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TEEN SCENE

Staying Connected While Traveling Abroad

By Caiseen Kelley

When my mom came to America for her graduate degree, she lacked the resources and funds to talk to her family often. She often laments about her experiences with the long distance and how hard it was for her to communicate with her loved ones back in her homeland. Luckily for students going abroad today, the story is a lot different.

There is a plethora of apps and websites that help people stay connected with home. Skype is a popular software application that allows you to get free face-to-face time with people anywhere in the world. In addition, Skype has paid options for international calling, which are often a lot cheaper than telephone services. Another alternative is Google Hangout. Google Hangout allows video chat in a group setting. You can invite all members of your family to "hang out" on a Google page where you can all see one another.

A common problem with traveling abroad is feeling disconnected

with your friends or family. Often it is the little moments that make us feel lonely, wishing that we could share our adventures. Now using apps like Snapchat you can document these special times. If you use Apple TV or Chromecast you can even share the shows you are watching with your loved ones, thus creating a "movie date" type setting. When you have a certain someone in your life that has been left behind, the apps Couple or Avocado may be perfect. Couple and Avocado allow you to send sketches, messages, pictures, stickers, and thumbprints to someone else in a password protected arena. For the more forgetful individual, the app Romantimatic is your ticket to being responsible. It allows you to send yourself reminders to text your friends and relations to keep connected.

Thankfully for our generation, this new technology helps us enjoy a more relaxing summer of traveling or studying abroad without losing

contact with family and friends. With these applications, travelers can focus more on the culture while being immersed in exciting foreign experiences without feeling homesick, because "home" is just a click or chat away.



An Orinda 10th grader, Caiseen Kelley is the *Be the Star You Are!*® radio coordinator and *Techie Talk* reporter for *Express Yourself!* as well as a competitive swimmer, coach, and piano player.

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

App: MyScript Calculator by Vision Objects Inc.
For: iPhones and Android phones
Price: Free

Doing a math problem on your smart phone is not a particularly easy task. If it is a complex math problem, with symbols and expressions that aren't found on your keypad, it may be impossible. But what if you could just draw the math problem on your smartphone screen using your fingertip? What if there was an app that could convert your drawings of math numbers, expressions and symbols into digital text and give you the result right on your screen? Well, you can do all of this if you download an amazing app called MyScript Calculator. Although this app is truly easy and simple to use, it is hard to believe it when you see it in action. If you can draw your equation freehand, using your fingertip or a stylus pen, this app can solve it. It should be noted that this app is not just a simple addition, subtraction, and division toy. On the contrary, MyScript recognizes complex math symbols including absolute value, exponents, factorials, pi, logarithms and even trigonometry func-

tions. It actually recognizes written math terms such as "tan" or "sin" or even "log." An added feature of MyScript Calculator is that it allows the user to clear the whole equation at once or rub out those parts of the equation that need to be changed.

This app is a natural for math students, business people, or anybody who wants a quick and easy way to solve a math problem.



Alex Pawlakos, an economics major at UC Berkeley, enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time. He is a volunteer with *Be the Star You Are!*® charity and a reporter on *Express Yourself!*(tm) Teen Radio.

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