

PTN

Business News for the Imaging Retailer

Storing Digital Images

BY DIANE BERKENFELD

Printing and CD/DVD Archiving Services to Offer Your Customers

Back in the good old days—of film—your customers could come to you to have their precious photos reprinted, from the negatives (if they'd kept them). And if they hadn't stored the negs, well, then you could always shoot a copy-negative or scan the print.

But in the digital age, awareness of how important it is to safely manage and store image files has been the topic of the industry's latest educational campaign. A recent Fujifilm study found that consumers have finally "gotten it" when it comes to archiving their digital image files. When asked how they stored their image files, those

surveyed listed removable media, such as CDs, floppies, and Zip Disks (66.3%), and their computer's hard disk drive (57.1%); with 32.7% making prints as a form of image storage.

Surprisingly, although most of those surveyed felt that storing their digital images on CD/floppy/Zip disk, hard disk drive, or media card was safe and easy to do, a large percentage of those consumers also complained that they had trouble finding files when they needed to. Reasons given included hard drives crashing, unreadable or lost media, misfiled images, and accidental erasure of files. Twelve percent of the people surveyed said their storage format of choice consisted of floppy disks and/or

Zip disks—two older forms of media. This data alone makes a strong case for printing, as the drives to read them aren't being incorporated into today's brand new computers.

"For the first time, prints are being seen as an easy way to share photos," said Joellyn Gray, Fujifilm's director of Marketing, Consumer Printing. "Prints," says Gray, "are the 'safest and best' form of storage." They're easy to create, fun and easy to share, and can be restored back to a digital file if needed.

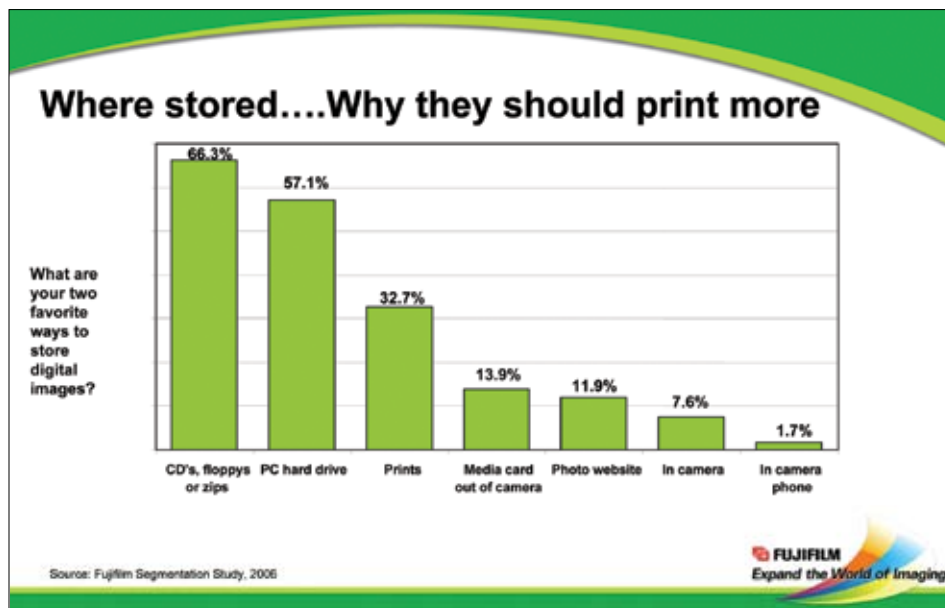
Gray explained that the survey also showed that consumers are beginning to recognize that printing at retail is the best solution. "The findings bode well for the industry," she says. Consumer attitudes about the quality of prints made at retail—whether by consumers at a kiosk, digital media handed to a clerk for printing via minilab, or uploaded to a website for pick-up at a store or mailed to the customer's home—offer the best quality at the cheapest price.

Especially notable in the Fujifilm study is the fact that of those consumers who said they regularly print their photos on a home printer, (photo- or document-printer), none felt the home-printing offered the best quality prints.

Redundancy, Redundancy, And More Redundancy

In addition to printing a hard copy, consumers need to be educated that the best form of storage is redundant storage, according to the industry experts we spoke with. Files stored on computer are ok, if they've also been burned to a CD or DVD. And two sets of important files are better than one, especially when each set is kept in a different location.

Built-in CD burners are incorporated into many of the kiosk and minilab solutions now on the market.



Companies such as Rimage and Primera offer CD and DVD units that can be incorporated into your digital workflow. CD burners have always been present in Lucidiom's APM (Automated Photo Machine) kiosks, says Jason Pareti, company CTO. "It's definitely a key feature for our retailers," he notes. And a profitable one. "The CD archive is a high margin product that plays into our 'beyond 4x6' mantra, driving profits at the kiosk," explains Pareti.

Another important message to get across to consumers is that as new technologies emerge, consumers should migrate to that new storage format. Floppies, Zip and Jazz disks are rarely used nowadays. Does anyone remember the 5 1/4-inch floppy?

And just as many consumers have upgraded their music collections from vinyl, 8-Track, audio cassette and then to CD—and movie collections from film and video to DVD, important data should be moved from one format to the next as they emerge.

Not All Media Is Created Equal

Offering CD archiving services also allows you to educate your customers on the importance of using quality media. According to Steven L. Mizelle, president of KMP Media, LLC, "Gold is the best media consumers can use today." Silver can tarnish over time, making the disk unreadable. However Mizelle is quick to point out that doesn't mean silver shouldn't be used at all. For short-term file storage, or sharing of data/images, silver media is perfectly adequate.

Any CD or DVD media, when manufactured to quality standards, will last longer than poor quality media. When precious family image archives or other important data will be stored on CD or DVD, Gold media should be used. Mizelle also recommends consumers store their CDs/DVDs properly to ensure the accessibility of the data. Gold CDs have been designed to last up to 300 years, and gold DVDs up to 100 years, with proper storage. (See sidebar)

"People used to save their photos in a family album and store their negatives in a safe place for reprints," explains Martin Wood, CEO, Delkin Devices, who also offers Gold CD/DVD media. Unlike the photo album, or even the shoebox many consumers store their prints in, computers are vulnerable to virus attack as well as crashing. "We wanted to provide consumers with the most reliable storage media available," he says of Delkin's Gold media.

KMP Media, LLC's Mizelle suggests retailers always use high quality media in-store, for customer image



KMP Media, LLC. offers Kodak Gold DVD media with a lifespan of 100 years, and Kodak Gold CD media with a lifespan of 300 years, when stored properly.

archiving services. This allows you to charge a premium price for this service, as you're providing more value to your customers.

"Consumers will spend a little more for the peace of mind," he adds. **PTN**

CD and DVD Storage Recommendations

Do your customers know how to properly store their CDs and DVDs? Do you? Following these simple tips can help prolong the life of data burned to these disks.

- Start with high quality media.
- When burning a disk, always let the CD or DVD burner verify that the data has been written to disk successfully. The extra few minutes at the time you burn the files will ease a lot of heartache when you try to access files on a disk that had a problem during the writing process, and wasn't verified.
- Store disks vertically.
- Store disks in a protective case.
- Don't use labels or tape on the media.
- Don't write on the media, even with markers that say they're safe for the purpose. Instead identify disks by writing on the center hub area, and using the paper insert that comes in a jewel case for fully listing what is on each disk.
- Disks should be stored at low temperature, low humidity, and in low light.
- Migrate to new technologies as they emerge.
- Keep redundant archives of important files.

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