

# Teenage filmmaker shoots cross-country documentary

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Between getting a knife pulled on him in Whitehorse and using video footage to convict a group of hoodlums for beating up a rickshaw driver in Halifax, Steve Shilson had "quite an experience" filming a cross-country documentary.

The 19-year-old graduate from Essex District High School spent a month this past summer shooting footage for One Web Day, a documentary about Canadians and the Internet for Cira.ca.

The website, which manages all ".ca" domains on the net, hired Fuse Marketing to recruit a filmmaker for the project.

"We needed some people who were able to quickly produce quality video," said Fuse's vice-president of marketing Adrian Capobianco. "Personality was also a big part of it. Not every person would be willing to travel across the country and be able to shoot and edit while on the road."

For Shilson, who hopes to some day make a living developing films, the project

was an opportunity to cut his teeth in the business.

Capobianco viewed some of Shilson's work that included short films and music videos. He liked what he saw and offered Shilson a job as cameraman and editor of the project.

Shilson was joined by Windsor's Gavin Booth, the documentary's host, in travelling to 12 Canadian cities from Aug. 7 to Sept. 7.

The focus of the film was how the Internet affects businesses and people's personal lives, Shilson said.

The pair interviewed anyone from corporate executives to people on the street.

"It brings the world closer," Shilson said of the film's subject. "In Whitehorse, it's so secluded and the Internet kind of brings the world to their fingertips."

While in Edmonton, Alta., the team visited a military base. They interviewed soldiers who had recently returned home from Afghanistan and had the Web to thank for allowing them to stay in close contact with their families,

Shilson said.

"Of course, some negatives were brought up too," Shilson said. "About how accessible things are to young children and credit card fraud...it's not 100 percent secure."

Shilson shot about 30 hours of film on a DVX Panasonic video camera. When he wasn't shooting footage, he was using a laptop computer to edit it on the plane.

"We were sleeping in shifts," Shilson said of his busy schedule. "We didn't get much sleep."

During the first few weeks of the trip while staying in Whitehorse, Yukon, a hotel manager warned Shilson about a number of hostile locals. One night shortly after, an inebriated man confronted Shilson, threatening him with a knife. Shilson was able to get away and, despite the encounter, said he still holds the city in high regard.

"I guess we just went down the wrong street," he said.

On the other side of the country in Halifax, N.S., while filming a segment, Shilson turned his camera on some "punk kids" beating up a rickshaw driver.



STEVE SHILSON

Local police later used the tape as evidence to lay charges.

One Web Day was completed in time for Cira.ca's first annual event of the same name in September, which celebrates the positives of the Internet.

Now that he's returned home to Essex, Shilson said he'll be focusing on the production company he's started, Framelight Productions.

To view some of Shilson's video work, visit [www.steveshilson.com](http://www.steveshilson.com).

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