

High-Tech Deprogramming

You've got nothing to lose but your delusions

by Bob Seidensticker, author of *Future Hype* (www.future-hype.com)

Lies have been told. Promises have been made—and broken. It's time to let go of your wrong-headed notions about technology and stop wasting money on unneeded high-tech gear, gadgets, and gizmos. Here are some tips to make it happen.

▶ **Avoid infatuation.**

Coolness is overrated. Keep blinders on to the “cool factor” and stay focused on what a product can *really* do for you.

▶ **Don't be bullied.**

When the marketing and media heat is on, that's your cue to chill, contemplate, and—whatever you do—keep your credit cards close.

▶ **Know what's inside.**

The price tag on a PC may look cheap, but in reality a computer system can cost up to \$20,000. What's “not included”—software, training, tech support, virus protection, and the high price of downtime.

▶ **Realize that “automate” doesn't mean “improve.”**

Sure, you can store recipes on your computer—but that doesn't mean you should. In the time it takes to boot up, log on, and search, you can open a cookbook and dive in.

▶ **Fear not.**

Resist alarmists' claims that you're falling behind. More often than not, the high-tech train departing the station is only an amusement-park ride.

▶ **Stay in charge.**

Technology is *not* the boss of you. Do your homework and buy when you're ready—not before.

▶ **Know why you buy.**

Don't fall for fads. Today's “must-have” may be tomorrow's “has-been.” Give that new technology some time to prove itself.

▶ **Filter information.**

The Internet has made information wildly more accessible—and far less reliable. Be a skeptic.

▶ **Challenge authority.**

Beware of technology experts. They can't predict the future of technology—or decide what you need.