



EDITORIAL

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Overload!

We live in the best of times:

... information is literally at our fingertips — with a mouse, a laptop keyboard or the teeny buttons of our cell phones or Blackberries. Our fingers don't even have to "walk" anymore; they just hop, skip and jump or hold a stylus.

... we no longer need to organize our lives to be somewhere to get a call from, or communicate with, a friend, relative, colleague or salesperson — "communications are us" we are eminently reachable, at home, on vacation, in our cars, even on our boats while taking our kids waterskiing. Sometimes we're even reachable at our offices.

... we have developed "meetings" into an art form worthy of the masters and virtuosos of old. Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Dürer, and Picasso have nothing on us. We can orchestrate them in such a fashion as to make Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Beethoven pale in comparison. Ravel's "Bolero" comes close in its repetition of theme and content. We have expanded the traditional concept of meetings to embrace the "pre-meeting" meeting, the "outcomes determination" pre-meeting, the actual "meeting", the "de-briefing" meeting and the "post-mortem" meeting, and (where convenient or necessitated by the outcome) the planning meeting for the "re-meeting".

... we have aced scheduling — it is now a science that the engineers of the Panama Canal would have envied. With the help of Outlook and its counterparts, we can fill virtually every moment of our day with scheduled meetings. We are so adept, that we can hold "virtual" meetings between meetings while driving from one to the other.

... we are "communications-friendly", we have come to believe that everyone's opinion is worth hearing, several times, if necessary — or not. We are receptive to all forms of communication; debate, speeches, wisdom-imparting, argument, soliloqui, pontificating, profundification and self-aggrandizement, not to mention "sharing". We welcome differing delivery mechanisms as well — iambic pentameter, droning, scolding, pleading, and persuasive passion. It can be a refreshing diversion from the lack of content after all. Attendance is vital, even if you're not really involved with the content — your absence might be noted — and mere presence is an ipso facto indicator of your perceived importance.

... we have been successful in being able to shed our conscience of the vagaries of costs associated with our quest to be fair and equitable communicators — that's for number-crunchers — effective communications are impaired and disabled when subject to simple math (number of people x hourly rate x number of hours = Cost of meeting). Excluding paid consultants or contractors that are attending it's all fixed overhead, after all.

... but, most of all, we have become tolerant and considerate. We willingly sacrifice our days to communicating, and our nights and weekends to actually dealing with all the information we have accumulated and putting it to some organizational use.

Yes, the best of times. I'm sure glad that this is our legacy to the next generation.

Indeed!

Thank God for PA's and EA's. Oh, and also e-mail.

I'm so proud, I get at least 100 of those a day, and my goal is to have no more than 250 unopened ones in my inbox before I go home - and I'm close, real close to achieving it.

