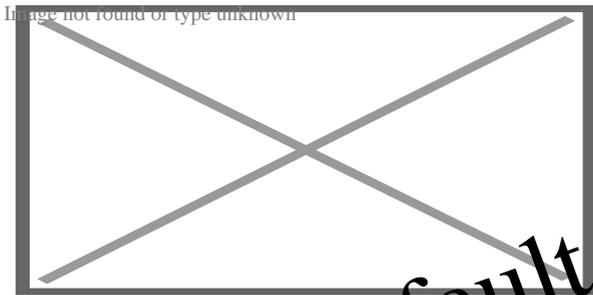


Continued reflections on the Lytro

Description

I've used the [Lytro](#) for [more than a year, now](#). I continue to marvel at its ability to refocus, and even more at its ability to shift perspective. In fact I use this feature a lot to create [cross-view 3D images](#); I find them especially appealing even if many others can't make them work.



Cross-View 3D photo of muffins

Over the past month or so I have realized that the Lytro is becoming my camera of choice. It has its limitations (relatively low-resolution jpegs, for example), but its features that exceed those of a regular digital camera make up for them.

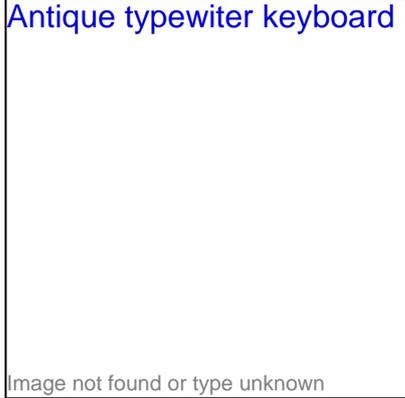
- Refocusing: this is the reason that I purchased the camera in the first place – the ability to refocus macro-shots of earthworms. I don't often use it for this purpose, but when I do it is fabulous.

[View of antique typewriter keys.](#)

Jpeg export from Lytro desktop.

- All-in-focus images: this is not officially supported by the friendly folks at Lytro yet, but it is not hard to achieve. Once a photo is perspective-shifted (one additional step after the image has been imported to your computer) you can click and drag the mouse on the image to change the perspective. While this is happening, the entire image will be in focus. A screen shot of the image will capture the all-in-focus view. A normal jpeg export (achieved by right-clicking on the thumbnail while in the Lytro desktop) will create a jpeg that has the focus set to the last-selected focal point. The all-in-focus view often appears sharper overall (to my eye anyway) than the normal jpeg export, even in the region of the image on which I last focused.

Antique typewriter keyboard



All-in-focus version of the same photo.

- Perspective-shift: I use this a lot to create the cross-view 3D images. The method that I used is described on my [Cross-View page](#). Suffice it to say that it is not difficult; about 3 minutes per image to make the 3D version. I fully expect Lytro to build this option into the desktop in a future release, but of course this is just a guess.
- Low-light or challenging-light situations: Although some reviewers have disparaged the Lytro in this regard, I typically find the results quite satisfactory. Even in Everyday mode the camera typically handles stage-lighting pretty well; occasionally I select the exposure region by tapping on the screen to achieve the equivalent of a (big) spot meter. If I switch to Manual control to adjust shutter speed I can underexpose a little bit to compensate for bright faces against a dark background. And generally I find that the 8x optical zoom (in Creative mode; 5.5x in Everyday with the most recent firmware update) coupled with the maximum 3200 iso yields a pleasing photo when I am far from a stage. And in those situations when the light is really too low for a good photo with any camera, the Lytro performs as well as any other.

So after a year of use, and multiple thousands of photos taken ([many viewable here](#)), I can report that the Lytro has not disappointed; in fact I am happier with it now than at the outset. On several recent outings I have opted to take only the Lytro rather than my trusted favorite, the Canon A570. Could it be better? Of course; here's a short wish-list of camera and software features that I would like to see:

1. Higher resolution jpegs (I fear that this will have to wait for a new model of the camera).
2. Easier export of jpegs. This should be available as a batch feature: highlight the images that you want to export and select "go." As it is the images must currently be exported one at a time.
3. Color and white balance adjustment. The camera does a real good job of getting it right under many lighting conditions. Stage lighting can cause problems – I sometimes make adjustments to the jpegs and 3D images that I create from the Lytro originals, but I can do nothing about the color of the original.
4. All-in-focus jpeg exports. As I indicated above, I can achieve this via a work-around, but the feature could be incorporated into the desktop software. Ideally a sliding depth of field control would be great, allowing the user to determine exactly what regions of a photo appear in focus.
5. Wi-fi downloading of photos. When the Lytro was first introduced there were clever people who

- examined the patent diagrams and concluded that it contains a wi-fi chip. When will we see the ability to download to our desktop, or directly upload to the Lytro page, using wi-fi technology?
6. And not for Lytro, but for our friends at Facebook: the ability to tag people in Lytro images in a manner that Facebook recognizes would be great!

Thanks, Lytro, for your innovation and your superb customer support. I look forward to additional products.

Category

- Uncategorized

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Author

wjwilson

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