

Supercourse Newsletter

Jan 26, 2011

Supercourse, [www.pitt.edu/~super1/](http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/)

Supercourse Mobile Global Health

[www.pitt.edu/~super1/globalhealth/mobileGHS.htm](http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/globalhealth/mobileGHS.htm)

Dear Friends,

Please forward this to those interested in global health and/or “app-ology”.

Faith is taking the first step even when you do not see the whole staircase. (ML King)  
(provided by Ed Chidiac, a good friend)

This quote describes exactly how we feel about Mobile Global health. It can be enormously powerful, for the primary reason that one can almost reach everyone in the world from our cell phones. It was recently pointed out that there are more cell phones in the world than tooth brushes. We are entering into this new world of Mobile Global health where we can see only as far as the reach of our headlights, but as we move forward more and more wonderful places of interest appear. We are so pleased that so many of you have joined this global effort to grow a new field of Mobile Global Health. We are especially interested in engaging the tech industry, not just in mhealth, but those in technology fields who would like to improve the health of the world. Therefore please share this with your techie friends.

“The world is like a grand staircase, some are going up, and some are going down.”  
(Johnson)

We are going up, as seen by web site of Mobile Global Health which can be found at:  
[www.pitt.edu/~super1/globalhealth/mobileGHS.htm](http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/globalhealth/mobileGHS.htm)

If you search on Mobile Global Health, there are 73,000,000 sites found and we are number 1. The goal of our Supercourse team is to bridge the gap between the Global Health Community and the Mobile community. We have 50,000 members of the global health community, almost all have cell phones. The Mobile network at this point has about 400 members who are interested in bringing their skills to global health. The difficulty is that even though we in global health have cell and smart phones, most of us are rather “app-challenged” and rarely do anything exciting with our phones, other than call other app challenged people. The Mobile people are very skilled in Apping, however almost all of their focus has been on clinical applications which are trivial for global health. We see that it is critical us to talk with each other, and to “take the first step on the staircase” to the goal of Mobile Global Health

A first step is simple, it is for us in Global health to think of apps that would have a great impact to improve the health of the world through prevention. We then start our discussions with the Mobile App experts. Please be wild and crazy and send us some ideas for global app health. Global Surveillance is of course obvious. How about “flash networks at the time of an earthquake?” A camera-nutrition app where all one needed to

do was to take a picture of a plate of food, and get an estimate of nutritional value. Teliagnosis for buildings, and for plants in agriculture. A system of pharmacovigilance where there apps can tell if drugs are real or forged. Asbestos sensor apps, etc. Please send your wild ideas to [ronaldlaporte@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldlaporte@gmail.com). We plan to gather these, and feed them back to the total network.

“Stairs are climbed step by step” Turkish proverb

We have been thinking of the power of this approach. We need to think how best to use the basic cell phone for global health which reaches almost 5 billion people and then move up the technology scale. However, the more we move up in technology, the lower the number of people have access. However, we can think of a model like in the early 1900s in many of our countries, where there was a single phone in a general store and people would come there to use it. Here there might be a single iphone for a district, and it is rented out.

We see networks to serve the main function of the Supercourse; education. We have provided to the Mobile community our lecture on global health and have encouraged them to review this to see our perspective. The lecture can be found at the mobile global website above. In the next week or two we will be rolling our educational materials for us in Global Health to learning more about the internet, Mobile and Apping. We have identified 10 outstanding lectures about the Internet and mobile technology that can be easily understood by app-challenged people such as me. In addition, we have found about 20 YouTube simple videos on everything from what is an app, to how to text, email on mobiles, etc.

One thing I would like is if you could distribute this newsletter your students. I at age 61 spent more than ½ my life without the Internet, and 60 years of my life without an iphone. It is really important to bring these bright young medical, public health, nursing, Engineering, etc. students into Mobile Global Health, as these kids have never known a time when there was no Internet.

It is time for us to take another step on the staircase to improve global health with Mobile Technology.

Thank you: We wish to thank all of you who have contributed to the Supercourse. I will be thanking you all personally, but have not received the names of all who have contributed. As the say in the tech industry, our “burn rate” of almost no funds is probably 6 months, your efforts allow us to continue probably for a year. We would very much appreciate if you could contribute to the global knowledge of health.

Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: “What are you doing for others?”, ML King, With the Mobile Global Supercourse we can answer this question for all of us.

Faina’s pick of the week: Vint Cerf. Dr. Cerf is considered to be the Father of the Internet. He also has been a primary developer of the Supercourse. He just updated his

Supercourse lecture for the Mobile Global Health Supercourse page to teach those of us in Global Health. He as an Internet King, now has a considerable understanding of the problems of global health and to see what we in Global Health need.

Lecture of the week

Today, we take Internet for granted. Few of us know how Internet was developed who were the people behind the development of this wonder. In the Supercourse, we are very fortunate to have a lecture on the future of information and communication technology, which is available at

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec33561/001.htm>

This lecture takes us from the early Internet days in 1969 to the concept of "interplanetary" internet, which we will hopefully see in our lifetimes.

Do not forget to check out Vint's video lecture "Are smart phones making us dumb", linked from the first slide of this lecture.

Best wishes from:

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