

Technology moving at a faster rate than ever

The BBC America news service had a small item on Thursday about how some news magazines are going to have video ads or stories right in along with the print. These videos will be on millimeters-thin screens – not all that different from cell phone screens – attached to the pages, will hold about 40 minutes of video and will have rechargeable batteries.

What a fascinating modern age we live in. New technology seems to be inserting itself into our lives at an ever-faster rate these days, and nowhere more so than education. Whereas 20 years ago, a student would be lucky to spend five minutes on a computer in a week, today there are computers in every classroom, mobile shelves of lap-tops roaming the halls and touch screen white-boards tacked up where chalk boards used to be.

Some may see this as a bad thing. But we need to teach according to the times. The whole point of school is to prepare kids to function in the world, and for better or worse, that means learning new technology. Like school, many jobs exclusively use computers, robots or other technology where they wouldn't have even 10 years ago. If we accept this as reality, we need to help our kids adjust into that reality.

Teachers have already gotten started. From putting together pod-casts for the Internet to demonstrating electronic voting machines, teachers are using more and more technology in the classroom. Some teachers even have a designated "Google Wrangler," one student whose job it is to run to the nearest computer and look something up if needed.

This is a good example of how technology can augment a class room rather than being the focus of the lesson. Teachers are, of course, human like the rest of

us and they don't know everything. So when a subject comes up in class that the teacher doesn't know, why not make a lesson out of looking it up.

There's a lot more reliable information on the internet than people think, you just have to know where to get it. And we can teach kids how to do that. Imagine a scenario where a subject like health care comes up in class. A teacher might assign every student to look for information on the Internet and then see how different every student's results differed. You would likely have 30 different takes on the issue. The teacher could then examine each one in turn and show where and how the site got their information and how reliable it might or might not be. Knowing how to find good information is always going to be valuable, whether they are looking in a library or on the Internet.

When you change the focus from learning how to use new technology to learning how it fits into society, you give the students skills they can use beyond just texting faster.

However, all things must be taken in moderation and this applies to technology as well. Most teachers would tell you that the single most valuable tool they have in teaching is one-on-one time with the student. We need to make sure that technology does not replace that kind of human interaction.

Kids today are indoctrinated into technology far earlier than in any other generation, and we need to help them understand how it relates to them, to their family, their friends and to the world. We need to encourage this kind of learning in combination with traditional methods of instruction, because for the vast majority of students, face time with a living, breathing teacher is still going to be the best way to get an education.

Subscriber agrees with editorial

To the editor:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Steve Haynes for his compelling and rational editorial in the Aug. 20, 2009, issue of *The Herald*.

Politically, Steve Haynes and I are on totally opposite sides of the spectrum but I appreciate and respect a thoughtful, constructive opinion on a subject that so many react to emotionally rather than sensibly. Steve Haynes has done that in this case and I applaud his courage in doing so.

I would hope that Steve could also bring the same rational, constructive, thoughtful analysis to the 2nd amendment folks including

Letters to the Editor

the limitations as articulated by the conservatives favorite Supreme Court Justice Scalia, to the 2nd amendment folks who apparently now think it is ok to bring loaded weapons to a political debate on health care reform and presidential appearances.

I have been horrified to see these disturbing images on the nightly news that have nothing to do with health care reform and everything to do with the misinformation and crazy claims arising from the right wing lobbyists intent on defeating anything that resembles health care reform.

We need a thoughtful, rational and respectful debate on health care reform...and it can happen if rational and thoughtful folks like Steve Haynes can and will use his editorial pulpit to lower the temperature of the current screaming matches to allow both progressives and conservatives the time we need to discuss the importance of this major legislation. The status quo on health care in this country is unsustainable.

Thank you
A liberal progressives
and subscriber,
Ron Ewing
St. Francis

Reader not renewing his subscription

Letter to the Editor:

I am writing this email to let you know that I will not be renewing my subscription to your paper. It is because of the editorial written by Steve Haynes in the latest issue regarding the firing of school administrators for praying over the noon meal.

He stated that this country is a secular democracy. He is either

very ignorant is trying to mislead his readers.

A study of the Constitution clearly shows we are a constitutional republic and the preamble clearly states the rights are granted by God. The Bill of Rights guarantees free speech and the press was supposed to be the 4th estate to guard against a tyrannical government.

The press has advocated their duties and is now the mouthpiece for the government. His editorial clearly shows this. It is sad to see even small town papers towing the government line. They were our last line of defense.

Larry Kramer
Bird City

Traveler enjoys stop in Saint Francis

I traveled through St. Francis yesterday morning for the first time ever, after having lived in Kansas all my life. I expected to find a small western Kansas town, which like a lot of others, was dying a slow death.

Much to my surprise, what I found was an oasis. You have an exceptional community that is vibrant and alive with activity and commerce. Perhaps, it is because of the location far away from major communities, or just because of the people who want to make it that way.

I was delighted to see such a clean, well-kept town. The people were kind and very willing to talk to me, including

Mr. Roberson (a very fit 85-year-old retired farmer, who was manicuring his lawn).

The ladies at the local hospital were very hospitable and gave me directions to the Arikaree Breaks, which was the main reason for my venture into Cheyenne County. I am from a part of the state that has similar topography, but this was even more grand.

After several hours of exploring the Breaks, I ventured to Three Corners and put my mark on the registry. I went to several other places that day, but none of the quality of your outstanding community.

You are all to be commended for a true example of a "Kansas Community With Pride." Go

Indians.

Sincerely,
Dr. R.W. "Pete" Meador
Medicine Lodge

P.S. I forgot to mention that two winters ago my daughter and her husband were "snowbound in Goodland" while headed back to Denver, and tried to escape the storm by going around it to the north. Alas, they became snowbound instead, for two days, in St. Francis at the high school. They also raved about the hospitality of the community. Thank you all for taking care of my kids.

P.S.: I come from Medicine Lodge and we also are "The Indians"

Hangin' With Marge

Sports Bar

By
Margaret
Bucholtz



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This last trip was full of "firsts" for me. First time I texted on the phone, and the first time I have ever been in a Sports Bar.

Because there were several of us at Wichita, Darrin spoke up when we were talking about where to go and eat. He said, "There is a Sports Bar here that serves a huge pizza that would serve us all, and it's cheap."

We loaded up in three cars and headed across town to the Sports Bar. Now I don't know what I thought a sports bar was, but it wasn't what I expected. I guess I thought I would be in a bar with no windows in the doors and it would be dark, with loud music. You know the kind of place your mother tells you that if you go you will be stabbed.

All the way over there I had

visions of poles with girls hanging off them, waiters with little skimpy shorts and low-cut tops waiting on us and loud blasting music. However the word cheap food kept me going.

When we got there I was surprised to see no dancers and waiters with long pants and T-shirts on. I was right about the noise, but it wasn't music. On each wall were huge televisions, each one had a different football or baseball game on.

Kurt sat at the end so he could watch the TV and as I was watching him I couldn't believe the different looks on his face. He was totally into whatever game he was watching. His mouth would twist one way and then another way and he never blinked an eye. It was like he was really into the game.

I was wishing I had brought my

camera to get a picture of it. Then it hit me, I had my cell phone. I had seen the grandkids take pictures on their's so it couldn't be hard.

I opened my phone under the table then I got it up to take the picture. I looked the phone over and thought the little round place on the front must be what you looked through to get the picture. However when I looked through it, it was black so I turned the phone over and just pointed it and pushed the button.

By this time everyone was watching and wondering what I was doing. You can imagine the surprise I had when the picture I got was of me. All the kids started laughing and my little 3-year-old granddaughter said, 'Grandma, you are a wreck!'

Casey's Comments

By
Casey
McCormick



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Sometimes good intentions can really run amuck.

I'm speaking of Scotland's release of terrorist Abdel Basel al-Megrahi on the basis of "compassionate grounds."

I wish I could defend the Scots for what they did. I wish all nations were ruled by compassion and good will. I wish we lived in a perfect world. But we don't.

Here is a little review, in case you missed it the first time. In 1988 al-Megrahi conspired with other terrorists and successfully blew up Pan America flight 103 as the Boeing 747 flew high above Lockerbie, Scotland. All of those aboard, which were mostly American, died a horrible death. There were 259 who perished in the air.

The Scots also suffered that day as 11 people from the small village were killed by the falling

wreckage.

Today, the prisoner al-Megrahi has developed prostate cancer and is only given several months to live. So what if he has only served an average of 11 days for each of the 270 victims of the bombing?

Now the good intentions of the Scottish government might have worked if the people of Libya were on the same page. But al-Megrahi's home country, its

leader, Muammar al-Qaddafi and all those who have only hatred for all things Western, turned his return into a celebration. He was paraded along like the home team returning from victory.

Compassionate grounds might sound good and noble, but in the world of reality the words have little meaning.

GOD SAYS

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27

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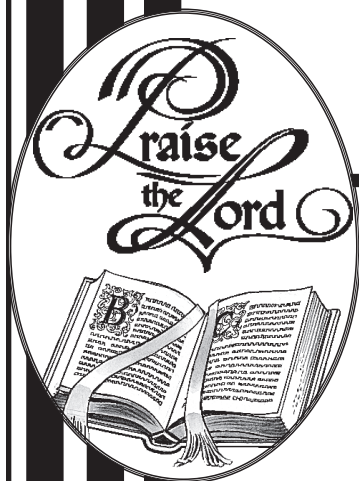
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