



Study Reveals Nearly Half of Americans' Photographic Histories Will Disappear

Americans understand their memories are fading away, yet they're not preserving them.

San Francisco, CA, November 18, 2008 – Americans have taken nearly 550 billion non-digital photos in their lifetimes, yet only about half (55.4%) have tried to preserve even some of them, instead leaving them to fade away in basements, attics and living rooms, according to a new survey. That means at least half of all the consumer photographs taken in the analog era are in danger of being lost, forever.

Conducted by GfK Custom Research North America (formerly the Roper Organization) and commissioned by ScanCafe (www.scancafe.com), the study found that 75 percent of Americans know their photos won't last forever and 85 percent want their great-grandchildren to see those photos, yet preservation still isn't a top priority.

“Clearly Americans are conflicted about their photos,” said Jim Timony, Senior Vice President, GfK Media and Communications. “While we are certainly dedicated to recording our personal histories and most of us want to share our memories with future generations, many people stop short of attempting to preserve their photos digitally.”

Inevitable Decay

Experts have long known that color prints, slides, and negatives don't last. Studies have shown it's just a question of how quickly they decay. For example, a color print on name-brand paper in the 1970s has been shown in testing to reach “objectionable color shift” after approximately 13 years of display in average conditions. Eventually, it will simply fade away. The truth of consumer color photography has simply been that color photos were not meant to last forever, and boxes of color film carry warnings to that effect.

Household Dangers

But many photos may not live long enough to fade away. Photos can easily be damaged by other means—by fire, water, humidity, even invisible dust, which will mar slides and negatives, or non-

archival quality photo albums, whose plastic pages can react with the prints and cause damage, or they can be misplaced or damaged around the house. More than 54 percent of consumers surveyed reported that they had already lost important photos in one of these ways.

So if we care so much about passing our memories on, and we understand that photos won't last, why aren't we preserving more of them? According to the survey, the "hassle factor" ranked among the most important concerns.

"A scanning service can definitely save Americans' memories, if it gets two things right," said Sam Allen, CEO of ScanCafe. "It has to take away the hassle of pre-organizing photos - which we know consumers love to hate - and it also has to bring those memories back to life, which requires a dedication to quality and care. At ScanCafe, we address the first problem by letting customers send us all of their images now and pay later for the scans they want to keep. And to ensure quality, we repair images by hand, so that they look the way you remembered."

Other points of interest from the survey:

- Photo albums rank among the top few items people would grab if their house were burning down. What's more, people value photos five times more than money – five times more respondents would grab photos from a burning home rather than their wallets.
- Eighty-five percent of Americans say that it is important that their great-grandchildren be able to see the photos they've taken, yet 40 percent keep them in closets where no one can see them, and another 16 percent store them in basements or attics where they are most likely to be damaged by moisture and the elements.
- Americans aged 18 to 24 are as interested in sharing their old photos with great-grandchildren as senior citizens are (96 percent of 18-24 year-olds say that it is important that their great-grandchildren be able to see the photos they've taken).
- A photo is four times as likely to be damaged by a child or pet as it is to be damaged by fire. But one of the biggest threats is simply misplacement – 37 percent of respondents admitted to losing important old photos.

"Photos don't last forever, but memories should," added Allen. "You protect your family's home, car, and health. Why not protect your family's memories, too?"

Methodology

As part of GfK's OmniTel survey, a nationally representative sample of 1004 respondents was surveyed from October 10 to 12, 2008. The survey was conducted by telephone and has a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points for the full sample.

About GfK

The GfK Group is the No. 4 market research organization worldwide. Its activities cover the three business sectors of Custom Research, Retail and Media. In financial year 2007, the GfK Group achieved sales of EUR 1,162.1 million. The Group has 115 companies operating in more than 100 countries. Of a total of approximately 9,297 employees (as of March 31, 2008), 81.1% are based outside Germany. For further information, visit our website: www.gfk.com

About ScanCafe

Founded in 2006, ScanCafe is an award-winning scanning service, serving photographers and amateur photo enthusiasts alike, that is dedicated to preserving America's memories. ScanCafe scans and digitally repairs old photos, slides, and negatives by hand, creating digital files that can be safely stored and shared forever. ScanCafe has successfully scanned and repaired more than 15 million images to date, and was selected as best scanning service by *Money Magazine* in 2008. ScanCafe is based in Burlingame, California. For more information on ScanCafe, please visit www.ScanCafe.com.

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