

iCRACK

As regular readers of my columns know, I have a wee bit of an addictive personality.

Give me a taste of something good – booze, cigarettes, crossword puzzles, Facebook, fly fishing – and I'll generally find a way to turn it into an obsession. I'm fun like that.

Thankfully, one exception is I've never been a technology junkie. Unlike many friends, I've never stood outside of Best Buy at 5 a.m. to get the newest gaming system, smart phone or 72-inch HDTV. I don't anxiously count the days until the new "Madden NFL" is released. My car is GPS-free but the glove box is still stuffed with badly refolded, old-school maps.

My BlackBerry is a tool with which I have a love/hate relationship. To me, it's really just a phone with e-mail on it. I cannot, as I have witnessed younger folks do on many occasions, multi-task by blindly thumb-replying to an e-mail while never breaking eye contact with another person and carrying on a lucid conversation. I am old as dirt and my cerebral cortex just isn't wired that way.

As the father of two teen-aged boys, I did succumb to the scourge of texting. (It was that or not communicate with them at all.) I do, however, insist on annoying them by using standard grammar and spelling. Instead of "RU home?" I will text "Have you successfully arrived at your residence yet?" Drives them absolutely nuts.

I don't own a TiVo and only have basic cable. That's fine because, with the exception of sports, my only must-see TV is "Hoarders."

Oh...dear...Lord. If you've seen this show, you're nodding your head in amazed agreement right now. If you haven't seen it, the only way I can describe "Hoarders" is that it's about people who are so crazy that they purposely live in their own filth and will argue for hours when a sane person tries to help them by throwing away their 6-foot-high pile of "Cat Fancy" magazines. It's a wonderful, awful train wreck guaranteed to make even the goofiest amongst us feel superior. I adore it. But I digress...

As a techno-skeptic, I've never been very impressed or interested with any of the much-ballyhooed Apple products. Never had a Mac – always a PC. Never owned an iPod – my

Walkman is still awesome. And, thanks to a million-year ironclad contract with Verizon, couldn't get an iPhone if I wanted to.

That's why I was gobsmacked, befuddled and otherwise discombobulated to find a brand spanking new iPad sitting on my desk. It was, I was told later, part of a company-wide program to promote our vast superiority in every aspect of digital communications. I was to learn how to use it and take it with me to trade shows, conferences and meetings to demonstrate all of the amazing geeky things we can do to communicate with you, my early-adapting friends.

I eyed the thin black thing with suspicion and disdain, slid it under a pile of papers and pretended it wasn't there.

Finally, with the weekend approaching, I stuck it in my backpack and took it home to at least figure out how to turn the damned thing on. Saturday morning rolled around and I warily punched buttons until the device lit up.

About 96 hours later, I was sitting in the same spot... hollow-eyed, dehydrated, fingertip swollen from millions of taps and swipes... completely, utterly and unabashedly in the throes of iPad addiction. I had downloaded 652 apps, most of which were freebies that create fart

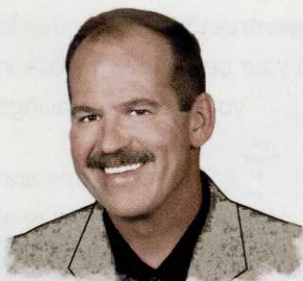
sounds or make cartoon kittens talk. I had invested a rent check (or two) in downloading every David Hasselhoff song ever recorded.

I had smoked the iCrack... and I liked it.

Curiously, among the thousands of apps you can download, there are very few for turfheads. I did find BASF's cool new web-based disease ID app online, but if you go to the App Store, GCI is the only magazine that has an app... and it's damned good.

Anyway, the current dearth of maintenance apps will undoubtedly be filled soon. It seems logical that little helper apps BASF's that you can use in the field are perfect for these devices. Need quick info on how to change a belt on an XYZ brand fairway mower? There will be an app for that. The iStimp? Gotta have it.

The point is the world is coming to our hands via iPads and smart phones whether we like it or not. The question is not whether we will be using them, but how. GCI



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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

Serving the Business of Golf Course Management

Vol. 22 No. 11

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