

Ubiquitous Connectivity, Never-ending Necessity (Planes, Trains ... and Tokyo Taxis)

Dimitri Kopanakis

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Picture-it – Central Rome, 2005. As the sunset settles on the Roman landscape, I was making my way through the streets from one tourist site to another, all the while mindful that it was the start of another business day back in Australia.

Given the year, mobile data charges and technology of the day were not an option to enable connectivity for work, my Wi-Fi internet subscription entity had only limited locations throughout the city, and as far as I could identify, I was some distance from any accessible Wi-Fi hub. Important emails needed to be sent for the start of the business day, and I knew I needed to source a location in next short while.

As I turn a corner, I see nothing but the stereotypical ruins and charm of the ancient city, but in the distance notice a glow, with a number of people gathering around it. I approach, I notice there are about a dozen individuals seated and milling around piles of ancient ruins, all huddled around their laptops, chatting away in Italian. Curious, I ask, in my broken Italian, “What is here...?”. “Wi-Fi Internet!” was the enthusiastic response from one in the forum, to which I quickly withdrew my laptop and could not think of a more fitting example of “When in Rome...” Other than some broken ancient columns, marble ornaments, and a few retailers, there was nothing notable in the area, but - I had my Wi-Fi. I was online and worked away, and have the photo evidence to prove this random moment in time did happen!

Fast-forward 17 years, as I sit on my Qantas flight between Brisbane and Sydney, Australia, ubiquitous connectivity could not be more evident, or prevalent for our professional or personal needs.

Technology has, and continues to evolve, and our connectivity and needs to work without impediment only become more relevant.

Ultimately, in over 20 years of travelling the globe for work in many capacities, seamless and ubiquitous connectivity, supported by access to the appropriate technology has been critical in order to respond to, and maintain intercontinental business.

In 2022, we have become accustomed to broad and wide-ranging digital services and products on offer, supported by high-speed Internet accessibility. Further, our tablets, phones and portable computers have provided the means to assimilate and create content, regardless of their platform. Augmenting this, online and accessible platforms for transfer of data is equally critical, and enabling the exchange of necessary business resources.

Like many a digital global nomad, my inter-connected, global ‘office’ (consisting of a laptop, tablet and phone) has ranged in location from cafés and restaurants around the world, to airline lounges, planes, hotels, airport-express train services, even taxis in Tokyo (each with their own Wi-Fi Hotspot connectivity) – which was critical in early mobile phone days, when cellular devices did not work in Japan unless you had a device that communicated on their technology.

As we also now accept, the physicality of a resource no longer creates an impediment, and

no clearer an example of this was on a business trip to Thailand a number of years ago, prior to the readily-available resources we have today.

In the mid 2000s, as part of a MICE event (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) my organisation had the opportunity to exhibit our products and an international, sector-wide, industry trade show in Pattaya, Thailand.

Supported by our team of staff, my business partner, colleagues and I prepared all we needed to setup our booth and present at the trade show, including, a signature draw-card, our 5 minute promo-video, which we would loop on the trade stand to attract delegates and passers-by to our booth, and showcase our products.

We all flew the 10 hours to Bangkok, then undertook the 2-hour car transfer to the beachside town of Pattaya, and diligently went straight to the trade show to ensure we were setup for the following day's flurry of visitors. As we unpacked the collateral and our representative merchandise, we eventually came to the realisation we had forgotten the video (on DVD) back in Sydney. This was not ideal to say the least. Whilst in 2022 this would not present an issue, there was no video-sharing social media platform in place at the time, International mail couriers would not deliver the physical disk to us in time, and we were facing a dilemma of having our signature attractant not supporting this critical event we had spent significant funds on.

Fortunately, large-capacity file-sharing platforms had just commenced operation, and courtesy of some late-night uploading from the team back in Australia, our video was downloaded by us in Pattaya, in time for the exhibition opening the following day. Without this technology, we would not have seen the trade show as successful as it was, with much uptake of our services in Thailand for many years to come as a result.

Whilst in my home, a security assessment of my Internet-connected devices informs me that I total over 30 devices registering an IP address (only a handful of these are for work-purposes), on the road, my three, key devices armed with a plethora of apps and platforms for processes including communication, project management, file-sharing, audio/photo/video editing, text/data generation/editing, and visual presentations, cover all that is necessary for my teams and I to work seamlessly, and to keep connected whilst working across borders and time zones.

Adjunct Professor Dimitri Kopanakis is a Fellow of the UBSS Centre for Entrepreneurship