Sarah Smith
Extreme freelancing: writing whilst sailing around the world

www.MedCommsNetworking.com
Who am I & what do I do?

- I am a freelance medical writer
- I have >20 years of experience working with MedComms agencies & pharma companies
- For the past 11 years I have continued to work whilst sailing on a yacht with my family
- We are currently based in Grenada in the West Indies
“Oh how glamorous! You’re living the dream!”

In reality, working from a yacht involves:

- Extreme heat & humidity
- Cramped conditions
- Limited power
- Crap internet

My work space = the family living space
Life on our boat is simpler but not necessarily easier

In addition to limited space, power & internet:

• Limited water
• Limited language skills
• No car
• No washing machine
• No freezer
• No TV
• No support network of family & friends
How did we do it?

• 2003: Talked to the Accountant
• Talked to my clients
• Started looking for the ‘right’ boat
• Bought SY CAPE December 2005
• Emptied & sold the house
• Rehomed the 2 Labradors
• Deregistered the 2 kids from school & started home schooling
• Moved onto SY CAPE
• Sold the 2 cars
• Managed to sell boat 1
• Had a big party
• 2007: Set sail (24 April)

We changed everything in our life apart from the way that I worked
How does it work from a business perspective?

• I am a UK resident
• I am a UK sole trader
• I have a tax liability in the UK

To be able to work I need:
• Mobile phone
• Internet access – my biggest challenge
• Laptop
• Printer/scanner

Freelance writing/editing has to be one of the most suitable careers for combining long-term travel & working
Internet access is getting easier & faster (not necessarily cheaper)

- Laptop to a cybercafé & plug in an ethernet cable
- Wi-fi in bars & cafés (I drank a lot of coffee...)
- USB dongles for specific country mobile phone networks
  
  **Disadvantage:** new dongle needed for each country
  
  **Advantage:** 3G internet 150 miles up the River Gambia!

- Long-distance wi-fi in Caribbean anchorages
  
  **Using a wi-fi booster hoisted up the mast**

- Mobile data packages via local SIM cards
- Mobile data packages via UK SIM roaming
SY CAPE
Where have we been?
Visited >25 countries & sailed >15,000 miles
The Smith Family album...
Bethany & Bryn

Aged 7 & 9 when we left
Home schooling (the Cape educational experiment)

Maths & English
Geography & geology
  Weather
  Caves
  Volcanoes
History
  The Romans in Italy
  The Ancient Greeks in Greece
  Slavery in Gambia/the Caribbean
Art
Music
Languages

Physics & Chemistry
  Navigation
  Sailing
  SCUBA diving
  Rum distilleries in the Caribbean
Biology
  Fauna & flora
Life skills
  Sea survival & first aid
  Cooking, cleaning & laundry
  Other cultures & religions
Volcanoes in the Aeolian Islands...
...and Morocco
Greece: Olympic flames & the running track
The Gambia, West Africa
Hippos, crocodiles, birds & slavery
Caribbean beaches & rainforest
Caribbean rhum & rum
Food, music & people around the world
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Horribly out-of-date blog:
http://blog.mailasail.com/cape