

[HOME](#) / [ADVERTISING WEEK BLOG](#) / COULD CGI SIGNAL THE END OF THE PHOTOSHOOT?

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IMAGE: [HTTP://WWW.THEAWSC.COM/WP-CONTENT/THEMES/HADES/IMAGES/CLOCK.PNG](http://www.theawsc.com/wp-content/themes/HADES/IMAGES/CLOCK.PNG)

 26 JUN 2015

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image: <http://www.theawsc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/merc.jpg>



Mark Gallie, Managing Director, Mackevision UK

image: <http://www.theawsc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/gunther.jpg>



For the best part of a century, photoshoots have been the coalface of advertising production and for creative departments, some of the most thrilling elements of the industry. It has been the live process where creative vision gets translated into actual, usable creative content.

What's not to like about flying out to the Serengeti for a glamorous fashion shoot or putting a 4×4 through its paces in front of the camera? Actually from a brand marketer's point of view there's quite a lot.

The excitement of art meeting marketing can often turn to stress as big ideas are stopped in their tracks by the wrong light, inclement weather and temperamental equipment; creating big headaches and bigger budgets, slipping schedules and compromises.

It's little wonder that marketers and creative agencies have looked to the world of film and TV for alternatives in the shape of CGI technology. So far CGI in advertising has grabbed headlines when key elements of the commercial or storyline are computer-generated and prove hugely effective. Arguably some of the best commercials in recent history have demonstrated a delicate balance of CGI and traditional photography, proving that this symbiotic relationship can work well. But we are approaching a pivot point where CGI becomes far more pervasive in not just commercials, but all brand marketing.

Some brands are starting to realise that a product can be digitally created from scratch in any dynamic environment – motion or stationary – and look entirely real. That footage can then be seamlessly mixed with live action or images to create truly compelling content at lower cost and without the huge risks that live photo shoots create.

Data crunching and rendering software may sound less romantic than a live shoot, but far from restricting an idea, CGI can actually add an enormous amount of freedom to the creative process.

There are a range of factors encouraging brands to embrace CGI in marketing other than cost and efficiency. Firstly, the world is rapidly moving towards customized, tailored, personalized products with more variations of style, design and features than ever before. It's becoming impossible to physically photograph every available product variation for a global campaign.

CGI technology gives total control over the context, environment or virtual set for a product and also key elements that can't be controlled in a live environment – weather, lighting and such. However the industry has also moved on in the sense that the best practitioners recognise the need to blend art with technology. Rather than simply relying on software capabilities and sheer computing power, 3D designers have a deep understanding of photography and lighting, marrying the best elements of both.

It is also worth noting that distribution of media has completely changed. Creative teams are beginning to understand entire product portfolios and the different ways they will be seen via the ever-growing list of media

channels and devices. Smartphones, TV sets and tablets all cater for very different viewing experiences – having a digital portfolio helps all markets receive the right image, film or media in the right format at every touchpoint, thus maintaining consistency throughout any consumer journey. Digital product portfolios need to be consistently maintained throughout the lifecycle of an entire product or range. Data management systems are making this possible.

Many may not realize it, but the shift from using real-life products in photoshoots to CGI has been happening for years. Mercedes-Benz uses CGI visualizations in all of its marketing and advertising; the ads for PANDORA's latest 'Rose' jewellery range are entirely computer-generated; and [75% of the images in IKEA's catalogue](#) are now created through CGI rather than traditional photoshoots.

image: <http://www.theawsc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/PANDORA-Mackevision-billboard-ad-600x302.jpg>



We're beginning to see the tide turning on the use of traditional photoshoots in isolation. Marketing and creative teams are realizing the riches that digitizing a product portfolio offers and are focusing on the creation of amazing digital imagery and all the flexible advantages that this approach offers.

In essence, CGI truly gives the advertising industry the ability to evolve into previously unexplored areas whilst at the same time utilising and maintaining some of those incredibly important and valuable – some might say traditional – skills that pre-date it.

Read more at <http://www.theawsc.com/2015/06/26/could-cgi-signal-the-end-of-the-photoshoot/#kQcPDzVUYKKS3eUg.99>