



TECHNOLOGY

'Creators of the selfie' honoured with £1 million prize - but did they make a big mistake?

The innovations, which span three decades, revolutionised the way we capture and analyse visual information

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BY SOPHIE CURTIS
19:27, 1 FEB 2017



L-R: Michael Thompsett (UK), Eric Fossum (USA), Nobukazu Teranishi (Japan)

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and George Smith from the US.

Between them, their innovations, which span three decades, revolutionised the way we capture and analyse visual information.

Thompsett and Smith kicked things off in the 1970s with the development of the charge coupled device (CCD) - the image sensor found inside early digital cameras that converts individual particles of light, or photons, into an electrical signal.



Today's cameras can fit on a fingertip and are found in countless portable devices around the world (Photo: Getty)

Then in 1980, Teranishi invented the modern pinned photodiode (PPD), which reduced the size of light-capturing "pixels" and significantly improved the quality of images.

Finally, in 1993, Fossum invented the complementary metal oxide semiconductor (CMOS) image sensor, which allowed cameras to be made smaller, cheaper and with better battery life.

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Thanks to this series of engineering innovations, today's cameras can fit on a fingertip and are found in countless portable devices around the world.

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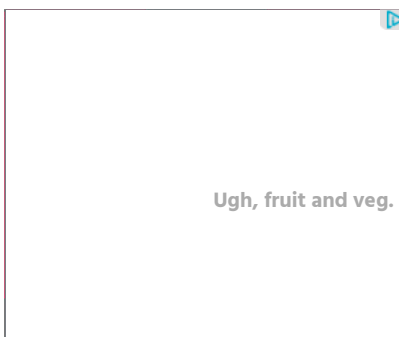
Over 3 billion images are shared from smartphone cameras every day (Photo: Getty Images)

From uploading photographs and videos to social media, to enabling biometric fingerprint recognition on smartphones and tablets, the global use of digital imaging has grown at a phenomenal rate.

However, when asked if they were proud that their innovations had spawned such ubiquitous technologies, some of them expressed mixed feelings.

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"I feel frustrated by all these people who have cameras, taking pictures of everything in sight - and selfies. You are walking along and a selfie stick suddenly appears," Tompsett told [BBC News](#).





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