

# Technology for Mummies

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*I remember how excited we were at work to get our first word processor. It took up as much room as a small freezer.*

Like most of you, I'm from that awkward generation: in the middle between people who grew up without computers and those whose thumbs are starting to change shape to accommodate texting. At 55 I'm just starting to use Facebook. Could anything be more precious?

I remember how excited we were at work to get our first word processor, a Xerox 860. We even hired a carpenter to build a special cabinet for it, to protect it from dust! It took up as much room as a small freezer. We were so in awe of it, I'm surprised we didn't genuflect as we passed the thing.

My first office computer was an Apple IIe. This was before Windows, when everything was DOS. Do you know what DOS is? You know when you restart your computer after it crashes there's a black screen with white letters and a blinking cursor, and you can only use the arrow and "Enter" keys to navigate because your mouse doesn't work? That's pretty much DOS. Try writing disciplinary memoranda on that sucker.

I've come a long way. Lately I'm at More.com and Facebook, and I have my own website which I created and edit myself using software called Dreamweaver. (Can anybody help me with Dreamweaver? Please?)

I only started using Facebook a few days ago and already I'm frustrated that my old friends from work who are now retired aren't on it. These are people I cared about but didn't stay in touch with. (They should try More.com. Same idea, but easier to use.) Every hour or so I think of somebody else with whom I shared those old days of IBM Selectrics and I wish they would start a Facebook page so I could communicate with them, but a lot of these people in my demographic don't even have their own email (they share it with their husbands and have cute names like [Two4theRoad@BigFatRV.com](#)). Or they're still working and they get their email through the corporate server, and they like it that way. Too damn much email anyway. Don't want to have to check it on the weekends.

My mom, who is 84, sort of gets why email and computers are cool but for her, a recent widow, it's like suggesting she might want a dog. "Don't you dare get me one of those things," she says. She means the computer.

My kids, all Gen X, don't even check their email that often. Like it's painful for them, due to the time and effort it takes. Much less tedious to text. I think they're on Facebook but I wouldn't embarrass them by asking if they'll "friend me." Did I say that right?

So it looks like my Facebook experience is going to include young-thinking people my age and above, kids, and people who are selling something. Like me. I'll have a book coming out next year and I sure do want to let everybody know it. Plus if an agent or fellow writer wants to contact me and can't find me on Facebook, how will it look?

Still, my head hurts. I was born too soon, and so were my contemporaries. We were in our thirties by the time all this tech-stuff started coming out. I remember bringing my first personal computer, a DOS laptop, to a union negotiation at the behest of my boss, the chief negotiator on the Management side. He intimidated Labor by putting it on the table, turning it on (so it beeped), and frowning intently at the screen. Labor was nervous, but looking back on it now, we must have looked like monkeys with forks.

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