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## Casio Exilim Zoom EX-Z1050 digital camera

by Doug Harman published on 22 May 2007

The Casio Exilim EX-Z1050 updates the Z1000 model with a few tweaks and some new-to-Casio technology that improves an already attractive package. The aluminum-bodied newcomer comes in four colours: black, silver, gold and pink.

Aside from the slim styling and 10.1-megapixel sensor, other new kit in the 1050 includes the updated Exilim engine 2.0 providing improved image processing that now boasts motion analysis technology.

The latter is utilised by the updated AF set up that can focus and then track moving subjects within the frame keeping them sharply focused. Motion analysis also helps the blur reduction systems which automatically analyse the velocity and vector of moving subjects and sets an appropriate ISO and shutter speed to help freeze the motion, the basis for Casio's Anti Shake DSP system.

The camera's 3x optical zoom lens has a "typical" focal range of 38-114mm with a maximum aperture range F2.8 to F5.1, again typical on this type of compact. However, the Exilim lens is crisp and fully retracts into the slim body when the camera's switched off.

The lack of an optical viewfinder means you must rely on the large, 2.6-inch wide aspect screen for composition, the bright screen is nice to use in all but the brightest of direct sunlight when it'll need shading.

The display has various modes but best of these include an active histogram display, grid composition overlay and the very neat control panel display.

This provides a vertical menu on the right of the screen that can be used to quickly access and adjust the various settings on display via the four



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-way jog buttons on the camera's back. This control option beats having to delve into menus for adjusting quality, ISO, resolution and white balance but means there are no direct controls for any settings other than the lens zoom control, tiny on/off button and shutter release on the top plate.

You get two shooting modes: Program AE and Best Shot. The former provides fast, automatic shooting for any situation while the latter offers a selection of 38 (yes, count them, 38) shooting options. Here a separate menu system is used to guide you through the options, which include everything from portrait mode to voice annotation, ID Photo mode to backlight or an underwater setting.

Another neat feature is the camera's Quick Shutter mode; it's common to many Casio cameras but allows for reduced shutter lag. That, a fast start up time and responsive playback mode combined with a continuous shooting mode of up to seven frames a second to the limit of the SDHC storage (the Z1050 also accepts standard SD/MMC storage and has 14.5MB of internal storage) but with the resolution limited to just 2 million pixels.

Together with the excellent tracking AF system, (sensitive enough to track moving objects on my TV from across the room) and responsive shutter, you have a very responsive little camera indeed.

In terms of picture quality, the 1050 seems to present a step up from the Z1000 that it replaces. Noise, while evident at higher ISOs, which run from ISO 80 to ISO 800 is less obvious and there seems to be less detail smoothing as well, which is a big bonus.

The lens is sharp and the focusing system, which, incidentally, also combines a nine-zone and single zone set up for use if the tracking system is not suitable for the subject; Macro focusing is modest with a 10cm closest focus point.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Casio 10.1-megapixel Digital compact

### Good

Good price, design, large colour LCD, USB2 connectivity, good image quality at lower ISOs, Auto Tracking AF

### Bad

No optical viewfinder, JPEG artifacts, noise at higher ISOs

### Verdict

Casio's latest Exilim the Z1050 is an update of the Z1000 but with a few neat tricks of its own

**Price** £229

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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Auto white balance is a bit hit and miss under mixed lighting but the presets (daylight, cloudy, fluorescent and tungsten for example) work well enough plus you get a simple to use manual control for more precise tailoring still.

Metering is good and proved reliable in most conditions and the flash system is fairly flexible too, the Soft Flash mode adding a modicum of control for fill in subjects or subjects close to the camera. And colour is good too with a not overly saturated approach by default but with the usual array of colour adjustments such as vivid and black and white should you need them.

One concern I have is slight problems in expanses of single colour, such as blue sky, which seems to show compression artifacts even in the top quality setting of Fine; JPEG compression is just too aggressive.

## **VERDICT**

The Casio EXILIM Zoom Z1050, while still a makeover of the Z1000, offers some excellent kit that makes it a real step forward. It lacks manual controls other than exposure compensation but is, instead, replete with Best Shot modes to cover almost any eventuality.

This and less issues with noise, a great AF set up and an easy to use interface combined with responsive handling make the Z1050 worthy of close consideration.