

Supercourse Newsletter
July 7, 2011
www.pitt.edu/~super1/

Please forward to people you know who have a cell phone.

7 Billion Voices, 14 Billion Eyes, 20 Billion Kilos of Brains

The end of 2012 will mark a tipping point for global health. For the first time all the world's voices can be heard and 2 Trillion IQ points can work together to improve the health of the world. The tipping point in 2012 will be when everyone in the world will be able to communicate to everyone else in the world because the number of cell phones will equal the number of people on earth.

The world penetration of voice, hearing, and intelligence most certainly will have a profound effect on global health. Essential cores of global health improvement are creativity, education and communication. Each of these are enabled by universal connectivity. With Universal cell access we tap into expert opinions on health and we can learn from some of the most distinguished teachers in the world (even our mothers half a world away)

“It is good to rub and polish our grain against that of others” (Montaigne)

Those who have been disenfranchised from global health technology such as the poor, the illiterate, the homeless, the sick, and non-English Speakers will suddenly have access to health knowledge and experts. For example, now there are twice as many cell phones in developing countries than developed. Although women in developing countries are slightly less likely to own a cell phone, access to cell phones is about on a par with men, because of cells in the household, or friends and family having cell phones. Even 50% of the homeless have a cell phone. Clearly there are some technologic disparities, but the disparities are smaller than that seen for other technologies such as automobiles, computers or ball point pens.

“I like nonsense; it wakes up the brain cells” (Dr. Seuss)

This is a brand new phenomena, as in 2005 there was one cell phone for every 2 people on earth. In only 7 years cell phones and people reached parity. What will this mean for global health? We would love to hear your suggestions.

We as senior health faculty have spent most of our lives without the Internet, let alone cell phones. Overall the uses and apps of phones for global health have not been very creative. We need to enlist the really big thinkers on Mobile Technology, the 12 year olds around the world who have never known life without a cell phone. We are seeing the tipping point for cell access and translation, the creative use of this technology has lagged behind with wonderful technology being used for rather trivial health efforts (e.g. buns of steel).

“The tipping point is that moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire” M. Gladwell

Skyping: I have been in email contact with many of you for decades, but we have never met I would very much like to see your face. Skype me at ronaldlaporte and we can talk. I have discovered 2 rules of skyping

1. Do not skype to people after 9:00 PM their time. Nothing good can come out of this. They will likely be asleep, or a little tipsy. Because of this the conversation rambles. Secondly, people are preparing for bed. It is most embarrassing to speak with someone when their wife is in the background in her night clothes.

2. Do not skype to people before 9:00 AM. On a Sunday, I sent an email to a top level official. He wrote back immediately suggesting that we skype. My hair was going in 17 different directions I did not have my coffee, I was in my University of Pittsburgh pajamas, and Ella was barking up a storm.

App of the week: Yinzer The people of Pittsburgh have an unusual dialect: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pittsburgh_English

There is now an app called “Yinzer” which provides to you the “language of Pittsburgh”. Please let us know if you know of any other cool app.

Ancient Libraries: Alexei Tikhomirov from the UN is a grand friend and helping us build collaboration in Central Europe. In Turkmenistan is the ancient Library of Merv, and we have been collaborating with Ismail Serageldin the director of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. A student in Library Science, Paula Nelson has been identifying ancient libraries and has some up with 44 so far. We hope to build a Supercourse for libraries and library science. We would appreciate if you knew of ancient libraries in the world, let us know (ronaldlaporte@gmail.com)

Faina’s pick of the week:

In the past few month, we asked ourselves very simple question, what lectures get the most numbers of hits and why? You will be surprised to find out that lectures that get the most number of hits do not come from Nobel Prize laureates or from leading universities. Simply put, lectures that get most number of hits are good lectures that cover interesting topics and have notes to go with slides. This week, we feature one of these lectures that came to us from Dr. Rakhimova in Kazakhstan. The lecture is entitled *The Impacts of Expert Systems on Health Care: Economic Consideration* and can be found at <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec5791/index.htm>

Among other things, lecture discusses the importance of telemedicine, expert systems, and economic considerations of using various systems for teaching and practicing medicine. It describes various types of telemedicine in easy to understand manner This lecture has been accessed hundreds of times. We were very pleased to see that other Supercourse lectures from Central Asia are also quite popular. Availability of the same lecture in multiple languages helps to boost the number of visitors. There are 15 million sites about this topic, Dr. Rakhimova’s lecture is number 1.

Best Regards,

Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Nicholas, Gil, Mita, Ismail, Eric, Jesse, Kawkab, Vint, Ali,
Meredith