



Time (and Money) in a Cellphone

Our modern age is becoming more virtual than physical, which I find increasingly depressing if only because I've failed to keep pace. I don't even own a cellphone. Still, it doesn't take a Boomer to observe that the reality outside as opposed to inside a computer or a cellphone should be the preferred experience. Scientists claim we are all just bits of information with billions of 1's and 0's, glued together to form a beating heart. Even so, I'm sticking with live chirping as opposed to Angry Birds for now. Virtual reality seems just a tad UNreal to me.



Aside from a computer or cellphone's obvious utility though, I think many of those in younger generations that use them are hoping to capture time in a figurative bottle, using a Samsung or Apple handheld as opposed to the proverbial wine-shaped container of another era as they take pictures. YouTube and Facebook apps, for example, record and memorialize events, creating a virtual history that can be preserved, with the most treasured experiences being measured in the millions of future hits as opposed to the euphoria or sometimes depressing succession of individual moments in the here and now. Watching a sporting event or concert, I can't help but be struck by the thousands of cellphones attempting to capture, in near unison, a moment in time that can be texted to hungry audiences. Recipients seem eager for a seemingly unlimited number of experiences in their or someone's immediate past, as opposed to the present moment. My view is that there is time stored in that cellphone but its vintage may be somewhat sour, as compared to the sweetness of the here and now. The most unfortunate aspect of this new virtual reality stored deep within "inner space" is that more and more people, especially young people, are evolving to believe that these experiences are "natural." A Pew survey in 2011 found that the average American teenager sends or receives between 100 and 200 text messages a day. At some point they may get so caught up in their frantic "busyness" that they fail to capture their present.