **Has a built-in projector**

Cameras have been getting smaller by the year and while this makes them easy to carry, it does mean photos are hard to view on their tiny screens.

Nikon's revolutionary new Coolpix camera with built-in projector changes all that. Just find a blank wall, switch off the lights and it projects your images up to 6ft 6in away and up to 40in wide.

'It caused gasps of amazement here. It's incredibly clever given the small size - it's no bigger than a pocket camera,' says Nigel.

*Nikon Coolpix S1000pj (available in September, £399.99).*




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### **The Olympus Tough 8000is for those people who have ever dropped their camera**

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#### **Is practically unbreakable**

If you've ever dropped your camera into a swimming pool or it's fallen out of your bag and smashed, you might want to think about investing in the new Olympus Tough .

You can drop it from 2m, swim with it down to 10m, crush it with 100kg weight or even expose it to temperatures as low as -10C, making it perfect for adrenaline junkies like skiers or snowboarders.

Nigel says: 'It's designed to be taken anywhere and not get damaged.' *Olympus Mju Tough-8000 (£252.93, Amazon).*

#### **Improves your skin tone**

Who needs to spend hours applying make-up for the camera when it comes with an inbuilt gizmo that perfects your skin? Beauty applications are becoming more common on digital cameras and are now available on a range of Samsung, Nikon and Olympus models.

Nigel says: 'The way it works is to apply a softening over the skin - it diffuses, or blurs, the skin to hide wrinkles, spots and blemishes and give even skin-tone. It's the same idea as the soft-focus that portrait photographers often use.' *Samsung WB1000 (£249.95, Amazon).*

#### **Produces 3D images**

With the growth of 3D films at the cinema, it was only a matter of time before cameras caught on. This year sees the launch of Fujifilm's first 3D camera. Like a human face, it has two separate photo sensors spaced apart like eyes, so the finished photo appears to go back farther than the screen.

This process is lenticular - it captures objects and people from different angles, giving the photo depth. Fujifilm can even print your photos in 3D using the same technology. *Fujifilm Finepix 3D (available in September).*

### Takes 30 shots per second

If you've ever wanted to watch a bubble pop in slow motion, study your golf swing frame by frame or simply get that perfect photo, Casio's new digital camera speed technology could help. The company has been working on cameras that can take up to 30 pictures per second, which can be played back in slow motion video.

Nigel says: 'It allows you to get the perfect photo - I took it to the horseracing and got some great shots.' *Casio Exilim FC100 (£238, Amazon).*



The HP Photosmart camera M737 helps to slim you down

### Makes you slimmer

We've heard that the camera adds 10lb, so one that helps to shave a dress size off sounds too good to be true, but that's what the HP Photo-smart range of cameras can do. They compress the image to make you look slimmer, essentially in the same way as a magic mirror-at the fair.

Nigel says: 'This is a bit of a gimmick. It distorts the whole picture, so it's not just you that looks longer and thinner. Everything in the picture does, so this is seen as a bit of fun more than anything serious. But it's a hit at parties.' *HP Photosmart M737 (£89, Amazon).*

### Allows you to capture a whole panorama

If landscape photography's your bag, Sony's new 'sweep panorama' effect could change the way you take photos. Instead of having to take pictures of a long panorama, you simply have to press the shutter and pan the camera around. It will capture everything it sees. *Sony Cyber-shot DSC HX1 (£346.71, Amazon).*

### Retakes after you blink

Many a shot has been ruined when someone's eyes are closed. This need not happen with blink detection technology.

Nigel says: 'It senses if someone has blinked and automatically takes another shot, so you don't have to re-pose for the picture.' This is becoming widespread among top-range digital models - nobody wants to get caught mid-blink. *Samsung PL50 (£89.99, Dixons).*

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