

Do you have a Technology Quotient?

Are you using modern technology or are you stuck in the past? Here we offer you a simple test to see whether you are a technophile or a technofart

Last summer we became a 4 car family. My wife and I have always had a car each but during the last year my son passed his test and bought the obligatory overpriced wreck with alloy wheels and a boom boom stereo. But as the summer holiday was looming and we didn't have a reliable family car we popped down to the local dealer and bought a new family car. When I asked if they wanted to part exchange my 8 year old Fiat Panda the dealers shook their heads righteously and intoned together with second hand feeling "I'm sorry sir but we don't want your car".

What? – my 50,000 mile Panda which does 45 mpg, has cheap tax, cheap insurance and never needs maintenance and that no-one will ever steal because it's so undesirable?

"Yes sir"

"OK I'll keep it!"

And that's how I found myself a four car family. I still go to work in the Panda, which does 45 mpg, has cheap tax, cheap insurance and never needs maintenance but I leave the new family car in the drive for weekends and holidays and racking up non existent mileage.

Then I thought back to when I was young. My parents were a one car family for a very long time (in fact it was the same Standard Eight for nearly 20 years) and they were also a one phone family (phone number Icknield 430 and you had to stand in the dark freezing hallway as you talked to your friends while the heavy bakelite apparatus slowly wore out your arm muscles.. and what was worse was that it was a party line so now and again some neighbour that you never talked to would squawk hello...hello...hello for minutes on end) and a one TV family and a one holiday a year family and...

I looked at my 21st century family and pondered about how much more of everything we had. One car – four cars; one phone – 9 phones; one TV – 5 TVs;

"Hang on a mo' did you say nine phones?"

"Er yes. 5 people with a mobile each, a BT line, a second BT line for internet, a cable line and an obsolete pay as you go that still receives calls 'cos great aunt Flora hasn't upgraded her mobile for years and it still rings the old stored numbers..."

Holidays? There's ski-ing, whit week in France, 3 weeks in the summer, a quick autumn break for mum & dad without the kids...

TVs? One in each bedroom plus the big one in the lounge... Videos? Yes there's four of them. DVDs – I keep one in my back pocket don't you? And while we're here how big is your USB stick? A gigabyte - you cheapskate!

Is there anything else that sets you apart from your parents?

4 mini CD systems, 3 walkpersons, 2 Minidisc players, several items that can only be identified by a combination of MP, I, W, USB, WAV, MPEG and a series of numbers. 3 toilets – the ensuite, the

family bathroom, the downstairs loo by the front door... 2 computers, so adults and kids won't argue too much. 2 internet connections, so adults and kids won't argue too much. 2 freezers, one in the garage to hold those fabulous half price beef joints from Sainsbury's. 2 fridges, one in the garage to hold the beer & wine brought back from France in the back of the MPV. Garage – did I mention it was a double?

So where does this rampant consumerism take us? To a new way of measuring how we are using technology or whether we don't. Take a few minutes to add up your TQ and see where you fit into this brave new world.

Add together the number of phones, computers, cars, videos, TVs, CD players, other music playing devices, freezers, fridges, toilets in your house. Done it? Good! Now divide by the number of people who live there. Finally rate your self according to this friendly scale

Under 3 – technophobe, between 3 and 6 techno friendly, 7- 10 technotechno (looking dangerous), over 10 – a consumer on the edge of overspend ...over 20 - beam me up Scotty...

Finished? Now let's start on the real technophile stuff. How many times in the past year have you bought something via the net (add a point for each...) How many email addresses do you have (add 3 points for each) How many Domain names have you purchased (add 5 points for each).

Anyone with a score over 50? Deduct 3 million if you've recently bought a USB turntable to convert your vinyl to digital. Deduct 10 gigabytes if you enjoy walking the dog through the park every morning. Forget this article completely if you love walking through autumn leaves with the grandchildren and enjoying an ice cream at the kiosk at the park (even though it's bloomin' freezing)

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