

People still fear technology

Technophobia has become a common phenomenon in the last decade.

"Technophobes" — persons who fear all that deals with industrial arts, applied science and engineering — make up a significant proportion of the population.

An extreme case of technophobia can lead to Luddite's syndrome, an abnormality associated with Ned Ludd, an 18th century Leicestershire worker who originated the idea of destroying industrial machinery in the belief that its use diminished employment.

MODERN EXAMPLES of this behavior have taken a variety of forms.

Office workers putting staples in key punch cards, pouring coffee in word processors and dropping paper clips in copying machines are a few examples of this type of sabotage.

But Luddite's syndrome isn't the only psychosocial problem associated with high technology. Disk drive envy, parent-child computer guilt, silicon chip depression, personal computer inferiority complex, peripheral paranoia and software overload are just a few of the lesser-known disorders.

DISK DRIVE envy is most common among new purchasers of personal computers. The affliction originates at the time of purchase when the consumer is torn between buying an inexpensive data cassette tape recorder or a costly disk drive.

Even if the choice is to select a disk drive, it is usually a single disk drive. Envy sets in once the purchase decision is compared with a friend or colleague who has dual disk drives.

Parent-child computer guilt is most commonly experienced in middle class families in the sub-



high tech
Ronald R.
Watcke

urbs. Tremendous pressure is exerted on parents by external forces, even in subtle ways, to buy a computer for their children. Commercially, constantly show home computers used by children in middle class families with amazing results in learning and future career development.

"Neighbors and friends who have bought home computers for their children subconsciously encourage the old 'keeping-up-with-the-Jones' adage. But this time it is not by a swimming pool or new car.

LESS COMMON, but potentially more serious, is silicon chip depression.

This neurosis occurs when the owner of a personal computer must take the machine in for routine service or repair. If the length of stay is more than a week, a form of separation anxiety may set in to further complicate the situation.

Personal computer inferiority complex is probably the most widespread psychological disorder. Inferiority complexes are not new, but now there is a new twist. If you bought a Timex Sinclair home computer for \$29.95, you probably won't even tell someone who owns a Commodore 64.

The same is true if you bought a Texas Instruments TI-84 for \$49.95, and your next door neighbor has an Apple IIe. Usually, a personal computer inferiority complex is greatly reduced when

the two competing parties have an Apple IIe and an IBM PC.

Peripheral paranoia is more widely known among the more serious personal computer users. This phenomenon usually occurs when a user has several peripheral pieces of equipment hooked up to his or her machines, including a printer, disk drive, monitor, modem and joy sticks.

The user in this case imagines some type of equipment failure, and fears having to locate the source of the problem. Carried to its extreme, a rare form of keyboard paralysis may occur.

SOFTWARE OVERLOAD usually attacks the unsuspecting computer neophyte. Having already purchased a machine, the less experienced computer user will carelessly buy numerous software programs for a variety of applications.

Faced with an armload of diskettes, the user comes to the realization that all the software programs have user manuals which must first be thoroughly read and understood.

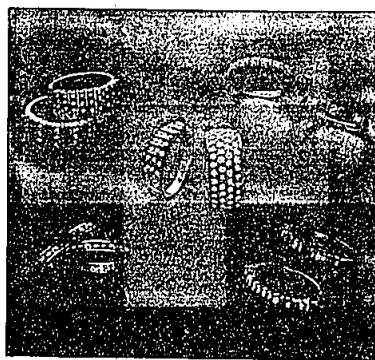
In addition to the psycho-social abnormalities described above, three physical conditions may also be common among heavy users. They are CRT eye strain, keyboard finger and data entry tow backpain.

Eye strain is caused by long uninterrupted periods of viewing the CRT. Keyboard finger is caused when the user exclusively uses the index fingers on each hand in a traditional "hunt and peck" fashion. In a short period of time, a callous forms on both index fingers.

Low back pain is common among most office clerical workers. Desk top computer users are especially vulnerable since they usually sit in uncomfortable chairs when entering data over an extended period of time.

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