

SanDisk Introduces 8GB Camera Flash Card

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Those little blue flash cards that store photos and video clips in digital cameras and camcorders keep adding more capacity as users keep creating more content.

SanDisk, which invented the SD-format flash storage card, on March 16 introduced an 8GB SD High Capacity (SDHC) version - twice that of the highest capacity now available in the familiar SD format.

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SanDisk, of Milpitas, Calif., showed the new cards at the CeBIT conference in Hannover, Germany. The conference began March 15 and continues through March 21.

Flash memory is a solid-state, rewritable silicon memory chip that holds its content without needing power. Up to now, SanDisk flash cards have been available at a maximum 4GB capacity.

Industry experts say that flash chip capacities will keep expanding as improvements in fabrication continue to take place.

"The bar keeps moving on to where the market dynamic will drive a flash solution versus a disk solution, and this will be an interesting race to follow," Jay Kramer, a data storage consultant with Network Storage Advisors in Laguna Beach, Calif., told eWEEK.

The SanDisk 8GB SDHC card will come bundled with a USB 2.0 reader at no extra charge. SDHC cards require an SDHC-compatible reader; the reader also works with standard SD cards, a SanDisk spokesperson said.

"As consumers add more digital entertainment and memories to their lives - especially when they start shooting video with a digital still camera or digital camcorder - they need more storage capacity in flash memory cards," said Susan Park, retail product marketing manager at SanDisk. "The new 8GB SDHC delivers twice the capacity of what was previously our biggest SD card - the 4GB SDHC - introduced just eight months ago."

SDHC is the new designation for cards in any SD format larger than 2GB that adhere to the new SD 2.0 specification. Previous specifications for SD cards limited capacity to 2GB, while SDHC supports capacities up to 32GB. The specification was developed by the SD Association, an industry standards organization.

More than 30 digital still cameras and digital camcorders from Canon, Casio, Nikon, Panasonic, Pentax and Sanyo are already SDHC-compatible, the spokesperson said. SanDisk expects that SDHC will spread to digital music players, mobile phones and other personal electronics, the spokesperson said.

The 8GB SDHC card with MicroMate USB 2.0 reader will be available in April in the United States, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The bundle will be available in Japan and elsewhere in Asia later in the second quarter. In the United States, the bundle will be priced at \$189.99.

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