


Instagram—more than self-portraits and pictures of food

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 [stinablom](#) If I was to be a worm I would def
be scared of Herr Melin.

According to a fresh study at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, a lot of effort often goes into a Instagram picture before it is shared. Credit: Kristina Blom

The photo-sharing application Instagram is used by millions of people around the world daily. In the media, the social media phenomenon is sometimes dismissed as trivial pastime. However, according to a fresh study at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, a lot of effort often goes

into a picture before it is shared.

In study, which was conducted by three researchers from the University of Gothenburg, investigated how visitors at the Gothenburg Museum of Natural History used their cellphones during a visit. Through ethnographic field studies the researchers examined how visitors documented and shared their experiences.

The study in itself is one of a kind. Since Instagram is a relatively new service, the body of research with in the area is still thin. Furthermore, the combination of Instragram and museums was previously unexplored.

"There are studies that have looked at how museum visitors use technology developed by the museums themselves, such as for example [touchscreens](#) or [mobile applications](#). But we are among the first to investigate how visitors use their own [mobile technology](#) in the museum environment," says Post-Doc Thomas [Hillman](#), one of the three researchers behind the study.

When the researchers analyzed the data they had collected, they were able to determine that visitors often upload many pictures from the museum during their visit, and that many of these pictures are carefully planned and edited.

"There is a conception that Instagram is used to post mostly of self-portraits and pictures of food, which can be perceived as shallow, but our research shows that there is a lot effort behind many of the pictures," says PhD Student Beata Jungselius.

The study also indicates that [smart phones](#) have changed the way we share our experiences.

"We used to document places and events by taking pictures with

cameras, which we would then print and share with our closest friends. Then [cellphone](#) with cameras with introduced, and as these have evolved, along with the breakthrough of Facebook and Instagram, our way of sharing our experiences has changed," says Associate Professor Alexandra Weilenmann.

More information: The study, Instagram at the museum - Communicating the museum experience through social photo sharing, will be presented at the internationally renowned The ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems at the end of April.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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