The Impact of Skype on the Spiritual Direction Relationship

by

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally spiritual direction has been offered face-to-face in an 'in person' setting. Advances in technology have broadened our connection with the world beyond our local communities thus extending the potential reach of spiritual direction practice and the opportunity to offer it in new ways.[1]

This research paper explores the impact of using skype[2] on the spiritual direction relationship only, not on the supervision relationship between Supervisors and Spiritual Directors.✓ This is a summary of the findings, identifying what is happening in the NZ context concerning the use of skype in spiritual direction and how it shapes the direction relationship, practice and process. It draws conclusions and offers recommendations applicable to practice including:

- expanding your practice, for greater effectiveness, to include offering spiritual direction through using skype
- learning how spiritual direction offered through skype differs from offering face-to-face direction
- exploring initial questions toward discerning if using skype is a right fit for your practice
- how to get started using skype and considering what's needed to practice well

My sincere thanks to the Spiritual Directors and Directees who contributed their time and wisdom to this study.

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1 Squires, Christianne, "Using Technology Tools in Spiritual Direction: Is it for you?" Spiritual Direction International webinar, May 2015

2 Skype is a free telecommunications application software product that specialises in providing video chat and voice calls from computers, tablets and mobile devices via the internet to other devices or telephones/smartphones. Downloadable from www.skype.com skype sets up quickly and easily

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This research has been gathered from questionnaires sent to two different groups of people during April and May 2015, via SurveyMonkey:

- Spiritual Directors (through the ACSDANZ[3] list and NZ Directors not included in that list)
- Spiritual Directees (through contact with the ACSDANZ list and SGM [4]trainees)

The questionnaires, for each group, included demographic, technical and experiential information regarding participants' experience of using skype in a spiritual direction relationship – past or present.

Of the 146 Spiritual Directors on the ACSDANZ list (November 2014) 62 responded while 10 other Directors not on the list were contacted and all responded. From these 72 Directors surveyed 23 have used skype in their practice. 24 Directees responded and 9 of these have used skype in spiritual direction.

See Appendix A for a summary of survey responses from Directors and Directees.

3.0 KEY FINDINGS

- Using skype requires commitment, competency and the development of multiple skills (technologically and relationally) which are different to face-to-face spiritual direction
- Understanding the technological requirements (hardware and software) in using skype is fundamental to it working well
- Geographical location may determine the accessibility and reliability of the internet connection
- Technical difficulties may make it difficult to focus on what is being said/seen and can be a distraction to the process but these may be overcome
- Directees prefer meeting face-to-face, however, skype provides spiritual direction with the Director of choice, continuity of the relationship in changing circumstances, overcomes geographical barriers and saves travel cost and time

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[3] Association of Christian Spiritual Directors of Aotearoa New Zealand

[4] Spiritual Growth Ministries (New Zealand)

- Skype works well when the relationship has initially started face-to-face; with rapport and connectedness having already been established
- Given the limited use of skype in the respondents, raising awareness and the promotion of using skype in spiritual direction could be achieved through discussion amongst users and sharing of information and resources. The development of models using skype and training in them could be jointly addressed by SGM and ACSDANZ and include a user guide/Frequently Asked Questions sheet and webinar

4.0 THE EXPERIENCE OF USING SKYPE – DIRECTORS

A female Director aged 45-65 years with 7 years spiritual direction experience has skyped (monthly) with 3 female Directees aged 25-34 years.

Technically the internet connection is easily accessible and reliable although the Director has experienced both voice and video 'breaking up' during most sessions to a mild-moderate degree. This is worse with overseas connections. In reference to how these technical difficulties interfere with the session she says,

> "It depends on me to keep focussed, to be the non-anxious presence. It can be hard for the Directee to keep their focus or continue sharing at a deep level. The discomfiture and unsettling that happens can throw them off. I listen intently and reflect back what I last heard. I give options for continuing or not. It's best to not panic or get frustrated and remain open to the possibility that the conversation hasn't been a dud."

Having met all her Directees in person this Director experiences the same level of rapport and connectedness with them using skype and managed the transition from face-to-face to skype easily. For this Director using skype hasn't altered the structure of a session compared to face-to-face.

> "Yes, there is a continued sense of God's presence in the session, although it may be harder for the Directees in their own space (work or home) and its distractions."

> "Skype requires deeper listening, watching, and awareness. Really working to catch the nuances that might be missed if the connection is playing up. Being myself is important. Not thinking about being 'on camera'. Seeing yourself can be distracting – that doesn't' happen face-to-face!"

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A male Director aged 75+ with 32 years of spiritual direction experience has skyped (monthly) with 2 Directees, having first established these relationships face-to-face. The internet connection is easily accessible and reliable for him and there have been no technical problems experienced to date. The transition to using skype with these Directees was somewhat awkward but necessary given their geographical locations.

This very experienced Director believes that using skype alters the structure of the session compared to face-to-face.

> "Conversation needs to be steadier, less quips and throw away lines/comments. I feel less able to frame intuitive questions as they don't seem to come so readily. I put this down to only seeing the Directee's face not whole body and so I'm missing those signals and the atmosphere of the room as in face-to-face."

> "I need to be more discerning and prayerfully prepared for the session. I review the previous session notes and think where he/she might have moved to more than in face-to-face."

> "The Directee needs to be honest, open and transparent to overcome the issues faced in making skype work more fruitfully."

Another female Director, aged 65-74 years old with 9 years of spiritual direction experience, acknowledges that using skype requires her to be more focused and flexible because it's easier to be distracted. She has used skype to direct 3 females aged 45-64 years and initially established rapport with them via email or face-to-face. In managing the transition from face-to-face to skype her experience was relational rather than technical.

> "There is more give and take in the way the relationships work. Where the relationship is close, then whatever medium you use the transition is with the relationship, not the medium."

> "While it takes more work to create warmth and reliance on prayer to create the atmosphere in skype there is a contentment with knowing that though it's not ideal, it is enough."

Another experienced female Director aged 75+ has used skype successfully with 3 Directees and believes it is a very effective way of working together. She has

experienced only minor technical difficulties using skype and initially established rapport and connection with her Directees face-to-face.

> *"With such a positive experience I am keen to discover the possibilities in commencing a skype relationship without prior relationship."*

One female Director aged 55-64 years old with 19 years spiritual direction experience skypes with 3 Directees. She is asked for and offers more resources and also makes notes when skyping which she doesn't do in face-to-face sessions.

One Director mentioned managing the transition from face-to-face to skype by negotiating the change through discussion with the Directee, setting a date and evaluating the skype experience after 3 sessions.

From the Director responses it is not definitive if using skype affects the level of rapport/connectedness with a Directee and the sense of presence/immediacy. There was a wide range of responses concerning these aspects on the impact of skype on the spiritual direction relationship. There were polarised responses to the questions of whether and how skype altered the structure of a session compared to face-to-face and if using skype requires anything different from either Director or Directee. There was agreement, however, on the need to create a contemplative online space through managing the technology, prayerful preparation, the physical setting, intentionality, stillness and silence.

5.0 THE EXPERIENCE OF USING SKYPE – DIRECTEES

One female Directee aged 65-74 years old with 40 years of spiritual direction experience currently skypes with her female Director (aged 55-64 years) who lives in another location. This relationship began face to face then moved to skype through necessity. The Directee prefers face to face direction but appreciates having a suitable Director available and not having to travel to see her.

Technically the internet connection is easily accessible and reliable and the Directee hasn't experienced any problems with voice or visual quality.

> *"It works better than I thought it would."*

The Directee uses skype while sitting at her desk in her office and feels that being in a 'sacred space 'would make it easier to sense God's presence. She feels a

lessened sense of immediacy and some separation from her Director although her Director is good at keeping the rapport and connectedness between them and inviting moments of silence and awareness.

"There's just something different about talking to a screen."

Another female Directee the same age and with the same length of spiritual direction experience skypes monthly with her current female Director (55-64 years). She has also experienced good technological connectivity. She had difficulty with the visual quality once and was able to overcome this by using voice only - having decided to not let this interfere with the session. Her Director corrected the technology malfunction prior to the next session and they both agreed that technology can be managed and improved.

With no Spiritual Director available in her location this Directee cited the advantage of saving time and money in long distant travel that would be required to meet with a Director. Disadvantages include a sense of missing the Director's physical environment, a welcome at the door, the room atmosphere and arriving and departing as part of the session. There was also a loss of using tools such as interactive drawing during a session.

"I know my Director and use my sense of her to visualise being in her presence, beyond what Skype offers. I sense God's presence through being heard, the wisdom reflected to me and the experience of a shift within me."

"I find I write things down more than in a face-to-face. Holding a pen seems to be part of my connection with my Director. I then have the words with me."

A female Directee 45-54 years old with 5 years of spiritual direction experience skyped her current female Director (64-74 years) monthly having met and developed the relationship initially face-to-face before moving overseas.

In her new location the internet connection was problematic – neither easily accessible nor reliable and this was increasingly frustrating, adding nothing to the relationship. She experienced severe problems in both voice and video most sessions and multiple times in a session. Technical difficulties included frame freezing, pixilation or the video was not possible. Multiple drop outs caused interference in the conversation and sometimes sessions were abandoned. These

problems led to feeling constrained by time and aware that the session could end abruptly which was disconcerting. Disruptions interfered with the flow of thoughts, questions and conversation and distracted from the sense of presence and connection with the other person. These problems were overcome by patiently trying again at a different time of day.

Disadvantages to using skype included an inability to easily make eye contact, and the loss/limitations of body language. Speaking at the same time, time delays and awkwardness to the conversation all contributed to difficulty in connecting well with each other even when seen and heard. The screen was a barrier to being vulnerable, honest and transparent and there was opportunity to present well to the other person but come to the session less well prepared given the lack of setting/atmosphere and potential for a lack of depth in the interactions.

> *"A sense of God's presence seems less tangible when we're separated by space and screen. It's difficult to discern this from the other person's perspective too, leaving you wondering what's going in the space. Stillness and silence can also be challenging. It takes intentionality and thoughtful creation of a sacred space."*

> *"If the video isn't available you're left wondering if the other person is still there and this doesn't foster a relaxed atmosphere and your time/effort/conversation is directed to the technology rather than being in the "moment"."*

A female Directee 55-64 years old with 20 years of spiritual direction experience skyped with her current female Director (64-74 years) monthly having met initially face-to-face (and preferring this) before moving to skype through necessity and managing this transition without problem. This Directee found the level of rapport and connectedness as well as the sense of immediacy and presence unaffected using skype. The advantages included being able to meet with a Director in another country and when physically unable to leave home. Missing cues from body language was a disadvantage but overall the experience was satisfactory. Technically there were few challenges for this Directee and if any arose they rescheduled the session if reconnecting didn't help or if the problem didn't right itself. The Directee admitted that sometimes Skype didn't work well but problems could be overcome. This Directee concurs with others that while skype does not significantly alter the structure of the session it requires personal preparation, intentionality, more focused attention and patient perseverance with the technology.

6.0 SUMMARY

This research indicates that technical difficulties encountered in using skype have an effect on the conversation and connectedness both technologically and relationally. These vary in severity, frequency and geographical location but the impact of these may be mitigated. Using skype in a spiritual direction relationship requires a skilled and experienced Director who is aware of the dynamics that fashion accompaniment online. For both Directors and Directees certain aspects of using skype are challenging if not disorienting and only honest and serious attention to its differences and its deficits will allow them to maximise its strengths. The challenges involved in using skype may be overcome through regular contact combined with open communication.

7.0 FACE-TO-FACE AND SKYPE DIRECTION

The use of skype in spiritual direction is more complex than a wholesale, indiscriminate application in place of face to face spiritual direction. This is neither possible nor desirable. Skype isn't the same as face-to-face spiritual direction experience, however, it is a valuable and valid option in its own right, providing a rich relational experience for those who long to be heard and those who are called to listen. Skype can connect Director and Directee with each other and with the Divine in real time although they are physically separated – making possible a relationship that otherwise may not exist.

This research considered the use of skype in spiritual direction with the more commonly practiced face-to-face mode of direction. The table below lists some key differences.

Face-to-Face (in person) Direction	Using Skype (in live time) Direction
Classical practice.	Contemporary practice which complements yet diverges from classical practice. Skype is a fundamentally different mode of communication and relationship where an artificial barrier separates Director and Directee giving the illusion of real contact in real time.

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Hosted companionship and guided accompaniment Face-to-face meetings build relationships through physical presence in a way skype cannot.	Provides continuity of relationship if circumstances change. Requires extra effort in companioning and authentic communication e.g. deeper listening, pay attention to vocal changes, tone, speed, words used, pausing and silence.
A specifically created sacred space (physical setting).	May be a multipurpose space e.g. office, cafe or a created, space. Personal advantage of working from home. Need to foster creative new ideas about how to design/offer this digital space as a sanctuary that inspires fruitful introspection, intentionality and stillness for Director and Directee.
Body language and eye contact are important aids in understanding and discernment, some non-verbal dimensions of communication can only be noted visually.	Orientation to screens is different to face-to-face[5]. Unable to make synchronised eye contact or take cues from nonverbal communication. Questioning may need to be more explicit due to lack of body language.
Suggestions • position their face up close to the top of the screen where the webcam is located and look between their face and the webcam to accommodate as much face-to-face contact as possible • use full screen mode • avoid excessive physical movements which may blur or make facial expressions invisible e.g. shaking your head, excessive nodding or large hand gestures. • leaning forward towards the screen conveys an eagerness and willingness to listen	

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5 In his book Shane Hipps explores how using technology shapes our faith and that the medium of the screen itself is part of the message (the content of the spiritual direction session) and these both reflect and reinforce one another. He comments on the influence of images when using technology and brain balance that allows entry into spiritual practices such as contemplation, centring prayer and silence. "Flickering Pixels – how technology shapes your faith" Zondervan, 2009 MI

Listening to God, listening to the Directee through the art of conversation, noticing the absence/presence of tears, strong or repeated words, raised/quietened voice. Verbal communication supported by nuances, gestures, facial expressions, stillness, attention, energy levels and breathing.	Become as comfortable and familiar with skype as possible beforehand, making any adjustments needed for the best connection possible. Equip your Directee with instruction, and informational resources in order to be confident and successful online. Be aware of what is helping or hindering listening is vital. Identify the barriers of the technology itself and any for you and/or your Directee. The primary goal is to facilitate a listening environment conducive to the soul. Distractions/interruptions/influences from the environment and/or technology drain energy, blur focus and disrupt momentum.
Spontaneity of Director/Directee	May be compromised by latency issues (voice/video delays) and a sense of awkwardness or speaking over each other.
Immediacy of the conversation	Dependence on the Spirit for discernment and guidance may be increased as a sense of immediacy and accessibility can lure us away from being conscious of the present moment. The sense of listening becomes more finely tuned.
A sense of presence	A virtual "contemplative space" requires a greater personal sharing on each participant's part in order to establish the same level of intimacy achieved in face –to-face sessions. This requires the setting of boundaries.
Transference/countertransference/projection	A built in lack of physical presence may intensify the experience of transference issues and projection, which then needs to be discussed and worked through carefully and thoughtfully[6].

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[6] Estella, Jeanne, Heuer, Andre, Spiritual Direction in Cyberspace, (Presence: The Journal of Spiritual Directors International, Vol.3 No.2 May 1997) P.43

Contemplation, prayer, discernment and reflection	Need to establish an effective process for virtual communication e.g. being explicit about using silence, audible cues for closing silence and moving on, timing to ponder or sit in stillness. "Share your screen" facility enables creatively engaging with resources.
Limited by geography (rural/remote), illness or impediment	Overcomes physical barriers, making spiritual direction accessible anytime, anywhere with a strong and clear internet connection, overcomes scheduling constraints but there are challenges across time zones. Saves time and cost of travelling to meet fact-to-face.
Limited by availability of a suitable Director (language, faith, relational rapport)	Addresses a lack of available/compatible Director.
Technology and IT skill not required	Requires readily available knowledge and skill and is a cultivated practice.

8.0 CHOOSING TO USE SKYPE

Reasons for reluctance to use skype include a diminished sense of intimacy, lack of information (especially from body language), lack of understanding and premature judgement, resistance to change, bias/attachment to the familiar.

When considering using skype the following questions could be explored:

- What is your preferred way for doing spiritual direction and why?
- What is your theology of technology concerning spiritual direction? (Is skype just another tool to get the job done and used for other purposes can it be 'holy'?)
- What is God's invitation to you concerning the use of skype in your practice?
- How do you intentionally choose /choose not to use skype?[7]
- What, if any, resistance do you have to using skype? How could this be overcome?

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[7] Christianne Squires offers practical help in discerning if using skype is right for your spiritual direction practice in "Using Technology Tools in Spiritual Direction: Is it for you?" Spiritual Direction International webinar, May 2015

9.0 BEST PRACTICES

In her webinar "Using technology tools in spiritual direction: Is it for you?" Christianne Squires[8] addresses the different modes available for offering spiritual direction including face to face, by telephone, via email [9]and through video calling. She reviews each mode addressing the benefits and limitations of each one. She cites best practices and offers the following when using skype:

- Be comfortable and confident with skype
- Be clear on necessary Wi-Fi and bandwidth to handle a video call for you and your Directee
- Create a "Getting Started" sheet for your Directees to help them with skype and in preparing their contemplative space (See Appendix B)
- Close all browser windows or programmes so that nothing else on the screen via sight or sound appears/interrupts/distracts from the session

10.0   COMMON OBSTACLES AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM:

- Poor sound quality → use ear plugs or a headset and an external microphone
- Poor video quality → try voice only or restart computer and modem
- Connection dropping out → try restarting your computer, restarting your modem, disconnect other users from the network, try when there is less network traffic (at a different time of day or try a different location)
- For other technical problems → refer to the skype Help function

11.0   A MODEL OF SKYPE

For those who are not familiar or comfortable with using skype the model below is a suggestion for getting started.

When using skype with a Directee it is as important to test out the technical connection as it is to consider the relational/spiritual connection. It is preferable to have an introductory meeting over skype to consider the quality of the experience

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[8] Squires, Christianne, "Using Technology Tools in Spiritual Direction: Is it for you?" Spiritual Direction International webinar, May 2015

[9] For further research findings and information regarding offering spiritual direction via email see Margaret Tooley's "Spiritual Direction by Email for Missionaries in Isolated Places: An initial exploration" (2005) http://www.sgm.org.nz

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for each person in using the technology. For some people meeting face-to-face initially will be preferable and possible before moving to using skype.

Links, photographs, contacts, articles and other resources can be forwarded to the Directee during or after the session. Screen sharing on skype enables you to share what you're seeing on your screen with your Directee. Payment for skype may also be done online at the end of the session.

Creating a "sacred space" setting

- Position the computer (desktop or laptop) on a chair/table facing you (at an appropriate height) where you'd normally sit with a Directee
- Ensure adequate lighting/ventilation/heating/privacy to be comfortable
- Light a candle before the session starts
- Use appropriate images/icons/symbols
- Minimise outside noise/distraction/interruptions
- Turn off all devices and telephones other than the computer you will be using
- Check IT settings/screen visibility/volume with the help of the Tools/Options tabs in the Skype program
- Ensure the power supply is connected

Preparing yourself as the Director

- Prayerfully prepare yourself ahead of time in the skype location, cultivating stillness in yourself in order to be able to offer complete presence and attention to your Directee – endeavour to connect spiritually/contemplatively before technologically
- Having read your notes on the previous session have these available in case you need to refer to them
- Ensure your resources including Bible, paper and pen are readily available/within easy reach
- Arrive in the session and be fully present – here and now
- Notice how you're coming to the session, what you're bringing into the session and set it down as you visualise your Directee in their setting

Preparing yourself as the Directee

- Keep the appointment by guarding this time together
- Come into a quiet room that is set apart for the session (preferably)
- Minimise/manage any distractions/interruptions inside or outside the space if possible
- Silence and put away any phones
- Set up your computer and close any browser windows, email programs, or other applications on your computer that could create a distraction for you during our time together.
- Light a candle to acknowledge the presence of the Spirit
- Initiate video call on skype
- Face your Director once they are visible
- Begin when you are ready
- There may be an agreed explicit silence at the start of the session to recognise the distinction of what happened before coming into the session and setting this aside to enter fully into the shared time together
- There may be an explicit invitation to stillness/silence to take something you're sharing to God in prayer, to sit with something more deeply, to sit with an image and see what arises, to offer acknowledgement and gratitude or notice any final observations or to hold out reverently to God what has been shared before closing the session[10]

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[10] Squires, Christianne, "The Case for Spiritual Direction in the Technology Age" Spiritual Direction International webinar, April 2014

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12.0   CONCLUSION

While the internet has brought new challenges to our lives there are many benefits as well including greater awareness of and connection to spiritual direction. Although using skype influences the practice of spiritual direction its primary purpose, as stated by Merton below, remains the same and can be achieved through informed and appropriate use of technology.[11]

> *"The whole purpose of spiritual direction is to penetrate beneath the surface of a person's life, to get behind the façade of conventional gestures and attitudes which one presents to the world, and to bring out one's inner spiritual freedom, ones' inmost truth."* Thomas Merton

The advancement of technology and changing spiritual direction models mean there are a new range of skills that are needed today and in the future. Online spiritual direction, using skype, is available, accessible and appropriate in particular settings and relationships. The benefits of using skype can compensate for its limitations and disadvantages - which may be accepted and overcome creatively. For some using skype will be a new and exciting prospect, for others it may be a challenging one. When considering the possibility of using skype in spiritual direction, either as a Director or Directee, it is important to remember that the person who feels the need keenly for spiritual direction will discover ways to make it work.

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14.0   APPENDIX A   SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES[12]

Director Responses

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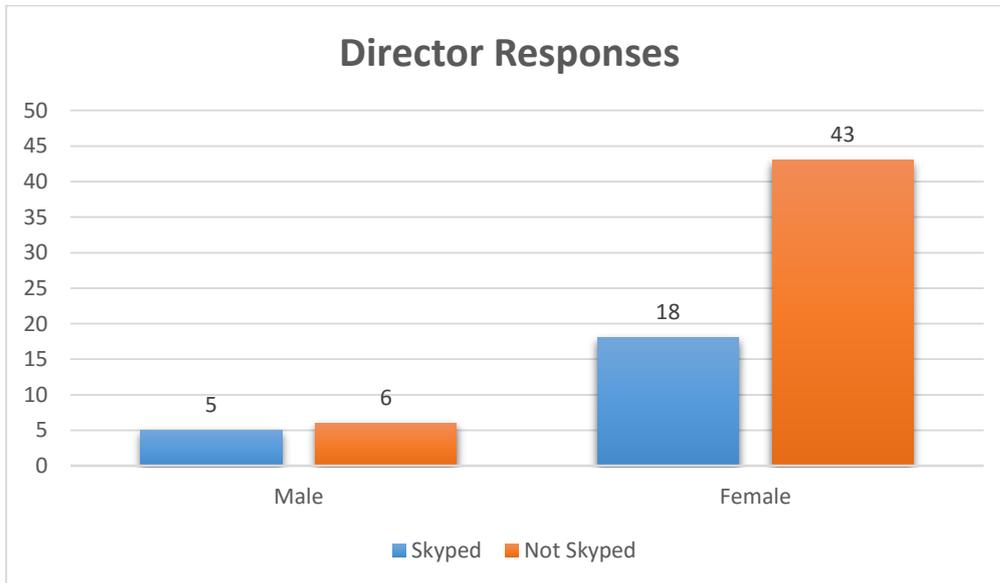
[12] For more complete details: jenny@caston.co.nz

|	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q11	Q16	Q23	Q23	Q26	Q28	Q24
	Sex	Age	Yrs SD	Internet Acces-sible	Internet Reliable	Sound Quality	Visual Quality	Summary	Pure Skype	Skype & F2F	Pref Skype	Necessity /Choice /Other	Initial rapport established
1	F	55-64	10	Y	Y	Interrup-tions 50%	Freezes 30%	Wonderful tool when it works	1	0	No	Necessity	Skype
2	F	45-54	15										
3	F	55-64	10	Y	Y	Issues when connected to obscure location		Need greatest where BB poor	0	4	No	Choice	Email/Other
4	F	65-74	35	Y	Y				0	1	No	Necessity	F2F
5	F	55-64	10	Y	Y	Strange noises	Lighting challenges	Reschedule if poor connection	0	2	No	Necessity	F2F
6	F	55-64	7	Y	Y	Variable connection quality	Low spec hardware a challenge	Effective tool for SD	30	2	No	Necessity	Email
7	F	65-74	21	Y	Y			Can't expect uninterrupted session	20	0	No	Necessity	F2F
8	M	55-64	20	Y	Y	Occasional drop out	No problems	Good It's not a deterrent	0	40	No	Necessity	F2F
9	F	65-74	18	y	Y	Nothing significant so far			2	1	No	Choice	F2F
10	F	65-74	18	Y	Y	Need to listen well	Mostly OK	Use when necessary	0	1	No	Necessity	F2F
11	M	45-54	4	Y	Y	Sound distorted	Stop visual to improve sounds	Prefer F2F	2	0	No	Other	Email

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12	M	55-64	10	Y	Y	Nil	Image breaks up	To be expected	0	2	No	Choice	F2F
13	M	65-74	21	Y	Y	More video drop outs	Intermittent drop outs	More difficult/less efficient overseas SD	1		No	Necessity	F2F
14	F	65-74	12	Y	Y	Voice distorted	Rarely use visual	Persist, overcome tech problems			No		F2F/Skype
15	F	55-64	10	Y		Nil	Nil		1	0	No	Necessity	F2F/Other
16	F	55-64	12	Y	Y	Variable connection quality	Usually not available						
17	F	55-64	12	Y	Y	Variable connection quality	Rarely use visual outside NZ	Directee persist if benefits outweigh disadvantages	1	2	No	Necessity	Email
18	F	65-74	19	Y	Y	Nil	Image intermittent	SD effective without image	10	0	No	Necessity	Email
19	F	65-74	9	Y	Y	Quality depends on connection	Quality depends on connection	Works well in established relationship	0	5	No	Necessity	Email/F2F
20	F	75+	20	Y	Y	Echo/fading of sound	Blurring/fading of picture	Effective tool for SD	0	3	No	Other	F2F
21	M	75+	32	Y	Y	Nil	Nil	Satisfactory given loss of body language	90	60	Yes	Necessity	F2F
22	F	45-54	7	Y	Y	Sound distortion at times	Image breaks up/freezing	Don't panic or get frustrated	0	3	No	Necessity	F2F
23	F	55-64	12										

Q17	Q18
Advantages of Skype	**Disadvantages of Skype**
Can have Director of your choice	Tech glitch interrupts sensitive sharing
Allows wider choice of available Directors	Noise can be distracting in silence
Allows continuity of Director	Intensity can feel uncomfortable
Spans geographical locations	Time zone challenges
Allows change in locations	No sense of atmosphere
No travel required	Unable to use all available resources
Cost and time savings as no travel	Difficult to develop working alliance if not initially established face to face
Suits those who have to travel	Just different "talking to a screen"
Efficient	Can feel less sacred
Convenient	Less fullness of presence
Still able to meet when unable to leave home	Diminishes chance of vulnerability
Seeing/hearing the Directee in their space	Body language queues missed
Deeper reliance on the Holy Spirit	Eye contact not the same
Requires deeper listening	Only view upper body
Greater awareness of God's presence	No chance to hug/physical touch
	Staccato speech/unnatural conversation

Directee Responses

Chart showing Skyped and Not Skyped responses by gender:
- Male: Skyped 1, Not Skyped 2
- Female: Skyped 8, Not Skyped 13

Legend: ■ Skyped ■ Not Skyped
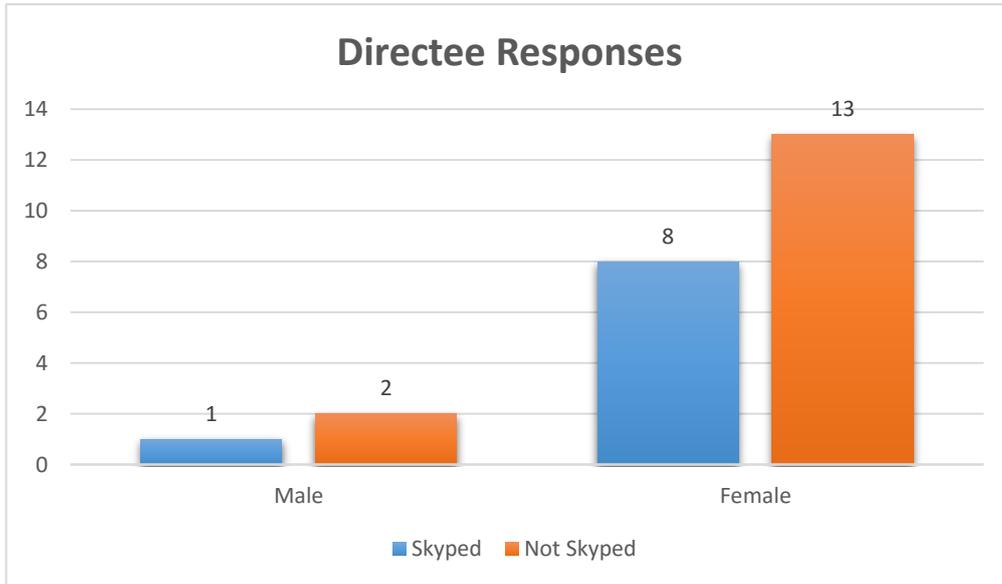
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q11	Q16	Q24	Q23	Q23	Q26	Q28
	Sex	Age	Yrs SD	Internet Acces-sible	Internet Reliable	Sound Quality	Visual Quality	Summary	Initial rapport established	Pure Skype	Skype & F2F	Pref Skype	Necessity /Choice /Other
1	F	65-74	40	Y	Y	N	N	Better than first thought	F2F	8	2	No	Necessity
2	M	55-64	17										
3	F	65-74	40	Y	Y	N	Revert 2 voice	Tech can be managed & improved	F2F				
4	F	25-34	10	Y	Y			Could be worse/glad to have this option	F2F	0	2	No	Necessity
5	F	55-64	10	Y	Y	N	Occasional freeze	the +ves > -ves	F2F	0	1		Other
6	F	65-74	8	Y	N	Crackle & echo	N	Find a solution to overcome obstacles	F2F	0	8	No	Choice
7	F	55-64	17	Y	Y	N	N		F2F	0	3	No	Other
8	F	55-64	20	Y	Y	occasional poor/ disconnects	Very few	Can be intermittent	F2F	0	1	No	Necessity
9	F	45-54	5	N	N	Often	Freeze pixilation dropout	Disruptions interfere with interpersonal connection	F2F	25	75	No	Necessity

15.0   APPENDIX B   SPIRITUAL DIRECTION VIA SKYPE - USER GUIDE[13]

STEP ONE
Getting Started on Skype

If you do not have an existing Skype account, here are the steps to get started.

To begin, you will need:

1. A webcam connected to or installed on your computer
2. A microphone connected to or installed on your computer
3. A broadband internet connection
4. Earbuds or a headset (optional)

To set up your Skype account, do the following:

1. Go to www.skype.com
2. Click "Download Skype"
3. Select the correct version for your operating system (Mac, Windows, etc.).
4. Allow the program to download.
5. Double-click on the download to install it.
6. Follow the installation instructions.
7. Once the program has been downloaded, open the Skype program in your applications folder.
8. Select a username and password for your account to start a new account.
9. Add any related profile details to your account, like your name and a photo.

To check your video and microphone settings, do the following:

1. Click on "Skype" on the menu bar at the top of your screen.
2. Click on "Preferences."
3. Click on the "Audio/Video" option.
4. Test the microphone and video settings to confirm they are working. (If you are using an external webcam or microphone, you may need to select those hardware options on the drop-down menus for each.)

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[13] Adapted from Christianne Squires   http://www.stillforming.com/

STEP TWO
Connecting on Skype

Once you have downloaded the Skype software and created an account for yourself, you'll need to send a contact request so you are set up to connect for your sessions.

- Open the Skype application on your computer.
- Log on to your account.
- Click on "Contacts" on the menu bar at the top of the screen.
- Click on "Add Contact."
- Enter the name of the person you're connecting with in the search bar under the "Add Contact" section.
- Click on the green "Add Contact" button to the right of the name to send a contact request.
- Once your contact request is received it can be accepted.
- Ensure all users have updated their version of Skype, an older version may be seen but not heard on the call. Go to the Skype menu --> Help → Check for Updates.

STEP THREE
Preparing for Our Time Together

To prepare your physical space for our time together, I recommend the following
best practices:

- Choose a setting that is both comfortable and private, where you will not be disturbed or hindered from sharing freely.
- Take care to select a location that also has a strong, clear internet connection.
- Close any browser windows, email programs, or other applications on your computer that could create a distraction for you during our time together.
- Put your phone in "do not disturb" mode.
- Perhaps light a candle on the table next to you.
- Prepare your mind, heart, and body to enter sacred space.

STEP FOUR
Initiating Our Call Time

It is best practice to arrive on Skype about 5 minutes prior to the scheduled call time, and the initiation of the beginning of the call is in your (the Directee's) hands. If you see that your Director is online prior to your call time that means they are ready and available for you to initiate the call whenever you are ready.

To initiate your call:

1. Open the Skype application on your computer.
2. Log on to your account.
3. Click on the "Contacts" option in the left sidebar.
4. Scroll to find your Director's name in your contacts database.
5. You should see a solid green cloud next to their name, indicating the person is online. (If the cloud is not solid green that means you arrived on Skype before them. Once they log in, their status cloud will automatically update and you can initiate the call.)
6. Select "Video Call" to the left of the name. This will initiate the video call, and your incoming call can be accepted to begin the session.
7. To share your screen click the +button in the call bar and select Share screens. In the dialogue box that appears, click Start to share your entire screen.

*** If you have any technical difficulty connecting to Skype on the day of your session, contact your Director via email.

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