



Islander March Technology Update

Unsociable social networking – do we need some acceptable behaviour rules?

Some years ago, when texting was the latest tech, I wrote a column for this esteemed publication entitled “Net Etiquette”. In it, I reflected on the dos and don’ts of sending texts, and commented on the new “textspeak”. For example, when you text in capitals, it’s the equivalent of SHOUTING! Nothing’s changed much with texting since then, apart from the fact that even Grandpa can text and send photos easily with WhatsApp! This illustrates that the use of technology gets accepted, adopted and eventually taken for granted.

So today, not many years on, the use of technology has grown enormously. We have all become a contact on each other’s cellphones, tablets and PCs. Many of us communicate with each other using tools such as Facebook, Tuenti, LinkedIn or Twitter and the tool we choose is the one that suits us best for the type of communication we think we want to perform. Some of us are still old fashioned and actually call people and speak to them and some, a lot, still text. Some of us just do it because we have been told we should, and don’t want to be left out or behind. Some of us are just inquisitive. Some of us have tried it and found it fascinating, especially the ability to re-establish contact with long lost friends and to see what they look like now. Some of us have discovered how these new tools can be used for spreading a message worldwide and thus how useful they are for free corporate marketing. Some of us don’t use them at all. However, some of us have become compulsive obsessives, and have let these new communication tools take over our lives.

The number of compulsive obsessives is growing rapidly, especially in the younger generations. I now refer to this demographic group as our “screenagers”. A term defined by the very nature of being a technology based compulsive obsessive. However it is not a problem limited to screenagers. We have all witnessed many friends of our own generation and backgrounds get hooked by the technology and not know how to behave.

Compulsive obsessive social networkers, emailers or texters are usually unaware of how unsociable and rude they are being to the real people in their real environment around them. They make the people they are with feel resentful and unhappy, as the obsessive gives the impression they would rather be with someone else.

Just recently I was driving in the UK listening to the Chris Evans breakfast show on BBC Radio 2. He was interviewing Gary Barlow

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of Take That. Gary Barlow was complaining about this very same thing, at how rude people have become by letting their mobile phones take over their lives. He mentioned an occasion where he had invited friends to dinner and one of them kept responding to messages coming in on his Blackberry whilst he was trying to hold a conversation with him. He said that he eventually told his friend that "if he had more important people to talk to, he shouldn't have accepted his invitation to dinner". Chris Evans agreed and said he had experienced similar situations and that he been a culprit himself until he realised the error of his ways. I have experienced many similar situations myself and, unlike Gary, have never had that cutting remark ready, or had the nerve to dispense it.

Where have we got to, and where are we going? Recently I heard about a screenager's party where all the kids sat around in a room not communicating with each other but they were all typing messages madly on their cell phones to people not at the party, or maybe to someone on the other side of the room? Is this sad or what?

Adults should know better and should be aware of their own unsociable social networking, and they should be laying the ground rules for the next generations. With new technology comes the need for some new ground rules. These rules are not complicated and are certainly not onerous and I believe will, strangely enough, help people of all ages be more successful at communicating or networking in more ways than through a screen. One simple rule is to switch Auto Fetch off, when you're a guest at a dinner party, then download your messages and emails manually at the next available opportunity -nothing can't wait until your next visit to the loo! Always remember that in case of dire emergency you will receive a phone call, in less urgent cases you will receive a text, which leaves emails for those situations which do not require an instant response.

For many years we have all been asked to turn our phones off in public places such as theatres to avoid disturbing the action. People naturally oblige and accept it as irritating to others. Should this be extended to other public places such as trains or, coming soon, planes? I would be very interested to hear from my reader whether she agrees, has any other examples of bad behaviour and has any other suggestions, or am I just a grumpy old git but in good company with Gary Barlow and Chris Evans?

New Blackberry 9800 Torch and HTC Desire HD

So after berating the way we use the technology, I am now going to provide a quick update on a couple of Smartphone manufacturer's models as, irrelevant of the human owner, I think the technology is wonderful.

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Blackberry has finally released what it hopes is its answer to the market dominance of Android and Apple, the Blackberry 9800 Torch. The new handset incorporates a 3.2 inch touch screen and physical QWERTY keyboard which looks to be a carbon copy of the phenomenal Bold 9700 keyboard. The new Torch incorporates the new Blackberry OS 6. The biggest update in the operating system is the browser which has been behind the times to say the least. The new browser is significantly improved. The 9800 includes 3G, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity with GPS. With a MicroSD expansion card you could potentially carry 36GB of data. The Torch also has up rated the camera to 5.0 Megapixels with flash.

The HTC Desire HD has a super-fast 1Ghz processor to take you anywhere online in seconds, plus a clever zoom that automatically reflows text and images to fit your screen to make sure the Internet works around you and not vice-versa. The screen is 4.3 inch with a pin sharp text display, vivid photos and vibrant video. It is based on Android 2.2 OS with HTC Sense, 3G, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. It incorporates a High Definition video camera and an 8.0 Megapixel camera.

Latest Capacity Crunch statistic: New Android phone activations have risen to 350,000 per single day.

Roger Horner of e3 Systems

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