

The case against prolific Instagram use is all about protecting your memories

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Here's a hot tip for this summer vacation season: Stop. Put the camera down. Don't take that photo.

A study [published recently](#) in the Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition details two experiments, each producing evidence that in situations where people snap photos, their memories of those situations will fade more than in those in which they did not reach for their cameras. These findings, by two University of California-Santa Cruz researchers, ostensibly discredit the idea that by taking photos, we can offload our own organic memories and store them in pictures.

It's an interesting conclusion for scientists to come to during a time when the ubiquity of smartphones sticks high-quality cameras into the hands of tens of millions of people who eagerly post photos of their lives on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and other social media every day. If people exchange lives immersed in moments for lives spent taking, filtering, and posting their photos to the internet ether, what does that say about their actual lived experience?

In 2014, a Fairfield University researcher named Linda Henkel [published work](#) in the journal Psychological Science in which she detailed taking people on a tour of a museum where they were invited to take photos of objects.