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# Text messaging as a near synchronous method in adventure

Heather Prince, Associate Professor



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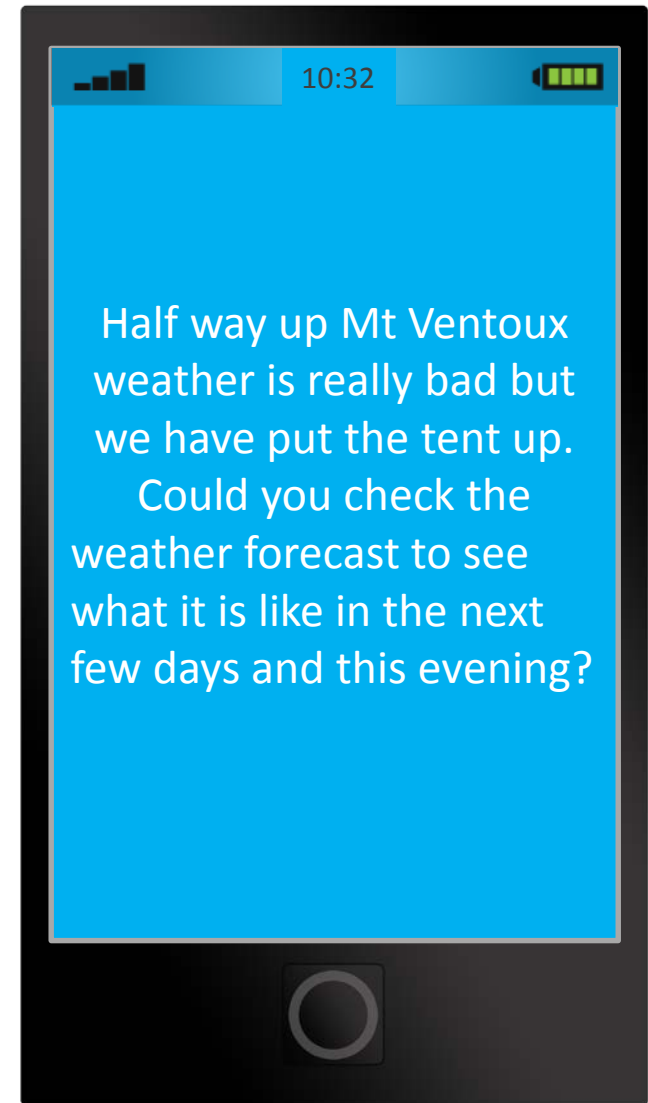
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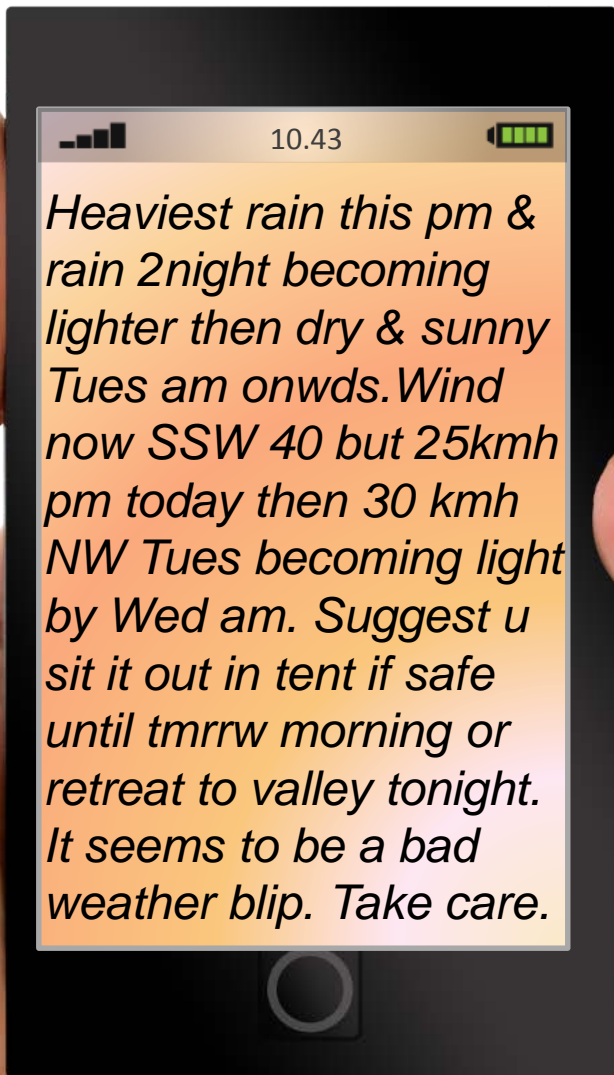
## First climb – Mont Ventoux (1911 m)

“Of all the great mountains in the annals of cycling, Mont Ventoux reigns supreme ...it has a unique presence that makes any and every ascent a magnificent experience.” (Henderson, 2013, p.150)

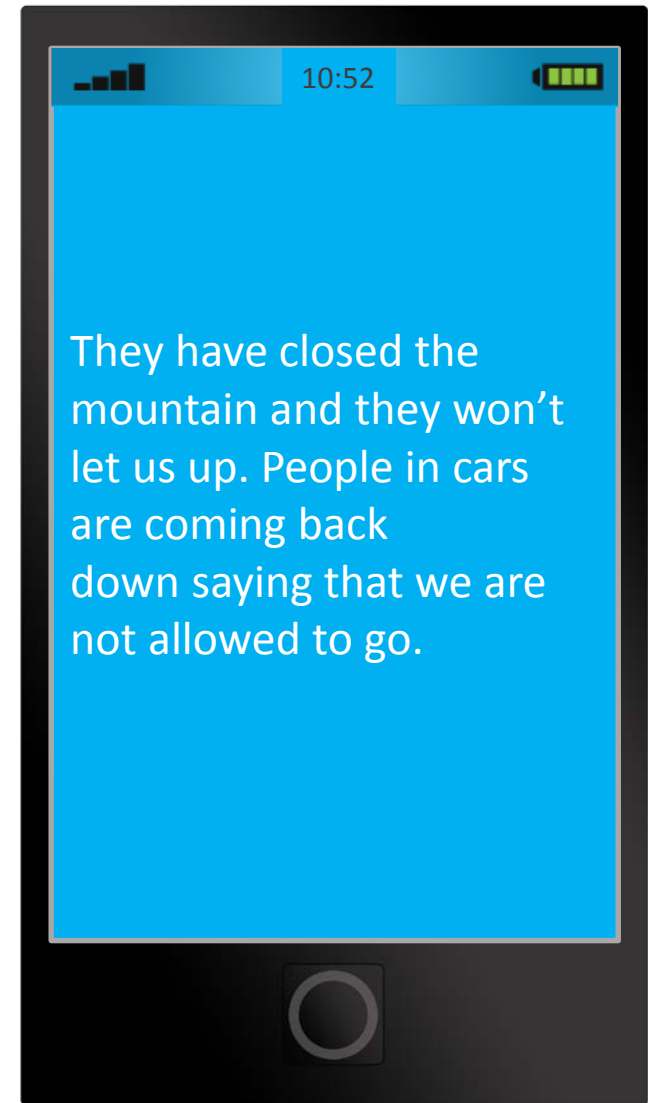
“Constantly presented in the cycling press as one of the most dreaded climbs in the sport ...” (Spinney, 2006, p.710)





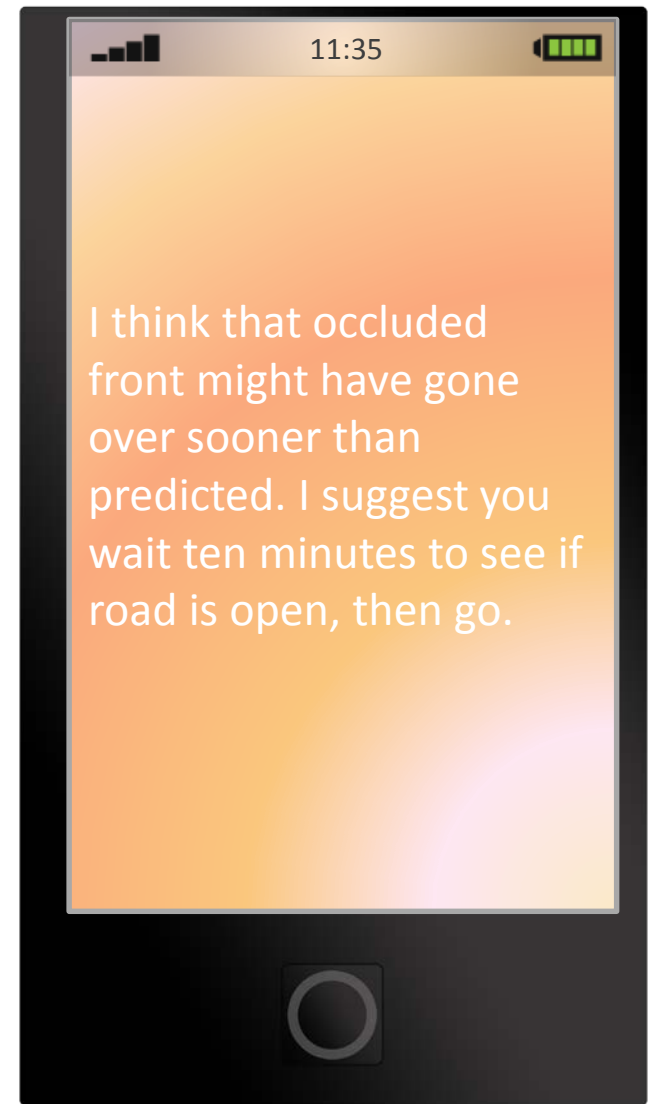
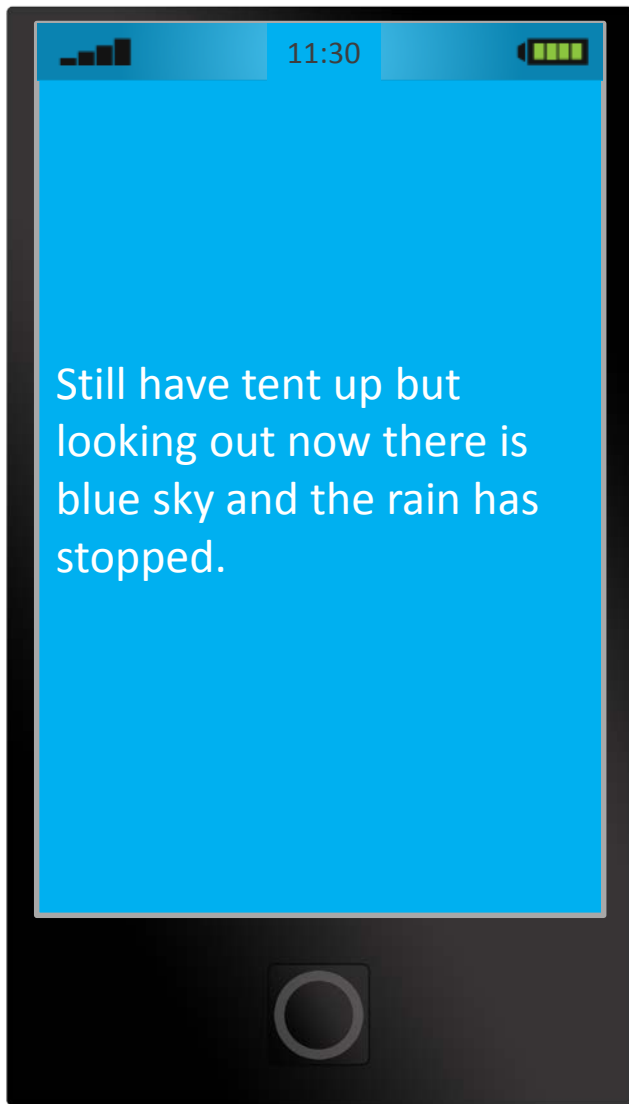


*Heaviest rain this pm & rain 2night becoming lighter then dry & sunny Tues am onwds. Wind now SSW 40 but 25kmh pm today then 30 kmh NW Tues becoming light by Wed am. Suggest u sit it out in tent if safe until tmrrw morning or retreat to valley tonight. It seems to be a bad weather blip. Take care.*



They have closed the mountain and they won't let us up. People in cars are coming back down saying that we are not allowed to go.





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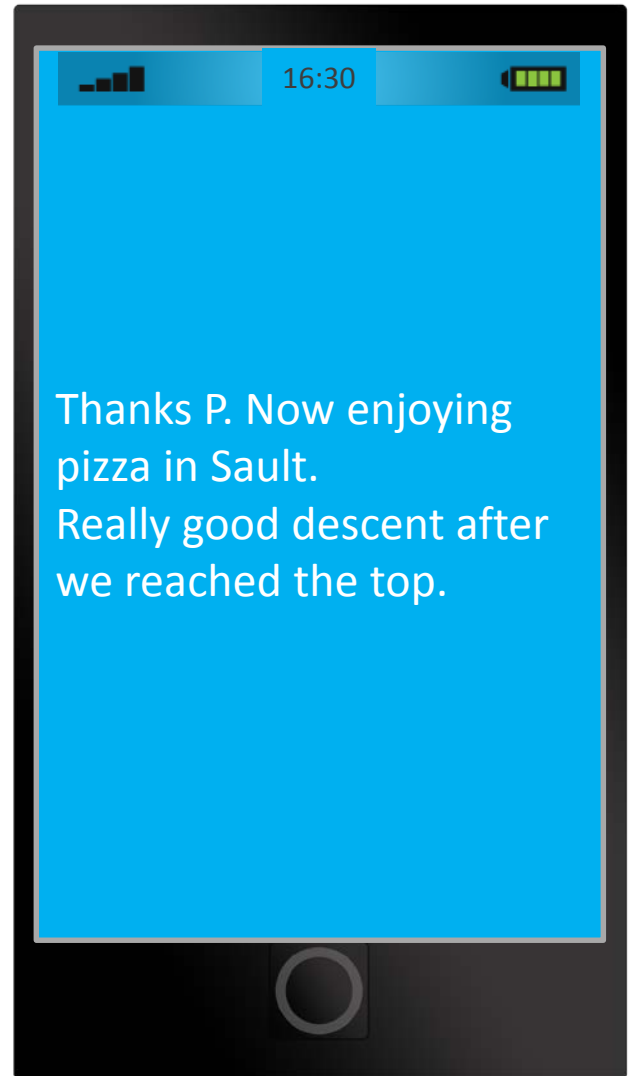
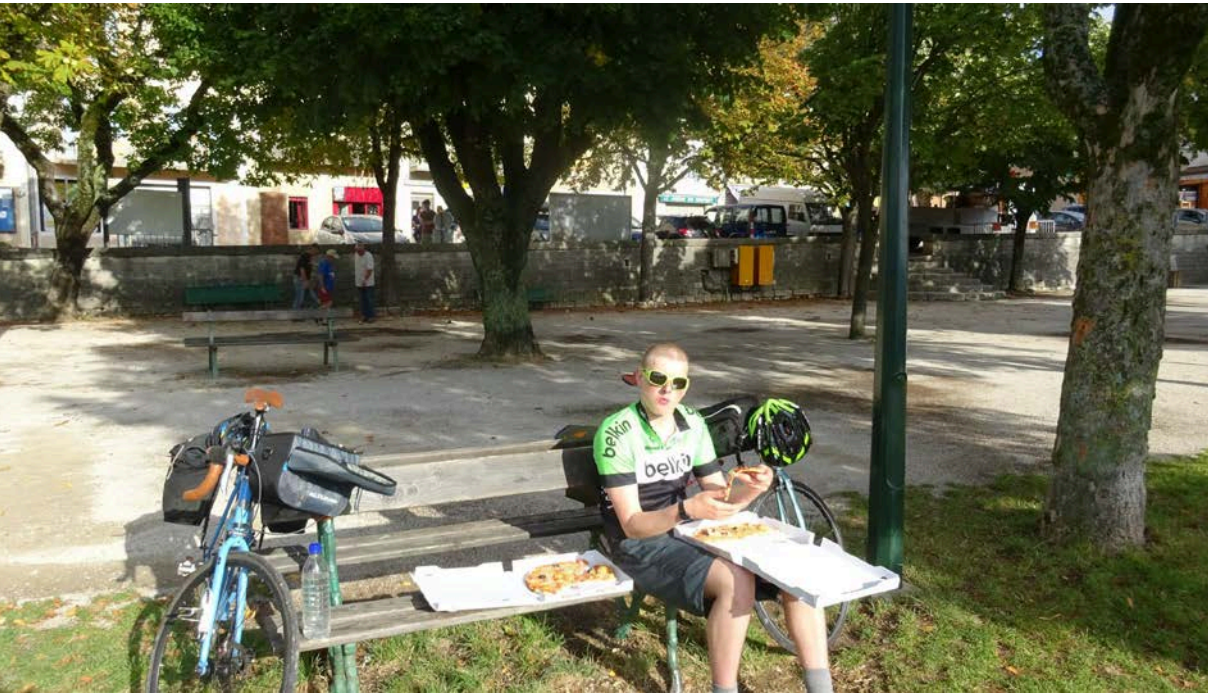
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Text messages identifying key moments from dual perspectives to derive meaning.



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# Context

- Cycle touring expedition: Orange via Southern French Alps to Valence
- 900 km, 17 high mountain passes in 13 days
- Two brothers, 17 & 20 years
- Parent-researcher (retrospective)





# Data

Text messages (SMS): near synchronous  
'Connected presence' (Licoppe, 2004)

Use of text messages for research in health-related contexts, not for research into remote support in adventure.

- necessarily pertinent and focused
- 'upended' mobilities

Supplementary mobile conversations:

- interactionist approach (dialogic) for advice, information and reassurance.

# Methodological challenges

- Mobilities paradigm (transient adventure settings)
- Phenomenological and ethnographic (including autoethnographic approach)
- Not hermeneutic phenomenology

Co-construction of meaning through the interpretation of textual information and of lived experiences.

Advantages of delayed response in adventure situations?

# Ethical questions

- Parent-researcher
  - - familial relationship, bias, power (?)
  - - retrospective use of data

## Advantages

- - reliable data, critical insights into dialogic interaction, reflexivity
- - naturalistic fluency

Approved by University Ethics Panel



Debate about text messaging as a method ...



## Text messaging

- Not 'place-based' immersion (Merriman, 2014)
- Not performative or participative in the active sense
- Questionable 'embodiment'. Researcher is distant from adventure
- Necessarily focused and limited, although this might be seen as advantageous in adventure situations (non-intrusive?)
- Overtaken by social media? Range of media beyond words, more holistic picture of lived experience?
- Initiated by young people
- Cheap
- Reception more widespread than internet & focused, although mediated, information channel



# Outcomes



Increasing autonomy



'Transition' stage



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'Rite of passage' (van Gennep [1909] 1960; Larson & Lloyd, 2012)









# Reflections

Son 1: "Stop the parent worrying" but admitted contact was very useful for weather information and advice on wild boars;

Son 2: Appreciated support whilst journeying. Immediacy of response not so important.

Which party appreciated level of interactive support more? Depends on degree of adventure and level of competence of participants; experience and understanding of older adult.

Participants became more confident as journey progressed in confronting and rationalising unfamiliar social, cultural and psychologically challenging situations.





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Following year, cycle tour Barcelona, Spain – Bristol, UK, via Pyrenees.



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