

Freeze Frame

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Archiving for longevity

In the June 2012 edition of Freeze Frame, I discussed the importance of using keywords effectively when captioning images. Doing so will improve your searches as well as assist in marketing your images via Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System.

But what is the use of using keywords if you can't physically get your hands on your images when you need them?

This question leads us to this month's article – utilizing smart yet sensible archiving techniques.

Archiving in threes

I've taken many commercial photography and professional photojournalism workshops and one of the most repeated themes is archiving, archiving, and archiving.

Applying the “archiving in threes” method will hopefully help you in the event you are currently relying on a single source archive location.

Hopefully there is never a catastrophe in your office such as a natural or man-made disaster, or even worse, theft. If you haven't planned for such, and you only have burned your images to CDs/DVDs, or just an external drive, you could be in for all of your hard work gone to waste.

How does archiving in threes work? It's very simple, actually.

Burn a CD/DVD from each event you photograph of the original RAW files plus your finished JPGs or TIFFs. (That's one).

Then, copy those same files to an external drive or a RAID system. (That's two). This is especially true since there are plenty of one, two, or even three terabyte external drives available that will not bust your budget.

Finally, utilize an off-site online storage system. Since most units will not or cannot pay for a commercial off-site storage location, this is where DVIDS comes – they can be your off-site storage.

Now this will only include your edited final JPGs but hey, at least you'll have the images saved somewhere in the event you need them later. (That's three).

There is another school of thought and that is to keep your external drive away from your main workplace. That's a little risky in the event there is a disaster or theft at the off-site location.

That said, I know a few photographers who actually keep a second external drive in bank safe deposit boxes. You can decide if this option is right for your particular situation.

The bottom line here is you should not be relying on a single source archiving system, unless you're looking for eventual pain and heartache coming the loss of years of hard work.

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Archiving your images utilizing different storage systems and methods to include CDs/DVDs, external drives, and off-site storage will help you in the event you have a catastrophic system failure, natural or man-made disaster, or worse, even theft. Having your image stored in multiple formats and even in different physical locations, virtually assures you will have what you need in the event of data loss.