

Blipfoto – from bedroom to BAFTA and beyond



"Each day that's passed is now little more than a collection of unique moments – moments that came together to make your day the day it was. And while we all remember the big moments – the defining events – the small moments are often neglected. Yet, it's these that make each day unique – irreplaceable even. These are moments that you'll never have again... Blipfoto lets you save your life."

In October 2004, Joe Tree spent a few hours on a rainy Sunday afternoon in his bedroom building a really simple website which let him publish just one photo a day on the internet and write something about it. He set himself two simple rules: He could only upload one picture a day, and it had to be taken on that day. The website was called Blipfoto.

The following Thursday, he posted the first ever Blipfoto entry. "I expected to get bored quickly, but surprised myself by becoming completely hooked. It got under my skin, and I found myself walking around, looking at the world in a completely different way," says Joe.

So he kept doing it. Gradually, he built up a loyal following of viewers who became just as captivated by the idea as he was. Then they started asking him if they could have a copy of his website, or to point them somewhere else they could do this. Realising there was nothing out there which did this, Joe set about extending Blipfoto into something which anyone could sign up to and use.

In the summer of 2006, he released a very rudimentary version of Blipfoto and invited 15 other people to join in. It let anyone set up a journal of their own, upload one picture a

day, write some words, and comment on other people's material... And it grew like crazy.

In October 2008, exactly four years after he'd started, he was a dad... And with no promotion whatsoever Blipfoto was delivering more page views each month than most of Scotland's national newspapers.

"We already had people contributing from every corner of the world, and a thriving community was developing around this simple, shared purpose," says Joe. "Then our servers crashed late on a Friday evening and we were offline for a whole weekend..."

The outpouring of emotion when [Blipfoto](#) came back online was phenomenal and focussed Joe's mind on what he was sitting on.

"We'd assumed Blip would become home to lots of individual photographers' journals, attracted by its simple design," says Joe. "But something much more profound had developed, and the place it had assumed in people's lives was amazing.

"Something else which surprised us was that for a big proportion of our users it wasn't about photography – the photograph was simply a cue for something much deeper."

Things carried on growing throughout 2009. Then in November he found himself at the BAFTA Scotland awards with a nomination for best website. Then he found himself on stage accepting the award.

At this point Blipfoto was still a hobby.

"We call this day one for Blipfoto," says Joe, "because on the bus on the way home that night, clutching our BAFTA, we decided we had to give up the day jobs and find a way to apply ourselves to Blipfoto full time."

Most of 2010 was spent looking for a small amount of funding to help make that leap. And in December that year Blipfoto

announced seed investment which paid for Joe and a small team to apply themselves full time...

What started in Edinburgh now has contributors in over 175 countries worldwide. Today it receives over 18 million monthly views, and there are over 3m images shared on [Blipfoto](#) – which is even more amazing when you consider each one represents a single day in someone's life. (The level of engagement of this vibrant, worldwide, online community can also be seen by the 19 million comments on photos that have also been shared!!).

[Blipfoto](#)'s been responsible for numerous relationships, and at least one wedding; 'Blippers' have won trips to the Arctic circle; And [projects](#) that encourage people across the globe to get together have been successfully run, as well as a few more [closer to home](#) and [also here!](#)

Not only is Blipfoto the perfect place to save your life, it's a world of discovery too. You'll discover the everyday nestled right next to the amazing. You'll find real people sharing real stories. You might see the 'ordinary' but you'll just as easily stumble across the 'extraordinary'.

Stats:

- Users in Over 175 countries
- 18 million monthly views
- 3m + images saved on Blipfoto
- 19m + comments shared

Recent projects:

Lovers of Light

Blipfoto collaborated with Velux to launch Lovers of Light – a landscape photography competition with a twist. The aim of the competition was to encourage people to think differently about daylight. To win an amazing trip to the Arctic Circle, users were asked to simply upload a landscape photo of the light they enjoyed on that day. A selection of the photographs were

also chosen to feature in a unique crowd-sourced "[Lovers of Light](#)" film – a beautiful, animated short film made using only still photography. Almost 9,000 entries were received, 1.5m views of the entries were recorded and over a quarter of a million votes were cast at the nominations stage.

The World Over

Between St Andrew's Day 2011 and Burns Night 2012, Blipfoto teamed up with [Scotland.org](#) to create a unique crowd-sourced film – [Scotland The World Over](#). Blipfoto encouraged anyone, anywhere in the world, to join in by taking and uploading a photo of a saltire. 1,507 entries were received over the two months. From these, 715 photos – from 32 countries – were used to create the film. The First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, took time out to thank everyone who took part in the film.

Life.turns.

Blipfoto worked with the AltW fund during the Edinburgh Art Festival to create an animated film – frame by frame – with thousands of people around the world. The film was based around 8 simple figures of a human walking. Contributors were invited to submit photos of themselves, colleagues, friends and family in one of these poses and the images were uploaded to Blipfoto where they were used to create [a completely unique film](#) made by thousands of individuals all over the planet.

See Us

Scotland is a creative nation. Its arts, culture and creativity are world renowned. But people are creative, as individuals, every day – in ways we often take for granted. 2012 was the Year of Creative Scotland and 'Blippers' helped us tell the story of our creative country. People across Scotland (and further afield) grabbed their cameras in a quest to capture something creative. Over 4,000 photos and stories were submitted to help create a record of your creative Scotland in 2012. [A selecton of these entries were curated](#) by famous Scottish "creatives" (including world-renowned musician

Nicola Benedetti and celebrated author Ian Rankin) into a shortlist for a touring exhibition and book.

Edinburgh Festivals

Blipfoto works annually with the famous Edinburgh Festivals to provide a moderated, realtime stream of photos from the international Festivals staged in the city. Photographers at the Festivals simply upload their image to [Blipfoto](#) and tag it "[Blipthefest](#)"

The Edinburgh Reporter has a [Blipfoto profile which you can have a look at here](#). Are you a Blipper? Then do add your profile name below!

Submitted by [Gordon Laing](#)

