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Lost in (cyber)space

Dinner at our house is not a pretty affair, what with an ever-changing constellation of family, friends, and felines; a cacophony of conversations; and a telltale tapping in the background. Kids on cell phones, PDAs, and who-knows-what other devices are busy accessing instant messages, bidding on eBay, and exchanging e-mail messages with their pals a continent away. It's enough to make anyone feel like a Luddite.

The feeling remains as I sit down at my computer in February to write this editorial, which will be printed in a few weeks, make its way through the mail system, and finally land in your mail box in early March.

So when, at the journal, we sit down to discuss the future of publishing, I hold myself suspect. I hate Blackboard (an online learning system) with a passion. I can't understand why anyone would want a Second Life (a 3-D virtual world); managing my first life is complicated enough. And who needs a wiki, when "old-fashioned" electronic drafts circulated via e-mail will do?

But looking around my dinner table, I am convinced that we're in the midst of a communications evolution—no, make that a revolution.

That's where you come in.

As many of you know, JFP has recently begun posting audiocasts, which are available at www.jfponline.com and accompany every issue. We've also set up a Facebook page and are exploring blogs and Twitter. But asking a middle-aged, decidedly low-tech family physician like me what technology can best meet your needs is like asking the Iceman about the future of refrigeration.

That's why I'm asking you to answer 3 questions:

1. What new communication technologies do you use regularly?
2. What new communication technologies would you like to try, provided the content was compelling?
3. Would you like to see more JFP audiocasts, and would you read a JFP blog, check us out on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter?

I look forward to your comments and suggestions. You can e-mail me at jfp@famned.uc.edu, or post a comment to this article on our Web site at www.jfponline.com. In the meantime, I've got to make a telephone call—on my landline. ■

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P.S. Confused about the meaning of wikis, blogs, Blackboard, or Twitter? You'll find definitions at www.wikipedia.org.