

Get in the frame with

If you're thinking of buying a digital photo frame as a Christmas gift, beware of cheaper models

Digital photo frames have become very popular over the last few years – and many are bought as gifts in the run-up to Christmas. They've transformed the way we look at our photos, allowing you to display hundreds of your favourite images as a slideshow.

Frames have got cheaper, and it's possible to pick one up for as little as £30. But be careful when seeking out a photo-frame bargain. Our latest test of 16 frames found that many cheap models are disappointing, and it's often better to spend more money to secure a good model. Photos viewed on our four Best Buys look fantastic – they cost more, but you'll avoid being let down by badly displayed images.

Picture imperfect

Though all the models we tested are of a similar size (7-8 inches), some had extremely low screen resolutions of just 480x234 pixels, and displayed incredibly blocky photos with poor detail. The higher the resolution, the more detailed the images will be. Our tests also found that certain frames showed images badly affected by 'noise', such as undesirable flecks of colour.

Our tests examine how easy each frame is to set up and use. We found that some cheaper models have no internal memory for storing images, so you'll have to leave your memory card in them when in use. This means you'll need an extra card if you want to keep your photos in place in your frame. Some models only accept a limited range, which could leave them incompatible with your camera (see www.which.co.uk/digitalphotoframes). All our Best Buys are easy to operate and accept a wide range of memory cards.

Sony DPF-V800 £189

Which? test score **83%**

Image quality ★★★★★

Ease of use ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★ Power ★★★

PROS Image quality is outstanding on this Sony frame. It's simple to set up and use, and offers basic onscreen photo-editing such as red-eye reduction. It accepts most memory cards and has a large 1GB internal memory. The frame can be wall mounted and has an auto-orientation sensor that detects whether it's sitting horizontally or vertically, automatically rotating images accordingly. There's also an HDMI output for viewing photos on your TV.

CONS It's expensive. The ambient light sensor, which should dim the frame in low light, has no noticeable affect. You can't connect it to USB flash drives and the widescreen shape means that, unless you shoot in 16:9 aspect ratio, your photos will display with black borders.

Full review www.which.co.uk/SonyDPF-V800

We found it cheapest at Jessops Also available Online
Size 8 inches Resolution 800x480 Internal memory 1GB
Remote control Yes Plays music No Plays video No



Sony DPF-X800 £219

Which? test score **83%**

Image quality ★★★★★

Ease of use ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★ Power ★★★

PROS This model is very similar to the Sony DPF-V800 we tested (left), but has an even larger memory (2GB). The frame offers fantastic image quality and is easy to use. It can accept most memory cards and shares many features with the V800, including an eco-friendly on/off timer, alarm clock, onscreen photo-editing, HDMI output and optional Bluetooth connectivity.

CONS This frame shares the shortcomings of its sister model the DPF-V800, but is even more expensive. And, despite this frame having Sony's enhanced 'super photo LCD panel', our tests found that image quality is not noticeably better than on the cheaper frame.

Full review www.which.co.uk/

SonyDPF-X800

We found it cheapest at Jessops Also available Online
Size 8 inches Resolution 800x480 Internal memory 2GB Remote control Yes Plays music No Plays video No



a Best Buy

Sony DPF-D80 £99



Which? test score **79%**

Image quality ★★★★★

Ease of use ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★ Power ★

PROS This is the cheapest of the three Sony Best Buys. Image quality from the 800x600 resolution display is excellent, and it's simple to set up and operate. The frame is pretty fast at displaying your photos, can handle large images with ease and accepts most memory cards. It comes with a remote control, and features include an auto-orientation sensor and the usual range of slideshow effects.

CONS It doesn't have as many features as the more expensive Sony Best Buys, and has a smaller internal memory (256MB). There's no ambient light sensor, it can't connect to USB flash drives and there are no screw-sized holes for wall mounting (but you can use a cord). It's also power hungry, using 9.3W (the other Sony Best Buys use 5.5W).

Full review www.which.co.uk/SonyDPF-D80

We found it cheapest at Jessops and John Lewis **Also available** Tesco Direct **Size** 8 inches **Resolution** 800x600 **Internal memory** 0.256GB **Remote control** Yes **Plays music** No **Plays video** No

Kodak Easyshare S730 £100



Which? test score **77%**

Image quality ★★★★★ Ease of use ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★ Power ★★★★★

PROS This Kodak is the only frame in our test that has a rechargeable battery, so you can pass it around to share your photos. Image quality is excellent. The frame is easy to operate, with touch-sensitive buttons on the front. The menus are straightforward and there's a handy function that will find all the pictures taken on a given date. The frame has a large memory (1GB) and, unlike most other models, can play music and videos.

CONS It can't accept CF memory cards and there's no ambient light sensor or remote control. It's power hungry, using 8.3W. Unless you shoot in 16:9 aspect ratio, your photos will display with black borders.

Full review www.which.co.uk/KodakS730

We found it cheapest at Independents and online, including Amazon.co.uk **Also available** <http://shop.kodak.co.uk> **Size** 7 inches **Resolution** 800x480 **Internal memory** 1GB **Remote control** No **Plays music** Yes **Plays video** Yes



Which? online Digital photo frames

Which? tested 16 digital photo frames new for Christmas 2009 – you can read the full reviews of these and more at www.which.co.uk/digitalphotoframes.