



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Cross-Sectional Help

by Mary Pat Campbell

In the April 2009 issue of *The Stepping Stone*, Paula Hodges exhorted us to keep up with technology in her Chairperson's Corner, writing:

"You may not realize how much the new technology impacts many aspects of our jobs, regardless of your practice area. I urge you to keep informed of new developments in technology. Why? Here are just three reasons:

- 1) If you're hiring entry-level staff, you need to keep up with the basics of how the younger generation thinks, learns and works.
- 2) Technology can help you make better use of your time, and the time of those you work with.
- 3) Social networking through the Web has more to offer than you think."

Tony Batory responded in the July 2009 issue that trying to keep on the cutting edge is overrated:

"I'm certain that techies will disagree with what I've said. Let me try something more palatable. It's not the technology that has value, but how you use it. Would I want an entry level person to text me during a meeting? NOT."

Both Paula and Tony are correct.

Keeping track of developments in the tech world can help you get your job done; that said, there are always so many developments it's difficult to know what to pay attention to, and what level of detail you really need to know. A lot of technology that supposedly will free up our time or make us more productive seems to just fill up more time and bring in more demands on our attention.

I come with a message from the Technology Section: We're here to help!

While we often have very technical articles intended for those already deep in tech-geek-itude, we are interested in covering more general interest technology issues. Without a filter on the large amount of

information on technology developments, it can be easy to lose what will really be useful to your work; or you may skip over some new service as a frivolous amusement, missing an opportunity for a good information channel.

For example, one of the more recent "fads" is Twitter [of course, by the time of publication here, things may have moved on—one of the disadvantages of this fast-moving world]. You may think that this is just a text-chatting tool, but Twitter has become one of the best real-time search tools I've found. I am often on the lookout for pension-related news, and I have a Twitter search permanently set up in my Tweetdeck. That has caught news I didn't find in a Google news search. For more information about what Twitter can do for you, check out the article by Eddie Smith in the *October 2009 CompAct* titled "Introducing Twitter".

We're also interested in informing people about using the tools they have at hand in a better way. Eddie Smith has another article in the *October 2009 CompAct* where he talks about tips for improving your experience with Microsoft Windows or Outlook. He has a list of handy keyboard shortcuts, for example, some of which may be familiar, but others may be new to you.

I invite my fellow Management and Personal Development Section members to tell the Technology Section [of which I'm also a member] what you'd like to know about in the tech world. We could publish these articles either here in *The Stepping Stone* or in *CompAct*.

Whether it's a certain type of business problem that technology developments can help with [say, a problem with institutional memory—perhaps a wiki will help there], or you've heard about a development you'd like to know more about—let us know! ●



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