5 TOOLS TO HELP YOU AVOID TECH OVERLOAD

By Julie Perrine, CAP-OM, MBTI Certified

Technology is everywhere these days...and sometimes that’s not necessarily a good thing.

Technology is extremely useful in our personal and professional lives. It helps us stay in touch with people. It allows us to work from places that aren't our offices. And it enables us to network with people we might not otherwise meet face-to-face. Yet being constantly plugged in to all our gadgets, gizmos, apps, and programs can lead to a serious case of tech overload.

Taking time to unplug is important, which means you need to be as productive and efficient as possible when using technology. Fortunately, there are some tools out there that can help you do both. Here are some of my team’s favorites:

1. **Social media aggregators** – Are youlogging into multiple social media platforms to post updates to your personal or company pages? Social media aggregators allow you to read, post and respond to social media updates all in one place. These free programs require some set-up time, but it’s minimal when compared to the time saved. We use Hootsuite and TweetDeck at All Things Admin, and both programs have really cut down on the amount of time we spend on social media. (Hootsuite also has a paid subscription if you want to link more than five social accounts.)

2. **Subscription email aggregators** – Email subscriptions are immensely valuable in helping admins stay up to date on the news and information that’s relevant to our careers. However, all those emails flooding your inbox can be overwhelming, and some may even be messages you didn’t subscribe to. A subscription email aggregator, like Unroll.me, can help you weed through email pile, unsubscribe to the ones you don’t want, and keep your inbox clean.

3. **File-sharing programs** – Sharing files with your executive, team members, and co-workers is a necessity in just about every workplace. Yet sending files via email or using a USB drive can be time-consuming and unsafe, especially when sending larger files. File-sharing programs eliminate the need to wait for files to load in an

ARE YOU PRESENT?

By Laura Berman Fortgang, Coach

I don’t know about you, but when I was in grade school, you answered your teacher’s ubiquitous roll call with “present.” As I got older, we were allowed to say “here” to confirm our presence in the room. Now, no one asks us anymore, but maybe they should.

Being present, being fully focused and attentive to the moment or the task at hand, is a skill in itself and one that is becoming harder to come by. The parent at the park talking on their cell phone while pushing their kid on a swing, the driver who bumps the car in front of him while juggling a cup of coffee and the steering wheel, the executive who is standing up greeting their next visitor before they’ve even let you know your meeting with them is over. In a world that does too much, it is really hard to be present. We are merely really good at pretending we are not absent.

Do you sometimes feel like you didn’t accomplish anything all day although you were busy at every moment? Do you lack the closeness to your spouse, your kids or other loved ones that you desire? Do you find yourself irritable and hostile for no immediate reason? These could all be indications of being absent, or at least, not as present as you could be.

Being absent means you’re not there. Your body might be there, you may see yourself and hear yourself, but you are somewhere else.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Hello, and thanks for reading this issue of Portico. With the summer over, I’m sure you’ve been wondering what we, the Seattle Chapter, have been up to.

- We kicked off the new board of directors with a Strategic Planning session in June. We updated our chapter Vision. We identified goals and strategies that will support us in achieving that vision. We are using a focused, strategic approach, and I’m confident we’ll reach most, if not all, of our goals by 2019.

- Board members Pakalana, Carrie, Cathy, Gretchen, Stacy, Lois, and Shannon have been working hard to bring you another year of educational opportunities. All of our business practice events will qualify for certification points. And right now, we’re planning for at least 14 available credits.

- I am pleased to introduce you to our new Editor, Gretchen Renz, CDFA. While she is managing this publication, she is also serving as a director to the chapter. Gretchen works in Spokane. She flew in for our board transition meeting, and we have been Skyping her during our board meetings. We even made chapter history. For the first time we used Skype to install a member of the Seattle chapter board.

- That’s right! We are taking advantage of the technology available to us and are planning for alternate delivery methods for our educational opportunities. Stay tuned for more information.

- In addition to using the available technology, we are tweaking our language a bit. You’re on our mailing list for upcoming announcements of our 2014-2015 business practice events—dinners, breakfasts, lunches, and roundtables, including tours.

- Speaking of tours, check out the article on the tour of DLR Group’s Seattle office. DLR’s office is a comfortable and wide-open work environment that caters to its occupants. If you get the opportunity, don’t pass on the chance to see it.

- Our website is getting more robust, and you’ll soon be able to register for our business practice events directly from there. And for you chapter Sponsors, we are working on an easy sponsor payment as well.

On behalf of the Seattle chapter board of directors, we are looking forward to see you at our upcoming events. And as always, we welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback. What business practice (educational) events are you interested in? How can we help you add value to your firm? How can we help you grow your career? Be sure to drop me a line or give me a call.

Until then,
Judy Beebe, CDFA

Welcome New Members
A warm SDA Seattle welcome to the following new members who joined in July and August:

- Marjorie Nelch
  Gelotte Hommas Architecture

- Andrew Gilbert
  Schacht Aslani Architects

- Gena Aiello
  DLR Group

- Kathy Milano
  DLR Group

Sponsor Highlight
Please visit our Glacier Peak sponsor.

sallydiscuillo.blogspot.com
In the first of several building tours planned by the Seattle Chapter, Chapter members were treated to a behind the scenes peek at the new offices of the DLR Group on University Street in Seattle. Chapter President, Judy A. Beebe, CDFA, provided this summary and photos of the space.

**FROM THE PUGET SOUND TO THE HAMMERING MAN**

The views weren’t the only benefit from the design of DLR Group’s new Seattle office. According to David Reid of DLR (lead architect for the new space), “It was important to us to have a place where employees can be comfortable doing the work, how they want to work.” You should see their awesome views—from the Puget Sound to the Hammering Man. DLR employees joke about their very own southwest-view traffic report (the number of vehicles on the Alaskan Way Viaduct). They soak up the activity along the waterfront, including the Big Wheel’s evening colors. And don’t forget the glorious sunsets over the Olympic Mountains. Turning a bit to the northeast, they can watch the slow motion movement of the gigantic Hammering Man statue at the Seattle Art Museum.

David led Seattle chapter members on an afternoon tour. Their space is wide open, and there are only three designated offices. They have a huge “living room” where employees can hang out, and where they hold their all-hands meetings. There are a number of enclosed team spaces, equipped with videoconferencing; and their “dark room/theater” looks like something you would want in your own home—comfy couches and a huge screen.

Dual monitors are the standard for all staff. So is Wi-Fi. There’s an open café (kitchen) area. There’s a newer piece of colorful modular furniture with tall backs and what looks like six-foot, ample seating sections (did someone say relaxation, or naptime?)

For DLR, it was all about creating comfort for the employees. They can gather ’round (stand up) at the large TV-type screens that are strategically placed near the workstations. They can have conversations in the living room, in the café, or within that colorful, tall-back furniture. It’s a large, free-flowing space that’s very comfortable and inviting. Well done, DLR!

David Reid, DLR Group
Design Architect for Project
AVOIDING TECH OVERLOAD

Continued from page 1

email or walk them over to the recipients. They’re also excellent for those who work remotely as they provide a secure way to quickly and easily transfer files. Two of our favorites here at All Things Admin are Dropbox and Google Docs.

4. Collaboration programs — Collaboration is important for any team. Yet with people in and out of the office, working remotely, and operating on different schedules, it can be a challenge to keep everyone on the same page. Collaboration programs solve this dilemma. From shared calendars to project management to messaging capabilities, collaboration programs make it possible for everyone on a team to work together, regardless of their locations. We use Central Desktop to collaborate with members of our team, but Basecamp and Microsoft’s SharePoint are also great collaboration options.

5. Note capturing programs — Note-taking is a key part of most admins’ responsibilities, but keeping these notes accurate and up to date doesn’t have to be a big chore. There are several programs out there that are extremely useful in for capturing notes and other information, such as to-do lists, agendas, and more. A couple of my favorites are Microsoft’s OneNote and Evernote. Both programs allow you to take, update, and store notes that can be accessed across all your electronic devices. These programs are also awesome for capturing great ideas you come across on the web because they allow you to save them so you can find them again later.

I’m a huge proponent of technology, especially for administrative professionals. But it’s just as important to recognize that technology has its time and place…and it’s not anytime and everywhere. Give some of these tools a try and give yourself a much needed tech timeout.

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Julie Perrine, CAP-OM, is the founder and CEO of All Things Admin, providing training, mentoring and resources for administrative professionals worldwide. Julie applies her administrative expertise and passion for lifelong learning to serving as an enthusiastic mentor, speaker and author who educates admins around the world on how to be more effective every day. Learn more about Julie’s new book, “The Innovative Admin: Unleash the Power of Innovation in Your Administrative Career,” and request your free copy of our special report “From Reactive to Proactive: Creating Your Strategic Administrative Career Plan” at www.AllThingsAdmin.com.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS—GREAT ADVICE FROM FELLOW SDA MEMBERS

Q: We are disbanding our library for the architects, and so we no longer will accept catalogs, samples, etc.

Please let me know how your office handles vendors who wish to share their contact information, etc. There is talk about creating a listing of vendors on our intranet, but I am not confident that the upkeep of this warrants it.

For those who no longer keep up with in-house libraries due to our technological advances in recent years, how to you manage this?

A: We got rid of our library about a year ago. We have a SharePoint page where we list vendors with direct links to catalogs and reps. Whenever someone comes into our office to update a catalog we take their information instead and add them to our page. Most of them don’t mind; they like it.

The SharePoint page is ordered by spec section.

Follow this and other group discussions at www.sdanational.org
ARE YOU PRESENT?

Continued from page 1

You are not feeling, not experiencing, not absorbing what there is to absorb from that moment. Being present, on the other hand, means you are paying attention and experiencing all the nuances of the moment. Those nuances may be your own emotions or the satisfaction that comes from listening fully, learning from every experience and surrendering to the unexpected.

Does it matter? If you don’t think about what you are missing, it doesn’t. But if you care that life might be passing you by a bit too fast, get “present” by using the following tips for being more present.

Take a deep breath. Filling your lungs with air before settling down to a task, conversation or activity can help to slow you down enough to be present. Several deep breaths in a row, will help you quiet your mind as well. Know the signals. Recognize when you are spinning out of attention and do what you have to do to focus again.

Avoid triggers. Once you recognize when you are not present, start observing what are the things that are the cause of your lack of attentiveness and nip the source of those problems in the bud.

Be complete in each task or communication. When you are thorough and finish one thing before you move on to the next, you can be fully attentive to the new task or conversation. If you find yourself distracted or into something new before finishing the old, stop, ask for a moment, write down what needs to be done or said, and get it out of your mind so you can be present to what you are currently doing.

Purge often. Make it a habit to throw things out as you are finished with them. Sticky notes, lists, old mail, clothes that are outdated—anything that you are not using, needs to be disposed of so you are not annoyed or distracted by clutter.

Delegate. One great way to be able to feel present is to get some things off your plate through delegation. Create templates for how you want things done and have someone else do them whether at the office or at home. Do tasks that only you can do and set up a follow-up system so you are never distracted by too many tasks again.

Find your transition. Come to know how you best make transitions from one thing to the next. Do you need to debrief? Take a breath? Make some notes? Celebrate one thing before moving to the next? Figure out what would allow you to move from thing to thing with ease, and do it.

Being a working mom who transitions from one role to the other several times a day, I am especially aware of preserving myself. I will not enter an interaction with one of my children if business is still plaguing my mind. I make note of an incomplete business task, take a deep breath and focus fully on my child. That way, I avoid taking out any stress or frustration on my kids. I learned early on that if I pretended to pay attention to my kid when I was carrying a business concern in my mind, I would become irritated with the little person and was sending a message that I did not really want to be with them.

In our multi-tasking world, we can fool ourselves by being proud of all we can get done. However, you have to ask yourself what the goal is. Is it to get things done or to do things that matter? What would change in your world if you were more present?

Did You Know?

You can change the subject line of any email in your inbox simply by opening the message, highlighting the subject line and entering the new information. When you close the message, you will be asked if you want to save the changes.

Contributor Carrie Thompson of Studio Meng Strazzara said, “Quite often, an email chain will veer into a different project but nobody changes the subject line; or, the subject line was too brief (or nonexistent). When filing these emails into the project folder, it helps if the subject lines are accurate and relevant to the contents.”

Coming Up Next

The Winter issue of Portico will focus on Project Administration.

If you have an article, best practice, tech tip, lesson learned or success story relating to Project Administration that you’d like to see in Portico, please submit to Gretchen Renz, CDFA, grenz@bwarch.com by November 10, 2014.

Look for the return of the popular “Question of the Quarter” and “Member Spotlight” features in the Winter issue.

Sound Bites

“The secret of joy in work is contained in one word—excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it. —Pearl Buck
NEW CHAPTER BOARD INSTALLED

During the meeting on May 29, 2014, the Officers and Directors for the upcoming year were installed by Lois Diemert, CDFA.

Your Seattle Chapter Board of Directors for 2014—2015 are:

President: Judy A. Beebe, CDFA
Parsons Brinckerhoff

President-Elect: Shannon Soady, CDFA
DLR Group

Vice President: Stacy Rowland, CDFA
Berger Partnership

Secretary: Carrie Thompson
Studio Meng Strazzara

Treasurer: Cathy Comstock, CDFA
Sparks Management Inc.

Directors: Pakalana Patterson, CDFA
BHC Consultants, LLC

Gretchen Renz, CDFA
Bernardo | Wills Architects, PC

Many thanks to the outgoing board members Tena Martins, CDFA, Renae Howard, CDFA, and Lois Diemert, CDFA. We appreciate your service to SDA Seattle.

TEST YOUR OFFICE ADMINISTRATION IQ

(see below for answers)

1. Vertical communication is composed of:
   a. A sender and a recipient
   b. A speaker and a listener
   c. Top down and bottom up messages
   d. A series of messages that build upon one another

2. Minor tasks should be addressed:
   a. First thing in the morning to get them out of the way
   b. At the end of the day
   c. After more important tasks are completed
   d. As they arise

3. Which of the following sentences is correct?
   a. All of the 7-year-old office furniture needs to be replaced.
   b. All of the seven year old office furniture needs to be replaced.
   c. All of the 7 year old office furniture needs to be replaced.
   d. All of the seven-year-old office furniture needs to be replaced.

4. What should a person check to know if software will run on the computer?
   a. Compatibility monitor
   b. Memory
   c. Instructions
   d. System requirements

5. Nichols prefers a direct access records storage system.
   Which system would best meet his needs?
   a. Alphabetic
   b. Subject
   c. Numeric
   d. Geographic

The above are examples of the types of questions that are covered on the CDFA Certification Exam. From the SDA National website: “CDFA certification recognizes an individual who has met a rigorous standard of experience and expertise in design firm management and administration and who has demonstrated their knowledge of the practice and related disciplines through a thorough examination of management and administrative competencies.” Visit www.sdanational.org for more information about CDFA certification. Get certified today!
Five Tips on Preparing for Disaster Recovery

- Recognize that your business can suffer a natural disaster. Small businesses the world over have been affected by disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and fire.

- Develop your recovery plan before disaster strikes. Make sure everyone in your company is familiar with the plan and knows what steps to take in emergencies.

- Have adequate insurance. You’ll need coverage not only for property damage and loss (including inventory), but also for business interruption.

- Draw up a list of telephone numbers for all employees. Assign certain employees to call others if disaster strikes. That way, you can learn who is all right and who needs help, and you can quickly communicate instructions about your business.

- Don’t forget your computer system. Keep backup programs and duplicate records (accounts receivable, client information, and the like) at a different, safe site.

Originally appeared on SCORE.org.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: RENAMING A GROUP OF PHOTOS

Tired of having to individually rename the digital photo files you uploaded to your computer? If you are okay with using a common subject name, you can rename all of the photos at once.

Find the photo files on your computer (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Digital photo files](image-url)

Select all of the files (press Ctrl+A to select all of the photos in that location, or click on the first one, then hold the Shift key and click on the last one).

Right-click on the selected items and select Rename.

Whichever file your cursor was on when you right-clicked will be the first file to be renamed. Type a name, then press Enter (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Rename the file](image-url)

All of the selected files will now show the name you typed, along with an automatically-generated sequential number to distinguish between each file (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Renamed files](image-url)
Educational Programs and Networking Opportunities
You won’t want to miss these!

**SEPT 18**
**BUSINESS PRACTICE DINNER: HOLDING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**
Presenter: Erica Loynd, DLR Group

**SEPT 23**
**BUSINESS PRACTICE LUNCH: DESIGNING PROJECTS USING VISUAL SIMULATIONS**
Presenter: Steve Johnson, Parsons Brinckerhoff

**NOV 20**
**BUSINESS PRACTICE DINNER: UPDATE ON HEALTHCARE REFORM & EXCHANGES**
Presenter: Heidi Heikkala, Sound Benefits

**JAN 22**
**BUSINESS PRACTICE DINNER: FINANCE—KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**
Presenter: Mary Dickinson, CPA, Bader Martin

Check our website for more details (sda-seattle.org). Seattle Chapter events are also published in the Puget Sound Business Journal, AIA eNews, Seattle P-I, and the Daily Journal of Commerce. For questions about any of the chapter programs, or if you have suggestions for SDA programs, please contact Stacy Rowland at stacyr@bergerpartnership.com.

Check out these Online Office Administration Resources

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<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<td>SDA National</td>
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<td>Group discussions, Professional Emphasis Group (PEG) resources, certification information, newsletter</td>
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<td>SDA Seattle</td>
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<td>Upcoming events, jobline, chapter contact information</td>
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<td>International Association of Administrative Professionals</td>
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<td>Live webinars, webinars on demand, articles, and white papers</td>
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<td>All Things Admin</td>
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<td>American Society of Administrative Professionals</td>
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<td>Tech tools and tips, product recommendations, events</td>
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<td>Articles, advice, message boards, free content. (There is a UK version of the site also, so make sure you’re on the US site).</td>
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<td>Microsoft Office</td>
<td>office.microsoft.com</td>
<td>Templates, support, forums</td>
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<td>Confessions of an Admin Junkie</td>
<td>judyabeebe.wordpress.com</td>
<td>Insights from an experienced A/E/C administrator on how to grow professionally and personally in an admin role.</td>
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About SDA
For over 50 years, the Society for Design Administration (SDA) has promoted education and best practices in management and professional standards of design firm administration. SDA membership stretches across the United States and Canada, and is composed of personnel working in the design industry for architectural, engineering, construction, and related industry firms.

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Follow us on Twitter

Portico is published quarterly. Please send comments, suggestions, announcements and articles to the Editor, Gretchen Renz, at grenz@bwarch.com.