

The Sony XDCam PXW-Z200

Sony tries to eliminate all real-world shooting challenges. Again.

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With the [Sony XDCam PXW-Z200](#), you won't have to worry about focus, keeping your subject in-frame, dialing-in exposure, or having an audio assistant—if you don't want to. It can just be you, the camera, your subject, and a streaming connection if you're live broadcasting. And the results can be amazing.

The Image You See

The PXW-Z200 will capture your subject with a Sony 1"-type, 14-megapixel **Exmore RS sensor**, backed by the latest **BIONZ XR image processor**. The image is captured in 5K from the entire sensor surface with no cropping, condensed to 4k, and output in frame rates up to 60p with audio. Or you can capture slow motion without audio at 120p in 4k and 240p in Full HD (FHD).

When you're far from your subject but wish you could be near, the **20x Optical Zoom** will get you there. In 35 mm terms that would be a wide view of 24mm to 480 mm telephoto, with an aperture range of F2.8 to F4.5 at full zoom.

Keep it Steady

A downside of zoom lenses had always been the increased difficulty of keeping the subject in the frame while avoiding vibration. That's where **Sony's AI Processing Unit** comes in. It brings all the optical and digital **image stabilization** we expect from today's cameras, but also has **Auto Framing, Auto Focus with 81% sensor coverage**, and the ability to **recognize and track the "human form."**

Not satisfied to simply look for your subject's face, Auto Focus and Auto Framing follows your subject by their *shape* as a human. It will **track and reframe the subject within a sub-section of the larger 4K image, in HD**. So long as the camera has a full view of the range over which the subject might wander, you will not need to risk introducing jitter by touching the camera, much less moving it.

While the camera tracks the subject, **the Monitor & Control app** on your smartphone or tablet sets you free to manage the room, checking on the venue, equipment or people.

Exposure Smarts. Color Presets.

The auto **Neutral Density filter** provides an alternative to manually adjusting exposure via the aperture for moving from, for example, an interior to an exterior shot. This makes long, single-shot camera moves practical even with lighting changes.

When you're on a **multi-camera shoot**, the XDCam PXW-Z200 lets you **dial-in a preset color gamut**, such as **S-Cinetone, ITU709**, or others to match your footage to other professional cameras.

Dialing-in the Audio Story

With **four channels of audio**, recording professional audio in-camera is a given. This includes two XLR inputs plus the **Multi Interface Shoe**, with two of the channels sporting **physical level dials**. Sure, keep your handheld recorder available as a backup, but for many professional video shooters the practice of Double System audio recording can safely be relegated to distant memory—and movie sets.

Out-of-the-Box Streaming

For **live streaming** or broadcasting an event, the XDCam PXW-Z200 supports hard-wired **Ethernet, Wi-Fi**, or built-in **12G-SDI connection**, which is a stand-out feature that allows for **longer cable runs**. Having it built-in reduces the burden of separate equipment.

Our Conclusion

The **Sony XDCam PXW-Z200** is a professional camcorder with a powerful zoom, AI autofocus with full-body subject tracking, auto ND filters, built in audio with professional connections, live streaming capability, and color gamut selection to play well with other cameras. All-in-all, it's clear that Sony's engineers are trying to eliminate as many of our real-world shooting challenges as possible—and it seems to be working.

TO BUY, OR NOT?

The XDCam PXW-Z200 is ideal for any recording situation, especially if you are a solo-operator, and particularly when live-streaming long sessions. The audio can feed directly into the camera, you can stream from there or send the audio out to the board. The Cine color gamut presets mean that the PXW-Z200 will play nicely in a multi-camera setting. And while not mentioned in the general review, the ability to hot-swap batteries and memory cards means even the longest show can go on.

On the other hand, if SDI output and timecode input/output is not important, the **Sony HXR-NX800** might be your ideal camcorder. Both offer the same high-quality video and audio capture.

For more comparisons, see the *Apples to Oranges* section.

Preorders began August 21, 2024, with the Z200 at \$4,000 and the NX800 at \$3,300.

APPLES TO ORANGES

Compared to other cameras, the [Sony PXW-Z200](#) has a particular advantage: nearly everything is accomplished within a single package, and it's a package that simplifies real-world challenges of professional video shooters. And the price is competitive. Still, comparisons must be made. Here are a few.

Sony HDR-NX800: The [PXW-Z200](#) camcorder is part of Sony's **MPEG HD422 series** of camcorders. MPEG HD422 refers to compression technology, providing the highest picture quality in Sony's XDCam series of cameras. As mentioned in the main article, the [Sony HXR-NX800](#) is identical to the PXW-Z200, except that the latter lacks timecodes and SDI output.

Sony PXW-Z190: The earlier model, the [PXW-Z190](#), still holds its own. It has three 1/3" sensors, a higher zoom range, three control rings instead of two, a variable ND filter with both manual and auto mode, and streaming capabilities. The SDI output is at 3G, which has lower bandwidth than the 12G-SDI of the newer model. It lacks the newer BIONZ XR image processing and the latest AI Processing. It has facial detection but does not detect the entire human form.

Sony FDR-AX100: The Sony PXW-Z200 will be a clear upgrade from the discontinued [Sony FDR-AX100 Handycam](#), which had a 1"-type sensor but had a lower zoom range at 12x and lacked the newer AI and ND filter technologies, the XLR audio connectors, the additional media card slot, and other features.

Sony FX30: The [Sony FX30](#) interchangeable lens cine camera has a higher megapixel, APS-C sensor at 26.1 MP, and it handles 4k up to 120p, and captures both video and still images. But it lacks the XLR ports without an add-on, and IP streaming. It starts at a competitive price, but interchangeable lenses means that there is no upper limit to how much we might spend on [enticing new lenses](#).

Canon XF605: Canon offers the [Canon XF605](#), a more expensive 4K camcorder with a lesser optical zoom range at 15x. Yet, like the Sony PXW-Z200 it boasts a single 1"-type sensor, up to 4k 60p recording, dual card slots, 12G-SDI output, and optical and digital stabilization. Canon has facial detection but does not detect the entire human form. It bests Sony in that it does take still photographs, including time-lapse photographs.

Other Canon: Other popular Canon cameras are the [Canon XA70](#), which only supports up to 4k 30p while still utilizing a 1"-type sensor; and the [Canon XA65](#) and [Vixia HF G70](#), both of which use 1/2.3" sensors and are likewise limited to 4k 30p.

DSLRs: Unlike camcorders, many [Mirrorless Digital Single Lens Reflex cameras](#) suffer a 30-minute recording time limit. Other concerns are the lack of XLR inputs, or timecode input and output, or streaming connections. Other issues common to DSLRs are the ability to only use a portion of the image sensor for video (cropping), lower dynamic range, increased moiré in images, overheating, and the tendency of camera owners to make-do with inferior lenses.

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