

Going tech-free a real challenge for many



Mark Pavilons

?Men have become the tools of their tools.?
Henry David Thoreau

When we examine our current technology-dependent existence, it's really impressive how this coup happened.

Wikipedia won't have a listing for a certain date when technology took over from man. It may be a footnote in our human history, or may not even be mentioned at all.

It's been a quick, smooth transition where the unknown became commonplace. Thanks to science and technology, we've catapulted ourselves from the stone age to the space age.

Our western society has experienced more advances in the past 50 years than our species has in modern man's 200,000 years on this planet. It's like going from horse and buggy to hovercraft in a week!

Just imagine how that has impacted our lives. It's mind-boggling and yet how much have our brains increased in size during this time? Are we even prepared for what's to come?

The first cell phone, courtesy of Motorola, appeared in the prototype handheld phone used by Dr. Cooper weighed 1.1 kg and measured 23 centimeters long, 13 centimeters deep and 4.45 centimeters wide. The prototype offered a talk time of just 30 minutes and took 10 hours to charge.

In 1993, IBM Simon was introduced. It could be considered the world's first smartphone. It was a mobile phone, pager, fax machine, and PDA all rolled into one. It included a calendar, address book, clock, calculator, notepad, email, and a touchscreen with a standard keyboard.

The first pre-commercial trial network with 3G was launched by NTT DoCoMo in Japan in the Tokyo region in May 2001. NTT DoCoMo launched the first commercial 3G network October 2001. In the mid-2000s, an evolution of 3G technology took place and by the end of 2007, there were 295 million subscribers on 3G networks worldwide.

Those people who were products of the 1960s have seen it all.

I?remember the bulky dial phones, rabbit ears, pay phones, thermal fax paper, dot matrix printers and floppy discs. I also remember leather pants, but that's another story.

In my 30s, I?never contemplated touch-screen tablets, wireless earpieces or live video streaming.

And yet now, we seem to have it all, and there's no sign of it slowing, not one iota. If anything, we're moving forward at break-neck speed, constantly in search of the newest and latest and most advanced.

To what end?

I?guess we'll soon find out.

?It's not a faith in technology. It's faith in people.?

Steve Jobs

To slow the pace, there have been calls to give up technology for a while.

Just last week, Allstate held its Distraction-Free 23 movement, where participants sacrificed their personal tech distractions for a full 23 hours Nov. 22 to 23. The main message was that distracted driving kills.

We all know about the consequences of distracted driving and that's why we have laws here.

Texting behind the wheel makes you 23 times more likely to crash.

And getting into a car crash is a terrible thing, why risk it? You could end up hurting someone, or worse killing someone. It's just not worth it.

Be prepared though, even if you are driving safely, someone else might be distracted whilst driving and cause an accident which isn't your fault. If this is the case then you need to get a lawyer involved. Why not consider using a company like [lamber goodnow](#) to help your case?

Anyway, the point they were trying make was if you can go 23 hours without your tech device, surely you can go a few minutes in the car while driving without your tech devices.

So, for the thousands who made the pledge, their challenge was finding something to do with all this free time.

Did they play a board game or go for a walk? Did they see a movie or read a book?

I can just see this taking shape in Canadian homes. It would be like ?Little House on the Prairie??in many cases. Teens would turn to their parents in disbelief, asking them if they had to endure such non-tech pastimes.

How did we ever survive?

As I?recall, we were much less sedentary back then In my teen years, living in rural Caledon, we rode our bikes if we wanted to get anywhere. We found stuff to do. Being a bit on the creative side, I?drew, built models, read and listened to music on, get this, a record player! I?had chores and helped around the house.

Being a bit of a deep thinker, I?read magazines like Popular Science, which tried to paint a picture of our wonderful, technology-laden future. It showed solar powered vehicles, moving public sidewalks, glass cities, monorails and passenger ships to the moon.

Okay, so we haven't quite gotten there yet.

Our society, it seems, has made a u-turn on the road to widespread human enlightenment.

We've traded in our lofty dreams for virtual murder, simulated everything and mind-numbing, dumbed-down entertainment. We want to enjoy life without living or ever stepping outside and taking a deep breath. We want instant gratification and have lost our ability to cope, or wait more than 10 seconds for a download.

We've opted for eye-candy, entertainment and stimulating our senses. We've given up human contact for virtual interaction. Our young no longer speak in full sentences, LOL!

This is likely not what famous scientists of the past had in mind.

We have so much information, opinion and brain food available, we should all be Einsteins.

If a video game can generate sales of \$800 million in 24 hours, why can't we cure hunger, poverty and polio in developing countries??Why can't we save our planet and put a dent in pollution? Instead of curbing cancer, we have new ways of ?virtually? stealing a car!

?Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense.?

Gertrude Stein