

## What's All the Fuss about 4K RAW Video?

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By Michael Erlewine ([Michael@Erlewine.net](mailto:Michael@Erlewine.net))

[Have not been posting here much of late, but I have been posting on one of the photography sites that I follow, but it is mostly technical stuff. This is a little technical, but a little interesting too, so here goes.]

I have to admit I am coming late to the party. I am an early adopter when it comes to video, which means that somewhere in my basement (in old moldy-by-now vinyl bags) are all kinds of totally outdated and terrible camcorders. I still have two Sony VX-2000 DV camcorders laying around the studio, if I can even find them. That's what early adopter means, also called the 'bleeding edge.' Anyway...

Once burned, twice shy has been my attitude as video has crept into my beloved Nikon still cameras over the last few years. For me, this was the last feature I was about to use, AND as far as the reviews could tell me, it didn't work well on top of that, so forget-about-it.

Meanwhile, I have been delighting in raw images since my first D1x, which cost \$5K way back around 2001, and now graces a copy stand armed with the old version of the 60mm Micro-Nikkor lens. It is not worth selling and goes for about \$300 on eBay today.

I know well the value and flexibility of working in raw compared to working in the baked-in nature of .JPG and other less-flexible formats. I use raw every day.

My interest in DSLR video stems from an age-old dream of mine about "what if" I could capture quality stills from a stream and get to pick the moment when the image I am looking for is present. I am always a moment late, and one good shot short. This may not interest studio photographers, but it probably does interest those of us who try to capture live critters in the fields and meadows. They don't pose for photos.

Actually, studio photographers could also benefit from picking a still from a stream of stills, which is what progressive-frame (1080p) video is all about. Imagine choosing a nice passport or driver's license photo from a stream rather than what we all have to look at now. That is point number one, picking our moment instead of having to try to capture a shot in a split-second. Very difficult as we all know.

Point number two is working in raw format. There are cameras out there that can capture 2K, 2.5K, and even 4K video, but the footage then is packed away in a codec until much of its freshness uncompressed is compromised forever. It is baked in again, like .JPG files. Very little flexibility.

But if that same resolution is in raw format, we have the same latitude of adjustment most of us here are used to having with our raw and large images. We can pull images of shadows and down from overblown highlights. That is hard to do with a baked-in .JPG.

All that 4K raw video would give us is the luxury of picking the moment when the image is perfect rather than the catch-as-catch-can photos we take now, plus greater flexibility in post, which we are already addicted to.

I was watching a little video where Canon was showing its 1DC (18.1 MP) \$12,000 camera, which shoots compressed 4K (not raw) to a bunch of photographers, and asking what they thought about picking the moment from a stream.

I was surprised how many of them had qualms, suggesting that this somehow was not being an artist. However, folks like Philip Bloom just laughed and pointed to his time-lapse stuff taken while he slept. He said it is "all mine," nevertheless. He had no qualms.

I write this just to point out that we already love everything about 4K (and higher) and also working in raw. What we might gain from working with 4K raw is the ability to pick the precise still image that represents the moment we were hoping to capture, and also develop it as we are now doing.

Additionally, we might just learn to better appreciate that moving stream of stills we call movies.