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## **In praise of ... the wristwatch**

Leader

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By most standards 2005 was the year of the mobile and of the cameraphone as millions of people took snaps with their phones and shared them with others on websites. The BBC received 6,500 emailed mobile-phone images of the Buncefield fire. But, however popular mobile cameras are, they have not passed the test that matters: the test of time.

So, let's hear it instead for the humble wristwatch. Not because sales are booming (they are not), but because it is still there. Let's be honest: the one thing you do not need on your wrist is something to tell you the time, since practically everyone has a mobile with a clock on the front. Even if your mobile is lost, there are clocks nearby - on your computer, the DVD player, the mantelpiece, the wall, the shop or the street.

Yet the wristwatch - invented nearly 150 years ago - has a place in our lives that could be called timeless. This is not just because the name wristwatch fails to mention time, as if the aim was simply an excuse to look at your arm. It also seems to fill a psychological need. This may explain its longevity, despite losing popularity with youngsters.

Indeed the wristwatch may still, so to speak, have a trick up its sleeve. It is fighting back with new functions, such as heart monitor or pedometer. And if phones continue to shrink, they may one day be incorporated into the watch. After all, the act of putting a wrist to your ear to listen to a phone ought to give an advantage to a device that is already there. You read it here first.

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