

Memory card corruption occurs for the same exact reason that a five-year-old computer runs slower than its brand new counterpart. The processor can only handle a certain amount of data before slowing down the overall processing power of the machine. Your digital camera *is* a handheld computer.

Files A-E are pictures on a memory card where the colors represent the placeholder for the images on the memory card, and the numbers are representative of the file size of each image:

A=4MB B=6MB C=2MB D=5MB E=9MB

The image files are arranged on the memory card like this:

12341234561212345123456789

If you use the trash can button, it removes the image but not the placeholder:

1234123456 12345123456789

On the next image you take, your camera fills in that empty placeholder then adds the remaining pieces of the image file at the end of the memory card:

F=7MB

1234123456121234512345678934567

This occurrence is called file fragmentation. This is the same way that all computer systems work. If this occurs enough times on the same memory card, the image files will be harder—if not impossible—for the camera's processor to find the image files. When the camera cannot read the image files on the memory card, some computers may be able to read them. If no machine can read the image files on the memory card that means the memory card has become corrupt.

THERE IS STILL HOPE! If you have a corrupt memory card, you can have the image files recovered by your local camera store.

You are in control of preventing memory card corruption. In order to avoid corruption, *do not use the trash can button* unless the image you are deleting is the last image on the memory card. Also, make sure you **format your memory card regularly** after backing up your photos onto CD or DVD. Formatting your memory card clears out all the placeholders therefore negating the fragmentation of images.

There is one last thing to do in order to prevent file corruption. Purchase a *memory card designed specifically for digital imaging equipment*. Memory cards designed for digital imaging actually have fewer physical memory modules which means the processor in the camera has to search through fewer places to find each image file making it easier and faster for the camera.