

Techno trap

Advanced gadgets trip up our lives



AARON COOPER is a junior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

The studies are in. Americans watch some 40-50 hours of television a week, not including time spent listening to compact discs, on the Internet, talking on cellular phones and playing video games. Many people would say everything you need to know or do can be accomplished right from your own home.

Many people would be wrong. Techno corporations boast about the all-powerful "information super-highway." With the birth of the modern Internet, it would be safe to say that this megacommunications system is well on its way - maybe a little too well. It's only a matter of time before we will open our doors by coded fingerprint systems, and be talking to Aunt Gertrude on picture phones when she has her mud mask on. Is that what we *really* want? God, I hope not!

We've all seen the movies: "Total Recall", "The Running Man", "The Fifth Element." These are places where you can walk in your door after coming home from work and start a pot of coffee, turn on the television and the lights, and open your windows all within 10 seconds by voice operation. Forget the clapper - that's

a thing of the distant past. Pretty soon flushing toilets will be setting off Pakistani radar detectors once scientists harbor the electrical transport potential of superconductivity.

I see a point when people will say cellular phones are beneficial to have in emergencies, or that the Internet saves on postage and cuts mailing time to a fraction of the manual rate; but like anything else some people don't know when to quit. People will freely and ignorantly give out credit card numbers over the Internet. Cable isn't good enough, so HDTV (high definition television) must be immediately acquired. The business world is the worst; where there's some poor lost soul driving to work with two beepers, two cellular phones plus an extra flip phone, and a portable fax in his or her car while he or she is on two phones with four people (via call waiting) and being beeped, yelled at, and barked at all at the same time. We want technology to make our lives easier.

Welcome to America. Something inevitably gets lost in this hype. That something is nature. When was the last time you went hiking or mountain climbing? How about camping? Granted, many people take part in these activities daily, but, because of technology, many walks and hikes have turned into phone conferences and Web surfing. If your primary contact with nature is through mediated messages anywhere from TV to computers then think of how distorted your perception of the "environment" is.

Televisions, like most technodream machines of the 20th century, are painfully restrictive. Think of the difference between seeing a beach on an MTV party and actually standing

on one. The phrase "night and day" comes to mind.

Increasingly, as the 20th century comes to a close, many people seem to depend on technology for the bulk of their experiences with and perceptions of the "real" world. People have to work. Fine. But, they don't have to let portable phones and Internet pages get between them and mountains or even the back yard. Step out for a minute, look around, take a sniff. Montel won't miss you for a few minutes.

We aren't lost - yet. We are just headed down a road that could prove to be detrimental to our culture unless we drive with extreme caution. Slow down once in a while. Don't always try to sneak through the yellow arrows at intersections. You're already late to math - what's another 39 seconds? If you're so late maybe you should use Energizer back-ups for that radio alarm clock.

In a world with Ricki Lake, Donkey Kong, Web pages, Nintendo, satellite television, cellular phones and gadgets to help you complete every imaginable task better, don't forget about the little things - the things that are more important than how many points NASDAQ has fluctuated. Rediscover your average perceptions of the things around you and reach beyond your normal realms of contact with the world.

Read books. Really look at trees, don't just pass by them. See how many colors are out in the world. And now and then it's OK to pick up the newspaper or tune in to Dan Rather. He won't bite. As for me, it's long past time to dip into the refreshing environs of nature.

Now where did I put that damn remote ...

DN LETTERS

Free-ad?

Exactly how much did NABI and Centeon pay you guys to run your plasma ad ... I mean ... article. You gave the name, the address, the locale, the pay and all the things that you can do with this newfound "income" ... all of this with the added bonus of a young, happy donor. You never mentioned the fact that donating will cause scarring not only on your skin, but on your veins as well, which could cause veins to become weak and not useful in real medical procedures. By the way I still have a scar even after not donating for almost two years. You also failed to report about the possibility of hematomas - dark purple and red bruises that surround the area of injection and hurt for at least a week. I had five people ask me if I was doing drugs when they saw the hematoma on my arm. Who knows how many thought it. You also mentioned using the money received to buy alcohol, but forgot to mention that it could cause damage to your system if ingested within 24 hours of donation, or that a lot of students do not heed to these warnings and drink anyway because they know that they won't need as much to get drunk. I enjoy reading the DN, but please don't write an article on something and only show one side, or put forth a trivial negative side (i.e. "Do plasma centers play good or bad movies?").

Eric Martin
senior
broadcasting

HP clarify

The DN gave the honors program

lots of attention last week - we were mentioned in two front page articles, one regarding Chancellor Moeser's Faculty Fireside session with honors students; the other about Campus Rec's Ropes Challenge, in which honors students participated on Sept. 21.

We certainly appreciate all this attention, but, with all due respect to the DN and the reporter, incomplete reporting about the Ropes Challenge has stirred dissent among honors upperclassmen.

Our session at the Ropes Challenge course should have been billed as the Honors Freshman Ropes Challenge. Freshman honors students alone were invited to participate. The three upperclassmen who attended were members of the Honors Program Student Advisory Board and were there to help supervise the event.

Concerned honors upperclassmen can rest easy: We didn't fail to invite to the event because we were lazy or didn't care - we didn't invite you because the event was for freshmen. You will be notified of all programwide events held this semester.

Otherwise, thanks again to the DN for the two great articles!

Mark Stone
Honors Program Student
Advisory Board

Greek-less

I am writing in response to "My view." Yes, I am a college student. Yes, I pay my own tuition. And yes, my GPA is high.

However, I refuse to close my eyes to the negative activities of the greek system. This is a beautiful campus, and

if you don't want to treat it with respect, then leave. And take your kegs, burning crosses, rude behavior and toilet paper with you. In my opinion, UNL would be a more diversified, respectable campus if the greek system were abolished.

Chad McGuire
junior
horticulture

Think

Mr. Hickenbottom seems to believe in a statistically anomalous dream. Mr. Anderson sounds like a heterophobe. Both would make good stereotypical lawyers because they make some sense but say little relevant to the overall problem. (Law students, please take a joke.) Ultimately, the debate centers round how life can be good overall.

How can we be happy individually or as a group? We must learn to think for ourselves and determine our personal identity on our own. We must develop the confidence to assert ourselves in the world. If others bother us, we must negotiate with them to either find a workable solution or to tolerate each other. However, in doing that, we may find we have to change ourselves. In the Bible, we learn we should tell others what we dislike first, then take the problem to the church if necessary. I think we habitually run around that idea. In the long run, then, we must learn to take criticism, constructive or otherwise. If it makes sense, let's reevaluate our opinion. If not, throw it into the trash.

John Flaherty
senior
meteorology

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