

Making the World Smaller

This technology allows you to connect live and in real time with anyone anywhere

BY WADE PATON



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I have this habit. Maybe it is more of a routine than a habit. But regardless of which it is, it is something I do everyday. It goes something like this: Hotmail, TSN, ESPN, CNN International. These are the first four websites I look at to find out what is going on in the world. I noticed something interesting the other day as I entered the CNN International news home page.

Beside each current story, in bold red type, was how long ago the story had been uploaded. Some stories were 14 minutes old. Others 38 minutes old. The one that stood out to me was a story that was 13 seconds old. Instant news. As the event is unfolding I am able to engage in the current happenings. I am able to enter into the story as it happens. A connection is made as the situation begins that keeps me interested in the story for a long time.

This, in many ways, is like something that happened while I was on the pastoral team at St. Albert Alliance in Alberta. An opportunity arose for us as a church to have

one of our Alliance workers speak at our Sunday morning services. Although not an uncommon occurrence in many churches today, the unique part was that he was only in Canada for a few days and then heading back overseas.

What I remember so vividly was the ‘freshness’ of his stories. As he spoke he would say things like, “Three days ago I was in ... and I saw God doing amazing things!” Or, “While I was on the plane over the Atlantic the other day, God spoke to me about the problems in ...” As he spoke, a connection was made between life here and life there. We were entering into his stories as they were unfolding. The issues he was facing had not reached a resolution so we prayed together about the things that were current realities in his place of service. Memorable. Powerful. Engaging.

The point of this article is to share with you how we have experienced these two things—the speed of Internet news and the power of current stories—at a fraction of the cost of flying someone to Canada from another part of the world.

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Fast Facts About Skype

Skype is software that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. Calls to other users of the service and to free-of-charge numbers are free, while calls to other landlines and mobile phones can be made for a fee. Additional features include instant messaging, file transfer and video conferencing.

It was created by two entrepreneurs and a team of software developers based in Tallinn, Estonia. The Skype Group has its headquarters in Luxembourg. Skype has experienced rapid growth in popular usage since the launch of its services in 2003. It was acquired by eBay in September 2005 for \$2.6 billion.

As of December 31, 2008 Skype had 405 million user accounts. Users may have more than one account, and it is not possible to identify users with multiple accounts. It was reported that 15,952,085 concurrent Skype users were online as of January 26, 2009. As of January 2009, Skype is adding about 30 million subscribers a quarter.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

www.skype.com



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that pray for us and support us in Canada. Skype is downloadable software that allows you to communicate, computer-to-computer, for free. With two computers equipped with cameras (one here and one there) we are able to have direct eye contact with our family, friends, and churches whenever it can be arranged.

In fact, since we arrived in Thailand 18 months ago, we have spoken with our sending church, St. Albert Alliance, three different times. Twice we have shared in the staff devotional time and once during the Sunday morning worship service.

We have been able to share the things that happened that very day with the people that are walking this journey with us. They pray for us. We pray for them.

Instant news. Fresh stories of what God is doing. Face-to-face. Minus the agony and expense of overseas travel.

Our encouragement to you is to try it out and see how it works. Small groups can invite an International Worker to one of their meetings. Families can have live conversation with people living overseas. Missionaries can invite people into their homes and gatherings for encouragement. Churches and pastoral teams can arrange services and events with this technology able to assist them in touching the world.

It is a connection worth making.

Wade Paton and his family are International Workers with The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, serving in the Asian Spice region. He can be reached at wkpaton@hotmail.com

