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SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# CompAct

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

by Timothy Deitz

When my daughter, who is now a sophomore in college, was in high school she wanted text messaging on her phone. My immediate answer was "No." It costs more money and the only purpose I saw was to communicate when you weren't supposed to, like during class! Well, she worked on my wife and negotiated a deal. She had a B in her math class. If she pulled it up to an A, then she could get text messaging. Of course, she got an A, so I was on the hook. She had a limited number of texts per month and we monitored it closely. She had to pay for any overage charges.

I was talking to my cellular provider one day regarding a different issue and they said I could get unlimited texting on all five of my phones for just 10 dollars a month more than I was paying for the limited number on the one phone. I saw this as a way to avoid the expensive overage charges and let my other children have texting, too. This is when I began to experiment on my own.

Well, long story short, I now do a lot of texting! It is the primary communication I have with my two daughters who are away at college. Between their schedules and mine, it's difficult to find time to talk and they aren't constantly checking e-mail. We can send a text with a quick question or note and get a response when it is convenient. The students that I tutor prefer this method of communication to set up tutoring sessions. I have increased communication with several relatives and friends through texting. Even my 74-year-old father is now texting with his children and grandchildren, when he would normally only talk to some of them

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during visits, holidays, etc. The more frequent texting has enriched the conversations that they do have when they see each other.

Why am I telling you this story? It is an example of why it is important to keep an open mind to new technologies and to not be afraid of experimenting with them. Another example is social networking, like FaceBook. My children are all on it, but I don't want to be. I don't have the time and don't see the need or benefit to me. I then realized that this sounded similar to my original texting argument. Therefore, I decided to sign-up for LinkedIn, a professional network. I made a bunch of connections, joined some groups and am exploring the benefits. It is clear to me that as these networks grow, new benefits to me and other actuaries will emerge. I encourage everybody to do this. The more of us out there exploring, experimenting and sharing, the faster the benefits will be realized. The SOA Technology Section has a group on LinkedIn, as well as the SOA and many other actuarial organizations. There are a lot of actuaries out there using LinkedIn, don't be left behind.

I'll be honest, I don't yet see huge benefits to me professionally, but I have talked to others who utilize LinkedIn and are reaping benefits. This might be because I am now getting older. Many younger actuaries are finding more benefits, but they have grown up during the FaceBook age and better understand how to utilize the network to exchange knowledge. As usage expands, there are more benefits to all, even us "older" actuaries.

I encourage everybody to set up a LinkedIn account, join the SOA Technology Section group and to start exploring. The more of us using it, the more benefits to all and we can grow with this technology. Keep an open mind to new technologies and we may all reap currently unknown benefits.

Please feel free to contact me or any Technology Section Council member with any ideas of how we as a section can serve your needs.

I just want to finish with a call for volunteers. Please contact me, Howard Callif or Eddie Smith if you are willing to submit an article for a future issue of CompAct. Also, we are looking for any volunteers who would like to serve on next year's section council. Elections will be held in the late summer. Let me know and I will be glad to answer any questions you might have.



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