



What is phonesnap?

Most of us have a mobile phone to hand at all times, the majority of which have a built-in camera. We are using these phone cameras to document different events and objects than we would with a traditional SLR or digital camera.

The phone camera grants us an alternative way of capturing memories (holidays, family get-togethers, nights down the pub) and of photographing our daily lives (view from office window, recent purchase on Ebay, lunchtime meal) as shown on a growing number of 'moblogs' – mobile phone blogs, featuring photo's and text in an online diary format.

(see phonesnaps at <http://moblog.co.uk/blog/phonesnap>).



Phonesnap is an ongoing research project that seeks to map these contemporary uses of mobile phone photography.

Phone camera users are asked to submit to *phonesnap* the last two pictures taken on their phones without any judgement, selection or editing over their entries. This can be done via MMS messaging on the phone via a dedicated number or by e-mail.



The Results

The collected images reveal the emerging new trends and that the mobile phone camera is forging a new aesthetic within modern photography.

Perhaps the most interesting usage is the mobile phone camera as a visual note-book. In our time-pressured lives the phone camera lets us make a quick visual note, recording information such as website details, maps, train and event times, shop prices and wish list items that would previously have been scrawled on a bit of paper, or committed to memory. Ideas, designs and mental notes can be stored for future reference.



It also enables us to observe and photograph our environment in a new way, freezing details such as the latest Banksy graffiti, quirky signs or misspelt shop notices, which previously, in the absence of a pocket camera, would have remained unrecorded.

These images can also be shared with friends and family at the touch of a button, or by simply using the phone as a portable photo album. Photos can be sent instantaneously to anyone, anywhere in the world. They are an immediate picture post-card and the modern day carte-de-visite.



Yet they are also very temporary. The vast majority of these images are never be printed out, uploaded to a computer, or even circulated. Many remain as a visual record on the handset only to be deleted once they are no longer of any use or once the memory card is full.

Phonesnap is archiving the random snaps and images of our day-to-day lives, that up until now no-one has thought to preserve.



The Website

The phonesnap web site at www.phonesnap.co.uk features a gallery of participant's last two phonesnaps (currently hosted by mobile blog site – moblog). The site also offers information and advice on how to retrieve the photographs from a camera phone – something many users never do. There is also a forum where it is possible to discuss how camera phones are used in everyday life.

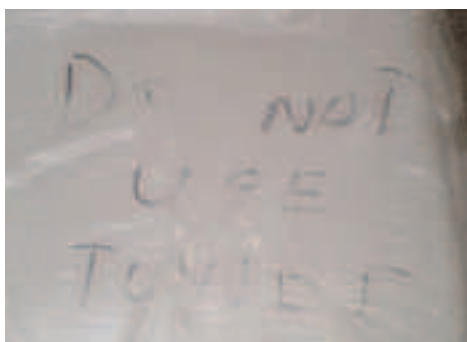


Phonesnap Profile

Catherine Roylance, curator of phonesnap is a graphic designer, whose clients include Eric Clapton, The British Library and Talkback Thames.

She is studying an MA in Graphic Design at London College of Communication, London.

She is also a director of Genesis Publications, publisher of rock photography limited edition books.



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