

# Software changes history

## Photo alterations go far beyond removing red-eye and whitening teeth

By Alex Williams

**NEW YORK** — Removing her ex-husband from more than a decade of memories may take a lifetime for Laura Horn, a police emergency dispatcher in Rochester, N.Y. But removing him from a dozen years of vacation photographs took only hours, with some deft mouse work from a willing friend who was proficient in Photoshop, the popular digital-image editing program.

Like a Stalin-era technician in the Kremlin removing all traces of an out-of-favour official from state photos, the friend erased the husband from numerous cherished pictures taken on cruises and at Caribbean cottages, where he had been standing alongside Horn, now 50, and other travelling companions.

"In my own reality, I know that these things did happen," Horn said. But "without him in them, I can display them. I can look at those pictures and think of the laughter we were sharing, the places we went to."

"This new reality," she added, "is a lot more pleasant."

As image-editing software grows in sophistication and ubiquity, alterations go far beyond removing red-eye and whitening teeth. They include substituting head shots to achieve the best combination of smiles, deleting problematic personalities or adding family members who were unable to attend important events, performing virtual liposuction or hair restoration, even reanimating the dead. Revisionist history, it seems, can be practised by just about anyone.

As people fiddle with the photos in their scrapbooks, the tug of emotion and vanity can win out over the objective truth. And in some cases, it can even alter memories — cousin Andy was at the wedding, right?

In an age of digital manipulation, many people believe that snapshots and family photos need no longer stand as a definitive record of what was, but instead, of what they wish it was.

"It used to be that photographs provided documentary evidence, and there was something sacrosanct about that," said Chris Johnson, a photography professor at California College of the Arts in San Francisco.

If you wanted to remove an ex from an old snapshot, you had to use a Bic pen or pinking shears. But in the digital age, people treat photos like mash-ups in music, combining various elements to form a more pleasing whole.

"What we're doing," Johnson said, "is fulfilling the wish that all of us have to make reality to our liking."



NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

After her divorce, Laura Horn (in the white shirt) decided to have her ex-husband (guess who?) removed from her vacation pictures by using Photoshop.

He is no exception. When he photographed a wedding for his girlfriend's family in upstate New York a few years ago, he left a space at the end of a big group shot for one member who was unable to attend. They caught up with him months later, snapped a head shot, and Johnson used Photoshop to paste him into the wedding photo.

Now, he said, everyone knows it is phoney, but "this faked photograph actually created the assumption — people kind of remember him as there."

The impulse to record family history that is more wishful than accurate is as old as photography itself. In the 19th century, people routinely posed with personal items,

such as purses or scarves, that belonged to absent or dead relatives to include them, emotionally, in the frame, said Mary Warner Marien, an art history professor at Syracuse University and the author of *Photography: A Cultural History*.

In India, she said, it is a tradition to cut and paste head shots of absent family members into wedding photographs as a gesture of respect and inclusion. "Everyone understands that it's not a trick," she said. "That's the nature of the photograph. It's a Western sense of reality that what is in front of the lens has to be true."

New York Times News Service

## Health & Fitness

## Online blitz urges youth to practise safe sex

By Andrea Gordon

**TORONTO** — A new campaign to promote HIV testing is trying to reach young Canadians where they're at — on the internet and listening to tunes.

And it's relying on the talents of rockers U2 and hip-hop sensation Mary J. Blige to get them to pay attention.

One Life, an online initiative launched yesterday at [luvu2.ca](http://luvu2.ca), targets sexually active youth aged 18 to 30 and urges them to practise safe sex and get tested for HIV.

It aims to spread the word through an online video set to U2's hit song *One*, recorded with Blige and made available by the artists at no charge.

The campaign is a collaboration of Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, which makes pharmaceuticals including drugs to treat HIV-AIDS, and Universal Music Canada. It also involved AIDS service organizations, medical clinics and testing facilities, and physicians.

The companies, hoping to create a buzz on networks, forums and blogs, are pledging a \$1 corporate donation to HIV-AIDS prevention groups every time a viewer forwards the video.

Murray Jose, executive director of the Toronto People With AIDS Foundation and a spokesperson for the campaign, said he's worried the evolution of medications to treat HIV-AIDS has created a false sense of security among youth, with some mistakenly believing the disease is curable.

He said testing is critical because one in three people infected with HIV don't know they have it.

There is "a huge need" to keep repeating messages about the importance of protected sex and HIV tests to every new crop of teens, he added, and the internet campaign is an innovative way to grab their attention and point them to more information.

While the rate of new reported cases of HIV has declined overall in Toronto, recent health statistics show an increase among those aged 20 to 24.

The One Life website includes a search tool to help people find local testing facilities and links to sources of sexual health and HIV information.

Alex McKay, research co-ordinator of the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada, says the fact that celebrities are lending their names for the promotion of sexual health is "laudable" and long overdue.

But it's unfortunate the message is limited to HIV, he added.

Youth who have unprotected sex are also at risk of contracting more common sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia and HPV.

STIs such as gonorrhoea and syphilis have also seen a resurgence in the last decade.

A study published earlier this year in the journal *Pediatrics* and *Child Health* found that while most teens use condoms, they lack knowledge about STIs and know much more about HIV than more common infections such as chlamydia.

Record news service

# Huge global growth for social networking sites

By LuAnn LaSalle

**MONTREAL** — Social networking is spreading worldwide as Facebook and other sites adapt to local cultures and languages with use in Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific all shooting upward.

By contrast, the growth of new users of social networking sites in North America is beginning to level off, says a report by U.S.-based comScore, an online data marketing firm.

"The real growth is obviously occurring internationally with respect to social networking in broader terms, but even more specifically with certain sites like Facebook and Hi5," senior analyst Andrew Lipsman said.

"The sites that have (put) an emphasis on speaking to a specific market are the ones that are growing rapidly."

In Latin America, social networking on the internet is up 33 per cent with 53.2 million unique visitors to social networking sites in June 2008 versus June 2007.

"They tend to be very highly engaged in Latin America in different forms of communications online," including text messaging and chatting, said Lipsman.

"I think social networking goes along with that."

Facebook.com took the global lead among social networking sites in April, now more popular than MySpace, comScore said.

In Europe, social networking grew by 35 per cent to 165.2 million unique visitors in June '08 versus the same period a year ago. In Asia, it grew by 23 per cent to about 200 million unique visitors.

While comScore found that social networking is up 66 per cent in the Middle East and Africa to 30.1 million unique visitors for the same period, Lipsman said the growth is only from Israel and South Africa.

Lipsman said Facebook, which lets friends and families stay in touch, has users in many languages.

"In a lot of regions we are seeing where it

had a minimal presence last year, it's quickly moving up the ranking in a lot of cases and taking the No. 1 spot."

Facebook had 132.1 million unique visitors worldwide in June '08 versus a year earlier, up 153 per cent. MySpace had 117.5 million, up three per cent for the same period.

"Facebook is seeing strong growth just about everywhere."

Analyst Carmi Levy said worldwide users are making Facebook relevant in their own regions.

"Facebook doesn't provide the content, it simply provides the venue for people to connect with each other in whatever culturally acceptable way they deem fit," said Levy, senior vice-president of strategic consulting at Toronto's AR Communications Inc.

"There really is no American message incorporated within Facebook or MySpace or any of these other services."

The Canadian Press

# George Holbrook excelled in the classroom

► **Lifetimes** continued from D4

"He got his PhD while teaching," said Frances, who recalls her husband studying long hours while teaching full time and raising three children. George did a master's degree at Queen's University in Kingston, then a PhD from London University which, in the age before computers, required flying to England.

"It took 11 years," recalled Frances, proud of her husband's accomplishments. "He really liked teaching. If he wanted to be a professor he had to be a PhD. He wanted to be really professional."

In 1961, he was offered the presidency of Nova Scotia Technical College, where he once again helped establish both the department of industrial engineering and the school of architecture. Then George got restless again and took an Ottawa-based job as director-general of the Communications Research Centre. After three years, facing some family issues, George retired. "He was

only 54," said Frances. "We moved back to Nova Scotia."

She describes the beauty of their property, a renovated fisherman's house on the ocean. Adam Holbrook recalls how much his father loved fishing and boats, having built three or four fishing dories and spending many hours on his sailboat. When George's health began to deteriorate, they moved to Waterloo, closer to their daughter Jane. Adam, an adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University, lives in Vancouver. Their other son, Peter, died in 1973.

In 2004, George was made a Member of the Order of Canada for exceptional devotion as a mentor, innovator and leader while teaching engineering at both Royal Military College and Nova Scotia Technical College.

"He was very honoured," said Frances. "He was very modest about it and said he didn't know why he deserved it."

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## Web Pointer

[WWW.WEBEXHIBITS.ORG/VANGOGH](http://WWW.WEBEXHIBITS.ORG/VANGOGH)

[HTTP://PICASSO.TAMU.EDU/PICASSO](http://PICASSO.TAMU.EDU/PICASSO)

Many websites are devoted to great artists, covering in depth their life and works. Here are just two exceptional ones:

The van Gogh site is a collection of unabridged and annotated letters he penned.

The Picasso site is a catalogue of his art, biographical notes and writings.

Search for another artist and chances are you'll find a few sites to explore.

Send your favourite websites to [jweidner@therecord.com](mailto:jweidner@therecord.com). Web Pointer runs every Tuesday.

# Fizz

A BLOG WITH FUN, FRIVOLITY, PHOTOS  
[therecord.blogs.com/fizz](http://therecord.blogs.com/fizz)  
 By Susan Chilton

