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Getting Organized

An e-newsletter of organizing tips for faculty members. November 2006.

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"Hey, I love having lots of contacts and easy connectivity, but in an age when so many people you know -- and even more you don't know -- can contact you by e-mail or cellphone, I'm finding this age of interruption overwhelming. I was much smarter when I could only do one thing at a time. I know I'm not alone."

-- Thomas Friedman, New

York Times columnist and author

In a recent [New York Times editorial](#), columnist and author Thomas Friedman wrote about his ride in a taxi while visiting France. From the first moment, the cab driver was talking on his cellphone, and the two men only exchanged one line of dialogue about the hotel destination. Other than that, the taxi driver spoke on his cell, watched a movie on his GPS road map device, and oh, yes, drove the cab. Friedman found himself writing on his laptop and listening to his iPod.

Friedman points out that the one thing they didn't do was talk to each other. "Yes, technology can make the far feel near," he wrote. "But it can also make the near feel very far."

Technology is a great way to hide from the world. We live in an age where we can download more music that we can ever possibly listen to, watch any TV show that our Tivos and DVRs can capture, bury ourselves with e-mail and Internet surfing, and constantly look like we're talking to ourselves in a fit of what I call technological schizophrenia. A recent report came out that Americans have less friends than they use to do because we spend so much time watching TV or chatting on the Internet. When you're more concerned about someone on a reality TV show versus someone in your life, it may be time for a reality check of your own.

As we enter the crush of the holiday season, it's even more important to connect with those we truly care about without the gadgets standing in our way. Make an effort to have a real face-to-face conversation with someone. And leave the gadgets at home.

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Got Scary Clutter? Organizing Expo

Our fifth annual Organizing Expo was a big hit thanks to all of you who attended. For those who couldn't make it, here are a few new things our vendors showcased.

- [Fellowes Powershred shredders](#). A new line of the company's shredders feature SafeSense Technology to prevent children or pets from accidentally turning it on. As soon as little hands touch the vicinity of the shredder entry, it automatically shuts off.
- [Binderbox Storage Box](#). Unlike typical storage boxes, this box is made taller to

accommodate binders. These extra deep boxes can hold up to eight full 1 1/2 inch binders.

- **[Optima PowerEase Reduced Effort Stapler](#)**. It looks like any ordinary stapler, but with the power of a mere two fingers, this latest product from Swingline will staple up to 25 sheets of paper. This stapler demands 70 percent less effort than regular staplers.
- **[Daytimer Diabetes Management Set](#)**. This calendar helps those who need to manage diabetes, and the set includes space to record your appointments, physical activity, medications, blood sugar levels, and food intake. The set also has monthly Blood Sugar pages, a shopping guide pad, and tips on nutrition, meal planning and exercise. It can be adapted to anyone who needs to monitor their medications and food intake. For those wanting something on a smaller scale, there is a [Diabetes Management box](#) which comes with a planner small enough to fit into your purse or pocket.
- **[Expandable Sheet Protectors](#)**. Both Office Depot and ACCO offer sheet protectors which can expand to hold bulkier documents in a binder.
- **[Post-It Durable Tabs](#)**. These tabs are similar to the Avery Write-On Tabs but come in a larger variety of colors. Use the tabs to make pages or create your own index, and the best part is that the ink doesn't smear when you write on them.
- **[Rolodex Cord Organizer](#)**. The cord organizer helps you organize your tangled web of computer cords, and each organizer comes with an adhesive fastener that you can stick on your desktop monitor, laptop stand, or behind your desk. It manages up to six cords. If your desktop or laptop stands need more of a power boost, Rolodex also has a combination [Single Power Outlet and 2 Port USB 2.0 Hub](#), which can be added to your existing stand.
- **[ProClick Pronto P3000](#)**. This binding machine automatically binds your documents. If you make a change, you can simply remove the binder, change out the page, and close it back. It's that easy.

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Holiday Housecleaning

I really don't like housework, and I'm all for anything that will make it easier for me. In Donna Smallin's book *Cleaning Plain and Simple*, she outlines a few strategies to use, especially as the holiday season gears up and those relatives start showing up on your doorstep.

Smallin advises either doing the entire job all at once or breaking it into smaller chunks, such as working on cleaning 30 minutes a day or doing one task per day until the job is complete. To prepare for those "unexpected" guests, Smallin advises:

- Stash dirty dishes in the dishwasher.
- Wipe off kitchen counters, the stovetop, and the bathroom counters. Target's Method brand cleaners have a nice fragrance that's not overpowering.
- Clean the toilet.
- Hang fresh towels in the bathroom and kitchen.
- Gather up any clutter in a laundry basket and hide it in a closet or in the laundry room.
- If you don't want any guests wandering into a room, just close the door.
- Use scented candles or spray air freshener and dim the lights. If they can't see the dust, they will never know that it's there.
- Take out the trash.

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Got Clutter?

I have developed 15-minute, 30-minute and 45-minute presentations on organizing and time management. Moving to a new building? I also have a 15-minute presentation on preparing for a move for your department.

I also do one-on-one sessions in your office and help you come up with a solution. To schedule a presentation or a one-on-one appointment, call (713) 792-8061 or e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jjsimon@mdanderson.org) (jjsimon@mdanderson.org).

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail [Janice Simon](mailto:jjsimon@mdanderson.org) (jjsimon@mdanderson.org).

Happy Organizing!

-- Janice

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