

Comms from the Field

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The Next Challenge

RGS Explore Conference 2011

www.thenextchallenge.org

@nextchallenge

In this talk...

1. What, why and who
2. Technology and types
3. Examples

What

Before you go

While you're going

After you've gone

Not emergency comms

Why?

Different from post-event, potentially..

1. More engaging
2. More powerful
3. More interesting

Great shame not to

Might not bother afterwards

Who

1. Sponsors
2. Scientific community
3. General public
4. Friends and family

SOCIAL MEDIA

Ground Rules

1. Wilderness expeditions = social media hubs
2. Open mind
3. Don't exaggerate
4. Keep it cheap and simple

Twitter

Forget negative connotations

Use Twitter without being a Twitter user

Send SMS - Appears on website - Done.

Pros

- Quick/easy/instant
- Interfaces with everything
- Big audience potential

Cons

- Tiny messages

Can use

Mobile with signal

Internet

Email

Satphone

Voice

Podcasts / voicemail

VoxSciences (dead), Ipadio, Google Voice

Pros

- Quick and easy
- Nicer than written word

Cons

- Attention span
- Can't listen at work
- Dodgy reception

Can use

Mobile with signal

Satphone

Internet (with good signal)

Blog

Blogger, Wordpress, Typepad

Pros

- Huge scope
- Upload when convenient

Cons

- More time consuming
- Less instant

Can use

Internet

Email

Smartphone

Satphone / mobile (very basic)

Maps and Trackers

Google Maps, Google Earth, Mapology, home-made

Pros

- Great visual aid
- Sense of remoteness/progress

Cons

- Confusing if in different places

Can use

SPOT Tracker

Yellow Brick

Handheld GPS

Smartphone

Wireless

TECHNOLOGY

- **Mobile** - for texts (10p+/text)
- **Smart phone** - local SIM (£5+) or international roaming (£15+/month)
- **Satphone** - voice, text, basic data (~£100/month)
- **Laptop** - plugged into smart/sat-phone (£150+)
- **BGAN** - satellite broadband (£1000+ plus data)
- **Kindle 3G** - for email, Twitter, blog, photos (£150)
- **GPS** – for maps (£20+), SPOT (£100), YB (hire)
- **Solar panels** – fancy (£200), basic (£65), Maplin (£25)
- **Websites** - free software, free hosting or £20+?

Email Newsletters

Gmail, Mail Chimp, from blog

Pros

- Delivered directly
- Can automate/schedule

Cons

- Spam
- Deadline

Can use

Internet

Email

Smartphone (slowly)

Automation

- Blog by email
- Email from satphone
- FB, G+, Twitter, LinkedIn etc all linked
- New blogs/Flickr/YouTube update elsewhere
- UK team

Style

Technology is a vehicle only

Blow by blow is not interesting

Facts vs feelings

Sarah Outen – London2London: Via the World

Cycling and rowing around the world



- Tech allows videos
- Questions from schools

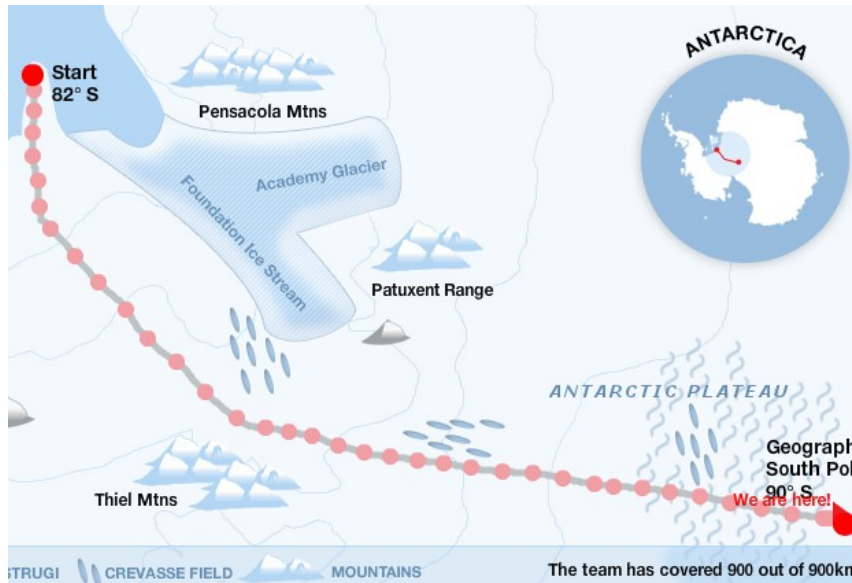
- Comms Kit: BGAN and laptop, Blackberry
- Tracking: YellowBrick
- Charging: Solar panels/dynamo/mains
- Website: Wordpress
- Map: Google Earth, Human Edge Tech

- BGAN/Wifi - Blog, video, high-res photos
- Phone - Twitter
- Automatic - Facebook, map

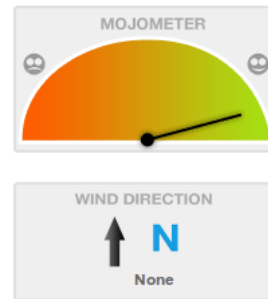
www.sarahouten.com

Kaspersky Antarctic Expeditions

Eight women from Commonwealth countries skiing to the South Pole
Felicity Aston completing a solo traverse of Antarctica



- Simple map
- Two phone calls
- Used UK team



- Comms Kit: Satphone
- Charging: Solar panels
- Website: Custom
- Map: Custom

- Satphone: Twitter, voicemail
- Automatic/UK: Facebook, map, blog, stockpiled images

www.kasperskyonetransantarcticexpedition.com

Crossing South America

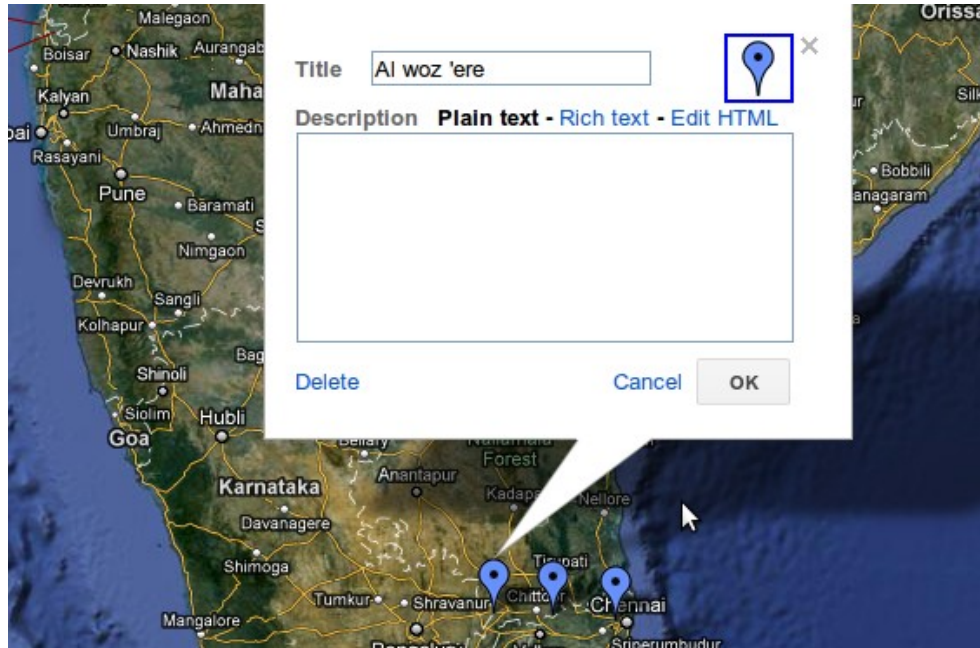
Me and my wife, Laura, going coast-to-coast across Patagonia

- Comms Kit: Old mobile, Kindle 3G
- Charging: Low usage, cheap solar panel?
- Website: Wordpress
- Map: Google Maps?
- Phone: Twitter
- Kindle: Twitter, basic blog
- Automatic: Facebook, website, Google+

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Walking Across India

Alastair Humphreys following the River Kaveri



- Super simple
- Low (no?) tech

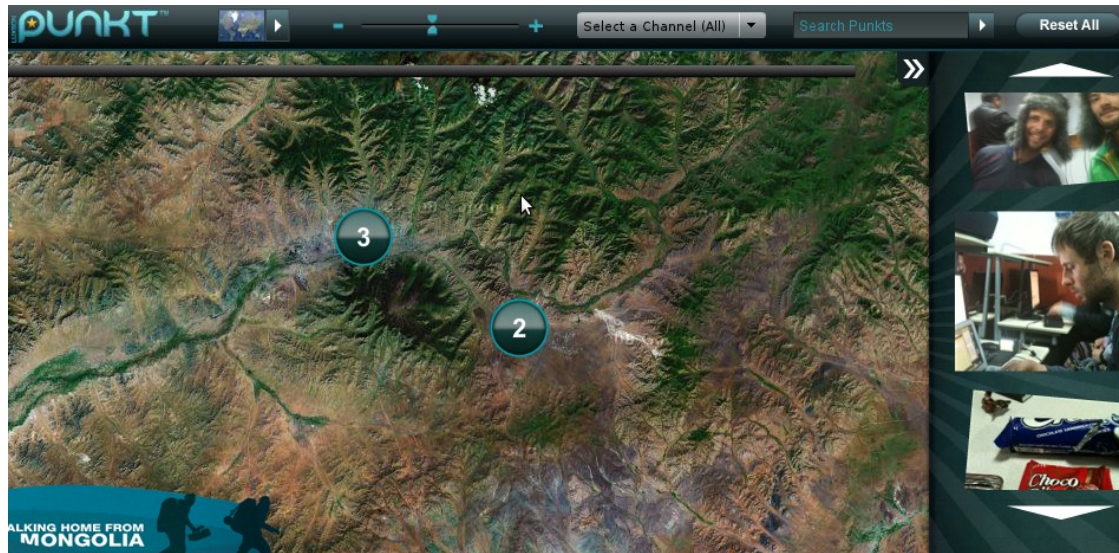
- Comms/Charging: None. Internet cafes.
- Website: Wordpress
- Map: Google Maps

- Cafes: Map
- Phone/cafe?: Twitter

www.alastairhumphreys.com

Walking Home from Mongolia

Rob Lilwall and Leon McCarron, 5000km through China by foot and boat



- Geolocated updates
- Retrospective with signal

- Comms Kit: SPOT, iPhone
- Charging: Solar panel
- Website: Wordpress
- Map: Luxson Mapology

- iPhone - Blog, Twitter, photos
- Automatic - Facebook, map

(Bit of guess work)

www.walkinghomefrommongolia.com

In Summary

- Think about why you're doing it
- What the simplest method is
- Automate as much as possible
- Think about style
- Be honest and open