

Award winning online photography magazine celebrates fifth birthday

It all started five years ago in a tiny home office in Worksop, but from humble beginnings ePHOTOzine has gone on to become the UK's number one photography website with 270,000 visitors every month.

Statistics from Alexa, provider of Amazon's traffic rankings, show that the site is now the most popular online resource for photographers in the UK.

Since its launch in February 2001, ePHOTOzine has won a number of awards including two separate accolades from Web User Magazine.

Described by the publication as "a veritable Swiss army knife of a site," ePHOTOzine was awarded the prestigious Gold Award for best photography website in December 2005.

A quick glance at the site's home page backs up the claim. Boasting a plethora of features, including a lively discussion forum where members debate photography issues, a gallery for readers' photographs and an in-depth news section, ePHOTOzine is nothing if not comprehensive.

The site is the brainchild of Peter Bargh, former editor of *PhotoFX* and *Buying Cameras* magazines and author of the books '*Teach Yourself Digital Photography*' and '*Photoshop CS A to Z*'.

Peter developed the original version of the site from an office in his home in Worksop, Notts. in late 2000. Having worked for publishing giant Emap for many years, this new environment took a little getting used to.

"It was a bit cramped to begin with," says Peter, "We only had one tiny room and there were three of us working in it. It was hard work in the beginning but hindsight seems to suggest it was worth it."

With the help of Technical Director Will Smith and Sales Director Tracey Johnson, the site grew rapidly and a parent company was soon formed to oversee development. Magezine Publishing now employs seven full time members of staff in its offices located in Shireoaks, near Worksop, Notts.

"The new offices are much more professional, a real step forward. Now we have a dedicated team responsible for overseeing the different areas of the site and our productivity has

increased as a result."

Recent developments include the introduction of a private messaging system allowing members to communicate with each other on a one-to-one basis and an enhanced search facility to enable them to locate the wealth of information available.

"The beauty of our site is that there's so much to find. With over 350 reviews, 300 techniques and 100 articles, it was important to provide a customised search facility for our members."

Peter believes the secret behind ePHOTOzine's continued success is the members who keep the site's community feel alive.

"Just look at the forums, we really do have a thriving community. There are some lively debates in there and a wealth of advice being offered. Our gallery receives 3,000 new submissions each week that are critiqued by other photographers.

We have members who will readily admit that ePHOTOzine has inspired their photography and improved it beyond all recognition.

First and foremost we're a community of like-minded people who all love photography. You'll find me and the rest of the team joining in on the forums daily, and I think it's important for us to be visible, regardless of how 'big' the site is. It shows we care."

Magezine Publishing is also working on a number of other projects at the moment including the Freelance Photography Made Easy and Pentax User magazines as well as an ePHOTOzine book, proving they're a company who refuse to rest on their laurels.

With the popularity of their flagship website growing on a daily basis, rest assured that they'll be celebrating birthdays, and further awards, for many years to come.

<http://www.ephotozine.com>

<http://www.fpme.co.uk>

<http://www.pentaxuser.co.uk>

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