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The information age

by BRIAN LOCKHART

If you're old enough, you may remember Walter Cronkite bringing you the newson television.

It was a no-nonsense age of news reporting. Cronkite told you that facts. He didn't editorialize, offer an opinion, or tell you news of what the Kardashians were up to.

In Canada, we had people like Gordon Sinclair, who filed news reports from places around the world based on facts, and very little fluff-type news.

The thing with television news and newsprint of the time, was that there were limits on what could be reported.

On a national news broadcast, you wouldn't get reports about things like old lady Leary's cow kicking over a lantern and starting a fire in some small town, because it wasn't newsworthy on a national level.

Mrs. Leary's cow accident might be reported in a local newspaper, but beyond that, there was no interest.

Sometimes small news items did make a larger paper if they were short on material or just to use as filler, but for the most part, regional news stayed as regional news.

The world wide web has changed all that.

It doesn't matter where an event happened, somewhere it will be online and you can read about it, or see a video of the moment some guy made the mistake of running from police until he crashed his pickup truck into a utility pole or through the front window of a Piggly Wiggly somewhere.

On the daily feed I pick up on the web page that opens my web browser, I am linked into news outlets from around the world. I didn't choose this particular webpage, it came with the browser on my new computer, but it sure makes for some interesting reading.

The stories come from all over the place and every news outlet from the national newspapers to one-person print editions in a small village. If it's online, someone will access it and pass it on.

I get news feeds from all over the work, notably, North America, U.K, and Asia, and some other parts of the world.

The fact that you can access news from all over the place sure enlightens you to what is going on in the world ? both the good and the bad.

There are a lot more murderers out there then you realize. While a local murder makes the local news, when stories come in from all over, you begin to realize how many people are killed each year at the hands of another.

There are a lot of people who die every year from falling off balconies. You would think that falling over a waist high, or higher railing, would be difficult, but it happens all the time. The stories never seem to indicate if alcohol was involved, but I suspect the instance of intoxication while doing something stupid plays a big part in people being found in a parking lot ten stories below their hotel room.

Unknown deceased people have been identified like crazy recently. Some agencies have had bodies, or remnants of bodies on ice, or at least on file for as much as 40 or more years. Over the past few weeks there have been several stories about remains being

identified decades after they were discovered.

That is the result of new DNA technology which allows some police agencies to access family DNA records, and narrow down an unidentified person's next of kin.

If you know someone who has disappeared, and it was out of character for them, and they left in their car, and neither the person or the car has been seen, you should start searching local farm ponds, rivers, lakes, and quarries.

There are a lot of stories, including several in Canada, of cars being discovered after decades in the water that contained the remnants of missing persons. One story in the U.S. explained the mystery of six teenagers who disappeared from a small town over 40 years ago.

If you miss a turn on the road, and no one sees your car sink into the local water filled quarry, no one will know you are there ? that is until some scuba diver or kid with a drone spots your car.

I spend a few minutes almost every morning looking over these news feeds, and I'm sure a lot of you do as well.

It's a strange world, and reading all these crazy stories show you just how crazy it is.