



Thursday, Dec 28, 2006

[Make Us Your Homepage](#)

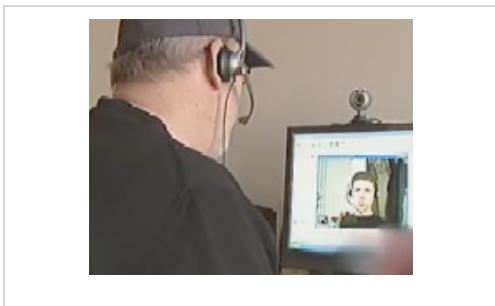
[Go Wireless](#)

[Info To Go From 9NEWS NOW](#)

Search

- [Home](#)
- [Videos v](#)
- [News v](#)
- [Weather v](#)
- [Sports v](#)
- [Traffic v](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Living v](#)
- [About Us v](#)
- [What's On 9? v](#)

Virtual Visitation



Written By Samara Martin-Ewing 9 News

Created:5/4/2006 10:28:30 PM

Last Updated:5/9/2006 5:04:18 PM

It's the toughest part of a divorce, child custody. Especially when one parent's address changes. It can put thousands of miles between a child and his mom or dad. But some parents have found a solution to this emotional dilemma. They're turning to technology and something called virtual visitation.

All it takes is a keyboard, a web cam and a microphone and Charles Mason can visit with his 10-year-old daughter who lives 1600 miles from Virginia.

"I can watch her grow. I can watch her change. I can watch her experiment with her hair style," he said. He can also help Arielle with her homework and even play games.

"The non-custodial parent has to mourn the loss of a child as if it was a death. The internet alleviates that," he said.

David Levy is with the Children's Rights Council. He says virtual visits are no substitute for the real thing.

"We don't want to see even more moveaways justified on the basis, oh you can maintain computer contact," he said. "Kids are not virtual kids. Kids are real kids. Parents are not virtual parents. They are real parents."

Arielle and her dad see each other in person four times a year. Both agree video conferencing can never replace a real hug, a real kiss goodnight. But it's certainly better than nothing or an occasional chat on the phone.

"I'll tell you right now, the telephone is boring. And with the telephone you can't see him. And with the computer it's more fun than just saying, hi, how's your day been," Arielle said.

Only two states have passed laws allowing for virtual visits: Utah and Wisconsin. Eighteen states have pending legislation, among them Maryland. Virginia legislators voted down a bill in the last legislative session.

Related Video
Tracey Neal reports

Related Links

- [Virtual Visitation](#)
- [Children's Rights Council](#)

E-mail This Story

Print This Story

Get Videos For Your Pod

Send Us Your Photos & Videos

Get Our Headlines

Bookmark This Story

Google

Yahoo!

Reddit

Facebook

Technorati

del.icio.us

Related News From The Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- Family
- Kids

Powered by Topix.net



Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

Comments

[Empty comment box]

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Post Comment

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator.



Top 9 Stories Now On WUSA9.com

Former President Gerald Ford Dead at 93



Gerald R. Ford, who picked up the pieces of Richard Nixon's scandal-shattered White House as the 38th and only unelected president in America's history, has died, his wife, Betty, said Tuesday. He was 93. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

15 Winning Lottery Tickets Sold At Same Store



Maryland Lottery officials say the fluky result in Saturday's Bonus Match Five lottery drawing apparently had nothing to do with computer snafus or fraud. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Did Springfield Killer Strike Again??



Fairfax County Police look to see if a Christmas Eve home invasion may be related to murders of two elderly women. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Some Celebs Scared of HDTV



Hollywood is buzzing over vain TV stars who don't like high-def appearance. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Standoff Questions



Family and friends of 29 year old James Dean want to know why he was killed. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

DC Police Investigate Three Separate Homicides



Six shootings - including three fatalities - made for a busy night for police. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Statement From Betty Ford



The Ford Family issues statement from Rancho Mirage, California [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Remembering James Brown



He had so much energy and raw talent. It is hard to imagine that James Brown will dance no more. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

Family To Meet 911 Operator Who Helped Deliver Baby



There will be a cheerful meeting Wednesday between a White Oak family and a Montgomery County 911 operator. [Full Story](#)

Email this to a friend

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VIDEOS

- All Videos
- Most Popular Videos
- Operation Football
- Sports: Extras
- Sports: Instant Access
- Sports: One On One
- Submit Your Video
- Watch CBS Shows

NEWS

- Campaign 06
- Closings and Delays
- Consumer
- Earth Watch
- Local
 - DC News
 - Maryland News
 - Virginia News
- National
- World
- Weird
- Health
- Unexplained

TRAFFIC

- Live Traffic Conditions
- Live Airport Status

WEATHER

- 7 Day Forecast
- 9CustomCast
- Allergy Update
- Almanac
- Climate Data
- Doppler 9000
- Eastern Weather
- File Storm Reports
- Highs & Lows
- Hurricanes
- Moon Phase
- Pollen Library
- Severe Weather Outlook
- Storm Reports
- Tropics
- Your Best Shot
- Watches & Warnings
- Weather Webcast

REGIONAL

- Doppler Loop
- Regional Radar
- Regional Satellite

EASTERN

- Eastern Radar
- Eastern Satellite

NATIONAL

- U.S. Radar
- U.S. Satellite
- U.S. Weather

SPORTS

- Extras
- Instant Access
- One On One
- Operation Football
- Scores

WHAT'S ON 9?

- 9NEWS NOW At 9am
- Eye On Washington
- Programming Grid

CONTESTS

- A-List
- Bus Stop Kids
- Makeover And A Musical
- My Spot Now
- Pro Football Frenzy

INSIDE W*USA 9

- 9NEWS NOW Team
- Contact Us
- EEO Public File
- Gannett Foundation
- HDTV
- History
- Internships
- Media Kit
- Work For 9

STATION PROJECTS

- Food Drive 9
- Race For The Cure
- Salute The Troops

LIVING

- A-List
- Buddy Check 9
- Event Calendar
- Featured Feds
- GW Mammovan
- Holiday Lights
- Interactives

- Blog: Nicole O'Brian
- Blog: Kim Martucci
- Blog: Andrea Roane
- Blog: Bruce Johnson
- Blog: Derek McGinty
- Blog: Mike Walter
- Caption Challenge
- Contact Us
- eAlerts - Sign Up!
- HDTV
- Online Games
- Photo Galleries
- Pump Patrol
- RSS Feeds
- Send Us News Tips
- Vodcasts
- JC & Friends
- Petline 9
- Recipes
- What2Do

School Supplies 9
Toy Drive 9
Walk For Literacy

PARTNER SITES



[Contact Us](#) | [Terms and Conditions of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Advertise with Us](#)

Copyright 2006, W*USA 9 & Gannett Co., Inc.
4100 Wisconsin Avenue NW | Washington, DC 20016