

The power of statistical photography

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20111101-00

November 1, 2011



Raymond Chen

Inside Microsoft, there was an employee photography contest to provide images to be included in Windows 7, either in one of the pre-release versions or in the final product. Each subsidiary selected the photos to be included in their localized version of Windows, choosing images which best reflect that region's culture, history, and natural beauty. The employee-submitted photos were in direct competition against the professional photographs; as a result, some regions ended up selecting multiple employee-contributed images and others picked none. The Swiss delegation, in characteristically Swiss fashion, put it to a public vote. (As you may recall, Windows Vista included photographs drawn from the community. That article is another great example of *No matter what you do, somebody will call you an idiot*. Microsoft decides to involve the community in a fun way, and the result is condemnation from the professional photographic community.) Around 2000 photographs were submitted by Microsoft employees, and one of the photos selected for the U.S. version of Windows 7 Beta was taken by a member of the user interface team. In response to congratulations, he humbly replied, "I'm a statistical photographer. I rely on sheer quantity to produce occasional quality."

Bonus reading: [A Look Behind the Backgrounds of Windows 7](#).

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

