



LS Edward Fowler was awarded an engraved commemorative plaque, as part of his Junior Sailor of the Year -2005 distinction, by Cdr Laurell Brault, Commanding Officer NOPFI Whidbey Island. This is the first time a Canadian sailor received the honour, which is awarded for leadership and supervision abilities that go beyond what is expected of a Leading Seaman.

## Website brings family to sea

CARMEL ECKER  
STAFF WRITER

Families separated by deployment can stay visually connected through DropShots.com.

Photos, videos and even an online conversation are available through a click of a button.

The website eliminates flooding the email system with large photo files, and offers instant access to friendly faces.

People can try out the service through a free account that provides space for 500 photos and 10 two-minute videos. If that's not enough storage, they can open an account for \$4.95 U.S. per month, which provides unlimited space and a few extras.

The genesis of DropShots came from creator Ryan Sit's masters thesis in Computer Science at the University of California San Diego. After

trying to teach his mother how to send digital photos to friends and family, he saw a need for a user-friendly website even the most novice computer literates could manage.

A year after it launched in 2004, 5,000 people were using it. It has grown substantially since then with more than 75,000 people holding accounts.

The website is easy to handle and account holders can upload photos and video on their own private web page.

After registering on the site and creating a password, it's simply a matter of dragging and dropping files onto the DropShots DropBox. Account holders can upload entire folders of photos and video and the website automatically organizes by the date they were taken.

"To help keep in touch and connect family and friends together, it had to be easy and

simple to use for any level of computer user - for aunt, uncle, grandma or grandpa," says Blake Prescott, spokesman for DropShots.

Visitors don't need a password to view the site, and account holders don't have to worry about exposing their personal files to a world of strangers. They have a personal web address they can share with family and friends.


"None of our user's pages are indexable by search engines and none of the tags, descriptions, captions or comments are searchable outside one's personal page," explains Prescott.

Visitors to the personal pages can also make comments about the images they see. The ongoing commentary creates a conversation between the account holder and the visitor.

"DropShots is more about relationship building and connection than it is a technology to post and store personal media," says Prescott. "The photos and video are just a catalyst, springboard or anchor to encourage the meaningful and relevant conversation about the happenings in the life of friends and family."

*"DropShots is more about relationship building and connection than it is a technology to post and store personal media."*

BLAKE PRESCOTT,  
DROPSHOTS SPOKESMAN




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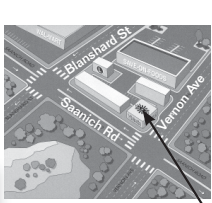
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