

# Down Home: Thank God for the infernal Internet

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Technology and I have a love/hate relationship.

Lately, in a dramatic shift in fortunes, the love side seems to be winning.

For several years, that hasn't been the case. It all started with the advent of either laptops and email or cell phones. Frankly, they all developed so long ago, I don't remember which came first.

What I definitely remember, however, was the world before email and cell phones. Back in the "good ol' days," life was simpler, slower, more compartmentalized. And we didn't know how good we had it.

## **A time when I could be alone in a world of ideas**

Before I owned a cell phone or signed up for an email account, I loved airplane trips. Airports and planes existed on the far side of the communication boundary. No calls. No messages. No intrusions. When I traveled, I stuffed my briefcase with books. And even though the airport crowds might equal the population density of Manhattan at rush hour, I could be alone in a world of ideas.

The same was true, for the most part, every evening. In my jobs, at least, carrying very much work home was practically impossible. So, once I rose from my desk, work basically stayed right there until the next morning. If I absolutely had to, I could produce a story on a typewriter. The phone rang at home once in awhile, but since most work had to wait until the morning, so did the calls.

Then came email and laptops and cell phones and universal wireless

connection. Futurists said technological devices would simplify our lives. They would speed up our productivity. We would spend less time working, because we could do it faster.

Turns out, futurists didn't know their heads from a hashtag.

### **Increasing expectations**

With cell phones, tablets, laptops and wi-fi, we can work from anywhere. And usually, we do. Expectation increased exponentially. Every moment is a potential deadline; every hour is an opportunity to get stuff done.

So, now we work everywhere. Because we can. Check email while brushing teeth. Read reports over breakfast. Walk the dog and listen to voicemail. Seems like we stay connected 24/7/365. I began to wish nobody ever [invented the Internet](#).

But then God gave Joanna and me grandchildren. Specifically, that would be Ezra and Eleanor, who live four and 11 hours away, respectively.

### **Thank the Lord for cell phones**

Ezra is 4, and he's never not known who we are, because we video-chat with him just about every week. Now, mostly, we talk with his mama, Lindsay, who pans their den with her video-phone while Ezra runs around the room shooting baskets, calling out to Jody and Marvo, and showing us his toys.

Eleanor is going on 4 months old, and she hasn't figured out Jody and Marvo just yet. But thanks to video clips on Instagram and occasional video calls, we stay up-to-date on all her tricks. Last week, we watched her learn to cackle. By the time you read this, who knows what she'll be doing. Well, we will.

Thank the Lord for cell phones, tablets, laptops and wi-fi. Of course, I'm

never far from work. But then again, Jo and I never are far from Ezra and Eleanor.