

A BULLETIN FROM
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**“Cyber Romeo” Marries “Cyber Juliet” —
Online — Without Ever Meeting: A Touching
Wedding?**

BY TOM BROWN

Yves Salois found the love of his life in his own birthplace of Paris, France — sort of. Turns out his bride, Peggy Neice, lives in Tel Aviv. They met on The Internet two years ago and have only telecommunicated during all that time. Last Saturday, they exchanged wedding vows on The Internet — the bride was in Israel, the groom was in France, and dozens of friends and relatives toasted the couple from locations around the globe. More than that, both the bride and groom say they plan to stay where they are, in two different countries!

Father Jean Streeé, a Catholic priest, performed the ceremony online using the EverybodyLink® technology that has united millions of people over the last few years. EverybodyLink® allows people to see and hear

each other on a normal Internet line; via a special hook-up, however, hundreds of others can observe a online dialogue. This, however, marks the first time that a couple has chosen to marry without physically coming together afterward.

“Peggy and I have found that a platonic relationship is all we really need for now,” said Mr. Salois. “We have found great companionship in being able to connect electronically — and isn’t companionship what marriage is really all about?”

While the actual wedding ceremony was closed to all but “a few hundred” friends, the wedding couple allowed an hour interview with the press. Asked about the possible absence of “true bliss” on their wedding day, Ms. Neice said that was, in her mind, secondary to the “great satisfaction” of having found a partner for life. “Yves is someone I have come to love for his wit, his mind — his presence, which I feel all the time, even though he’s hundreds of kilometers away. I have felt for months that I was, truly, Mrs. Salois. In a few minutes, I legally will be.”

“We are not saying this arrangement is for everybody,” Mr. Salois told reporters. “But Peggy and I are happy with her living there and my living here. After we place each other’s ring on our fingers and receive the blessings of the church, we will be man and wife. Let no one challenge that!”

Mr. Salois said that he and his fiancée had spent an average of 20 hours per week communicating online. “Of course, we spent more time than that in the last few months, planning the wedding and all,” Ms. Neice said just before the online wedding.

If this e-wedding weren’t curious enough, the couple said they had made no requests of the people around the world who were invited (by e-mail) to watch the ceremony. “We would hope they would open a bottle of champagne in our honor, but we did not feel we could make such a request,” Mr. Salois said.

The couple did indicate that many e-gifts had been sent to them by relatives and friends. “One of the gifts that really touched both of us,” Ms. Neice said, “was a credit to our cable modem account sent by an ex-college classmate of mine who now lives in Iceland. Thoughtful — most thoughtful!”

Mr. Salois works for the department of the French government which deals with worker rights; Ms. Neice is a reporter for the International Herald-Tribune. They met when Ms. Neice was covering a strike of airport workers and contacted Mr. Salois as a news source.

“After I interviewed Yves, I knew — I just knew — I wanted to know more about him. Much more. Now I have a whole lifetime to explore his mind and soul,” Ms. Neice said, just before the start of the e-nuptials.

When the seven-minute wedding ceremony was over and the priest certified the couple to be man and wife, the bride and groom each sent the other an “air kiss” by touching hand to mouth, kissing it, then waving it at the computer camera. It was not known if anyone in the worldwide audience, at that point, cried. |<

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