

ELECTRONICS

Omg! U gotta get with the program!

by Chamell Harris
Features Editor

Smartphones, iPods, laptops, oh my!

These items are no longer the electronics associated exclusively with the science club or the super-rich. Students and working-class folks now own them too.

This is the information age, meaning our society is growing more and more obsessed with how we share information and how efficient the process is. What's wrong with trying to be as efficient as possible when it comes to the way we deliver and receive information? We choose to attend college knowing that we're not only competing with our peers, but everyone else in the world. Knowing how to use new technological devices gives us the edge we need in the worldwide job market.

One of the main reasons people are quick to go against technological advancement is due to cost. The mantra that "better" equals "more expensive" is a thing of the past. Web sites such as Overstock, Amazon.com, and eBay sell updated electronic gadgets at reasonable rates. Best Buy and Target offer mail-in rebates that take hundreds off the sticker price for select items. When it comes down to it, students who can afford a pair of \$200 sneakers can definitely afford to purchase a laptop. If it helps with school and work, students and parents need to be willing to make these kinds of investments.

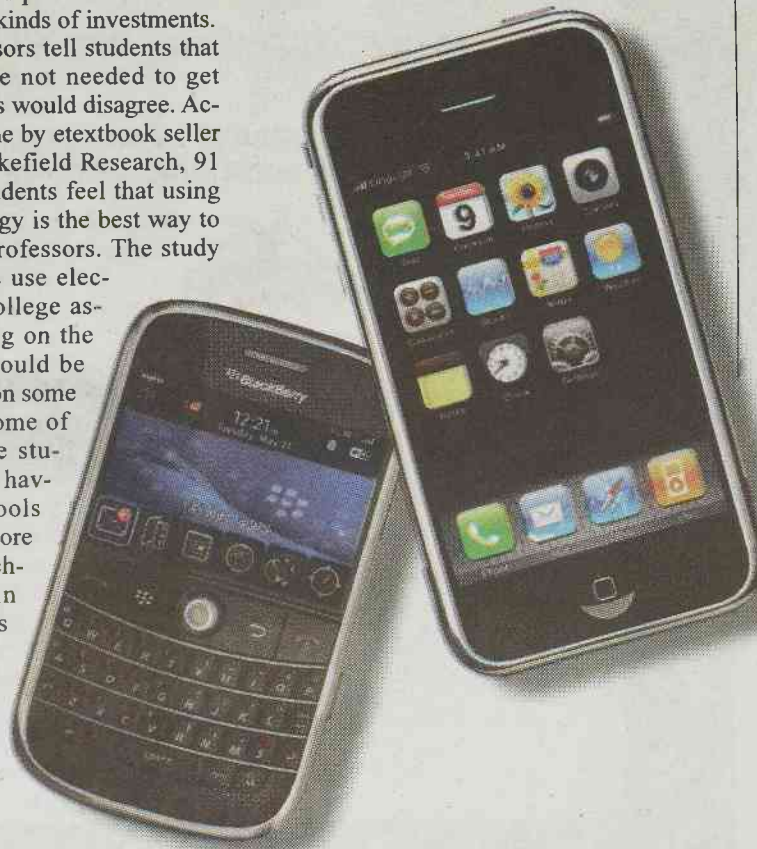
While some professors tell students that advanced gadgets are not needed to get through college, others would disagree. According to a study done by etextbook seller CourseSmart and Wakefield Research, 91 percent of college students feel that using some sort of technology is the best way to get in contact with professors. The study showed that students use electronics to do most college assignments. Depending on the student's major, it would be wise to spend money on some of the latest items. Some of these devices aid the student's learning. Also, having their own tech tools can help students be more proficient with the technology they'll use in their careers. Students majoring in fields like graphic design, computer science, or business should have a laptop with

the most current software for the student to practice with. At the very least, students' personal computers should have the capability to perform the same tasks as the school's computers.

Smartphones are also a good investment for college students. Though usually pegged as the phones for those addicted to Facebook and Twitter, smartphones have virtually the same capabilities as a laptop without the bulk. They can serve business and communication majors well, due to its 24/7 access to e-mail.

So, which piece of technology tops the list as the must-have gadget for college students? It's simple. Every student should have an external hard drive. External hard drives allow students to hold a lot of information on their laptops, and are a safety net for important files should the computer crash. Once students save assignments to their external hard drives, they are unplugged from the laptop. Thus, if your computer gets a virus, none of your files would be compromised. External hard drives are affordable and convenient.

iPods and mp3 players will always be on the list of most-wanted gadgets because of their portability. Students can listen to music without disturbing their roommates. Not only are they affordable, but some can be used as external hard drives and phones as well.



Don't break the bank trying to 'floss'

by Nike Pascal
Web Editor

Anything outside of a regular cell phone and unlimited texting plan, for most, is just for leisure and entertainment. Most college students are strapped for cash until their college years are over, and sometimes well after.

The latest iPhone, whether it's new or refurbished, can range anywhere from \$100 to \$600. Do you really need such high-tech gear for school? What classes are you taking that require this type of expensive technology? Is a student being financially responsible by making these hefty purchases?

Most wireless companies, including Verizon and AT&T, along with retailers like Walmart and Best Buy, offer inexpensive phones and other gadgets that have the same capabilities as name-brand and luxury gadgets. Students need to consider their purchases, whether or not they need and can afford certain electronics. Wanting a pricey phone versus needing it can make the difference between whether or not you have emergency funds for sticky last minute situations.

Be smart with your money. Students have been known to drop out of school so they can work full time, not because they cannot afford the cost of getting an education, but in order to keep up with the new fashion, gadget, and electronic trends.

In the long run you're just hurting yourself, not the folks you think you may be impressing with state-of-the-art technology.

How silly is it to drop out of college so you can work to pay an outrageous cell phone bill? We aren't so advanced that it'll be an absolute requirement for work and/or school.

Most students who are employed don't even have jobs that allow them to comfortably pay for the new gadgets, and cover everyday college life expenses. They spend their small checks on splurges, instead of savings. Then, when they receive large refund checks, in many instances, much of it goes towards backed-up bills and debt that could've been paid

off with the same funds used on those over-priced phones, music-players, tablets, and computers.

You're in college and an adult. And as an adult, sometimes you must forgo a desire in order to pursue something that will benefit your future.

It looks senseless when a student tells a professor he or she was unable to purchase a \$35 book due to a lack of money, but then pulls out an electronic device that costs over \$100. Take advantage of free computer labs, and save the extra cash for something you really need. The school's book rental plan only covers books that cost over \$50. Let's be serious, your friends and family will most likely send you a text rather than an email or a video that needs to be downloaded.

Also, more often than not, students using the pricier electronics are the culprits of interrupting instruction time. It's disrespectful to the professor and annoying to students when lessons are interrupted in order to tell students to put away their cell phones and iPods.

Between education and modern technology, education wins. No matter how much of a "techie" you are, it's not worth the money at this time if you have to buy books, food, and pay for shelter.

Every day, a new cell phone, laptop, or other gadget appears on the market. It is usually more expensive than its predecessor. Your education should be your number one priority. Skip out on the unnecessary spending and keep your head in the books. Save the high tech electronics for when you're truly able to afford and enjoy them.

