

NewsLetter



Christmas Stories

First Tech gift - Let's kick things off by reminiscing about the very first electric tech gift I ever received - Aurora Slot Cars. These innovative little cars zoomed around a plastic track, giving me the power to create my very own racing circuit. If you're in the market for a slot car racing set, Amazon has a fantastic selection. Just remember to go with the AFX brand so you can easily expand your collection with more cars and track pieces. It's mind-blowing to think that I still have all of my slot cars and track from 48 years ago when I was just a wee lad. Time flies when you're having fun, especially when you're racing around in style with Aurora Slot Cars!

Not a Gamer - Video games were never really my thing growing up. Sure, we had Pong and the first Atari system in the 70s, but they were pretty dull compared to driving the old field cars around my parent's oval harness track, those were some fun times back then. Now fast forward to Christmas in 1991, when my kids got their hands on the Sega Genesis system with Sonic the Hedgehog and Road Rash games. I reluctantly hooked it up to the living room TV and I watched them play Sonic all Christmas day and night. I was also mesmerized watching them play Road Rash, so once the kids finally crashed, I decided to give it a go myself. Hours flew by, the sun started to rise, and before I knew it, I was completely hooked on gaming. Now, 59 years later, I'm still a die-hard gamer and always will be. And you better believe that getting to the E3 Show is at the top of my bucket list one of these years.

Is gaming in your future? Gaming is a blast! For those of us who love watching baseball football and watching some car racing, like Modifieds and Stockcar racing but can't quite swing the cost of hitting the track ourselves, gaming is the perfect solution. It's like having all the thrills of real racing right at your fingertips or just setting up a steering wheel with gas and brake pedals might be easier and more fun than you think!! On a rainy day when you're stuck inside with nothing to do, gaming is the ultimate boredom buster. It's like playing chess or checkers, but on a massive TV screen

Tech No Dad - The age-old struggle of parents versus technology. It seems like everyone has that one parent who just can't seem to figure out how to work anything beyond a toaster. Take my dad, for example - a fantastic, hardworking father, but when

it comes to connecting the new V V D movie disco player to the TV, it's like watching a comedy of errors. My son had to step in and save the day, but when it came to the remote control, well, let's just say my mom had to swoop in and take charge. It's a classic tale of generations clashing in the digital age.

Upgrading your Tech on a Budget during the holiday season.

Though Black Friday and Cyber Monday are behind us that doesn't mean you have missed your chance to pick up a new piece of technology at a reduced cost.

There will be a lot of deals still through the holidays. Many companies want you to buy the next best thing and pay marketing departments the big bucks to make that possible. They will have special deals online, last minute holiday deals, and the "We have to meet our projected goals so please buy now" deals.

If you don't want to buy brand new devices at brand new prices you are in luck, though not before the holidays I am afraid. Once everyone who stretches their wallets on the Brand-new shiny devices gives their gifts as intended the receiver often must make a choice. "What to do with the old?"

When looking for deals on last generations tech or even just slightly used you can look at various online marketplaces starting around February for people selling their old tech after receiving their Christmas upgrades. You can often find older generations of the type of tech you are looking for at a significantly reduced rate. If they are not damaged often there is nothing wrong with the technology used other than it's not the newest and shiniest. This benefits you.

The reason I omit January from starting to look for used tech is because this is the time when people mull over their purchases, decide if it's what they really wanted or realize that what they purchased was the wrong thing or the person they purchased it for already had it. This is when you can start checking big box stores for deals on open box items or online retailers for "Refurbished" deals. People have returned Their brand-new shiny items leaving you to benefit from slightly reduced prices because the stores cannot call them new anymore and must price them as used.



So, if you are looking to be frugal and don't mind waiting until after the holidays to find that tech upgrade you want without breaking the bank you have options.

says the Stickler

Be alert. The world needs all the alerts it can get.

Lifelong learning is the continuous pursuit of knowledge and skills throughout one's life. This practice is crucial for several reasons, impacting personal growth, professional development, and societal progress.



Personal Growth

Lifelong learning fosters personal growth by keeping the mind active and engaged. It helps individuals stay curious and open-minded, which can lead to a more fulfilling and enriched life. Engaging in new learning experiences can also boost cognitive function and delay the onset of age-related cognitive decline. For example, learning a new language or musical instrument can enhance brain plasticity and improve memory.

Professional Development

In the professional realm, lifelong learning is essential for staying relevant in a rapidly changing job market. As technology and industries evolve, new skills and knowledge are required to remain competitive. Continuous learning enables individuals to adapt to these changes, enhancing their employability and career prospects. For instance, professionals who regularly update their skills through courses, workshops, or certifications are more likely to advance in their careers and seize new opportunities.

Adaptability and Resilience

Being a lifelong learner also cultivates adaptability and resilience. In a world where change is constant, the ability to learn and adapt is invaluable. Lifelong learners are better equipped to handle unexpected challenges and transitions, whether in their personal lives or careers. This adaptability can lead to greater confidence and a proactive approach to problem-solving.

Social and Community Engagement

Lifelong learning can also enhance social and community engagement. By participating in educational activities, individuals can connect with others who share similar interests, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Additionally, lifelong learners often contribute to society by sharing their knowledge and skills, mentoring others, and participating in civic activities.

Innovation and Progress

On a broader scale, lifelong learning drives innovation and societal progress. A culture that values continuous learning encourages creativity and the development of new ideas. This can lead to advancements in various fields, from science and technology to the arts and

humanities. Societies that prioritize education and lifelong learning are better positioned to address complex global challenges and drive sustainable development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, being a lifelong learner is important for personal growth, professional development, adaptability, social engagement, and societal progress. By embracing continuous learning, individuals can lead more fulfilling lives, stay competitive in their careers, and contribute positively to their communities and the world at large.

Getting even at Christmas Time!

My mother gave me an IBM Aptiva with Windows 3.1 for Christmas one year. OK, a long long long time ago. I think she may have gotten a deal on it, not because she worked at IBM but because it failed before I even got it home to my house. I tried to leave it there but Mother said “Hey Mike, don’t forget your new computer.” Darn, she noticed that had left it behind. The thing weighed about 30 lbs., but that was nothing compared to the “17-inch monitor that came in at a staggering 70lbs. You guys got it easy, let me tell you, but I was conditioned from carrying my boombox up on my shoulder.

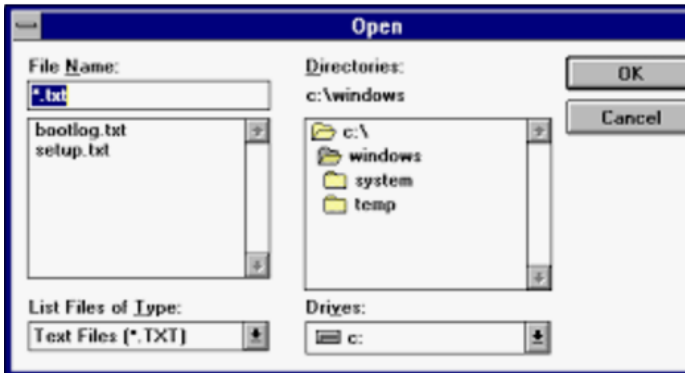
Now, I come from a long line of Computer gurus and its in my blood, but when that pc failed, I knew, nothing had changed since the days of my younger years. Back when computers did what they were supposed to do. Beep and make colors on your monitor and occasionally play the all too familiar game “Pong.”

I had taken some programming way back when (1983 through 1985), learning the basics with BASIC (Beginners' All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code), FORTRAN (still used today), COLBOL (Common Business-Oriented Language) and of course DOS.

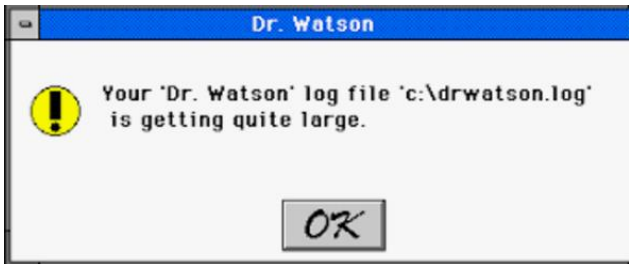
I had no idea what this “Windows 3.1” was all about. It looked cool but that was about it. It was clunky, slow and made these funny pictures all over my monitor when I moved my mouse.



And, where I do I save files? I mean, what is this?



And for some light humor, I named my puppy dog “Watson”



Or how about this one? If you choose to “Ignore”, does the problem go away like a nagging child or if you choose “Close” then your app will terminate? If you pick the latter of the 2 , it will take a minimum of 3 hours to reinstall the application because its on 20 or more 3.5 floppy disks, each taking more than 10 minutes to upload to your computer. Do the math, I’m correct on this one.



I save the best for last “Fatal error.” That was never a pleasant pop up. I mean really, “Fatal” (one could only hope when your computer has an attitude like that), but c’mon, why that word? I always had that feeling while waiting for Bill Gates to come to my house and yell at me with the question “What inarnation’s are you doing” then blast me with a water gun and say **Hasta La Vista Baby!** Hopefully, he aims for the computer!



Also, where does it say “Are you sure you want to delete this (.ini or .bat) file?” Nope, back then Windows let you delete anything and everything. Then, Poof, another Blue Screen of death.

Now you see why I “accidently” tried to leave it there at her house. I could go on about this “wonderful gift”, Mother gave me, but I would need my own SharePoint Doc site.

To this day, I thank my mother for that computer because it taught me how to keep my cool even when the computer got HOT!

Happy Holidays and don’t let the Computer Scrooge take the fun out of yours this Holiday Season!

The Funny Pages will return in 2025

From everyone in the IT Department wishing you all

A Merry Christmas

It’s a Wonderful Life

for

A Christmas Story

while on a

Christmas Vacation







....and to all a good night