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**Photo Sharing on Kuaipai kuaipai**

Visions, affordances, individual uses and community building

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Photography is today a big passion among increasing groups of Chinese people who are motivated by artistic aspirations and/or use photography for self-expression and communication. New digital technologies, including the development of smartphones and different social media sites, have enabled new forms of photographic practices and visual communication. People use a range of different social media platforms, such as weibo and WeChat, as well as different photo apps such as Tuchong and Kuaipai kuaipai to post and share images. Each of these platforms come with their own affordances, visions, and expected audiences that influence how people select, post and share images.

In this paper I focus on the photo app Kuaipai kuaipai that was set up by the newspaper Dushi kuaibao in Hangzhou, a fact that has shaped its vision, content and relationship to users. Apart from using the app myself, including serving as a curator/editor, and interviewing two people behind it, I have also to date interviewed 12 users, including seven in face-to-face interviews and five over WeChat. My sampling was purposive and exemplary and included different users in terms of age, gender, types of photos posted, and professional backgrounds, including a few making a living out of photography. My interviews aimed to understand people's views on photography, photographic practices and changes over time, different patterns of posting and sharing photos on the app and across other social media platforms, forms of interaction and sense of community on/through the app, as well as their engagement in different offline activities organised by the newspaper/app.

My study is informed by works on digital photography and mobile phone camera that underline both continuities and changes from the analogue age with respect to how photography is related to memory, communication and self-expression. The main findings of the study is that the app was built upon a vision of photography as a way of life where people are encouraged to both document and share everyday life and rapid changes in society. The app also strive to create a sense of community through involving users as editors/curators and by organising different online and offline activities. This vision and possibilities for active involvement was attractive to many of the users at the same time that they also appreciated the acceptance of different types of photography and aesthetics. The app is an example of how digital technologies can help create new (visual) practices and a sense of community, and for several of the interviewees the app also encouraged and helped them develop and find a unique voice as photographers. In addition it increased interactions between professional photographers and ordinary citizens who incorporate photography into their daily, networked lives. Chinese people today increasingly communicate through and with photography and other visual forms, and for some this medium might be more powerful and empowering than writing.