NEW in LW   Public Forum   JOIN IT

Over the past year, we have received several exceptionally thoughtful letters from readers in response to some of our stories. Most have been too lengthy for us to print. In an effort to adhere to our mission of being a forum for public discussion, we have decided to allocate sufficient space to publish these letters whenever possible.

Our internal editorial board will review all letters for form and content, and reserves the right to refuse a submission. Writers should have significant knowledge of the area in which they are writing, and letters should be on a subject that we have introduced in our pages. We have not set a maximum word count, but it is unlikely that a 2000-word letter would be printed (for reference, the letter on the right contains 477 words).

All opinions expressed in this forum are those of the writer and not of the Lamorinda Weekly. Letters may be edited for legal considerations, but edited letters will be returned to the writer for consent prior to publication. Submissions should be sent to letter@lamorindaweekly.com.

(Our already-familiar Letters to the Editor section will remain unchanged.)

Being "Wired on Technology" – Is it a Good Thing?

When I first opened up Computer Software & Hardware in Orinda in 1991, there were very few cell phones and no internet. People were thrilled when their computers opened up and produced a C} prompt. Computers were unreliable, expensive and the wave of the future.

As I read your front page article, "Wired on Technology," I was curious as to why you missed the part about how "instant communication" is threatening the need for the printed word. Why read a newspaper, book or newsmagazine when you can view them on-line?

I have seen the evolution of the instant communication revolution. It has created a culture of fraud, deceit, instant gratification, fear and according to some University studies, a decline in intelligence and reverse evolution.

I have every incarnation of cell phone, computer, IPOD and Blackberry. I see the advantage of instant communication. I also see what it is doing to our society. Text messaging during a movie, talking on a cell phone while driving, answering a device while in the middle of a conversation with someone and, most distressing, someone carrying on a private conversation in earshot of others. This is not the worst of it.

I have parents come into my office seeking help in getting their children to stop playing addictive computer games. There is a profusion of underage people losing big money playing on-line poker. Pornography is freely available to anyone who knows how to use a mouse and click on the button that says they are 'of age.' Since I make a living helping people with their computer problems, I have to know how to help.

Then we have the internet criminals. They steal peoples' identities. They create a climate of fear that breeds something worse. Anti-virus, anti-spyware companies make money by providing fake security. These include some well known, local companies whose software is ineffectual and is efficient only in requesting money from the user on a yearly basis.

Your article mentions a school where cell phone use is banned. This does not work. Some students use the phones for cheating and are addicted to texting. AOL Instant Messenger is on almost every computer. The television, cell phone, and instant messaging are on while a student does their homework.

Also mentioned is a person who likes to be available 24/7 and even during sleep. The average Blackberry user checks the machine every 5 minutes. This is alarming. Some might say our productivity is increased. Our life spans are getting shorter. Depression, anger, drug use and white-collar crime are increasing. Courtesy, etiquette, conversational skills, handwriting and spelling are getting worse.

I can go on and on. I see the advantage to instant communication. I hope that at some point, we can raise the consciousness of our younger generation to revere those things that are really important. They are not found in little screens.

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