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Text messaging as a near synchronous method in adventure

Heather Prince, Associate Professor



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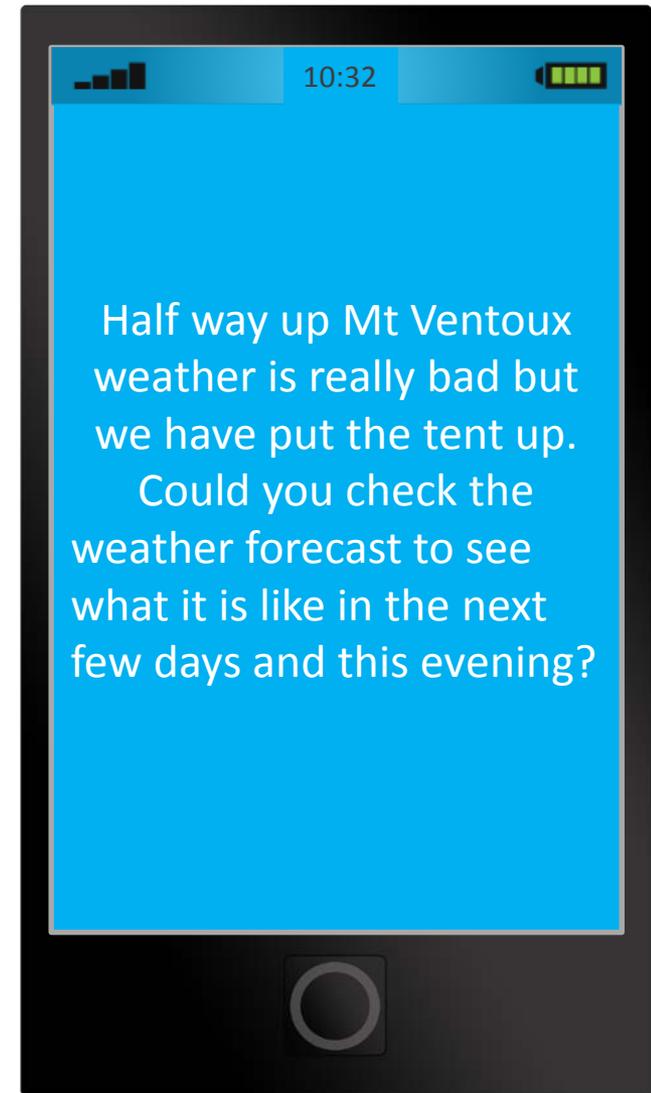
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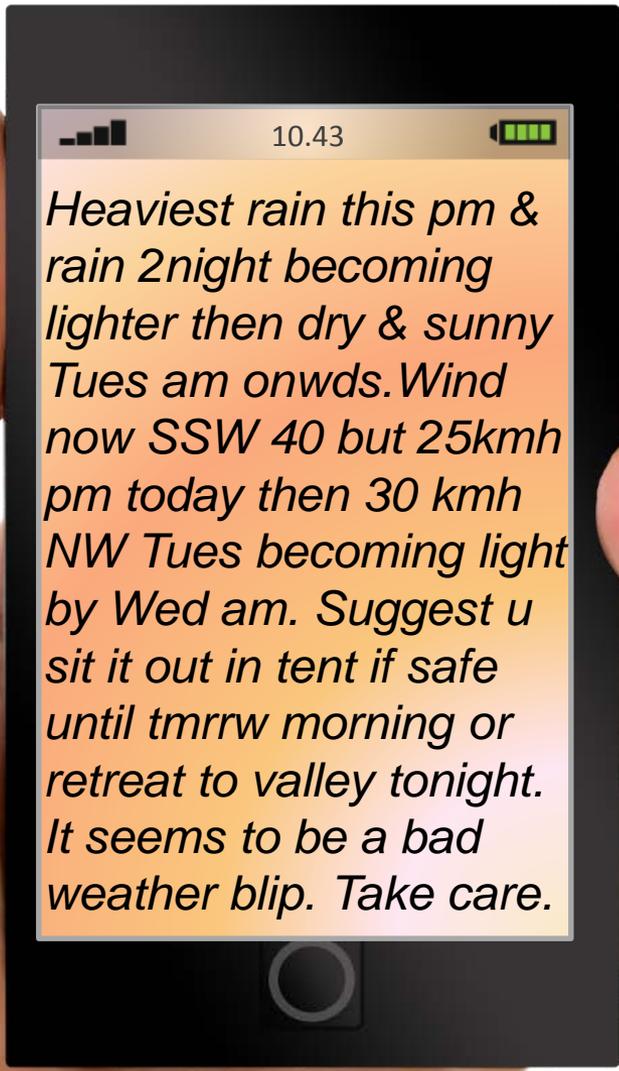
TEN
years
2007-2017

First climb – Mont Ventoux (1911 m)

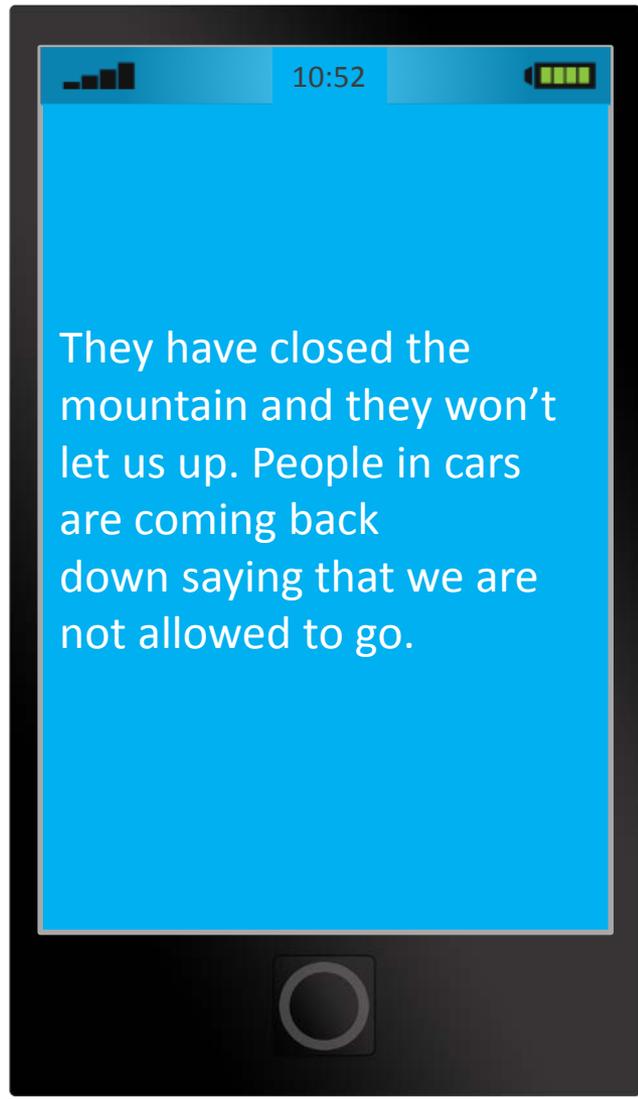
“Of all the great mountains in the annals of cycling, Mont Ventoux reigns supreme ...it has a unique presence that makes any and every ascent a magnificent experience.” (Henderson, 2013, p.150)

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



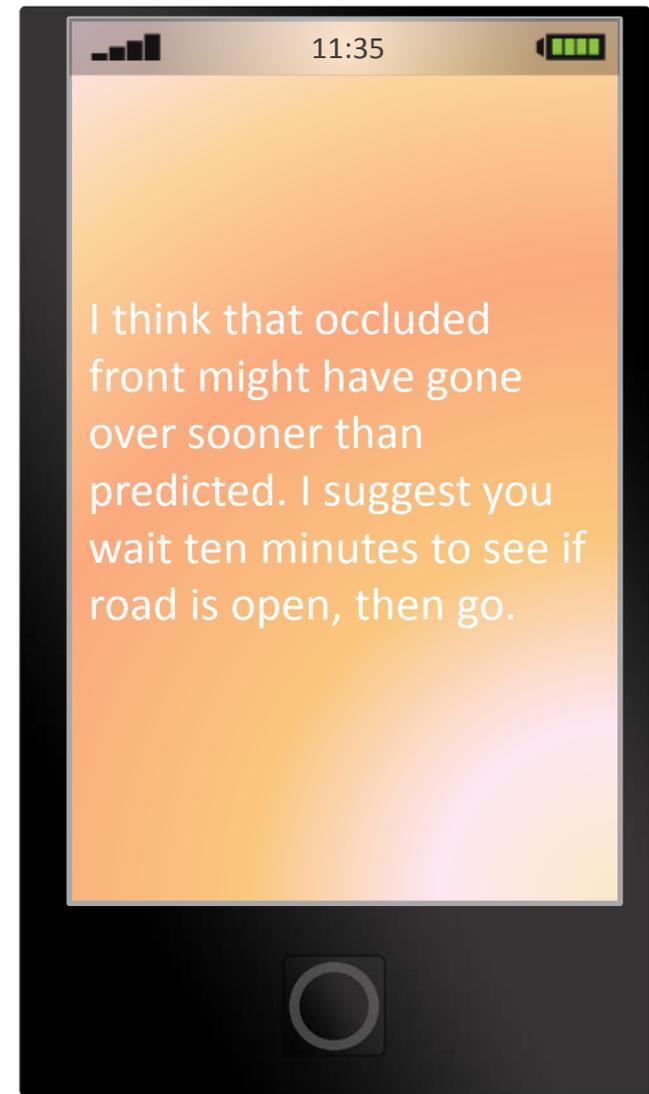
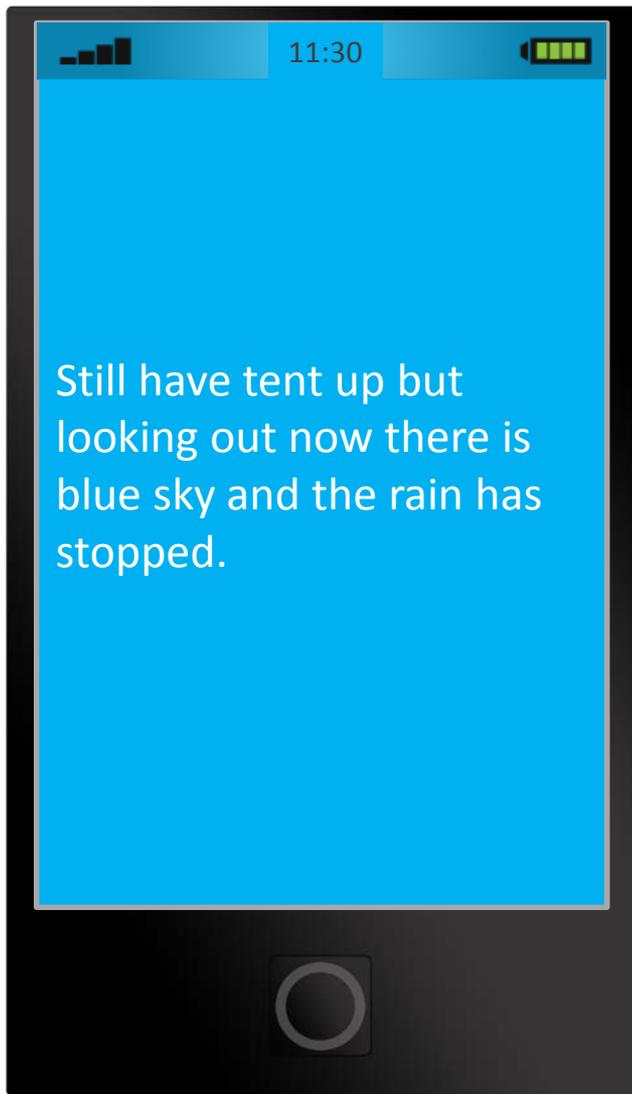


Heaviest rain this pm & rain 2night becoming lighter then dry & sunny Tues am onwds. Wind now SSW 40 but 25kmh pm today then 30 kmh NW Tues becoming light by Wed am. Suggest u sit it out in tent if safe until tmrrw morning or retreat to valley tonight. It seems to be a bad weather blip. Take care.



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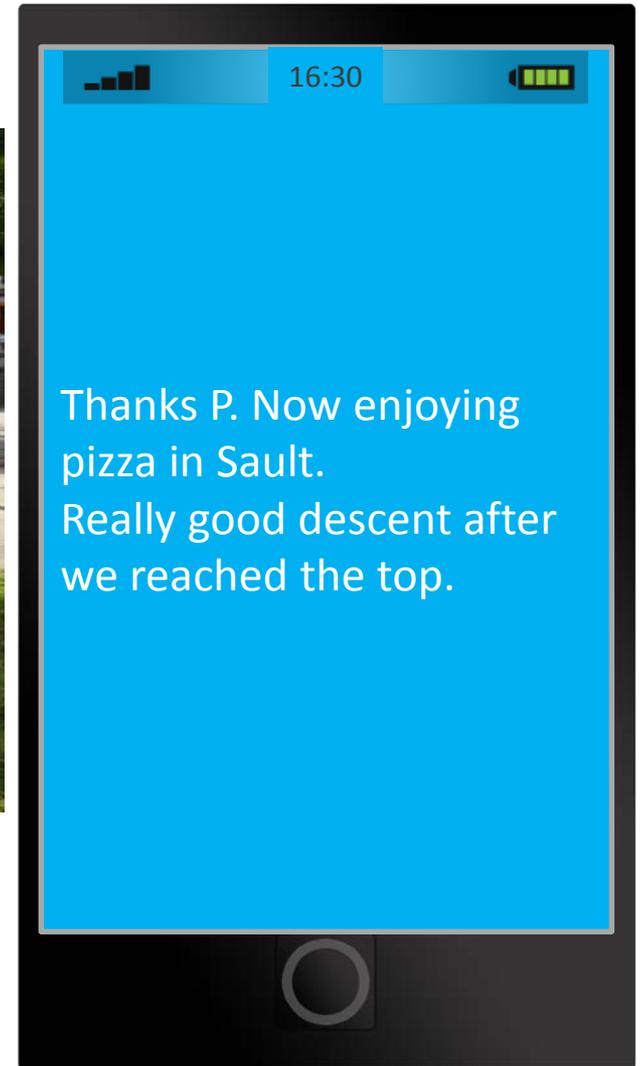
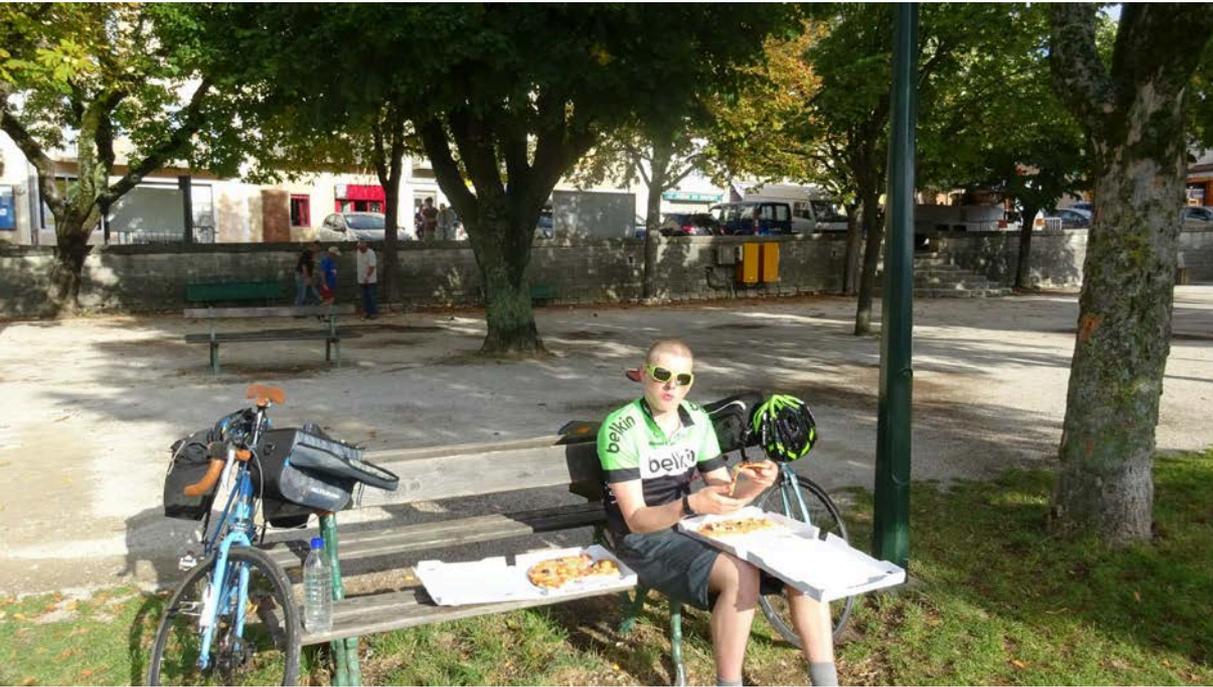
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Text messages identifying key moments from dual perspectives to derive meaning.



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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

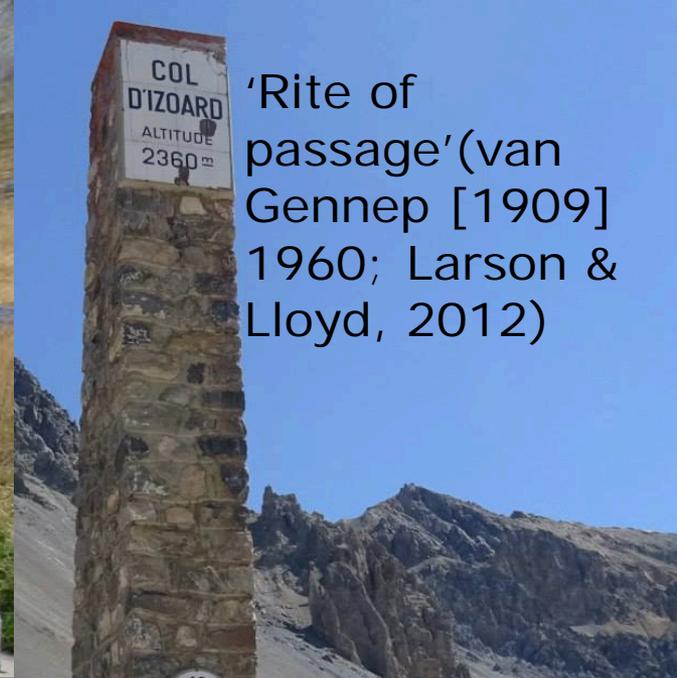
'Transition' stage



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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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