

So my phone takes a picture, what changes does that forebode for photography you will ask. Well, look at it this way, over the past year (2003), the number of cameraphones sold world wide has been larger than the number of stand alone digital cameras, and no doubt the trend will continue into the future. By next year (2004) the number of camera-phones sold is expected to be greater than the number of digital and film cameras combined.

The Still Image in Real Time



| Written by Pedro Meye | ∍r |
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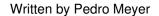
We should understand that with the camera-phones entire new photographic endeavors will emerge. We should not always judge the future by that which we already know, on the contrary, the exciting thing is to imagine what we do not yet know or even fully understand.

For instance, how will people use the camera-phone? Possibly to create their personal diaries in new ways that have not been done in the past, it's quite an intriguing proposition in spite of diaries not being something very new, in fact it is quite ancient. But what keeps it alive is that it is so human and so basic to our personal interactions. The potential to find new forms of delivery and construction (internet+ camera-phone images) is what offers such a great challenge to our imagination.

But what about someone who is out shopping and wants to confirm if the chair they are about to buy is the right design? Or if the pattern on the textile is the right one for their curtains? You can save yourself a lot of additional trips by just confirming via picture phone if what you need really is what you are being offered.

Then we have all those blind dates, they no longer need to be so blind! There can be a picture phone going on in either direction. We understand that escort services, also want for security reasons, to get a picture of their clients ahead of time, something that works to the benefit of both parties as security is sought by one side and "good looks" by the other, both seem to benefit from visual confirmation.

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Photography has always been based among other ideas, on the notion of being a witness to an event. The desire to use the camera as a tool to mediate the world of the photographer in bringing the image to the viewer. However still photography was never delivered in real time, as could be the case with broadcast television. Now for the first time, the still image is in real time. The phone-camera, and the digital camera over the internet.

We are looking at something completely new, the delivery of the still image in real time. In the past, the time lag between taking a picture and showing it went from months, then to weeks, following that it went to days, and then to hours, and more recently to minutes, finally now we have for the first time all of this happening in real time.

The implications for all of photography are of course huge. When photography can be in real time, we will discover that we have to reconsider many of our traditional notions of what photography has stood for, and how it was delivered. Some new forms of delivery will emerge, others will tend to disappear, it is yet too early to tell, which ones. What is clear is that the world of photography is not going to remain the way it was only a decade ago.

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