ON-SITE AND ON-HAND WITH THE EPSON P-2000

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CASE STUDY

MULTIMEDIA STORAGE VIEWER

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Felicity Jenkins

With a degree in Visual Arts from the Australian National University and strong interests in photojournalism and photomedia-art, photographer Felicity Jenkins spent four months in 1997 on a voyage to the Antarctic. During that time Jenkins travelled over 6,000 kilometres by land, sea and air, photographically capturing the people, landscapes and wildlife she encountered. Her photographic work, aside from being collected by the National Library of Australia has been exhibited in Sydney and included in a travelling exhibition and book on Australian and Chinese relations.

The need for power and portability

For her second trip to Antarctica, which came about in 2005, Jenkins was given the opportunity to travel as a tourist expedition's official photographer, providing expert advice to other members of the expedition as well as developing a pictorial log of the month-long trip. The latter of these two requirements called for a powerful digital photography solution, with all the expedition's members to be provided with a DVD-ROM containing hundreds of the best photographs taken.

Aside from the camera, one of the first pieces of equipment Jenkins identified as being crucial to her digital solution was a portable image storage and viewing device. It was this need that she took to Kayell Australia, one of the country's foremost suppliers to the imaging industry.

"As soon as I explained what I was looking for," Jenkins says, "I was immediately shown the Epson P-2000 Multimedia Storage Viewer - and it was fairly obvious that this was the perfect blend of power, features and portability."

Withstanding extreme conditions

In selecting equipment to use in the extreme Antarctic conditions, Jenkins drew on the experiences gained during her first trip; and it was the reliability of batteries that became a key issue. "When I was down in Antarctica in 1997 I found that battery failure was a major problem," she says. "Some of the equipment I took down simply couldn't work because the batteries were unable to operate in such low temperatures."

Even with constant use of the P-2000, the unit's battery operated faultlessly; and it was this faultless operation that proved to be a gain for Jenkins. She explains: "At one point during the expedition we were given permission to stay overnight at one of the Emperor Penguin colonies. It was an almost once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend 12 hours literally 'hanging out' with and photographing the penguins.

"Fortunately, even though this was an unplanned event, the P-2000 gave me the ability to take as many photographs as I wanted *without* being constrained by the camera's memory card capabilities," Jenkins continues.

"As soon as I took as many photographs that would fit on a memory card, I simply removed that card, plugged it in to the P-2000 then used a second card with the camera while the images on the first were being downloaded to the viewer. Without the P-2000, it would have been a case of being strictly limited to the combined storage capacity of the memory cards, which would *not* have been nearly enough."

Felicity Jenkins
Photographer

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Adding even further to the advantages gained by Jenkins through using the P-2000 was the unit's simple yet highly effective control panel. According to Jenkins, the sub-zero Antarctic conditions meant that any equipment had to be handled whilst wearing thick gloves. "It's no good having fiddly little buttons that require you to take off your gloves when you're in the middle of a blizzard," she says. "And I was taking photographs in blizzards more than once during the expedition.

"With the P-2000, even with thick gloves, I was able to manipulate every control without 'mashing' away at a group of buttons."

Technical flexibility

With one of the primary features of the P-2000 being its broad media support, Jenkins was able to utilise this to gain the full benefits of high quality digital photography through use of the RAW image file format. "Aside from providing me with a far greater freedom in editing the final image, shooting in RAW format delivers images of a much greater colour depth," she explains.

"So, with the P-2000's native support for RAW files *and* the viewing screen which I can only describe as being brilliantly clear and colourful, I was able to shoot, download and view absolutely anywhere - even hanging out with Emperor Penguins."

While the use of RAW image files provides far superior image quality, one of its drawbacks over the JPEG format is file size. In fact, the average file size of the images taken by Jenkins on the Antarctic expeditions was around 35 Megabytes.

"Initially I was a bit concerned as to whether the P-2000 would give me the storage capacity I'd need for extended photo shoot sessions," Jenkins explains. "But even with 35 megabyte files, I found that I was able to store at least 2,000 images on the 40 Gigabyte hard drive before I needed to transfer them across to my Apple notebook.

"That's an enormous number of files; but when you're out on a location shoot without the luxury of a computer for storing and viewing images, the number of photos you take can start to mount up fairly quickly. And this is another reason why the P-2000 will be a standard piece of equipment when I make my next Antarctic trip later this year!"