Photographers, Avoid Digital File Corruption

I just spent the last 45 minutes listening to David Ziser interview Digital Data Recovery Service's Guru Scott Tallyn. Yes, long and technical but I picked up some good info about preventing data being lost from your camera's media card.

I have the entire interview on MP3 and can email it to you but the file is 53meg, or you can download it from iTunes for free.

Or you can just read these few tips and keep your fingers crossed... like I do.

First the stuff you probably all ready know to prevent corrupting files on our media cards:

- Avoid static
- Don't keep them in a pocket (shirt or pants)
- Don't just throw them in to your camera bag, they are more delicate than you would think.
- Never delete images off the card using the camera (apparently real dangerous)
- Always format the card in your camera not your computer (cards and cameras use the FAT32 system, your computer probably uses NTFS)
- If you do have a problem with your card, DO NOT shoot anymore photos on it. It will overwrite the possibly recoverable files.

Stuff I didn't know or think of:

- Several small cards are better than one big card because if a card gets corrupted you don't loose hundreds of photos.
- He suggests using cards that hold 70-100 images MAX.
- Never shoot until your card is full, (also very dangerous) leave some space.
- The newer cards are more stable than older cards
- The newer cards are more compatible with the newer cameras
- Cards have a maximum shelf life of 10 years (even if never used and stored properly)
- Cards have a lifespan of 100,000 read/writes. A read/write is each time EACH IMAGE is shot, reviewed or downloaded. So if your card hold 100 files... you do the math...
- Most pros can get 2 years out of a card safely, then throw it away.
- Mark the date you bought the card on the card and don't use it longer than the 2 years.
- Tests show the more expensive cards are usually more stable (and faster)
- Hard drives have a life expectancy of about 5 years
- CD's and DVD's have a life expectancy of 5-10 years
- Prints stored under optimum conditions have a life expectancy of 100 to 200 years
- US Library of Congress research department tells us that TIFF files are the most stable way to store photographic image files.

Cards are so cheap now plus think of what you are saving in film costs, replace the old ones before you run into problems.

I hope this helps.

Robin Spencer
Spencer Studio http://www.spencerstudio.com