

## Communications went down, the world didn't burn

**By Sarah Sobanski**

Was anyone else a little sad when communications in Bancroft and surrounding area were restored Sunday night (April 29)? A fire early Sunday morning knocked out select service cellphones, most local landlines and internet services for the majority of the day. Lots of people including in Tudor and Cashel, Limerick, Wollaston, Faraday, Bancroft and Hastings Highlands were affected. I was one of the lucky ones who lost communications across the board. I can't help but think no cell, no data, no problems. When was the last time you went the whole day without contact with the extended outside world? When was the last time you went a day without checking your Facebook or Instagram or email?

It was a blessing in disguise not being able to check my email for the whole day, you might agree. Someone recently asked me at a weekend event if I ever get a day off. I laughed. Even if you don't have the hectic schedule of covering community happenings like I do, you're probably hyper-connected to the planet just the same.

You check your work email on weekends and week nights, I know you do. You've called someone afterhours to double check something for your business, and ? when that person didn't pick up at home ? called their cellphone. You've overthought someone's social media status wondering if they were speaking directly to you, without just speaking with them face to face about it. I imagine we didn't always find it so hard to balance our working lives, personal lives and social lives. Being connected every minute of every day can be incredibly exhausting ? I wonder why we do it to ourselves. We feel pressure to be connected at all times because we can, or we have been as technology infrastructure advances.

Perhaps we allow it because we're addicted to that connection. We so easily tie our self-worth to external gratifications from having someone like our page to telling us we were right. We're happily satiated by knowing everything about everyone, knowing what anyone is doing any minute of every day and of course, having control to plan and compartmentalize every minute of our own days. Sounds a little bit ridiculous, doesn't it? Even a little crazy. How can we expect that of ourselves?

I remember reading once that no matter if you live in a major city hub, or in a small town of 4,000 people, your community, your microcosm, is always 100 people strong. But then there's the theory of six degrees of separation ? where you're connected to every person by six people or less.

Maybe we've always been this way and technology has just given us the tools to settle further in our faults ? that burning curiosity that borders on nosiness. Maybe it's the fault of this technological era. But did anyone notice the world didn't fall apart? No calls, no internet and cash only at businesses were a little inconvenient, sure ? but we survived. 911 calls still got through, emergency services and the hospital were still running ? we made it.

Technology has some amazing perks. For example, I can check in with my family and friends scattered across the world whenever I feel like it. That's incredible.

Sunday was nice reminder to slow down, however. We should remember no one can be expected to keep up every minute of every day. We should remember the world won't end if we miss a call or an email.