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# The Slideshow

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REMEMBER SITTING IN A DARKENED classroom, watching protozoa slides beep past you? What about viewing never-ending Tahoe vacation pics in your mid-century living room? Get sucked into endless clicking recently on Flickr? If you've answered yes to any one of these questions, then you've experienced the wonders (and occasional boredoms) of a slideshow. Kodak may have killed the slide projector in 2004, but the slideshow still lives on, forever posing the question, if a picture is worth a thousand words, what might a thousand pictures equate to? *BEEP!*

The slideshow first took shape in Victorian times when the well-to-do man of the house "journeyed" to exotic locales by viewing successive images taken by hired photographers who did the traveling—and thus the hefting of cumbersome cameras—for him. Around the same time, intrepid explorers shared their discoveries with a curious public through lively lectures illustrated with fantastical stories and the photographs that seemingly lended some truth to those tales. In the 1890s, Thomas Edison and William Kennedy Dickson's Kinetoscope, essentially functioning as a sped-up slideshow, became one of the first methods of motion picture projection. Eventually, the advent of the home slide projector would revolutionize, among many other fields, travel photography. A vacation in the 1950s wasn't officially over until your neigh-

bors assembled to see you mugging for the camera in front of Niagara Falls. *BEEP!*

Slideshows have had educational and artistic purpose, too. Museums and galleries used slides to catalog and chronicle all of the works contained within their walls. Artists themselves turned to multiple images rather than single photographs to communicate more complex stories. Robert Smithson was a pioneer with his 1969 slideshow work *Hotel Palenque*, and Nan Goldin's controversial photographs of New York's Bowery subculture was presented similarly in *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. *BEEP!*

Today, thanks to digital cameras and Web 2.0, the slideshow is back with a vengeance. From home design blogs featuring slideshow house tours to last night's party pics on Facebook, it seems everyone needs to showcase their lives online. The need to connect with others through photos hasn't changed, but the immediacy certainly has. Those photos you took of the Golden Gate Bridge with your camera phone this morning? They can be uploaded and shared instantly by pressing just a few buttons. While we're all about the latest gadgets, we still like to inject some old-school flavor: Why not invite your friends over, load up on chips and dip, and keep the good old fashioned slideshow alive? Huddle around the laptop and relive your journey all over again. Minus the beep, of course.