

Google Photos partners with CVS and Walmart for prints

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Google Photos, far and away the most used photo sharing app, with over 1 billion users monthly, has partnered with CVS and Walmart to offer on-demand, in-store prints from the app.

The 4x6 photo prints directly from Google Photos and will be available for same day pick up at the stores, which have a combined 11,000 locations. Consumers order the prints from within the app, and the retailer gets the photo directly from Google. You'll get a notification when they're ready for pickup in the app itself.

Many retailers currently offer apps to order prints and then pick them up later, but none has the worldwide gravitas of Google Photos.

In an age when many people share their phone to do display images, Google is pushing back to help get them back on refrigerators, office desks and the like, hoping it will be easier to click a few buttons in a widely used app than just let them sit there in the digital cloud.

In 2017, Google said some 2 billion photos and videos were being uploaded to the service daily, a number that hasn't been updated by Google, but product lead David Lieb says the numbers have clearly grown from there.

Beyond the prints, Google Photos, which added photo books in 2017, is now also offering the ability to make canvas prints, in three sizes, 8x8, 11x14 and 16x20. They start at \$19.99 for the 8x8 and cost \$29.99 for the 11x14 and \$44.99 for 16x20.

Photo prints are \$0.25 each from Walmart or \$0.33 from CVS.

Unlike the prints, which have to be picked up at retail, the canvas prints are available via mail order.

Lieb says that Google didn't offer shipping services for the prints because its research showed that consumers wanted the prints instantly, so this way made more sense.

Google Photos has been all about using machine learning to recognize images and find them instantly, with searches like "bridge," "Eiffel tower" and the like. Now Google is bringing text search to photos, and if there's text in a photo—like a picture of a recipe—Google Photos will find it.

Google is adding a Memories feature to the app, with machine learning picking out your best shots from a year ago, similar to Facebook's memories feature.

In a blog post, Shimrit Ben-Yair, Google Photos Lead notes the difference between a Facebook memory and a Google Photos one. "These memories are your personal media, privately presented to you so you can sit back and enjoy some of your best moments."

She credits Google's robots for sifting through duplicate shots and poorly exposed ones. And for those of you who have moved on from certain relationships, "We understand that you might not want to revisit all of your memories, so you'll be able to hide certain people or time periods, and you have the option to turn this feature off entirely," she writes.

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