

First tests

Specs

Prices

Control Unit Mk II £119.94, Wireless Multi Sensor £59.94, IR transmitter (battery powered) £29.94, Camera cable (Nikon) £9.60, TSJX-25 2.5mm camera joiner £4.80, 5m camera trigger extension cable £9.60

Trigger input

433MHz wireless link, or hard wired input from other sensors

Wireless channels

16 programmable

Digital trigger timer

0.1 to 9.9secs

Digital delay timer

1 to 100ms and 1/10sec to 10secs

Timing accuracy

2% or better

Trigger modes

Manual, auto one shot, auto re-arm

Focus activation

Manual

Trigger outputs

Camera and auxiliary

Sensor modes

Light, infrared beam, sound

Waterproofing

IP53

Power requirements

Two PP3 batteries

Dimensions (wxdxh)

15x10x3.5cm

Weight

200g

Contact

flaghead.co.uk

TriggerSmart Control Unit Mk II £119.94

Bursting balloons, water droplets, wildlife and bugs in flight are the sort of images you can capture with the TriggerSmart Mk II.

The original TriggerSmart is still available, as are many of its accessories, which work with the Mk II.

The key advantages of the Mk II over the original, are that it is wireless and with time delays now digitally controlled for precision. The Classic had dials for this.

For this test, I was supplied with the Mk II Digital Controller unit (DC2), Wireless Multi Sensor (WMS) module, an infrared transmitter, a ten-pin Nikon camera cable and a 5m extension cable. I happened to have a couple of tiny tripods to hold the sensors.

After unpacking the first thing I did was read through the instructions. It was been some years since I used the original TriggerSmart so I was effectively starting from scratch.

The DC2 and WMS link wirelessly automatically and there's a 30m working range between the two units.

Turn the DCS on and you'll see the default work space. Red LEDs show for SENSITIVITY, RESET and SHORT (mS) and 01 and 0.1 in the DELAY ON and FIRE ON displays. The unit always starts in this manner, so it is worth making note of settings, especially the times, once you have a process that works for you.

There are two ranges for delay on times, 0.1 to 100mS and 0.1 to 10secs. This adjusts the time delay between the sensors detecting sound/movement/light and the shutter firing. You'll need to experiment with what timings work for the situation you are working in. For example, I went for a



delay of 40mS for the droplets I shot for this test but tried with 20mS and 90mS too.

The FIRE ON time range is 0.1 to 9.9secs and this is the time you want the camera to run for once a signal has been detected. With the camera set to continuous shooting you can shoot a sequence lasting a set time period.

Turn on the WMS and start with the red LED next to the SENS and SND settings. SND stands for sound and is one of the four trigger modes - IRB for infrared, LIS for light and AUX auxiliary are the others. You can do a quick check if the units are talking to each other by tapping either of the boxes. A yellow LED lights up next to the words SIGNAL TRIG on the DCS unit to confirm operation.

Knowing that it was all working I decided to shoot water droplets. If the trigger can pick up tiny falling water droplets then strawberries, darts, mammals and the like will be a piece of cake. My set-up was very basic, as you can see bottom left. In a semi

darkened room to keep out any big sources of IR I set the WMS to IRB mode and placed this facing the IR transmitter across a dish of water.

On the WMS I adjusted sensitivity using the up arrow until the red SIG LED showed, then pushed the down arrow to extinguish it.

With the camera connected and the lead plugged into the DCS, I checked it was working by breaking the IR beam with my finger. It took a little fine-tuning but it was soon working.

I started dripping water droplets in front of the beam and adjusted the times. I started with DELAY ON at 40ms - a pure guess but as it happens a good one. I had TIME ON at three seconds and the camera in continuous shooting mode.

To determine focusing I pushed the INHIBIT button, which stops the DCS triggering the camera. I then moved a drinking straw into the invisible IR beam. Yellow LEDs on the DCS flash when the beam is broken so you have an idea that you are in

the right spot. With the straw positioned in the right place I focused up on that.

I dripped water from a handheld syringe, varying position until the camera fired. It was an ad hoc set-up and a more reliable and consistent water drop system would be good. It would make composition more precise too.

Despite my haphazard set-up I soon racked up 300 shots with focusing and timing changes being made as I went along. I added a blue plastic sheet for some colour too.

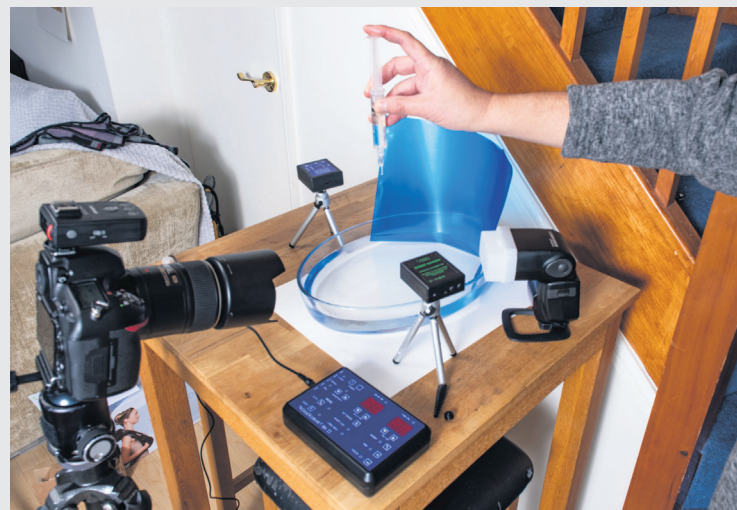
Success rate wasn't high, but the fact that I got some half decent shots without much effort soon after unpacking the package was good going.

If I bought a TriggerSmart to do this sort of work I'd soon be developing a more reliable way of working and pushing the creative envelope a tad more, but the main thing is that the unit did its job very well without too much fuss. *WC*

Go see the demo

If you are visiting The Photography Show at the NEC, 16-19 March, go to the Flaghead stand (G91) where

the TriggerSmart MkII will be on demonstration and experts available to answer your questions.



Above This was the basic set-up to capture the water droplet image shown above right. The camera was a Nikon D850 with a 105mm macro lens with light supplied by an off-camera Hahnel Modus 600RT with a Viper TTL trigger on the hotshoe. The flashgun was set to manual mode and at 1/128 power for the briefest flash duration - around 1/20,000sec. The exposure was 1/60sec at f/8 and ISO 400. Water was dripped into the dish using a syringe, which - when the alignment was correct - fired the camera and flash. The time delay set on the console was varied between 20ms and 90ms.



Verdict

The TriggerSmart Mk II is nicely priced at £120, but you need to budget for a few accessories depending on what you want to shoot. The outfit I used was around £230, which is very reasonable for the shooting opportunities it offers to the imaginative user, and it certainly works well.

Pros It works, versatile, fun,

potential

Cons Control unit resets when switched off