

Darwin said: **It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the smartest, but the one that adapts better to change.**

In a devastating week for the professional development laboratories industry, we can see Darwin's theory fully proved. **Ceta** and **Sky Imaging UK**, both renowned photo laboratories in London, went out of business last December 1st, following the footsteps of their fellow competitors **Keishi Colour**, who shut down last March.

Photo labs face voluntary extinction for not adapting in a timely fashion to the digital revolution, which is a process that has been in the making for quite some time now. Sky's director, Mike Sherry stated that he would continue to offer his services to those clients that are still in need of them.

Sherry said that he tried to look for a possible buyer to at least save a little bit of the business, as a director responsible for his people, he didn't want to expose them to another difficult month, specially knowing how December usually is. Providing analog services when there is no profit was not easy on his staff, especially in the weeks prior to the business closing down. Profits plummeted and competition is fierce.

2006, a devastating year for the Photographic Development Industry

Written by Iliana Ulloa

Steve Kent, owner of Ceta also decided to go out of business due to the extremely difficult conditions of the market in this area, he even decided to close on the same day as his competitors did. **Metro Imaging** also closed their Chelsea office since it no longer rendered any profits to the group, and could not even cover its own operation expenses, according to Ben Richardson, director of **Metro Imaging**. However, this company still keeps its Clerkenwell and Soho offices open.



Only a few will survive until the end. The volume of film received by photo labs has dropped to 15% of what was processed just 3 years ago. Shutting down was inevitable. Nonetheless, Richardson said that they would stay in business as long as there is film to be developed.

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“London enjoyed an abundance of work for a long time, it is not a surprise that the market of work for photo labs changed so quickly. They have had to change and specialize, focusing on a niche, thus becoming different from other photo labs”, said Nigel McNaught from the Photo Marketing Association UK.

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