

Talking About Home Technology: Is Life Better or Worse?

We buy a lot of **technologies** to make our life better. Computers organize everything for us, and when we can't bring our computer with us, there are hand held **devices**—devices that fit in a hand—that we can carry with us to organize our lives. iPods and other MP3 players let us carry **gigabytes** of music with us, and cell phones keep us in touch all the time.

But, *do these things really make our life better?* I know many people who think they do. And I use a lot of these technologies. But I'm not sure that my life is simpler for it. So, today I'll tell you how *I* feel about the technology in my life. . . and then I want to hear what you think!

You can probably guess that I use the Internet a lot. I use it to keep in touch with my family and friends in the U.S. It's the first place I turn when I have a question. I even use it for a lot of my shopping.

But I don't think that the Internet is better for everything. Even though I'm in front of my computer a lot, I think I can learn more from other sources. I prefer books for 'big' questions like “how can I be a good dad?” And I like real, paper newspapers for the news. Both books and newspapers are easy to look at for a long time, and I can carry them around with me, to read on the balcony or in the tram.

In some ways, I love the connectivity of modern life. I use a program called Skype almost every week, so that I can talk to my mother over the Internet. . . complete with video! Just ten years ago, telephoning between Germany and the U.S. was *very* expensive. In other ways, though, I don't like the way different **gadgets** take over my life. My cell phone, especially, can bother me when I get a phone call when I'm somewhere I don't want to be interrupted. This can happen when I'm teaching, but also when I'm visiting someone, or simply out with my dog. After all, when my parents were my age, they lived just fine with fewer phone calls!

I guess you can tell I'm not a big fan of technology. Some people might think that I'm a dinosaur—a person from a different age. I know that my brother does. He has a hand held computer from Palm Pilot to organize all his appointments and phone numbers. He pulls it out all the time to make a note of this information, or to check that information. If you asked him, he'd say it simplifies his life. I think he's a slave to it: it's always beeping to remind him of what he *should* be doing and where he should be going. I like my simple paper appointment calendar: I can use it to keep track of when my lessons are, but it doesn't make any noises!

What do you think? How many gadgets and devices are in your life? Do they make your life better? Do you need them? Want them? Or do you prefer to do things 'the old way?' Tell me about it, and tell me why!