

Photo & Imaging NEWS

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In Brief

Brainless topless ban

Has the world gone mad – or is it that nasty out there? Photo sharing site Photobucket recently banned photos of babies in nappies, claiming it contravened the website's non-nudity policy.

The ban only lasted a few days as it became clear to someone at Photobucket that they were about to become the world's wacko story of the week, conceding the ban was a case of "overcensoring".

HP in OFIS

HP has been appointed preferred Imaging partner for Harvey Norman's venture into large scale office supplies retailing, the new OFIS chain. This will see the HP Photo Centre equipment going into the new stores.

"HP can deliver a total 'eco print system' from desktop, commercial, printers, and MFPs to photo printing systems, so the Photo Centre solution is only part of a much bigger presence," explained Terry Rimmer, product marketing manager, Retail Photo Solutions Division, HP Asia Pacific region. He added that OFIS would run large print services departments in its stores. The first OFIS stores were scheduled to open in March, with 10 planned by the end of the year.

Nikon appointments

Nikon Australia has added the new positions of area managers for NSW and the ACT. Brett Storm (NSW) and David Wilson (ACT) are former account managers with Hitachi, which quit the Australian market earlier this year.

Cheer up!

The Westpac-Melbourne Institute consumer confidence survey tumbled over 21 per cent in the first three months of this year, its largest three-monthly drop since records started in 1975, according to *The Age*.

The index is of more interest than many of the economic stats that are hurled at us, as although it is a subjective measure, it's a leading indicator, anticipating behaviour, rather than describing it after it happens.

Consumer sentiment was at 88.6, with 100 being the point at which pessimism sets in. This is the lowest level since September 1993.

The index asking consumers whether now is "a good time to buy a major household item", such as a television or appliance, dipped 11.4 per cent.

Who knows, maybe those gloomy consumers will cheer themselves up by buying a digital camera instead.

GE launch in the pink

Tasco Sales Australia, recently appointed distributor of GE digital cameras, has announced a partnership between the new camera brand and the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Tasco Sales Australia will offer the GE E850 Pink camera during 2008 bearing the NBCF pink ribbon to signify Tasco's commitment to the fight against breast cancer. For every unit sold, Tasco will donate a portion of proceeds to the National Breast Cancer Foundation for the research into breast cancer.

"We are honoured to play a role in finding a cure for such a devastating disease as breast cancer. It's fantastic to think that, the more cameras we sell, the greater our contribution will be," said Stewart Pickersgill, Tasco Sales national sales manager for GE cameras. "We hope that people whose life has been touched by cancer and who happen to be in the market for a digital camera will consider the E850."

Available in hot metallic pink, the E850 Pink is a special-edition version of GE's E850, offering 8 megapixels, a 3-inch LCD screen, 5X zoom and a 28mm equivalent wide-angle lens.



A portion of proceeds from sale of the GE E850 Pink goes to help fund research into breast cancer.

In addition to the E850, Tasco is releasing a full range of compact digital cameras from GE. All GE cameras offer such advanced features as panorama stitching, face detection, smile & blink detection, auto LCD brightness, red-eye removal, image stabilisation and ISO 1600 and 3200 sensitivity. GE cameras also offer movie mode, continuous-shot mode, and a variety of special scene modes – all at relatively low prices.

The GE digital camera line is featured at the website: www.ge.com/digitalcameras.

Sony website 'unites photographers'

Sony has launched a new website to support its Alpha range of DSLRs; www.sony.com.au/dslr.

Sony Alpha business development manager, John Wallace, said that consumers research their camera purchases on the internet before going into a shop, but more surprisingly, Sony has found that they usually go to the manufacturers' sites for information, rather than third party review sites such as DP Review.

The Alpha centre "is designed to bring professional photographers together to discuss their craft, yet also offer novice photographers a place to seek advice from professionals, obtain feedback on their photography and communicate with like-minded enthusiasts."

In a briefing to media to mark the website launch and the availability of the Alpha 350, 200 and new accessory lenses, Wallace said:

- Sales of the Alpha 700 in Australia were among the best in the world.
- He could not confirm when an Alpha model with the full frame 24 megapixel sensor announced at PMA Las Vegas

would be released – but the next round of product releases was scheduled for photokina.

- That Sony wasn't expecting to "convert" Nikon or Canon users, but rather win market share among Cyber-shot users and newcomers to DSLR photography.
- Sony saw women – both in the 35+ and under 35 age demographics, as active DSLR purchasers.
- The new 14-megapixel sensor in the Alpha 350 was getting towards the upper limit of what was effective for an APS-C-sized sensor.
- Sony was not going after the professional press photographer market as it didn't yet have a product to offer them, but was having some success with fashion photographers with the Alpha 700/Carl Zeiss lens combination.
- Sony would have 24 lenses on the market, including seven Carl Zeiss models, by years end.
- A \$1.8 million advertising campaign has been planned for Alpha cameras.