

Community Comment
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Sam Pennisi

Hi Tech Abuse

In my Rotary Club I am known as a person who doesn't respond to e-mail. Some see me as anti technology and some attribute my lack of interest to my age. I turned 66 this last February, so it's true that the majority of my working life outside of Innkeeping was before there was a computer on every desk. However, I was an Aerospace Engineering major my first two years of college and while they were primitive, we used computers the size of a room for complex calculations. My little laptop has more computing power than those room size units and are a lot easier to use.

I am not anti computer or anti technology. In fact, these are some of my favorite things. But they are tools. Like in my wood shop, I need to know how to use my tools, what they are and are not capable of, and when not to use them.

This week there was some news that got too little attention. It seems that some hackers broke in to who knows what internet address and identified highly personal and financial information on some prominent people. How prominent? The first lady of the United States, the Vice President, and Beyonce to name a few. How could this happen? I think it was inevitable.

Think about it. We e-mail and we face book. We order goods and services on line. We do on line banking and job interviewing. We post our pictures for 500 of our closest friends. Our service clubs and family members share mass e-mails or other forms of on line communications. We buy tickets and use credit cards. We deal with social security and transmit our Social Security numbers. We pay our bills and receive statements on line. In other words, we have come to depend on the use of the internet for the most private transactions we do in life. And we are shocked when this information is hacked and shared inappropriately! And we are shocked at the increasing incidence of identity theft!

We shouldn't be. We have chosen to give this information freely without a care in the world. How many people have tried to get that fortune from Nigeria. All you have to do is give some unknown person your bank info to help someone and claim your fortune. These scams are everywhere but we don't need to even be that gullible. Heck, we give *away* enough ~~away~~ information just ordering boots from L.L.Bean.

We need to remember that this technology is a tool. It is to be used wisely, appropriately, and with due caution. No government agency said we had to; but now we even e-file our tax returns. I am not anti technology but I think we have been stupid and careless about our use of this tool and how dependent we have become on it. I don't worry so much about my information but too much is out there. But I do worry about how vulnerable we

as a nation are to cyber attack. I don't think we have given enough care to this issue and I think we waste a great deal of time doing nonsense. We are losing the personal touch.

But on a lighter note, the Arcata Rotary Club is hosting it's Annual Wine Festival on March 23rd. It's our main fundraiser for the projects we do for the community. It features local wines and great food. Ask any Arcata Rotarian for tickets or buy them at the door. You will hear more about this great event.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment. On the radio, not on line!