

## Shaking on a New World Record

Friday 14th January 2011 marked the start of an international attempt to break the current Guinness World Record™ for the longest continuous handshake.

The event was organised by two students at Claremont McKenna College in California, Jason Soll and John-Clark Levin. It was held in Times Square, New York, with a multitude of media in attendance, plus a live internet camera feed.



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Three teams were competing to break the existing official world record time of 15 hours and 30 minutes and 45 seconds, with a team from the USA, a team from Nepal, and a team from New Zealand.

Multiple world record holder Alastair Galpin (the original holder of this world record) and management consultant Don Purdon represented New Zealand and had chosen to support the Auckland Down Syndrome Association, which is based in their home town of Auckland, New Zealand. Details of Alastair's other records appear on his website - [www.WorldRecordChase.com](http://www.WorldRecordChase.com)

Despite the freezing conditions, an estimated crowd total of 40,000 to 80,000 gathered to watch the spectacle, with an average of 350 people watching the live internet stream at any one time.



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All three teams continued to shake through the first night, although unfortunately, the American team had to withdraw before even 9 hours were up, with the paramedics having to be called in when John-Clark Levin (a previous world record holder for this event) collapsed with exhaustion.

Logistics were key to the ongoing test of endurance. The rules dictated that teams were not allowed to stop shaking hands, even for toilet breaks, when witnesses had to also attend to ensure that the attempt continued non-stop. Even the arrival of paramedics and concern for John-Clark's health would not break the hold the two remaining teams had over each other, as they sailed through the existing world record duration.

*"This was a remarkable event, with large crowds both in Times Square and on the internet fascinated by the spectacle of three teams from across the world shaking hands for hour upon hour. Shaking hands with someone has always been symbolic of improving relations, and perhaps this event has brought those diverse nations a little closer." - Alastair Galpin, Event Participant*

Then, shortly after 5am EST on Sunday 16th January, both teams decided that neither of them were going to give up lightly. So they agreed, after a mammoth 33 hours 3 minutes of shaking hands, that they would simultaneously break their joined hands, having more than doubled the existing world record.

**Media of the event included:**

Video of the competition became YouTube's #3 most-viewed video of the day and the #4 most-commented video of the day.

A link to the competition was featured on every single web page on YouTube, where hundreds of thousands of new web pages are created daily.

Videos of the competition surpassed 500,000 views in less than two days. Furthermore, according to the event organisers' knowledge, this is the longest video to ever go viral so quickly on the internet. YouTube is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> most-visited website on the internet.

The event was also covered by (amongst others):

- Wall Street Journal
- AOL News
- ABC
- CBS
- NBC

**Impacts included:**

The Prime Minister of Nepal was personally involved in celebrations surrounding this event.

US and other media has begun reporting on the strong international symbolism of the handshake gesture; boosting credibility of the event as a project of peace and humanitarian goodwill.

Congratulations and handshaking all around marked the end of the event, to the amazement of its followers.

Subject to ratification by Guinness World Records™, this amazing record will be shared by all four competitors remaining at the finish (Alastair Galpin and Don Purdon from New Zealand, together with Rohit Timilsina and Santosh Timilsina from Nepal), with the majority of all monies raised being shared equally between their chosen charities, the Auckland Down Syndrome Association and The Women's Foundation of Nepal.

The remaining monies will be paid to the American team's charity, Teach for America.

The event's unexpected outcome (sharing the record between the two teams) has led to a deep, compelling story that continues to grow. The fact that these teams decided to extend their handshake beyond their teammates, transcending the competition and establishing an unshakable relationship between these incredible teams and their countries, is a story that must be told.

“I feel honoured to have spent the past few days with these teams. As I look back on the event's unique conclusion, I cannot imagine a stronger ending to such a powerful competition” – Jason Soll, Event Director.

*Notes to Editors:*

*This world record attempt is subject to ratification by Guinness World Records™.*

*Alastair Galpin is perhaps best known officially as the second biggest Guinness World Record™ breaker of the decade (2000-2009). His website, [www.WorldRecordChase.com](http://www.WorldRecordChase.com) reflects his dedication to breaking world records, with stories of his numerous record breaking attempts. Alastair's previous world records include that for the Furthest Distance to Blow a Malteser with a straw (11 metres 29.5cm) and the Loudest Clap (an amazing 113 dbA), which has been used as a public challenge at Dubai's Guinness World Records™ Pavilion for years. His clap remains unbeaten. Among his other world record engagements is the Largest Bottle Cap Sculpture (19,205 bottle caps) which was unveiled to the public on 18th November 2010 and is awaiting ratification.*

*The Auckland Down Syndrome Association Inc. provides support to the parents of children and young adults with Down syndrome. The Auckland Down Syndrome Association works to develop the potential of these special people and promote awareness about the abilities and special needs of individuals with Down syndrome to the general public.*

*The Women's Foundation of Nepal (WFN) is set up to help women and children equally, regardless of caste, religion, or race. WFN strives to alleviate problems through increasing public awareness of opportunities for economic and social development, by fostering social responsibility and self-reliance in developing villages and cities, and through direct social work.*

*Teach For America provides a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the cycle of educational inequity. These teachers, called corps members, commit to teach for two years in one of 39 urban and rural regions across the country, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students to achieve at high levels.*

*Pictures are available for licensing from [www.WorldRecordChase.com](http://www.WorldRecordChase.com)*