



Put to the test

I'm a 21-year-old student in the United States, and as such, I have taken more tests in my life than I can even comprehend. They range from grade school spelling to standardized tests in high school to the midterms and finals each semester at college.

Now I'm at a point where I'm being challenged with a whole new kind of trial. Let me explain.

A couple weeks ago I wrote a column questioning my dependency on technology. I contended that we rely too heavily on modern technology and perhaps we should rethink where we stand.

Now, as I write this very sentence, I am using a borrowed computer. My laptop had a minor run-in with a cup of coffee and now I'm facing a true test. How long can I survive without all the conveniences of having a computer in my room?

As a testament of just how dependent I am, my first instinct when my computer would not turn on was to Google the solution. It took me a minute to figure out why this wouldn't work. Obviously, the next step was to borrow someone else's computer to find the answer.

But alas, no amount of search engine scouring could yield a resolution for my problem. I accepted there was nothing to be done that night and set my laptop aside. Fortunately I was able to focus my attention elsewhere and not dwell on my misfortune. I met up with some friends and we entertained ourselves with online quizzes at www.sporcle.com on someone else's computer.

This morning I woke up for class and prepared for my day as usual. Only today, I didn't have music playing while I got ready, and I didn't peruse any websites before heading off to class. Oddly enough, I found myself with some extra time before calculus was scheduled to begin, so I

Drumroll Please

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actually made it to breakfast.

Between the time I finish class and go to work, I usually play a game or two of solitaire or catch up on some blog reading. Instead, today I grabbed a newspaper and read by a cozy fire. Not a bad substitution, if I do say so myself.

It certainly does sound like being without a computer can have its advantages. But, of course, there's the dark side of the situation. I'm not handling it nearly as well as the breakfast and reading by the fire would suggest.

My computer has been out of commission for less than 24 hours. In that time, I've made 14 phone calls trying to get to the root of the problem, and I've sent several text messages eliciting sympathy for my plight. Good thing my phone isn't broken too, or I'd be going crazy. I've been to four separate locations to use public computers, sending inquiries to computer stores and trying to keep up with all my correspondences.

By all measures it seems I've failed this test. Even with a broken laptop, I can't seem to stop my computer usage.

On the other hand, I have to say I can take a hint. Between the GPS malfunction last month and the current computer mishap, I've had plenty of opportunities to think about technology. Granted, most of my thoughts have been loathing, but still, I honestly believe I have a better perspective of how much I actually rely on technology every single day.

I wouldn't wish a broken computer on anyone, not even to teach a lesson. So be thankful for technology today, and go check out Sporcle.