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David Schloss

distort more at the edges, it's a good idea to keep faces away from the corners, but the wide angle makes for an unusual and unique angle of view in many scenes.

In comparisons against Tokina's excellent new FiRIN 20mm, I noticed slightly greater detail, better flare and chromatic correction on most images, in general. The Tokina lens has the benefit of being half the price of the Zeiss Batis 2.8/18 but lacks autofocus.

Conclusion

Thanks to the excellent image quality, small size and fast focus speeds, the Batis 2.8/18 is a high-quality and highly recommended ultra-wide-angle lens for shooters of the Sony a7-series cameras. While the $1,500 price point will make it out of the range of some shooters, for the pro looking for excellent image quality on the Sony platform, the 2.8/18 Batis is well worth the price. **DPP**

Brian Matiash

MANAGING YOUR ARCHIVES

How you store your files is as important as how you capture them By Brian Matiash

I will never forget the moment I learned about the importance of having an implemented, ironclad photo backup strategy. The date was April 13, 2002, months after the tragic day that my hometown of New York City—and the entire U.S.—was devastated by terrorist attacks. It was one of the last nights I had to photograph the "Tribute in Light," an on-site installation of two massive searchlight arrays that, when lit, restored the Twin Towers back amongst the city's famous skyline in ghostly outline. I grabbed my digital camera—a 1.5-megapixel Fujifilm MX-700—and headed out to pay my respects. It was a solemn visit, and I managed to take a series of photos that commemorated it, knowing that this would be the last night I could see the installment before it was discontinued.

When I got home, I connected the camera to my computer and began copying the files over. About halfway through the copy process, the progress window disappeared and the destination folder was empty. To my absolute horror, every photo on the memory card had been inexplicably wiped. I had no words to describe the miserable loss I felt at that moment. I had been using this camera for years, and this sort of thing had never happened. Suddenly, I had lost photos commemorating one of the most important moments in my life. Granted, in 2002, having a photo backup strategy wasn't on the top of every photographer's list because digital was still so new. Still, it was at that moment that my neurosis around protecting my photos was driven into my brain.

The Importance Of Having A Backup Strategy

While losing your own personal digital photo files can be tragic, imagine how much that's compounded if you're a photographer who's being paid to capture and safeguard the memories of a couple's most special day. These days, it goes without saying that you, as the wedding photographer, aren't being hired for your photography abilities alone. You're also being hired for your professionalism, which includes understanding the importance of safeguarding every digital file you expose during the event and ensuring those files are protected well after it ends.

There are myriad ways to implement a backup strategy, and they're as diverse as photographers themselves. However, there's one common denominator under every backup strategy: It's mandatory.

What Does A Backup Strategy Look Like?

Over the years, I've developed two primary backup strategies based on the situation I'm in. I have a backup strategy for when I'm at my home office and one for when I'm traveling, and each has its own requirements. Both scenarios also have on-site and off-site redundancies implemented.

Before you do anything, you should identify what your needs are. This will help you determine what storage solutions you should buy. If you're the sort of photographer who only shoots stills, your storage needs will likely differ from a content creator who shoots a mix of stills and video or video exclusively. Generally, video eats up a lot more room, which requires larger storage capacities with your memory cards and hard drives.

The next part of a backup strategy focuses on redundancy. In other words, what's the quality and rate of bit-for-bit backups? This question is also multifaceted because backups shouldn't only be considered when you're in the safety and comfort of your home or office. Whether you're on location at a wedding or traveling abroad, having an

on-the-fly backup solution is critical and shouldn't be overlooked. While purchasing duplicates or triplicates of hard drives and memory cards may sound expensive—and it certainly can be—that cost will pale in comparison to losing the sole copy of your photos. Trust me.

My Backup Strategy

To reiterate, I have both on-site and off-site backup strategies for my home office and for when I'm traveling. These strategies have been refined over the years, and I continue to adjust as needed. To start, the first common thread with my strategies is that I exclusively use SSD drives, travel enclosures and RAID containers made by G-Technology. In full disclosure, I'm a member of the G-Technology G-Team, their ambassador program. I accepted the role specifically because I absolutely love their products, but it's worth noting that there are many storage solutions available from companies like LaCie, Pegasus, Seagate and others that are equally as robust. Just be sure to do your due diligence in determining which solution(s) fit your needs and budget.

Whether I'm returning home from a local shoot or at a hotel or campsite during my travels, the first thing I do at the end of the day is create three copies of the photos taken. In a broad sense, the first is the production copy that's imported directly into Adobe Lightroom and resides on the computer's internal SSD. Immediately afterward, I create a copy of the image files and Lightroom catalog to External Drive No. 1 followed by a mirrored copy to External Drive No. 2. I use a Mac app called ChronoSync by Econ Technologies Software to run the incremental, mirrored backups. This process ensures that on the following day, I always have my production files plus a backup copy with me

and a secondary backup that's off-site. No SD card is ever formatted until I can confirm that I have both on-site and off-site backups of every file.

Now, let's drill down for a granular look at my backup strategy.

In-Camera Storage Strategy

This part is straightforward. I have three camera bodies, and each one has three dedicated Sony 64 GB SD cards. Each card is labeled in a series designated for the respective camera body. While we've come a long way since the days of corrupting media cards, it's important that I always have my set of three cards with me. If I take only one camera body with me, then its three cards come along. If two bodies are packed, then six are with me, and so on.

Home/Office Backup Strategy

When I'm on local shoots where I return home at the end of the day, or after I return home from a destination shoot, the first thing I do is import my photos onto my production volume, which is a 16 TB G-Technology G-SPEED Studio. Next, every morning at 2 a.m., ChronoSync initiates an incremental backup to an identical, daisy-chained G-SPEED Studio, providing me with my on-site backup. Finally, I retrieve a third identical G-SPEED Studio from the fireproof safe in my neighbor's basement and run an ad-hoc incremental backup via ChronoSync. This provides me with an off-site backup.

Travel Backup Strategy

Whether I'm camping in the wilderness or staying in a cabin or hotel, it's critical that I have a mirrored backup strategy in place. While I understand that not every aspect of this strategy can be replicated (it's not like I can drag around a fireproof safe everywhere), having redundancies is a requirement.

Like my home office strategy, the first thing I do at the end of every day is import my photos into Adobe Lightroom, located on my production volume. In this case, that's the 1 TB internal SSD of my MacBook Pro. Upon

successful import, I run two incremental backups via ChronoSync. The first backup job serves as my "on-site" backup; the second one serves as my "off-site" backup. In both cases, I use 1 TB G-Technology G-DRIVE ev RAW SSD drives that sit inside a G-DRIVE ev ATC case. The ATC case has become indispensable because of the added level of environmental protection it provides, which is crucial if you're a travel photographer.

When I set off the following day, whether it's on another shoot or boarding a plane, one of the ATC cases stays with me always. The second case remains back at the hotel, in my Jeep or in my rucksack, depending on the situation. The point is that there should always be two backups in two different locations. While this plan isn't always ideal, it makes a lot more sense to diversify where the backups are rather than have both in the same location.

When I return home from my travels, I do one final backup to my travel drive and then migrate the data to my RAID container, where my home/office backup strategy kicks in.

But Where's Your Cloud Backup?

You noticed that, huh? Remember earlier when I said that the first thing you need to do is identify what your needs are? In my case, my need is to have a bit-for-bit copy of every single RAW file and 4K video clip I create. That sort of total file size often makes it unfeasible to maintain a consistent cloud backup. Trust me, I've tried. But that's not to say that a cloud-based backup solution can't work for you and your workflow. If you don't take many photos, it's highly likely that you can incorporate the cloud, giving you the added benefit of having ready access to all of your photos no matter where you are, as long as you have Internet connectivity.

Improvements in connectivity speeds, notably Google's Fiber and Verizon's new FIOS gigabit service, make

cloud storage more feasible for the high-volume photographer. With Verizon's new 750 MB/second connectivity, we've been able to back up around 500 GB per day to the cloud service Backblaze.

Backblaze isn't the only cloud backup tool; there are backup tools from companies like Mozy and CrashPlan that offer similar features. CrashPlan even allows photographers to make backups to local drives or create encrypted backups to drives stored at other locations. Hook a drive up to your parents' computer across the country, and CrashPlan will create an archive there, too, for example.

We picked Backblaze for our FIOS tests because the software allows users to tweak how much bandwidth and processor power are used, which allowed us to back up as fast as our connection would allow.

With a cloud-based plan, when I'm on location, I can leave my laptop on in my hotel room overnight, and it will usually have backed up at least some of the many gigabytes of a day's shoot. It's not the first tier of backup, but it's an added redundancy.

Never Lose A Thing

I take my photo backups very seriously, and I don't weigh the need for one any differently between personal or commissioned work. Whether you're a wedding photographer hired to photograph the event or a guest attending it, the effort you put into creating that memorable photo should be mirrored in the way you protect it from data corruption or physical loss. The last experience you ever want to have as a photographer is permanently losing any photos you've taken. Please believe me. You won't be sorry. **DPP**

Brian Matiash is a photographer, author and educator based in Portland, Oregon, and he's an ambassador for a number of companies including Sony and Zeiss. You can find more of his work at matiash.com and on Instagram @brianmatiash

LaCie 6big

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Seagate Innov8

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