BLINK, BLINK, BLINK...

Over the holidays, I enjoyed an all-too-brief respite from what I like to call the tyranny of the blinking red light.

If you own a mobile phone or a smart phone, you know what I mean. No matter how you mute the ringtone or suppress whatever wacky important call from the boss or spam from that annoyer. It doesn't care if you've received an out for you to stop and check.

The blinking light is an equal opportunity annoyance. It doesn't care if you've received an important call from the boss or spam from that Nigerian prince... it blinks the same and cries keter or, God forbid, a PR guy with a great light is a nearly constant companion. It tells of new messages in any one of various time-wasting games. But, a good chunk of it is serious and useful. I take the occasional sneak preview of an article or column out to the 500 or so who follow us to date. During the GIS, we’ll use Twitter to send updates, reports and photos out to attendees and those of you at home. If you’re going to the show (or not) and you’re a Twitter type, make sure to follow us.

I fear that I’ll eventually burn out the blinking red light. If that happens, I’d be lost. The blinking red light may be a tyrant that demands my attention, but it’s also a beacon to the new world of communications that brings global information – stuff you want and you choose to receive – into your hands nearly instantaneously. In a way, that little red blinking eye is telling me, “It’s time to learn something new.”

Speaking of which, we’re delivering something else new besides our Twitter. Facebook and news feeds. We relaunched our e-newsletter earlier this month and renamed it, “Fast & Firm.” The goal is to give you news, perspective, analysis and original ideas (not just junk from Google searches) plus video, podcasts and links to the best blogs out there. Look for Fast & Firm every other Monday and our new Video Plus! multimedia e-news and our new product showcase e-news in alternating weeks.

In the meantime, if you simply can’t stand that blinking red light, here’s a tip: black electrician’s tape. Covers the damn thing right up and you can blissfully ignore the outside world if you so choose. It’s a wonderful low-tech solution for the tyranny of high-technology.