

MedComms Networking

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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



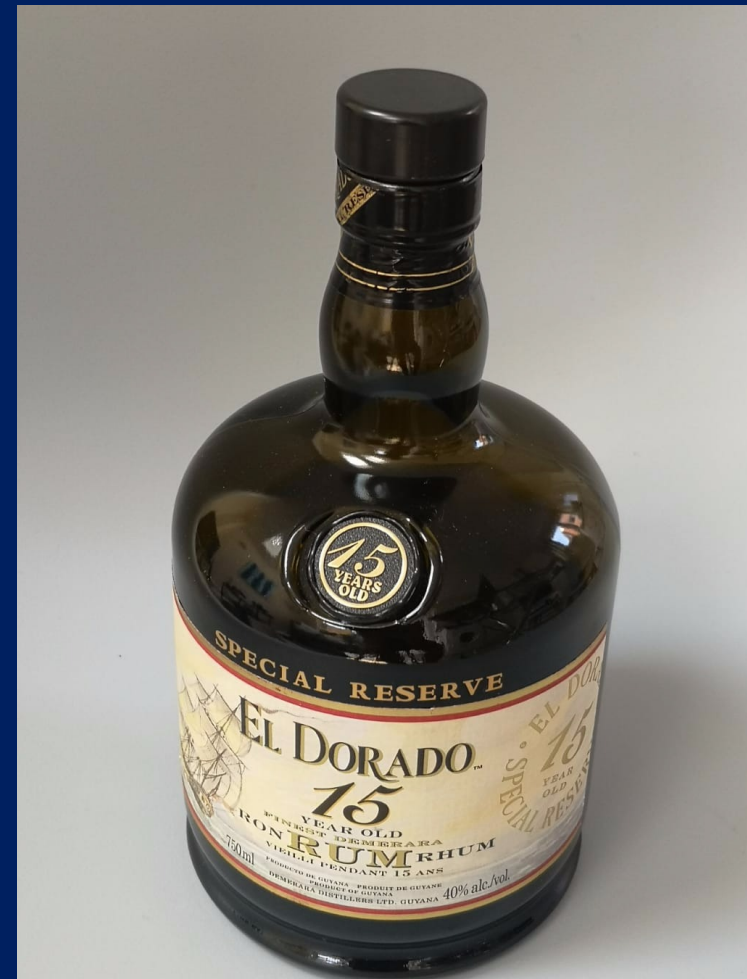
Hippos, crocodiles, birds & slavery



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>