

The Huffington Post



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Here's to the Technologists

Posted: November 25, 2010 10:00 AM

Just for the record: I'm thankful for my family, my work, my country, and those fighting to keep me safe. I deeply appreciate the gift of a beautiful sunrise, every day I get to be on the planet, and that my big, dimwitted (but so sweet) dog Stuart survived a cancer operation at age 12 and a half and has returned to his normal state of blissful inertia.

But I want to offer a special thanks to the technologists of the world -- all those who work anonymously in the world's labs and engineering departments to come up with the circuits, code and contraptions that have combined to change life as I know it.

I know that technology sometimes cheapens our lives, diverts us from deeper meanings, pollutes our world and, in the wrong hands, even threatens our lives. (It can also break our hearts, as I learned when my hard drive crashed, taking with it months of work that even computer geniuses working in a cleanroom in California could not bring back to me. Back up your files, people.)

I like it anyway.

I know that science is making people healthier, the world cleaner, societies safer, transportation faster, humanity more hopeful.

And I appreciate all of that. I do.

But this thank you is all about me, a member of a generation that knows that "CC" on your e-mail actually stands for carbon copy. Those were sheets of paper with ink on them that you put between two sheets of paper in a typewriter, so when the key hit the paper... oh, never mind.

In ways my children never can -- because they were swaddled in technology's benevolence -- I have points of reference. I remember the heady liberation of my first three-minute-a-page fax machine, and my first cell phone that was the size of a brick. I've been in line at the post office.

In no particular order, to all the technologists who have made my life easier, faster and better, thank you for:

Not having to get out of the chair every time I want to change a channel.

600 channels beamed from space. I only watch seven of them, but I like knowing they're there. You never know when you'll want to see a cheetah chase a wildebeest.

Putting the great, global brain of the internet at my fingertips. Need the population of Zimbabwe? 11,392,629.

GPS maps and the soothing voice of the lady who tells me when and where to turn. She's a genius.

Cable television programming -- which gives me *Mad Men* instead of *Wife Swap*.

One device -- smaller than a deck of cards -- that holds my appointments, my work and everybody I know. When necessary, I can use it to make a phone call.

Text messaging. Sure, it's ruining the English language, and it's not very personal. But with a daughter newly settled in at college and me walking the quiet halls of an empty nest, I'll take it. Luv-U is a universal language.

Twitter. I still don't get it. But I have this feeling that some day it will be important to tell people that I just had lunch.

Being able to find the perfect pair of shoes without leaving the house. And then sending them back for free when I realize they aren't as perfect as they looked.

Giant TV screens and theater-quality sound, with nobody munching popcorn right behind me or with a giant head right in front of me. Just Stuart in my lap. Snoring.

Letting me buy the two songs from a CD that I want without paying for the eight that I don't.

Most of all...

Thank you for putting me in charge. You have moved power from the center to the edge. You have broken down the barriers. You have removed the filters. You have created an electronic democracy that Jefferson would have loved.

I look forward to hydrogen cars, household robots, moon colonies and synthetic body parts.

Until then, thanks again for my iPod.