What is EXIF data and how can you use it Improve your Photography?

PUBLISHED - 27 JUN 2016

Improve your imaging by tapping into the wealth of information stored about your shots in the EXIF data.



EXIF stands for 'EXchangeable Image File format', and it lists the details of all the settings used to make your image. No matter what digital camera system you're shooting with – DSLR, compact, even a mobile-phone camera – it records the EXIF data for each image, whether that's RAW (NEF), TIFF or JPEG.

So what's recorded? Basically everything from the original image, including model of camera, lens type, exposure mode, shutter speed, lens aperture and focal length, metering mode, ISO, white balance, flash settings, subject distance, exposure bias (e.g. under/over), the date and time the picture was taken, and even the location if your camera has a geotagging facility. It

won't, however, show up adjustments made to an image – it's all about the RAW data.

The beauty of EXIF data is that it enables you to check out the settings that work in a particular situation, and the ones that don't, so you can learn from your mistakes and improve your imaging. Even better, you can also check out the EXIF data from images posted on photo-sharing websites such as Flickr, so you can explore the settings that more experienced photographers have chosen for their image to achieve a particular look.

You can access EXIF data in Nikon Capture NX-D (and Capture NX2), as well as Adobe's Photoshop, Bridge and Lightroom software. You can also read it straight off by right-clicking the image on your PC or Mac, although these right-click options might not give you full details.

© NIKON U.K.