

The Memory Keeping Landscape, circa 2009

Written by Jessica Sprague
Thursday, 09 April 2009 19:00



I have been thinking a lot lately about what constitutes scrapbooking. Or, more generally, what constitutes **memory keeping**? With all the cool tools and technology that are becoming available - everything from blogging to Facebook, to Twitter, to YouTube, to your digital video library living alongside the journal on your nightstand and your traditional scrapbook albums - the places we tell our stories are becoming vastly more varied.



When someone comes back, years from now, to try to get a picture of what your life was like, and what your thoughts were, how will that picture look?{...}

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Here's a better rephrasing: if you had to look at your memory-keeping or "this is my life" documentation efforts as a pie-chart, what would it look like? What percentage is:

- digital photos sitting on your hard drive or on CDs/DVDs
- boxes of printed photos
- digital video, on tapes, DVDs, or hard drives
- home movies
- written memories/journal
- digital scrapbook pages
- traditional paper scrapbook pages
- photo albums (traditional printed photos)
- recipe cards/recipe files (say it's recipes you've developed?)
- keepsakes and memorabilia (ticket stubs, programs, etc)

And these are just the more traditional media! What about the recent tools that enable you to **capture your story**

in more immediate ways? Twitter, your blog,

[Facebook](#)

, Flickr,

[Twitter](#)

, web galleries, forums, even email are ways we can share snippets in near-realtime.

I am part of the last generation that will remember dropping a roll of film off at Wal-mart to be developed, and waiting with anticipation to see which pictures came out. My kids might never even touch a film camera, and will grow up with the internet an integral part of their daily lives (something that the rest of us CLEARLY remember not having, even if we can't now imagine what our life would be like. No [Amazon](#) ? I shudder.)

I'm also part of the first generation of iPhone and other "smartphone" users, who think nothing of snapping a few quick pics or a little video on our way to work or school, and emailing them to Flickr or uploading them to YouTube. How do you think this immediacy, this intimacy affects the more traditional styles and media of memory keeping? Are they totally separate? Is posting a [tweet](#) as valid as writing two paragraphs of journaling a scrapbook page?

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For me, *the internet has changed everything about life-telling*. Not just in the opportunities it has presented me, but in the connection I feel with so many others. I don't talk about scrapbooking to that many people in real life, outside of events. But I know hundreds of people I would call friends that I may never even meet in real life. I think this is the best part of it. Couple that with the fact that I can dash off a blog post or a tweet or a Facebook post in a few minutes, rather than the 2.5 hours that EACH of the two scrapbook pages I made today took, and having lots of quick storytelling methods begins to make lots of sense.

Is there a place for new technology alongside more - shall we say - *thoughtful* record keeping (let's admit that when you snap a pic on your iphone and email it to Flickr that you aren't really going for professional quality OR for life-changing statements, right)? How have you noticed your own storytelling changing with the advent of life-sharing technologies like Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter? Do you think the trend is a good one?

So:

- Tell me what *your* memory keeping landscape looks like.
- How do you feel about new technology as an augment to more traditional media? What value do you find in the online world?
- And the final question, what of the new technologies are **you** most interested in, to set alongside what you're already doing to tell your stories?