

# Card downloads your memories before you forget

April 22 2009, By Eric Benderoff

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If you tend to forget or neglect to move photo treasures from your digital camera to your computer, an Eye-Fi card should interest you. This clever photo memory card handles that meddlesome task for you -- and now it does the same for video too.

I gave the first Eye-Fi card a positive review when it arrived in 2007. The latest iteration of the card, available now, offers several improvements.

If you're not familiar with the product, an Eye-Fi card turns any [digital camera](#) that uses SD memory into a Wi-Fi device. The Wi-Fi technology is built into the Eye-Fi card, which is offered in only the SD format. Most digital cameras use SD memory.

The card can download photos and videos directly into your computer and to a photo- or video-sharing Web site. No cables are required, but the camera needs to be in a Wi-Fi zone.

There are four versions of the Eye-Fi card, ranging from \$50 to \$100 and in size from 2 gigabytes to 4GB. Not all offer the video feature. They are available from several retailers and at [www.eye.fi](http://www.eye.fi) .

I tested the Eye-Fi Explore Video card and like it quite a bit. At \$99, the Explore is \$20 more than the 4GB Share video card because it has two neat features for travelers: geotagging and uploading from public Wi-Fi hot spots.

Geotags pinpoint where a picture was taken. After I downloaded photos of my kids onto my computer, a [Google](#) map popped up that identified the playground where I took the photos.

That's cool, but some users may fret about privacy and safety if images are uploaded to a public Web site. The feature can be disabled.

I used the card on two computers, a Windows-based PC at my brother-in-law's house in Michigan and a Mac in my Chicago home.

I didn't have much time to spend on the setup on the PC, because we were rushing to get to a family event. I made changes later.

The Eye-Fi comes with a card reader that has a [USB](#) plug on one end and a slot for the SD card on the other. The reader includes software needed for managing the card, and it establishes the connection between the Eye-Fi card and a wireless home network. You need to use the card reader only once, for initial setup.

When the Eye-Fi Manager opens, you can choose among several settings, such as sending your photos to sites such as Facebook, Flickr or Photobucket. You also can choose a destination for videos, such as YouTube.

Photos easily downloaded into my brother-in-law's computer, transferring nearly instantly after they were taken in the house. (Transfers were slower in my house, where the Wi-Fi network isn't as robust.)

At the family event, I took several more photos and videos. When I got back to his house, I turned the camera on to send the content, flawlessly, to the PC.

The setup on my Mac wasn't as smooth, but it worked after some fiddling.

I reinserted the card reader into the Mac so the Eye-Fi card would recognize my home network. That went fine, but I couldn't get the card to send photos directly into iPhoto, the photo-sharing software on Apple computers. It worked when I directed the photos to go into a generic photo folder.

(I used an older version of iPhoto. An Eye-Fi spokeswoman said the card works with iPhoto 08 and 09. The Eye-Fi [Web site](#) offers more guidance.)

The photos went to my Shutterfly account without trouble. When the upload was complete, I received an e-mail. E-mail notification confirms completion, which then allows you to send a note to friends to check out your new photos.

I also uploaded several videos to my computer and one to YouTube. With the YouTube video, I shot it in the kitchen and by the time I returned to the room with my laptop, the upload had started. Very cool.

At \$100, you're paying a premium for a product -- the SD memory card -- that has become a commodity and can be bought for \$10.

Yet the Eye-Fi card opens a world of new photo options. If nothing else, you won't forget to take your memories off the camera anymore.

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