

## What's Your 10-20?



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"...enables you to instantly talk to a person or group you have programmed into your unit. There is no dial tone, no ring, and no playing phone tag."

I remember a Christmas many years ago when my brother and I received two units that enabled us to go to different parts of the house and talk to each other. This became an enjoyable way to play outdoor war games until the batteries went dead. Such was my intro to 'walkie-talkies'.

This type of communication has come a long way. Now that Aliant has come out with their '10-4' cellular service to compete with Telus' 'Push-to-Talk', some of my clients have asked whether they should be considering this type of service for their company. Funny how competition enhances curiosity.

As with all general questions, the answer is 'yes' and 'no'.

The service is a cellular phone with a push button that enables you to instantly talk to a person or group you have programmed into your unit. There is no dial tone, no ring, and no playing phone tag. Unlike the limited range our toys had, these connect with the person you are calling whether they are across town or across North America. There is a low monthly fee for the service and you have unlimited minutes. If your usage is low, you can pay a dollar a day with Telus or \$0.35 per minute with Aliant.

I have one caveat, however: calls to the U.S. do not incur roaming charges BUT you are charged for roaming LD, which can get expensive. You would need a plan that covers these charges if you travel to the U.S.

There are many applications for this service, such as workers in a large plant who need to converse, hospital workers and just about anywhere else you see walkie-talkies in use.

There is a tendency to think that you could get a lot of use from having one of these units, but the person at the other end has to have one too, and they have to be a part of the group. If you don't communicate with a person or group of persons frequently, it is not a practical tool.

On that note, see you on the flip side and over and out. Good buddy. Whatever.

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