

Plugged in

RN USES TECHNOLOGY AS A PLATFORM TO SHOW THE WORLD WHAT NURSES DO.

When he got his first iPod in high school, Rob Fraser started downloading audio books and lectures to satisfy his appetite for knowledge. That hunger intensified when he got to university. He was studying nursing at Ryerson University and found he was searching for nursing and health science lectures to watch online. He was surprised to come up short.

“There was a gap,” recalls the soft-spoken 24-year-old, who was inspired to become a nurse after doing volunteer work in India and the Caribbean. The profession had a scarce presence online, which for Fraser meant future nurses and the public couldn’t discover all the great things about nursing.

That’s when the light bulb went on. He could help fill the technology gap.

As a student, Fraser was always taking part in nursing conferences and did a placement at RNAO.

“I did have a bit of access, and knew some nursing leaders,” he says. His hope was to have a dialogue on camera with those leaders, then share their knowledge and passion by making the video available online.

His involvement in RNAO opened his eyes to things like best practice guidelines, violence in the workplace and other nursing issues. He says this helped him better

understand his school work.

“I’d understand at a level that was a bit deeper than some of my classmates,” he says. “It wasn’t because I was smarter or studied harder; it was because I was so involved.” Fraser wanted his colleagues to have the same access to information, and to nurses he thought were inspiring.

Doris Grinspun, RNAO’s executive director, was his first

Since he launched the website in 2008, it has drawn more than 15,000 viewers from around the world. Thousands have downloaded his podcasts on topics ranging from research ethics and men in nursing to caring with cultural competency. *Nursing Ideas* also links to Fraser’s blog and Twitter page, where he shares tips on how to use the latest tech gadgets.

Fraser believes it’s important

turned to his followers on Twitter. He posted the question and nearly 25 nurses responded, each describing a different testing method in their respective workplaces. Fraser concluded there wasn’t a standardized approach, which was consistent with the research.

Although his conclusion was not scientific, Fraser found it helpful to connect with fellow

RNs to explore processes in their organizations: “It was the first time it clicked that (social media) is a real connection with people who are working at different hospitals and have knowledge to share.”

Fraser hopes *Nursing Ideas* and websites like it will boost nursing’s presence on the internet, which he says is critical if we want to increase public awareness of the profession.

His next project will take him out of cyberspace and into book publishing in an attempt to help equip RNs who are reluctant to embrace online communities. He’s writing a book that will explain the basics of social media, including the myriad of websites, how to set up a profile, and tips and advice about online etiquette. **RN**

STACEY HALE IS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT AT RNAO



Three things you don’t know about RN Rob Fraser

1. Fraser is completing a master’s degree in nursing administration at the University of Toronto.
2. He was director of mountain biking for a children’s summer camp in Huntsville, Ontario.
3. He plays acoustic guitar.

interview. He used his laptop propped up by a stack of books to shoot it. After he uploaded the video online, he started thinking about his next profile. Today, those videos feature nurse leaders and health researchers discussing their work. Street nurse Cathy Crowe and journalist Suzanne Gordon are just a few of the interviews on his website called *Nursing Ideas* (www.nursingideas.ca).

for nurses to get involved in technology and social media. He knows from experience that social media works. While still a student, Fraser was updating a hospital policy on nasogastric tube placement and found researchers were undecided on the best way to check if a medication/feeding tube was in a patient’s stomach, where it belonged, rather than in the lungs. To see if the research was in sync with reality, Fraser