

Obama, BlackBerrys and leadership



Michael Ridley

President Obama; it seems unlikely even now. However, the most recent inauguration in the United States has signaled changes in so many ways. One of those involved information technology (IT).

Never has there been a clearer distinction between the candidates and their use of IT. In a nutshell, John McCain had someone else print out his emails and read them to him while Barack Obama wouldn't let anyone take his BlackBerry from his hands. For McCain, technology is a tool; for Obama, technology is a way of life. It's a remarkable change. Incredibly, Obama is the first

American president to use email while in office. The first. In 2009.

Everyone doubts that Obama's BlackBerry is standard issue. The ObamaBerry is almost certainly unique in its features to encrypt data and protect communications. Risks aside, he has always been quick to adopt new technologies.

As the campaign rolled on, it was easy to laugh at McCain and his computer illiteracy. Obama on the other hand, was cool, connected, hip and online. He (or at least his workers) made good use of Twitter (the social networking poster child of 2008) and currently has over 144,000 followers (and is following over 168,000 people – including me).

Now I know it's easy to diminish and dismiss Twitter. Micro-blogging is an odd sounding thing but Obama, and others, use it well. Twitter poses the question: "What are you doing?"

By posting his itinerary and links to press reports, articles or comments, Obama used Twitter to create an unprecedented sense of intimacy. You were right there with him as he trudged through the primaries and into the campaign itself.

So what about our prime minister? Recently, Stephen Harper said to the *Toronto Star*, "I don't have a BlackBerry and I've never had a BlackBerry."

Apparently, he doesn't have any of the other stuff either. *The Star* reports that he has "ditched the other trappings of a connected life – his cell phone and email account." Harper's defense is reasonable... to a point.

"I've actually taken the view as prime minister that if I start using these things, then I'll be doing them myself instead of my staff... I try and keep focused on the big picture," Harper said.

Too important to carry a BlackBerry? Obama wanted to carry his for fear of "being in a bubble." I worry that our leadership has deliberately chosen the bubble. All this reminds me of those folks who proudly proclaim they don't own a TV. It's like a badge of honour; some sort of statement against all that is wrong in the world. Bollocks. Personally, I think it's just an anti-tech fetish. And I think it's dangerous.

Having my peeps read my email, filter my communications and interpret the world just seems so 10 minutes ago. The enormous transformation enabled by social networking and ubiquitous communication is that they can bring people together in new and authentic ways.

So what about Guelph? With respect to IT, is the leadership at the University "McCain" or

"Obama?" U of G President Alastair Summerlee is as much a CrackBerry addict as Obama. Not only that but he blogs, has videos on YouTube and talks in an informed, visionary way about how social networking is changing our understanding of knowledge, discovery and the nature of universities. Bottom line: Alastair gets it.

Engaging and embracing technology is not merely symbolic of generational change; it is a clear sign of intentionally becoming part of a participatory culture. Some get it, and some are going to be off line, out of touch, irrelevant. Which are you?

Michael Ridley is the Chief Information Officer and Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph. His column appears biweekly. Send your questions or concerns to mridley@uoguelph.ca.

Don't be so anal



Carly Vandergriendt

The great thing about anal sex is that it's a very inclusive sexual act – everyone has a butt, so technically everyone can experience it. But many people are not open to the idea of anal penetration because of negative attitudes surrounding this particular type of intercourse. Some worry that it is painful or unclean, while others are stuck thinking that it is an act only for homosexuals – these beliefs are simply ignorant and untrue. Anyone and everyone can enjoy anal sex.

Anal sex can be intensely pleasurable when done properly, as the anus is one of the body's most sensitive erogenous zones. Nerve endings surround the opening of the anus and line the inside of the cavity, making this area sensitive to oral stimulation and penile penetration. It can also act as a gateway to other pleasure zones; the prostate for males, or the tip of the internal clitoral body for females. But learning how to find these zones requires patience, practice, and an open mind (and butt).

There are several key things to remember when engaging in anal play – the first is that lubricant is your best friend. Where a vagina will naturally become wet with stimulation, the anus must

rely on lubricant to make things go smoothly. Look for lube that is water or silicone-based and don't use oil-based lubes as they will degrade the latex in a condom. It's also very important to avoid lubes that claim to give a tingling or freezing sensation. With these types of lubes, you risk making your anus less sensitive to pain that might indicate internal damage.

Pain during anal sex can be avoided if you take the time to learn how to do it right – start small and go slow. Work up to inserting anything large (a penis or dildo) by first inserting small things like fingers or miniature sex toys. Be careful about what it is you are putting in there – the walls of the anus and the rectum are easily susceptible to damage from sex toys with jagged edges or ridges or sharp fingernails.

Relaxation is also key to making your experience pain-free. The anal sphincter at the opening of the anus can tighten if not relaxed and make penetration extremely agonizing. If you are having difficulty relaxing or if you feel any pain, you should stop immediately – this is an indication that something is not right.

The last consideration you must make in your anal endeavours is cleanliness. STIs can easily be transferred through anal intercourse and using a condom is the only way to protect against them. Anything that you put into your anal cavity will pick up the bacteria that call your butt their

home, so you should never transfer anything from the anus to the vagina or mouth without switching condoms or washing thoroughly.

Anal sex is a healthy form of sexual expression, contrary to some beliefs. You can take advan-

tage of your anus by exploring it alone or with a partner, as long as you are willing to put in the time and effort to do it right and proceed with care. Don't let your ass become a forgotten frontier – make anal play part of your sexual repertoire.

Carly Vandergriendt writes about Sex biweekly. Send your sexy questions, comments or concerns to oneditor@uoguelph.ca.

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