

**2017: Trading HAL for SIRI**  
by  
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I suppose that I have been noticing it for quite some time now, but it only really clicked in how dependent we have become on our electronics the other day, when everything in my computer suddenly disappeared without warning. No documents, pictures, videos, Outlook; Nothing! Even my desktop picture had reverted back to the factory screensaver. It had eaten everything!

I was on my way to a meeting with no time to try to salvage anything, so I shut it down in disgust and left. When I came home and settled in to fix whatever was wrong, I found that everything had been restored. I had no clue what had gone wrong or how it miraculously restored itself; everything was just back the way it was before the problem.



I spent the rest of the afternoon backing all my files up to my external hard drive. No I don't back up to "The Cloud". My cloud based Adobe Creative Suite is quirky enough for me not to trust the cloud with anything I may want to keep. In fact, the current crash, or whatever it was, also caused my Creative Cloud to go down and it took more than one reboot to get it back up; during which time I discovered that Adobe doesn't offer an option for

live tech support. They give you a number of suggestions as to how you can solve potential problems, but basically you are on your own. Not particularly comforting. Bottom line on this story; a piece of electronics cost me a large portion of my afternoon, and possibly a couple years off my life in increased heart stress. Well, at least I'm not as bad as the people who have called 911 because their internet went down. Seriously, you can't make this stuff up.



Every Sci-Fi movie ever made about Artificial Intelligence, from 2001, A Space Odyssey to The Terminator warns us of artificially intelligent computers destroying humans and taking over the world. But Sci-Fi writers missed the real threat. Computers don't need to destroy humans, they are assimilating us. We are becoming increasingly more dependent on them and, as computers become more intelligent, humans become less intelligent. Don't believe me? When was the last time you

worked out a simple math problem in your head, without reaching for your smart phone? Go ahead. Give it a shot.

I have had to help cashiers in stores who accidentally punched in the wrong cash and didn't know how to fix it. There was a time at Tim Hortons when I bought a hot chocolate for \$2.35 and gave her a \$10, but she accidentally rang up \$5. She stood staring at the till for a moment before saying, in a quiet voice, "You gave me a \$10 didn't you?" I leaned forward and quietly said back, "It's \$7.65." She smiled gratefully and gave me my change.

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3	+	5	=	<input type="text"/>
8	-	7	=	<input type="text"/>
9	+	2	=	<input type="text"/>
6	+	8	=	<input type="text"/>
9	-	4	=	<input type="text"/>

Another time I was making a \$10.25 purchase at Wal-Mart and gave the cashier \$20.25, but he rang up \$10.25. He panicked and was digging furiously through the change, not sure what to do before I told him, "It's just \$10." He took my word for it. How did this happen?

We are getting to the point where we simply cannot do without our electronics. We go into a panic if we realize that we have left home without our smart phones. Believe it or not, it wasn't that long ago that our phone was attached to a wall and didn't travel with us everywhere we went. On occasion we actually missed phone calls and the world didn't come to an end. Really! It happened.



Now we have to be on our phones constantly, even while driving. Now, I'm not just talking about those people who are plugged into their Blue Tooth 24/7, although I find that silly. I'm talking about the people who believe that they can text and drive at the same time. At what point did people get to the point where they thought they could type and drive at the same time? We would never have thought of using a typewriter while driving. It would be ridiculous. Sorry kids, but this is no different. Don't do it.

To give you an example: I had someone in an SUV tailgate me through a construction area, all the time looking down into her lap. I was tempted to get out at the next red light, walk back to her vehicle and tell her that if she was going to insist on tailgating me, could she please put her damn phone down! Would this be wrong?

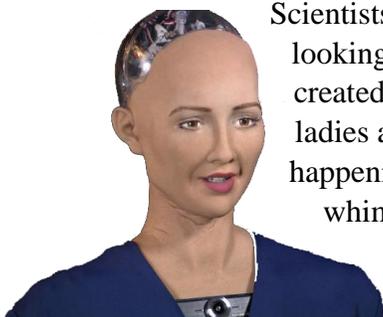


And don't even get me started about the Pokémon zombies who are once again invading the parks now that the weather is getting warmer. It is unbelievable how many people can be wandering through a beautiful scenic park, nature all around them, and totally oblivious to their surroundings.

I have nothing against people playing games, especially those that involve getting physical exercise. I just can't



get my head around the idea of people wandering aimlessly around, staring blankly into their cell phones. And what the heck is a Pokémon Gym? Who is getting exercise at the gym? It isn't the people sitting around staring at their screens! They barely move. It is possible that some may have stopped breathing.



Scientists are in the process of creating Artificially Intelligent, human looking robots, including Sophia, one of the best known humanoid robots created by Hanson Robotics. But it is merely a technicality. Let's face it ladies and gentlemen, Siri has already become our HAL. The takeover is happening and the human race is being devolved, not with a roar nor even a whimper, but with us staring blankly into the screens of our smart phones as Siri gives us our orders for the day.

