



Time Management and Productivity Expert Laura Stack Discusses the Pros and Cons of Modern Technology in Her Latest Blog, “Back To The Phone Age



DENVER, Colorado, November 13, 2012 – Technology has transformed productivity over the past 20 years, not only in the workplace, but at home as well. In fact, between smart phones, email, instant messaging, and texting, people are more efficient today than ever before – or are they? In her latest blog, “Back to the Phone Age,” time management and productivity expert Laura Stack says that although people tend to pack more into whatever time they save, thanks to technology, they soon hit a point of diminishing returns.

“Our techno-saviors end up driving us to distraction and stealing our personal time,” Stack says. “And electronic tools worsen this tendency because they kindle an urge for instant gratification.”

When people receive an email, for instance, their first response is to check it immediately. Trying to ignore the electronic “ding” that alerts the recipient every time a new message arrives can be more distracting than reading the email. Productivity plummets when time is wasted wondering who sent the email or instead reading each one as it arrives.

A ringing phone can be even worse, Stack says, if it interrupts a productive work trance, making it difficult to pick up the threads again later, no matter how brief the interruption.

Anyone truly committed to maximizing their day-to-day productivity while maintaining a real life must tame their technologies, Stack says, and begin using them only as intended. In her blog, she provides tips on reclaiming control of daily productivity.

Ignore the bells and whistles. Stack reminds her readers about why they bought their smartphones in the first place—to accept phone calls and read emails on the fly. At some point, it became accepted practice to answer every call and read every email the moment they arrive, which is where the smartphone’s efficiency begins to fade. While working on important tasks, workers must ignore the beeps and buzzes to achieve true productivity and find balance while at home.

“Who cares if you can download 50,000 different ringtones, check Twitter, and play Frogger on your smartphone,” Stack says. “You bought it so that you could take phone calls and read emails on the fly.

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“It’s a tool, not a toy, so discipline yourself to treat it as such.”

Turn it all off sometimes. Tough tasks often require laser-like focus for hours at a time, and casual interruptions must be eliminated. If possible, shut down email, turn off the cell phone, and set the landline to roll over to voicemail when focus is critical.

“Process your email messages all at once a few times a day,” Stack says. “On a broader scale, set boundaries around your work-related tools when you go home at night or on the weekends.

“Tune out so you can enjoy family and friends.”

Stay on point. When you do answer your email, Stack reminds her readers to leave the jokes, personal messages, and social media chatter for the next coffee break, focusing only on work-related messages.

“Reply to them in a straightforward, business-like manner,” she says. “You needn’t be curt, but you don’t have time to ramble on either.”

Forget the Internet exists. Many office workers stub their professional toes by surfing the Net when they should be working. However, not all surfing is a waste of time, because research, communication, and education are valid uses.

“Be careful of going there for something legitimate and following the rabbit trail down an unproductive path,” Stack says. “Don’t even surf during your breaks; get away and do something human, like talking with friends or going out for lunch.”

Ultimately, Stack reminds her readers that modern technology is a mixed blessing, and discipline is a must when it comes to striking a proper balance between using it and allowing it to use you. That includes choosing apps and tools that are going to actually provide a valid convenience without creating one more unnecessary distraction.

“If you decide to adopt it, take steps to define your use of the new tool and be vigilant in its application,” Stack says. “Vigilance is, after all, the price of liberty—and you never want to let your tools control you—not if you want to maintain your status as a healthy, productive human being.”

For information on technology and workplace productivity, visit [TheProductivityPro.com website](http://TheProductivityPro.com), Email Laura@TheProductivityPro.com, or call 303-471-7401.

About Laura Stack:

[Laura Stack](#) is a time management and productivity expert who has been speaking and writing about human potential and peak performance since 1992. She has implemented employee productivity improvement programs at Wal-Mart, Cisco Systems, UBS, Aramark, and Bank of America. Stack presents keynotes and seminars internationally for leaders, entrepreneurs, salespeople, and professional services firms on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in the workplace.

The president of [The Productivity Pro®, Inc.](#), a time management firm specializing in high-stress environments, Stack is the bestselling author of five books: [“What to do When There’s Too Much to do” \(2012\)](#); “SuperCompetent” (2010); “The Exhaustion Cure” (2008); “Find More Time” (2006); “Leave the Office Earlier” (2004). The 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association and recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, Stack has served as a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Xerox, and Office Depot and is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer. Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, Stack has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show and CNN, and in USA Today and the New York Times.

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