

Depth perceptions

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A newsletter from PoweredByProfundus.com

Resident Hours Under Scrutiny

Special points of interest:

- *The meaning of "Profundus"*
- *Resident hours to be monitored and reported*
- *Is technology making us impatient?*
- *Security focus*
- *Book Review*
- *Coming Soon*

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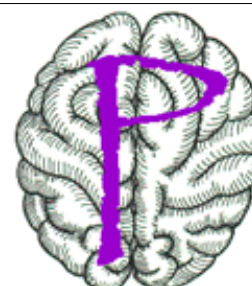
Residency has a well-known reputation for involving long hours. Older physicians often quip to their younger colleagues, "I used to admit 20 patients a night. You guys have it easy." However, new obstacles face today's physicians in training. These include: sicker patients, high patient turnover due to financial/insurance pressures, a wider range of drug classes, and a more litigious society with a need for more detailed documentation.

On July 1, 2003 the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) issued new resident hours requirements for all residency programs in the United States. In the ensuing months, resi-

dency programs across the country began their attempts to comply. These attempts evolved into outright scrambling when a few prominent institutions were placed on probation for violations with the threat of losing accreditation.

A summary of the ACGME provisions is as follows:

- Residents are limited to a maximum of 80 duty hours per week, averaged over four weeks. This includes in-house call.
- Residents must be given one day out of seven free from all clinical and educational duties. Again, this averaged out over four weeks.
- Resident call schedules cannot be more frequent than 1-in-3 nights, averaged over four weeks.
- Duty hours cannot last for more than 24 hours at a time, except for a post-call allowance of 6 additional hours for educational



Whether your brain is in your *pocket* or your *palm*,

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Is Technology Making Us Impatient?

E. Tori, D.O.

Technology is advancing at phenomenal rates. We have gone from the first computer which consumed an entire room to one able to be carried in our hands. Fast computers have become faster, phones have become fax machines, and automatic teller machines now sprawl the landscape. And all of these changes have

occurred in only a few short decades.

Since most feel that such devices are intended to make our lives easier, it is time to offer another perspective. In no way is this an argument against pursuing technological advancements. But rather to ask us all to take two or three steps back and take a look at

the big picture, to examine what we are leaving behind in our movement "forward".

Some refer to our technology as "progress", and in a sense it is. But at what cost? Sure, now we can send a document to someone across the globe through the fax machine rather than the lengthy, laborious

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process of mail, but has this act made us impatient? How many times have we stood by the fax machine, or checked it three and four times, infuriated that a document has not yet arrived? How many times have we gotten upset when a bus or a plane has been late? How about when the copier jams and sets us back four or five minutes? We have become more and more impatient with each movement "forward" with technology. And impatience begets impatience, and finally anger.



Have you ever checked for a fax 3 and 4 times, angry that it has yet to arrive?

What has happened is that technological advancements have coincided with our transformation into a materialistic society. And virtues that cannot be measured, calculated, or touched are of little importance to the materialist. Things like patience, mercy, and trust hold little weight. And while popular culture encourages us to move quickly

from one song to the next, one image to the next, one "news" item to the next, and one Sunday of football to the next, we find our attention spans withering. We are all becoming afflicted with an attention deficit disorder of sorts, which impacts the other realms of our lives in substantial ways. Just as we quickly move between sound bites and video clips, we seem to think that our interpersonal problems should be solved in a similar time frame. We try to do everything faster and we get frustrated when we cannot. So we have devolved into a culture of immediacy, a culture of the self, and a culture of the material.

When doomsday cults, political activists, conspiracy theorists, and the poorer nations of the earth speak out against the Western/Northern consumption of the world's resources and advances in technology, they are often refuted with phrases like, "These things are designed to make our lives easier." "They save us time." But even a few seconds of reflection would reveal that we are more busy now than we have ever been. How can this be if

these devices make things and people more efficient?

The fact is, that these gadgets and devices are not developed to make life easier. They are designed to make money. Period.

Furthermore, the development of credit cards has not only expanded the usurious industry of interest, but it has contributed to our impatience by creating a culture of instant gratification. We can no longer wait until we have enough money to purchase goods. Instead, now, we buy things with money that we do not yet possess. The concept of "credit" has given the illusion of wealth, which further pushes our sense of materialism, want, and desire to possess things. And it is all an illusion. Houses, cars, computers, vacations, etc...all of it purchased on credit, without actually having the money. The more we have, the more we want. And even more so...the more others have, the more we want.

Should we blame technology or should we blame ourselves?

Book Review: *Technopoly*

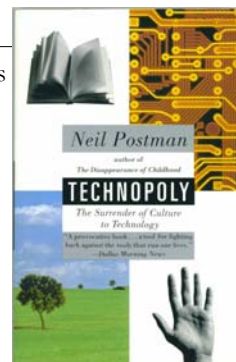
The author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman has once again brought us a provocative look at ourselves. In *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, Postman charts our course from a society that utilizes technology to one that is shaped by it. He chronicles the effects of this transformation on politics, history, and religion. He takes a deep look into how advancing technology impacts some of our basic concepts, such as information, truth, and knowledge.

Our culture is being transformed right before our very eyes. It is a rare individual who steps back and asks—

where are we going with this? What is important? Are we sacrificing anything here, and is it worth it?

Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo saw science as a means of appreciating God. Bacon, however, saw it as a means to "advance the happiness of mankind." Though the difference may seem subtle, it is not. It represents a profound paradigm shift. Bacon's ideas have formed the basis of the scripture for our new worship of progress.

Postman is not against technologic advancements, but rather he is for putting them in their proper societal,



Technopoly

By Neil Postman

cultural and historical contexts. He argues that rather than having

technology shape our social values, it may be in our best interest to have our social values shape our technological pursuits.

Technopoly is available through Vintage Books, New York, NY.

Resident Hours: continued from Page 1

- activities, continuity of care, and patient transfers.
- In-house moonlighting counts towards the weekly limit.

Many institutions have begun seeking their own methods of tracking resident duty hours. Some have left it up to individual residents to tally their hours however they wish and to report it to a designated secretary or residency staff person. Others have started their own hour cards for residents to total up their hours for a random week at the residency program's discretion. And

**NOW RESIDENTS
CAN TRACK
THEIR HOURS,
UPLOAD THEM,
AND HAVE THE
DATA ANALYZED
TO DETERMINE
TROUBLE SPOTS.**

still others have set up hotlines for their residents to call if they believe that they are in violation.

While these efforts are commendable, and at least on the surface appear effective, the fact is that many of these efforts are time consuming and impractical. Part of the problem is that the individuals developing the tools and policies are either years from, or have never been, residents. In addition, most institutions have tacked hour-tracking duties onto already busy personnel.

Enter Profundus. A company developed by recent residency graduates and IT specialists, Profundus has taken a long look at the above issues from the perspectives of residents, hospital administrators, secretaries, and IT specialists.

Profundus has developed Hour Traxx—a series of hour tracking methods with the various options tailored to different institutional settings and cultures.

Online PDF files of free pocket-sized Hour Traxx cards allow residents to record their hours by hand. A stand-alone Hour Traxx handheld application is available for keeping track of hours on Palm-OS, Pocket PC, and Blackberry devices.

A web-based approach is also available. It is presented in a format which allows institutions to graph residents' hours against other residents in their program. It allows for easy graphing of hours worked based on day of the week, rotation, and numerous other filters. There is also a handheld-to-web Hour Traxx application.

Security Focus

R. Denson, Jr.

In this day and age of daily reports of computer virus corruption and widespread cyber attacks on the information superhighway, it is everyone's duty and task to protect him/her self from invasion. There are many ways to do this and most of them are very easy, even for the computer layperson. The first way to guard against attack is to avoid opening an email attachment from someone that you are not familiar with, even if you believe it to be benign in nature, unless you are using a virus detection system such as Norton Antivirus by Symantec. This is an inexpensive safeguard for your personal data and peace of mind. If you are like most people and frown upon paying huge amounts of money for commercial software, there are excellent freeware versions of anti-virus programs. One such program is AVG Antivirus System. This company of-

fers an enterprise version and a personal edition. The two products are identical and in many instances are better than Norton Antivirus. I personally use AVG and it works wonders.

Another nuisance resulting from the success of the internet is spyware. Spyware are tiny applications that reside on your computer and track personal information ranging from what internet sites you frequent to which music you download. Companies try to stealthily monitor your habits so that data collected can be analyzed for marketing purposes. Spyware is fast becoming the number one marketing tool used by big companies to siphon your information and consumer dollars. Whether it is big business or some cyber thief, spyware can lead to things such as identity theft and fraud. Fortunately, there are numerous



**Security briefs by
R. Denson, Jr.**

applications out there that help to combat this invasion of privacy. Two of those programs are Ad-Aware and Spybot Search and Destroy. Used in conjunction, these tools can help rid your computer of virtually all spyware. These two programs are shareware, meaning you will want to donate some money to the authors of the software if you decide to keep it. Armed with these two means of protection, you are well on your way to becoming safe from cyber crime.



Profundus

Profundus is a Latin word often used in anatomy and physiology to indicate something which is deeper than the indicated reference point.

In this case it is derived from a nickname given to one of the founders of Profundus Technologies. While in medical school, he was known to be concerned with “deep” subjects, tending to find profound meaning in apparently simple things. He came to be known as Profundus for his thinking of things “on a whole other level”.

Profundus Technologies, too, asks the deep questions. Rather than simply working on technology for technology’s sake, the right questions are asked... What are the ramifications of this new development? Who will benefit? Is there any harm in it? Is it appropriate?

Coming Soon

This section is for discussing upcoming features of PoweredbyProfundus.com and future issues of Depth Perceptions.

- Technology & Trust
- Tracking resident procedures
- Tracking and billing for specialist procedures
- Handheld devices and their impact on medicine
- Is there a downside to handheld devices used in medical training?
- HIPAA & handhelds
- Using your handheld device to put money into your pocket
- ChartFarts.com and other medical humor

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