

LIFE TIME

Balancing family in the cyber world

• By Lois Clark, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for Ohio State University Extension in Auglaize County

Balancing work and family roles in today's cyber world can be challenging. With today's technological advances, you can literally be reached within a few minutes no matter where you are. As a result, the boundaries between work and home are not as easy to distinguish as they used to be.

How many electronic devices do you use that cross over from work to home or vice versa? Many immediately think of the cell phone or e-mail. What about pagers or telephones? With a computer, it is easy to accomplish work-related tasks at home. Are there others? Think about how these devices have changed your connectivity to work and home.

As a result of these demands, you may, at least occasionally, feel overwhelmed and wish the world would slow down. Here are some tips for balancing in the cyber world:

- Communicate openly and honestly with your family and your work associates. Talk about your what is expected. Come to an understanding about what is realistic and possible to accomplish. Honor your commitments and accomplish what you said you would do.
- Decide what your boundaries will be. Evaluate the demands of your work and family life and determine appropriate boundaries. The boundaries will be different for each person depending on their job and family responsibilities.
- Recognize that just because something is possible, you do not have to do it. For example, just because you can receive e-mail doesn't mean you have to read it the minute it arrives. Or, even though you have a cell phone, there are times when it is not appropriate to take a call. Don't become a slave to technology.
- Don't feel guilty when you have to say no. For many, that is easier said than done. You want to be able to "do it all." However, there are not enough hours in the day. You need to prioritize and do the most important things first. When you say no to one thing, you are saying yes to something more important.

From the Experts

Lifeworks
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Internet Addiction

• Submitted by Sheila Maggard, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for Ohio State University Extension in Adams County

How can parents tell if their children are becoming addicted to the 'net? Warning signs of Internet addiction include:

- **Sleep Patterns** – Changes in patterns?
- **Time on-line** – How much time do they spend on-line?
- **School Work** – Have grades dropped or assignments not turned in?
- **Extra-Curricular Activities** – Lost interest in activities they once enjoyed?
- **Computer Use** – Do they insist on privacy while using the computer?
- **Personal Mail/Gifts** – Do they receive personal mail or gifts from people that you don't know?

If you have noticed three or more of these signs continuing over a period of time, it would be wise to seek help.

Source: *Untangling the Web for Internet Addicted Adolescents*, Joyce A. Shriner, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent in Hocking County for Ohio State University Extension; available on the Internet at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm02/FS12.html>

Grocery shopping online can save time

• By Cheryl L. Barber, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent for Ohio State University Extension in Fulton County

As you look at your calendar and see your family's busy schedule, do you wonder when you will have time to get your errands accomplished? If you have Internet access, then online grocery shopping may be for you.

The Food Marketing Institute reported on how people are using online grocery stores and how they feel about them in *The e-tail Experience: What Grocery Shoppers Think about Online Shopping*, which was published in 2000. Findings of this survey indicate that 70 percent of Internet users frequently shop online for items other than groceries. Only 10 percent of Internet

shoppers purchase groceries online. Shoppers are concerned about not being able to touch and see the items prior to purchase, and they are uncertain of delivery procedures.

Once people try online grocery shopping and have a good experience, they are very likely to use it again. Perhaps family meals are rare at your house. Maybe, online shopping could save you time and bring the food to your door. Temptations may not seem as great when you are home and not smelling the bakery scents and seeing the attractive displays. Without the temptations, healthful habits and

monthly budget may not be as adversely affected.

Take some time and surf the Web for some online shopping options. Read and discover which stores have the best prices, delivery options, and good business practice reputations. The end result may be a fun new way to purchase groceries with time and money-saving benefits.

Source: The e-tail experience: What grocery shoppers think about online shopping. Executive summary. (2000). Retrieved August 19, 2003, from http://www.fmi.org/e_business/onlinepromo.pdf

New products for the high-tech home

• By Martha Filipic, Technical Editor, Communications and Technology, Ohio State University Extension

It wasn't that long ago when self-cleaning ovens and water dispensers in refrigerator doors marked the high end of high-tech kitchen appliances. But what new appliance features can you expect to see in showrooms today?

You can find information about them thanks to the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service. Its Family and Consumer Sciences Web site has a page devoted to home appliance information: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/HomeAppliances/>. Some featured items include:

• Inverter Microwave Ovens

Panasonic has developed Inverter Microwave Ovens with a special circuit that delivers up to 1300 watts of microwave power, with power supply

components taking up very little space. This results in a wide oven cavity housed in a compact microwave oven. The ovens also include a menu action screen that scrolls step-by-step through cooking instructions. The instructions can be displayed in English, Spanish or French.

• Polara Refrigerated Range

This new range by Whirlpool is a refrigerator and oven all in one. It keeps food placed in the oven cavity at 40 degrees F. until it's time for cooking. With pre-set timing, the oven begins to heat and cook the food so it is ready for serving when you plan to have dinner. At the end of the cooking time, the oven will cool down to a "keep warm" holding temperature. If you do not remove the food within two hours, it

will cool the food back down to 40 degrees and hold it at that temperature.

• Personal Valet System

Forget the iron. This Whirlpool system uses a deep misting process to get your clothes ready to wear. Using a special liquid designed for this system, you can hang up to three items inside the cabinet and press start. The system will smooth wrinkles and clean away odors from the garments hanging inside. The system can be installed in your home or your office. The system is safe for cotton, wool, silk, rayon, polyester, leather and suede fabrics.

Source: Home Appliance Information, University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service, <http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/HomeAppliances/>

TV violence and kids: 'A harmful risk'

The Kaiser Family Foundation recently reviewed the research on the effects of television violence on children. Its conclusion: "(V)iewing violence poses a harmful risk to children."

The report is presented in a fact sheet, available online at <http://www.kff.org/content/2003/3335/>.

The fact sheet reports that nearly two out of three TV programs contained some violence, averaging about six violent acts per hour. Violence was found to be more prevalent in children's programming (69 percent) than in other

types of programming (57 percent).

The report says that the largest meta-analysis on TV violence analyzed 217 studies conducted between 1957 and 1990, and found that viewing violence was significantly linked to aggressive and antisocial behavior, especially among the youngest viewers.

However, methods used to study media violence have been called into question. For example, experimental studies have been criticized for their artificial viewing situations, unrealistic measures of aggression, and focusing

only on short-term effects.

Still, the public health community advises parents that media violence can indeed foster aggressive behavior, at least among some children.

The National Institute on Media and the Family suggests that parents avoid using TV as a babysitter; know what your children are watching; and set some guidelines about when and what children watch. For more guidance, see the institute's web site at <http://www.mediafamily.org>, and click on "Facts and Tips."