



Assessing the Impacts of Daguerreotype Technology on The Development of Photography

by [Name]

Course

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Date

Assessing the Impacts of Daguerreotype Technology on the Development of Photography

CCS Level

Quick questions:

1) Word Length

The current length of the dissertation is between 1925 to 2000 words.

2) The Topic chosen and the studio?

This year a vote shall be cast to for a dissertation studio in a similar fashion that practice studios are done. The topic chosen does not have to fit within the theme (title of the studio). Each studio has a theme that is not restrictive.

3) Dissertation due date?

This year the dissertation shall be submitted in April which is anticipated to be the same the following year.

4) Referencing.

The form of referencing that has been employed in the paper is Harvard style.

5) Improper referencing

Inconsistent or improper referencing shall result in a failed grade.

6) Suitable sources

This dissertation requires academic sources only. This means books, journals and websites written by reputable organisations such catalogues of museums and government websites.

7) Forbidden sources.

Websites that end in “.com” (business), newspaper articles and magazines are prohibited for use in this dissertation unless they are employed to indicate the views of a reporter or media company; but not as factual sources. Wikipedia and books with no references are discouraged as well.

8) Knowledge and opinion.

Knowledge refers to information and skills acquired by an individual while an opinion is an individual's viewpoint on a matter, which is often informed by the knowledge he/ she has on the matter.

9) Opinion.

The opinion should be expressed at the beginning of the dissertation and elaborated through research in the subsequent text. Opinions can be wrong or too simple to set an effective basis for the dissertation. Additionally, informed opinions are preferred over simple opinions since they demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject area.

10) Teaching of studio.

The studio is taught on Wednesdays of every week and thus the students should ensure to keep their Wednesdays free.

Name of Student:

School:

Area of Interest: Development of Photography

Topic: Assessing the Impacts of daguerreotype technology on the development of photography.

Keywords: Chronology, daguerreotype, development, photography,

Chronology is the order in which technological advancement in the field of photography occurred.

Daguerreotypes- An ancient technology of taking and producing photograph where an image is formed on a silver plate treated with iodine by applying mercury film on it; where the camera is focused on an object for varied amount of time.

Development is the change in the methods and machines for photography production.

Photography is the science and art of producing photographs.

Equipment is the various devices use in the production of photographs over the period under study.

#### Rationale for Sharing

This research will add to the fairly under-researched field of daguerreotype as it relates to future advancement in photographic technologies. Although studies have shown the detailed history of photography, less attention has been given to how daguerreotype technology can influence the current and future developments in the field of technology. This systematic study, therefore, will affirm, question and clarify the existing knowledge while also bridging the knowledge gap existing in this field.

Secondly, the findings of this research will not only potentially lead to the development of a new technology but also identify gaps for further research. This study will result into detailed report targeting scholars and product engineers/developers. The language used will, therefore, be simple as to be of use to both the groups of users. This way will raise points for improvements in the technology and also point to issues that can further be pursued for academic purposes.

Finally, the study will provide recommendations on technological aspects of daguerreotype that can be developed and incorporated into the present photographic technologies.

#### Overview of Daguerreotype Technology

During 1839 – 1880, the Daguerreotype photo process was invented by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre, a French citizen and announced later the same year by Dominique-Francois Arago of the French Academy of Science (Coe 1978, p. 66). This represented in the infancy of photography and every later technology was built on this prototype of the camera

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004). It is important to note that the term daguerreotype refers to the process of that was used to produce the photograph; however, it is often used to refer to the camera as well. This era was vital in the technological advancement of the camera as it marked the first real photograph that resembles what there is modernly in terms of photography (Beaton & Buckland 1989, p.25). The previous pinhole cameras were too simple and would have a big gap when contrasted with modern photography. The closest ancient photography to the modern era photography is the daguerreotype. The daguerreotype camera has an optical lens and the picture was produced on a paper similar to the modern camera (Sandweiss, 2009). The daguerreotype paper was rigid, fragile, and glossy; it resembled the current film remotely and distantly.

It is important to note that modern photography arose from the daguerreotype technology and to date the techniques that are used to process photographs in dark rooms are essentially similar to those employed in daguerreotype technology (Habbard 2005, p.46). When one compares and contrasts the current filming and photography technology components, they are able to see these similarities clearly (Leggat 1995, p.70). For example, in both the daguerreotype and modern photography, a photosensitive film material is used in taking the photographs (The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2004). This photosensitive material has, however, evolved through time to get thinner and flexible enough to allow for folding and portability which is a big improvement over the rigid and brittle material used during the earlier days. From this example, we could argue that photography has not changed at all rather simply advanced, if Daguerre were to visit the modern age, he would not find it strange to see a modern film camera operate, the components and basic elements and working have remained similar over time.

As a matter of fact, camera technology has advanced relatively slowly over time (since Daguerre) until the period starting from 1920 onwards with the advent of the television. It is the media companies that strove to outdo each other and thus come up with better technology that spurred the enormous technological advances in the field of photography (Marcy 2012, 108).

### Museums and Archives

#### *The Royal Photographic Society Museum*

Based in Fenton house England, the museum has a collection of significant photographs in the history of photography. It also has almost all the samples of pieces of photography equipment useful for analysis in this study. The materials and information in this museum will serve as important evidence for understanding the development of photography over time. A visit to the museum would serve as a primary source of data and thus add invaluable insight to this study and its credibility.

#### *Sixth-Plate daguerreotypes of Hine. Lucius Alonso Hine*

From this archive, text, graphics, photographs, and ephemera can be obtained. This archive will support the study by providing information on daguerreotypes as were used historically used. It is an important source of data that shall serve as a primary evidence of the photography evolution process from daguerreotypes to current photography with specific references to the importance of the earlier to current advancements.

### Academic Expert Relevant for The Project

Prof. William. B. White: Is a professor of geochemistry at the University of Pennsylvania State University. He has extensive experience in photography acquired through research in the

field of light-sensitive materials and the development of photographic materials and equipment since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. His experience and objective will be vital for the success of this study. He is an important source of primary data that is rich in detail and can provide clarification in cases where it is necessary.

#### Practitioner in The Field of Photography

Ben Long: He is a US based photographer with wide experience in painting, photography, and teaching. He has won awards in the field and is also currently practicing as an editor for Macworld magazine. His guidance and moral support could be vital for the success of this project especially relating to his expertise in this field (Andujar 2011).

#### Other Persons to Interview

Customers at photography shops- since this research seeks to understand the deficiencies of the current technologies compared to daguerreotypes; these users will provide user-centered information and their experience with products developed through the daguerreotype technology.

Once this information is analyzed, it will enable the research to formulate recommendations on how advancement in technology and product development can be user-centered.

Experienced photographers- the project targets to interview a person with transgenerational experience in the field of photography. These people will provide information on efficiency in the use of various aspects of each age in photography equipment. Through analysis of this information, the project can find a hybrid of vital qualities that have accumulated over the period under consideration, but which are currently fragmented and not recognized. These qualities may have the possibilities of being combined in one product to produce high efficient photography equipment.

Software and product developers. These people have experience in combining different materials to produce technologies that are efficient. They are the drivers for technological advancement in this field. They will provide information on the possibility of incorporating the qualities of daguerreotypes into the current equipment. They also know the extent to which daguerreotype technology is currently applied in photograph development today and why some qualities may not be applicable in the current context.

Photography control institutions- these may be government institutions or intergovernmental organizations which are mandated to control the level of photograph development and production. Operating under laws and policy, they may forbid or restrict certain products or methods of production. They harbor vital information on why certain technologies and products stop existing and what can be done to enhance the current methods and equipment (European Daguerreotype Association 2015, p.22).

#### Relevant Websites and Literature

Additional literature on this topic can be accessed from various contemporary websites three of which shall be briefly discussed here. The first website is of The Metropolitan Museum of Art which talks about Daguerre (1787–1851) and the invention of photography. It is useful in demonstrating how photography evolved during Daguerre's time period. One of the rationales for selecting this source for further research for the class lies in the fact that it is a credible source published by a museum catalog as recommended by the professor for the dissertation. It meets the standards set out for a valid source for this dissertation including the date and authoritative author. The second site that can be used as a reliable source for this topic is Cdags.org which is a



collection of photographs that depict the effect of daguerreotype technology in the modern society (contemporary use). This helps to establish a timeline that can give a quick glimpse of how photography has evolved over the times and thus making it relevant to this paper.

Additionally, it is published by a credible institution as designated by the .org extension in its address. The final source is Daguerreotypes.co.uk is a website with an immense collection of artworks that reflect the history of the artistic process. It is similar to the previous website but serves to corroborate its data. This helps to improve and confirm the validity of the data, as with research multiple sources on the same subject with consistent results are often an indication of independent verifiability and thus credibility.

The genius of photography from 1839 to the present day: from the book by Beaton and Buckland (1989) *The Magic Image: The Genius of Photography from 1839 to the present day* it is evident that the previous technologies inspire the preceding technological advancements in the field of photograph making. For example, during the age of hand drawing, it was hard to draw pictures that are really identical to the object. It was also difficult to draw images of people from different perspectives, say a picture of people in a street from stereotypical points. With the invention of daguerreotype photography, it is now the level of precision and the ability to take photographs from stereotypical positions has been improved. This, therefore, demonstrates that the gaps in the past if well understood, can inspire the technological advancement going forward.

Publication by Coe, (1978) *Cameras: from daguerreotypes to instant pictures* details the chronology of advancement in the field of photography. The analysis of the quality of equipment as it relates to the quality of an image is given. This publication, therefore, serves to motivate an inquiry into the topic by giving the requisite base of information and defining the knowledge gap

in the field of photography. The publication has also demonstrated with clarity the importance of daguerreotype technology as it relates to the time taken to produce a photograph. This aspect of time and the cost of production are the major breakthrough in the field of photography as they enable pictures to be accessible to many people. Recently, however, it can be argued that the cost of photographs made is still expensive since some people are still unable to afford pictures they wish to have. This makes it interesting for this study to further inquire the reason photographs are still not affordable with technological advancement. Was daguerreotype the most affordable technology? How then can incorporation daguerreotype technology make it affordable for everybody to access photographs at will today? This publication, therefore, helps to identify the knowledge gaps for this study.

The source by Marcy (2012) named *The Camera and the Press: American Visual and Print Culture in the Age of Daguerreotypes* has given an analysis of how the daguerreotypes can be employed to influence the readers. From in America, the technology was employed to influence the political perception of users of these photographs and this way their thinking about racism was influenced. It has also detailed how Daguerreotype technology helped to produce more accurate



b. Too much light concentrated at one point distorting the quality photograph. The edges of the photographs are darker signifying the unbalanced hue. This is relevant as it shows how early photography was and serves as a reference for point in history.



a. The photograph could only be black and white. In a way, this was more precise compared to exaggerated colored photographs. But some details are evidently missing. This shows the early challenges in photography which still affect modern photography.



c. The daguerreotypes can be destroyed at the slightest touch especially with liquids. The edges ought to be protected. This shows the infant stages of photography and thus relevant to this paper.



d. Protecting the edges of the silver plate serves to protect the photograph. This shows the infant stages of photography and thus relevant to this paper.

fictional pictures. This makes it interesting for this study to explore and improve the understanding of how to see the technology from the reader's point of view. What then can we borrow from how daguerreotypes were applied to improve the clarity and precision on the reader's perspective?

What can we learn from this and how can it inspire a user-centered technological advancement?

*Relevant Photographs*



SAMPLE

SAMPLE

SAMPLE



e. When details are required daguerreotypes, it could result in a lack of clarity in the resulting image. However, clarity could be enhanced through lenses and equipment configuration. This photo demonstrates the improvements that artist engaged in to enhance photographic quality which still persists to date.  
*Source of photographs: the internet; under fair use policy.*

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