



# dust: bane of his story

**Alan Whittle asks** I use a Nikon D70 and a D200, and have recently found dust on the sensors. I have bought a Delkin Sensor Scope kit to solve the problem. The swabs and solution are fairly effective at removing the dust, but the solution leaves smears on the sensor. I have spent some time looking into the problems of dirt on sensors and have spoken to many camera suppliers and repairers, who say the kit I have purchased does as much as I can expect from a DIY kit. I have asked what the companies would use if I were to send the camera away for a clean, and the general consensus is that they would use something similar to the kit I bought. Is this true?

**Richard Sibley replies** From personal experience, I have found that the swab and solution method of sensor cleaning, when carried out with care, is extremely effective. The trick is not to put too much

solution onto the swab and to work quickly. Depending on the solution, one or two drops are generally all you need. Once you have applied the solution, make only one or two swipes over the sensor filter and use a new, clean swab if a repeat clean is required. Often I use a second clean swab to wipe off any last hint of solution. The smearing is a result of the solution collecting the dust as you apply it. If you don't wipe away all the solution before it evaporates, you will leave dirt behind in the form of the smear.

Most repair centres, including manufacturers' authorised centres, perform their sensor cleaning using swab methods, albeit with slight variations. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to remove 100% of dust from the sensor filter. A friend of mine sent his camera away to the manufacturer for cleaning, only for it to come back looking worse! It took three attempts for it to be satisfactorily

cleaned, and even then there were still small dust particles in the corners of the frame. Many pro service centres offer excellent 'while-you-wait' sensor-cleaning services. They examine images taken from the sensor before and after cleaning so they can see that it has been satisfactorily cleaned. Fixation, in London, charges £50 +VAT to clean full-frame sensors, and £25 + VAT for all other sensor sizes. Other centres charge a similar amount. Visit [www.fixationuk.com](http://www.fixationuk.com) or call 020 7582 3294 for more details. For further information on sensor cleaning, see the Digital SLR Supplement that came free with our 18 November 2006 issue. (For details on how to obtain back issues, call 020 3148 4138).

