

# Internet changes photo market: expert

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tures of the new house," said Hall. "And if they like the pics, they can order prints of them online."

"Where Napster is actually putting a U2 song online and you can go get a copy of it, we are not actually sending the images around the world, just sharing the website. It's a whole new medium."

To operate the system, a clerk simply loads the prints into the input tray on the scanner, selects the desired digital service and starts the scanning process. PhotoChute runs automatically without operator involvement from that point forward.

A typical PhotoChute operation can be profitable on about two digital orders per day.

In June, Telepix was chosen to develop and deploy a complete e-photo service for The Boots Company PCL, the United Kingdom's leading retailer of health and beauty products, ranging from cosmetics to medicines, sunglasses and film processing.

"The Internet will fundamentally change the photographic market," said bootsphoto.com president Phil Douy. "Because Boots has already invested in its own in-store mini labs, we are uniquely positioned to launch a complete e-photo service and roll it out fast through our stores."

"We will reach the whole UK market."

Boots joins Loblaw Cos. Ltd., Black's Photo Corp., Canadian Press, Western Canada's London Drugs Ltd. and Maryland's District Photo as retailers using the PhotoChute method.

"It's becoming an easy call for them," said Hall. "The system works well with their companies and because retailers like to sell branded products, we don't get between them and their customers."

*'People just don't want to spend hours making 300 Christmas cards using photos from their scanner and an inkjet printer.'*

An emerging business with 45 employees split between Woodbridge and research offices in Newfoundland and Singapore, Telepix is now a member of Switzerland's Gretag Imaging, the world's leading provider of equipment and systems for photofinishing and imaging.

"We were raising some venture capital money to go into the United States and Europe when Gretag approached us," added Hall. "They told us we could get big quick and go after the world."

Meanwhile, the market for Internet imaging is huge.

In North America alone, more than

900 million rolls — or 18 billion photos — are processed annually, including 70 million rolls in Canada. And with more than 70 million people online, the number of tekkies using their computers to store pictures has now surpassed 20 per cent.

With analysts forecasting 44 million rolls of film will be uploaded to the Net by the end of next year, the market is white hot.

"There's a lot of business out there waiting for us. Even if you only get five or six per cent of it, the market will be good to us," said Hall, noting the popularity of digital cameras and scanners will help his market — PhotoChute's worry-free approach will become a valuable asset.

"People just don't want to spend hours making 300 Christmas cards using photos from their scanner and an inkjet printer. For the past seven years, I have owned every cool technology toy there is, but I just don't have the time to use them."

"This makes it easier."

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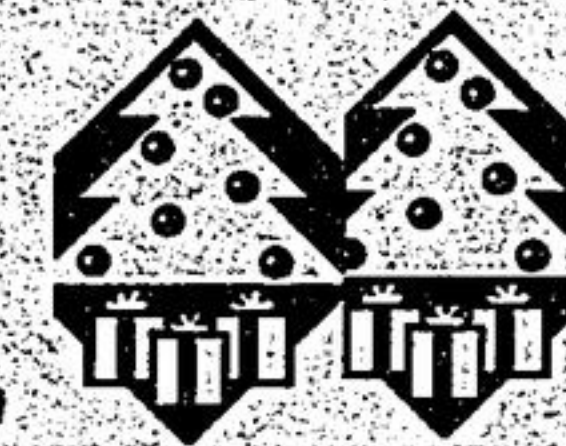
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