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Are camera phones destroying photography?

Key words:

Phone photography

Technology

Equipment

Within my dissertation proposal I will look at 3 key words that I find interesting and links to my own practice. The topic I would like to look at is, are camera phones destroying photography? I would like to look at this because I feel that there are many people who use cell phones as a quick way to take photos and consider them to be professional. Another reason I would like to look at this topic is because I feel that the newer model phones are built with a lot of techniques that you can work a look easier on the phones than you can on cameras for example, shutter speed. A lot of phones are now built with shutter speed settings allowing you to do slow and fast shutter speed without needing to know the correct F stop etc that you would need on a camera. For example, an iPhone has night mode setting on their cameras which allows you to take photos in the dark and they become long exposure photos without needing to know all the setting.

Phone photography

Will Wenders has suggested that

- 1) "phone photography' is killing photography as we know it." (carron, M., 2019.)

Smart phone cameras have become very sophisticated as newer models are created the camera quality is also upgraded and new techniques added. The newer model phones take good, sharp images that most photographers practiced years to get using a camera. One useful thing about taking photos on a phone is that you always have one on you and they are small and light in weight so makes it easier for you to carry around. A photographer makes a photo whereas most people who use their phones as a camera just feel that being a good photographer is just taking the photo instead of making it.

- 2) "cameras have seen a dramatic decline in sales, while the number of pictures has boomed with an estimated 1 trillion photos snapped in 2017" (Lucas, E., n.d.)

This shows that smart phones are taking over professional cameras. There are still a lot of features on a professional camera that a phone camera cannot do, however, with the right editing software the quality of images are nearly the same standards. There have been a lot of newer phones built with a lot of upgrades to the cameras which is why everyone takes photos. Some people just take photos so that they have the image there forever to record a moment in time/ memory. On the other hand, a lot of people have been taking photos using a phone and considering themselves as a photographer. With camera phones there are a lot of different settings like shutter speed that you can use easily without all the hassle of trying to figure out the correct exposure like you would need to with a professional camera.



Figure 1 “untitled”



Figure 2 “untitled”

Figure 1 is a photograph that was taken using a cell phone and figure 2 was a photo taken using a camera. You can see that figure 1 is the better-quality image than figure 2. This shows why people are choosing to take their photographs on a phone rather than a camera. With the phone you just need to take the photo and you got the image you were looking for, but with a camera if you don't know the correct settings to use you would not get the result and would get images like figure 2. Cameras allows you to take photos with higher quality than the phone if you spend the time to learn how the camera works which is another reason why people are choosing mobile phones because they don't need to change any setting.

Phones are now easier to carry around with you as you can just put your phone in your pocket and it is light to carry around, whereas if you were to take photos on a professional camera it means carrying around a lot of different lenses as well as the camera body which could be one reason people tend to use smart phones.

Technology

Technology is always changing and will continue to evolve in the future. This being said I believe that smart phones will only keep having improvements made which also includes the camera on the phone.

- 3) "in 202, the number of global smartphone users is projected to total 3.5 billion, marking a 9.3 percent increase from 2019" (Oberlo , 2020)

This tells me that with the number of mobile phones users on the rise means that more people are learning how to use a camera on their phone. If people learn to use a phone camera and have good quality images, then they will feel they won't need to buy a professional camera.

- 4) "it is weird photography has never been so popular, but it's getting destroyed. There have never been so many photographs taken, but photography is dying". (Jeffries, 2013)

Taking photos have become so popular over the last couple of years and the number of photos taken a day increases and more so now because even children have phones. I believe that when they say that photography is being destroyed, they are talking about all the technical aspects of photography and the quality. When people use their smart phones, they are losing put on a lot of quality that a camera can capture.

- 5) "Further, apps like Adobe lightroom have created the ability to significantly enhance the visual appeal of a cell phone photo at no extra cost." (villarreal, 2019)

With technology increasing so are software and apps. This means you can use software like photoshop and lightroom to edit your photos even if they are taken on a phone. By editing the photos using one of those apps it allows your images to look enhanced and adds details to your photographs. This explains why most people consider themselves as a photographer even if they take photos on their phone as they have apps that you can edit them in to allow them to look professional. Another thing with technology is that you can download apps that allows you to have all the settings that a professional camera would for example a shutter speed app. The shutter speed apps allow you to do long exposure photos or have a fast shutter speed and you don't really need to learn many settings to get professional looking images especially once edited.

One app that you can get on an iPhone is proCam 8 which costs £7.99 to buy and is a lot cheaper to buy than a professional camera is and has all the settings that you need to take photos. This app allows to do long exposure images fast shutter speed photos and also allows you to do many other things which shows how you don't need to buy an expensive camera to take photos anymore.

Knowing this makes me think that people don't want to buy a professional camera because some people can't afford the prices and they can download an app to get the same outcome that the camera would get even if the quality is not as high as it would be if they were to spend the money and buy a professional camera. I do believe that many people use their

phones to take photos because it is considerably cheaper than buying a camera and all the lenses that is needed to go with the camera.

Equipment

One main reason I feel that smart phones are taking over photography is because smart phones are easier to carry around and they can work out a lot cheaper when you work out how much equipment you would need to use a professional camera. For example, with a camera you need to have the camera body as well as the different lenses depending on the type of photography you want to do. Once you have purchased all the lenses you also need to consider other equipment such as lighting which can also work out to be expensive. A smart phone lens does not compare to a DSLR or mirrorless camera lens. This is because

- 6) Mobile phone lenses, like their sensors, are tiny. They are as small as 4mm wide and 0.2 mm thick. This inhibits their ability to produce high- quality photographs.”
(Ladweer-johan, 2021)

Showing that even now with smart phones being built with higher microchips and having a lot of improvements that they still do not meet up to the same standards as a DSLR camera, this is because the camera on a smart phone is not big enough to produce high- quality images. Another thing is that the lenses are changeable on a DSLR this means that I can change the lens on my camera to a macro lens or a wide-angle lens, but with a smart phone you have a built in camera that doesn't have the same quality as a professional camera does. I believe that this doesn't mean much to many people because they take photos for fun and don't need to spend a lot of money on professional gear whereas with a professional photographer, they need to make sure that they have all the equipment that they need which can cost a lot more than a smart phone.

You can buy an iPhone 12 for £849 and you can buy a Canon EOS 2000D with a simple kit lens 18-55mm for £499.99 however this may be cheaper than a smart phone camera right now but then you need to add cost of a more professional lens and then you need to buy lighting equipment and other things that allows you to have more professional images. Along with the camera sensor, the lens makes the biggest impact on image quality. The benefits of DSLR lens are that they have a higher zoom or can change them for a different focal length, but with a smart phone camera if you were to zoom in too much it would make the image look pixilated and take the quality away from the photo.

Camera lenses all incorporate controls for:

- Distortion
- Sharpness
- Vignetting
- Chromatic aberration

There are a lot of advantages to a DSLR camera compared to a smart phone camera and when you learn to use a DSLR you realise how much quality is lost by using a phone camera. I believe that people who take up photography at the beginning do not realise how a phone affects the quality of the image and how much quality is lost when they use their phones to take the photos, however, you must take into consideration the price difference for a phone and a DSLR camera. It would work out cheaper to buy a newer model phone to take photos than it would to buy a professional camera because you need to buy the camera body but

then you need to buy the lenses that you need for different types of photography you then have to buy all the editing software to make the images look more professional.

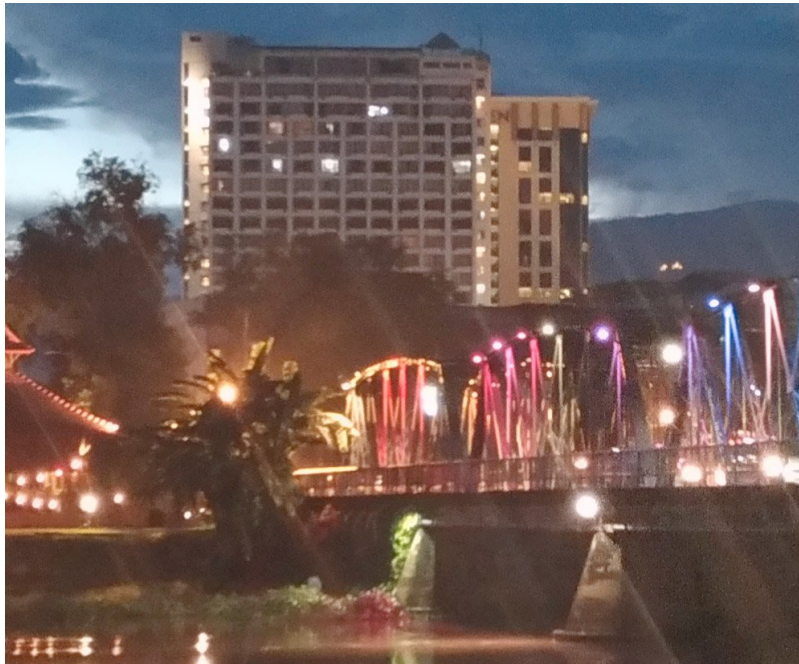


Figure 3 “untitled



Figure 4 “untitled”

Figure 3 is a photo that was taken using a smart phone. When looking at figure 3 you can see that the photo is dark, and the quality has been taken away from the image which is a clear example how smart phone cameras are not up to the same standards as a DSLR camera. Comparing figure 3 to figure 4 you can see the clear differences in the images. Figure 4 was taken using a Nikon D7200 lens using long exposure allowing the camera aperture to stay open long enough to let light in which is why the photo is not so dark. There is a lot more definition in figure 4 than there is in figure 3 this is because there was a lot more professional equipment's used than there is in figure 4.

Equipment can be important for a professional photographer because when they go to take their photos, they make sure that they have all the equipment that they need for example, correct lighting, tripod, lenses, flash, correct editing software etc. A professional photographer will make sure to have all this in order to get the best quality images whereas, someone who takes photos on their phone do not consider using equipment and may not think they need to have correct equipment in order to take photos.

After completing much research, I feel that the key words Phone photography, technology and equipment work best for me and will help me within my dissertation. They are looking closely at how cameras on mobile phones are taking over and clearly shows how a professional DSLR camera is not used as much as it used to be. These key words let to me looking at the question, are camera phones destroying photography? I was led to this question because when I was doing my research, I seen the difference in figures from 10 years ago compared to now. The key words helped me create my question because, I could see how things have changed and how people rely on phone cameras more now, which made me think phones are slowly taking over photography. There were a higher percentage of people using their phones to take photos which made me realise that even people who consider themselves to be a photographer don't own a professional DSLR camera. For my dissertation I will look at how phone cameras affect the image taken compared to a professional camera and I will consider if phones are ruining photography. Another thing I will look at is the price for all professional equipment and will look at photographers using phones to see if they are from lower poverty areas which could be one reason why they don't use a professional camera as they may not be able to afford all the professional equipment.

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Illustrations

Figure 1 “untitled” <https://www.wildwillowways.com/post/are-smartphones-destroying-photography>

Figure 2 “untitled” <https://www.wildwillowways.com/post/are-smartphones-destroying-photography>

Figure 3 “untitled” <https://www.kevinlj.com/camera-phone-vs-digital-camera-what-is-the-difference/>

Figure 4 “untitled” <https://www.kevinlj.com/camera-phone-vs-digital-camera-what-is-the-difference/>