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I can see my own voice

My son mentioned to me recently that it was about 60 years between the time we first learned to fly and the moment man first stepped on the moon.

It's amazing to think our society could progress that quickly through technology, yet there is evidence of it all around us every day.

In fact I'm trying not to be overwhelmed by technology every day. I don't tweet, or twitter, whatever that means. I don't have a Facebook. I don't have a MySpace or my page or face page or any of those things. I don't blog; I don't read blogs; and I don't want to blog. Frankly, my brain is so full with the technology I'm trying to master I don't even want to know more about those things. If the technology advances any more, I'll have to quit practicing law just to figure out what the hell I'm doing with all of these machines.

I do recognize I should at least become literate when it comes to the terms and trends evolving in technology, but I'm not sure at what point returns begin diminishing. Even though I don't blog or tweet, I can't help but wonder what type of ego someone has to have to assume the rest of the world wants to know whether they're shopping, eating, walking to a particular destination or, frankly, why the rest of the world cares.

Keith Olbermann had a problem when somebody else used his name to twitter, which means there were thousands of people assuming they were keeping track of Keith's every movement when, in reality, they were following a fraud.

I'm finishing this column while on trial in Buffalo. In an unusual move, I started writing it almost two weeks ago — an attempt, during a mid-life crisis, to overcome the result of a lifetime of fine-tuning the art of procrastination. I'm really glad I finally started writing one in advance, because as jury selection continues in another hour or so, I won't have a great deal of time to devote to anything other than the trial.

Thanks to the miracle of modern technology I was able to pull out my laptop — with new, freshly-installed speech recognition software and a microphone — allowing me to sit comfortably away from it while still dictating at a pretty fast pace.

I'm dictating this very column with voice technology, luckily the newest technology — and, I might as well give a plug here — the new Dragon NaturallySpeaking 10, which I got from my friends at the locally-owned and operated Achieve Results. Dana Abramson, the owner, has just explained to me the difference between voice recognition and speech recognition, so I just had to redo a portion of my dictation to acknowledge that, and I now stand corrected.

I'm still trying to get over the guilt I have from the time I con-

vinced my cousin, Jim Philippone, to start using the old-fashioned version of this technology 15 years ago, when computers were slightly more advanced than wood-burning stoves. I remember watching him as he spent hours trying to learn speech recognition. I'm lucky he still talks to me, let alone spends many Sunday mornings helping to co-host the radio show. What's really amazing is how old-fashioned computers were a mere 15 years ago.

Perhaps some of you are wondering how I can possibly segue the first moonwalk into this column. Many people are unaware that the computing potential of NASA at the time the space shuttle first touched down on the moon was merely that of what we now refer to as an IBM XT. It's true, and it's hard to believe how primitive that computer was. I bought one from IBM when it first came out and it had a 10-megabyte hard drive. It retailed for \$10,000 and was an amazing advance in technology because it did not need the system disk and a data disc, on which computers had relied until that time.

I probably would've felt better if I'd known it matched the entire NASA capability during that moonwalk, but I can tell you that in yesterday's mail I received more e-mail data than the entire hard drive would have held. How could this be possible?

Anyway, before I head off again to court, I also should tell you that if it weren't for the undo key on a computer, I don't think I could make it through the day. A good friend of mine just said that if there was a key like that in life, we'd all have a much easier time of it. I think he's right, and I intend to investigate immediately.

By the way, in the mere 14 days since I started this column, I have now been convinced that if I don't twitter, Facebook, my page, MySpace page, MySpacewalk page, tweet, join LinkedIn and blog, I'll soon be out of business. It was bad enough avoiding succumbing to the temptation of buying mass advertising or billboards to try to stay alive; now I've got a try to figure out what to do with all of the new technology that, two weeks ago, I was proud not to have to partake in. But, as of today, I have to wonder if I have to rethink that too. If my brain survives this latest episode, I'll be back again in two weeks.

Thanks for reading.

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