

Innovations

May Fun Facts

- x International Pickle Week was first celebrated in May, 1948
- x The Phrase "in a pickle" was coined by none other than Shakespeare himself
- x Mother's Day was first celebrated in Grafton, West Virginia on May 10th, 1908
- x Anna Jarvis started the crusade to found the memorial day for women
- x The official birthplace of Memorial Day is Waterloo, New York
- x The first Memorial Day was actually observed on May 5th, 1866.

Road connections: What's your need for speed?

What's your connection "type" when you travel? I'm not talking about finding a date when you're out of town. I'm talking about Internet hookups.

How you connect to the Internet may not be as glamorous as a weekend in the Hampton's, but it is important. Make the wrong link and you could end up wasting time, spending lots of money and even losing important information. Make the right one and your productivity will soar.

Recent studies suggest most of us travelers continue to use a dial-up connection to get online, with a smaller percentage subscribing to a high-speed cable or DSL connection. As recent report reveals, only 1 in 10 travelers has tried wireless access, though nearly 90% say they see wireless computing in their futures. But travelers, especially business travelers, are quicker to embrace technology. I think travelers have split into three camps. I call them the "connection personality types" — each strongly favor one type of Internet link over another. I also give a blanket approximation to the size of each market. What's your type? Let's take a closer look at all three.

Donna Dial-Up (40% of the market).

Donna likes a sure thing. She isn't impressed by the high cost of high-speed Internet access and is wary of

upgrading to a wireless modem or a new PC. Connecting at a slower speed suits her just fine, because she rarely has to surf the Web and uses a private e-mail account that is rigged to receive messages from a few important clients and family members. Donna Dial-Up keeps her phone calls to less than 20 minutes to avoid incurring additional hotel connection fees. She travels with a toolkit with adapters and filters to make sure she can tap into a phone line anytime, anywhere.

Bobby Broadband (40%).

Bobby does lots of business on the Internet and goes to great lengths to find a high-speed connection wherever he stays. It isn't the cost of new technology that fazes him, but the time spent waiting to download documents online. Bobby owns multiple e-mail accounts and some of them overflow with large documents. He's always online. He also spends a fair amount of time Web conferencing and sharing files that would take forever to download on a dial-up connection. Bobby likes the simplicity of a broadband link — usually all it takes is no more than a cable and a few tweaks to his network settings to get started. The \$10 a day he spends on the high-speed account is a bargain.

Wanda Wireless (20%)

Wanda is a heavy Internet user and a frequent traveler. She spends so much time in airports that if she didn't

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Get ready for the May Holidays

Is May really a holiday month? Yes indeed! There is Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day and much more.

After April's spring celebrations, May's holidays always seem to sneak up on me. Cinco de Mayo ("The fifth of May" in Spanish) comes first this year on a Saturday giving all celebrators an extra day of festivities. Cinco de Mayo celebrates the legendary Battle of Puebla, Mexico May 5th, 1862. Even though Cinco de Mayo is not a national holiday it has become conta-

gious. Many Americans celebrate this day with festivities including good food, drinks and always music. If nothing else, break out your dancing shoes and learn a few new steps in honor of Mexico's victory over the French.

Mother's Day

Mother's Day Sunday, May 13th is next. This is one holiday I am really bad about. My kids generally come home from school with an art project that inspires me to celebrate too. I usually end up

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Road connections...

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have Internet access, her productivity would probably plummet. She likes having the latest gadgets and is willing to sacrifice reliability for it. Price is less of a problem for her. Although she doesn't consider herself a bandwidth hog, occasionally, she'll need to download a large presentation to her laptop. A Wi-Fi modem will do the trick if Wanda isn't worried about an absence of hotspots. However, if you're the type of Wanda that needs access anywhere anytime AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon offer Type II PC Cards that give you mobile connectivity even if your out of range of Wi-Fi hot spots.

Most people who travel professionally don't limit themselves to just one connection type. At least I don't. On one of my last business trips, I traveled with all three, and found myself making some interesting choices.

My first hotel offered free local calls. I spent the weekend there, and didn't anticipate any editorial

emergencies, so I slipped into my Don Dial-Up persona. I connected to the Internet through a dreadfully slow 28.8 Kbps line, but it didn't matter to me because it was free.

On Monday, I moved to another hotel where each phone call cost \$1.50. Clients were beginning to call my cell phone and my e-mail box started to fill up. It was time to go wireless.

I found a wireless network operated by a local Internet service provider, and I signed up for a week of service for \$29.95. Over the next few days, I saved \$40 in communications charges and, quite possibly, thousands of dollars in lost productivity. The wireless modem offered me amazing mobility, too. I could check e-mail from the local cafe and hang out in the hotel lobby while researching my next column.

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Get ready for the May Holidays...

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buying my mother one of the last cards on the shelf on Saturday. Of course, my brother and I always take her out for dinner and bring her flowers but I am sure we could make the whole day a bit more exciting if it wasn't orchestrated the evening before.

So, don't get sucked into the Hallmark leftovers the day of; make sure your prepared for this Mother's Day. Give your mom a fabulous story to brag about to all of her friends and neighbors. If your mother is anything like my mother, you will hear about your Mother's Day efforts for months or even years to come.

Memorial Day

Let's not forget Memorial Day observed May 28th. Many citizens observe this day by visiting cemeteries and memorials with family and placing flowers on the graves of loved ones. Many volunteers dedicate their time to ensure each memorial is visited and honored with flowers. In addition, a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3 pm every year (GMT). Another time honored tradition is to fly

the U.S. Flag at half-staff from dawn until noon local time then raise it to full staff until sundown in honor of all the men and women who have died serving our country.

This great holiday marks a time to remember and honor those lost in battle as well as the beginning of the summer season. Get your coolers, sandwiches, watermelon and sun block ready for your trip to the lake! Memorial Day weekend is the perfect time for family gatherings and sporting events too like the Indy 500 on May 27th.

Other Observances

I was very surprised to find out about the many other little observances in May. For example, National Teacher Day is on May 8th, International Pickle Week begins on the 18th and lasts ten days, National Safe Boating week runs from the 19th-25th and May is even National Bike Month.

Is May really a holiday month? Absolutely. There are many observances we can participate in. Not to mention we all have a great excuse to learn how to Tango, take our mother flowers, have a picnic with friends and family as well as take time to remember those who gave their lives for America.



Be cautious with MySpace, blogs, email & voicemail

When the computer first came into businesses, the focus was on how to use it for a particular job. Workers have pretty well mastered that aspect. Now they're working on the finer points of computer use for blogs, email, and personal Web sites.

Before you jazz up your work computer with fancy add-ons, or fill your MySpace site with company information, or use your computer for personal purposes, keep a few points in mind.

First, everyone should know the company's policies on proper computer use, say advisors at the ePolicy Institute. Check your employee handbook. Some company policies restrict text messaging, camera phones, and software downloads.

Web surfing: Keep it to a minimum. Don't spend a lot of time on personal email. This is the company time, not personal time.

Be cautious with your use of blogs: Never use your supervisor's name. Use the company name only



with permission and say only good things about the company or nothing at all. Posting information about the company's markets, marketing strategies, product development or business strategy can harm the company and put your own job in jeopardy.

After all, you do not want to tip the competition off to the company's business strategies.

Remember, your MySpace postings live forever: Keep a conservative profile and use only flattering, classic photos of yourself and others.

Proofread: With anything on a blog or online profile, check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Once it's on the Web, you can never get it back. Search engines are likely to preserve it forever.

Voice mail: Never say anything you wouldn't want everyone to

hear.

Forwards: Not everyone likes to receive forwarded email. Material in bad taste can harm your reputation.

Why You Should Avoid Using A Debit Card When Shopping Online

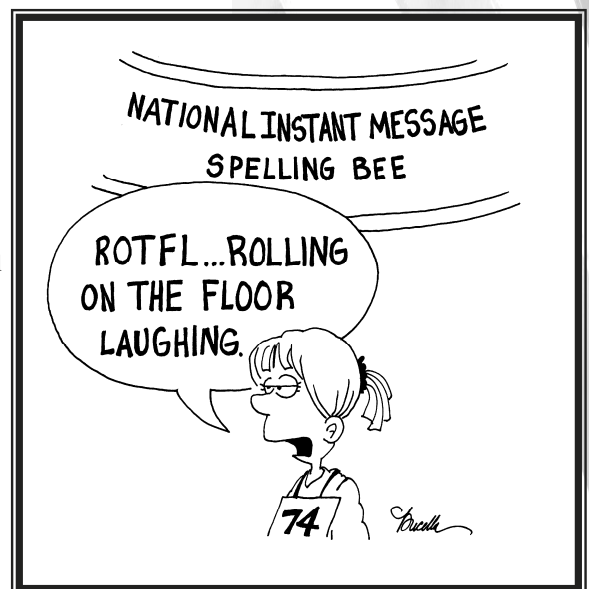
If you shop online (and these days, who doesn't?), you'll want to make sure you use a credit card instead of a debit card to protect yourself from online scams and rip offs. The biggest advantage credit cards offer is a buffer for payment. By law, your maximum loss if your credit card number is stolen is \$50, and most credit card companies and banks will cover the entire cost.

When you use a debit card, the funds come directly out of your bank account, which means you might have trouble disputing the charge if you get scammed or if you are not happy with the product or service you purchased.

Here are some other tips to make shopping online safer:

- « Research your merchant before buying. The Federal Trade Commission maintains a web site (www.consumer.gov) that provides many buyer's guides, lists of tips, and links to helpful resources.

- « Make sure you are on a secure web site before you give your name, address or credit card details. Look for a padlock or a key symbol in the bottom corner of your screen.
 - « Never send your credit card number in an e-mail because it can easily be stolen.
 - « Frequently check your credit card statements for suspicious entries. If you spot anything strange, contact your credit card company immediately to question
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the charge.

- « Call the company before placing an order. See if a real person answers the phone and how difficult it is to get someone live. Ask for their return policy for damaged or inadequate goods, expected delivery dates, shipping and handling fees, and after-purchase support.
- « Think before you buy. If the online advertisement or junk e-mail offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is! If you have any reason to be suspicious, you are better to err on the side of NOT buying.
- « Watch for hidden extras added on at checkout such as postage and packing costs, and handling fees. VAT and Customs charges for goods from overseas can add greatly to the final cost.
- « Read the company's privacy policy carefully. Make sure you uncheck any boxes giving the vendor permission to sell or share your information with other vendors.



Inquiring Minds...

The constant march of technology does leave many people with the nagging feeling that they are missing out if they don't buy at least every two years. At the same time, today's PCs are built to last longer than ever. Indeed, there are tradeoffs in deciding how long to own the same computer. PCs constantly are being upgraded to offer more speed and power at reduced cost.

But there will be a point when you absolutely need a new one, because your current one is ready for its after-life (hopefully safely in the hands of a recycler; for more on safe disposal, keep reading). Here are three signs that it's time to spring for a new PC.

Your computer plays music at startup. Beethoven's "Fur Elise" and Disney's "It's a Small, Small World" are pleasant tunes. If you hear either of these melodies when you turn on your computer, you're likely to want to relax or sing along. (After all, a computer that has developed a taste for punk rock music would be hard to handle.) Or you may suspect you have a virus. Wrong on both counts.

The computer is telling you that the microprocessor or microprocessor fan is failing, or has already gone south. Or it may be telling you that power supply voltages are drifting out of tolerance, or that the supply cannot meet demand.

The music is a feature built into the Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) of some motherboards. It is a gentle reminder that you have a serious problem. It's probably not a problem if you hear a couple notes at boot-up. But if you regularly hear a tune, you need to take care of it.

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What can you do? Take a deep breath and call us. We will respond immediately, assess the problem, determine your options and present them to you in plain English, along with an estimate of your costs.



“He's busy right now, but I may be able to get you in to see his screen saver.”