

Since its founding in 1919, Olympus, a precision technology leader in designing and delivering innovative solutions in healthcare and consumer electronics worldwide, has led the industry in developing various innovations across its business lines. For 85 years, Olympus has been known for pioneering innovation, including Japan's first microscope and many of the world's "firsts," such as the first gastrocamera, the first Microcassette™ recorder, the first compact 35 mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera system, and the first fully designed professional digital SLR camera system, the Olympus E-1™.

Timeline of Innovation

- 1919** **Olympus founded, and one year later, produces ASAHI, Japan's first microscope.**
Since the launch of the first model in 1920, Olympus microscopes have become vital to observation at the submicron level, and are found in the leading research laboratories, clinical centers, and educational institutions worldwide.
- Today, Olympus clinical laboratory microscopes are used in the U.S. more than any other brand.
- 1950** **Olympus develops world's first gastrocamera.**
Mounted at the tip of a flexible tube, Olympus' miniature camera could record the esophagus and the stomach on film – sparking a revolution in endoscopy. The 1960s saw another Olympus breakthrough with a fiberscope that could transmit the image directly – laying the foundation for minimally invasive endoscopic treatment. Setting the stage for further innovations, Olympus miniaturization technologies, once used for observation, have become the centerpiece of minimally invasive surgery, making treatment less invasive, shorter, less costly and more effective.
- Today, Olympus has greater than 70% market share in the global medical endoscope business.
- 1969** **Olympus introduces world's first Microcassette recorder.**
In the late 1960s, even the regular cassette recorder was considered innovative, reducing portable tape recorders to devices about the size of shoeboxes. But in 1969, Olympus revolutionized portable recording by miniaturizing the technology and introducing the Pearlrecorder. The world's first Microcassette recorder, this device allowed business people, reporters, and students to preserve the sounds of important moments with a device literally small enough to fit in a jacket breast pocket.
- Today, Olympus is the leading manufacturer of digital voice recorders in the U.S.
- 1972** **Olympus releases OM SLR system and establishes itself as pioneer in development of compact SLRs.**
The Olympus® OM-1 SLR system truly revolutionized 35 mm photography, slimming down the bulky, heavy SLRs of the day into an easy to handle, compact package that influenced future SLR design by leading manufacturers. Soon after, Olympus launched the next-generation Olympus® OM-2, the world's first SLR with a through-the-lens (TTL) direct light metering system, which provided more accurate exposure measurement.
- Today, the TTL system developed by Olympus is the gold standard in digital as well as film photography.
- 2002** **Olympus develops world's first DNA computer for gene analysis.**
Olympus unveiled in Japan the world's first functional computer for gene analysis, combining huge computing power and parallel processing. The result is a high-speed, fully automated process – from sample injection to reaction – to enable quantitative gene expression profiling for research and medical fields, such as genetic diagnosis and drug discovery.
- In the future, Olympus' technology may enable customized drug development for target populations, rather than today's mass-demand approach.
- 2003** **Olympus introduces Olympus E-1, world's first fully designed professional digital SLR camera system.**
At a time in the digital camera revolution when other leading camera manufacturers were cobbling together digital camera systems from existing film camera components, Olympus created and launched the world's first professional digital SLR camera system designed to be 100% digital from-the-ground-up -- maximizing performance and delivering unsurpassed image quality.
- Today, Olympus continues to set new standards in digital photography.