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York Region Media  
Group community  
newspapers

The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 100 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group also includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Markham Economist & Sun, Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, yorkregion.com and York Region Printing.

**LETTERS POLICY**

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Our children need digital boundaries

Re: Pulling digital plug hard to do, July 31.

Please publish more articles on the impact of the digital world on our youth.

Addiction aside, it is literally rewiring their brains.

According to the 2010 book by Nicholas Carr, *Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, studies find when we go online, we enter an environment that promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking and superficial learning.

Evidently, the links are particularly distracting and studies show jumping between digital documents impedes understanding. Comprehension declines whether or not people actually click on the links.

According to Mr. Carr's book, the depth of our intelligence hinges on our ability to transfer information from working

memory (short-term memory) to long-term memory.

But a bottleneck is created since working memory can only hold a relatively small amount at a time.

When we are swamped with information, links, images and advertising, the information spills over, so to speak, and doesn't make it into our long-term storage.

It's like watering a house plant by continuing to pour on more water without giving it a chance to soak in.

You don't have to be a neurologist to know we have a problem. And the solution is with the parents. Not only are we not putting limits on our children's use of technology, we are setting a bad example.

It's time we set an example by controlling the use of technology rather than allowing it to control us. Then we can start setting boundaries for our children.

HAROLD TAYLOR  
MARKHAM



## There are hazards to recycling and being green

**H**ands up out there: who has a garage full of hazardous chemicals? Or worse, a bathroom cupboard or basement hiding caustic, dangerous products?

Up until very recently, I was a guilty homeowner.

Not only did my kitchen and bathroom harbour spent batteries, old floor polishes and mostly-empty paint cans, but my garage was absolutely embarrassing.

I doubt any neighbours knew that on the metal shelving unit behind our two cars lurked paint thinners, old solvents, half-empty bottles of engine oil, rust removers and empty cans of wasp spray.

But the two old toilet bowls we had stored in there since replacing them with our modern low-flush versions were clearly visible.

### GARAGE CLEAN-UP TIME

Time for the summer garage clean-out and a trip to the closest regional hazardous waste facility.

I used a recent day off to go through the shelves in the garage and bathroom cupboards.

Once I got all the material together and my husband helped me lift the old toilet bowls into the back of our



Marney Beck

vehicle, it was time to research where we were going.

We'd both driven past the Household Hazardous Waste Depot in Vaughan on Rutherford Road, so we knew that's where most of our collection was destined to be safely disposed.

But a quick check of the Region of York's website showed that the old toilet bowls were certainly not going to be accepted as hazardous waste.

Under www.york.ca/services and the garbage and recycling link, I found information on Vaughan's McCleary Court Community Recycling Centre.

It was just a short drive away. It seemed perfect.

Armed with my Google map (first mistake) and instructions from the website — McCleary Court, within the industrial area of Hwy. 7 and Creditstone Road — I took the wheel (second mistake) and we started our Conscientious Environmental Resident Adventure.

### SAD RELICS OF PAST

It was reassuring, and sad at the same time, to see old televisions in one large container, old computer terminals (ours was the only Mac), and a long table loaded with electronic relics from the past (to which we added old telephones and a bag full of batteries).

Staff waved us through and told us what to put where and helped us unload our paint cans and other small waste items.

Then it was time to head south down Creditstone to the Community Recycling Centre. Did I mention that it was the Friday of a holiday weekend?

Did I mention that my husband is one of those guys who is happier being the driver and is not always a happy passenger?

Traffic in Richmond Hill and Vaughan is always thick, but on this very hot day it was choked beyond

belief.

I assumed there was access to McCleary Court via Hwy. 7 and neither my Google map nor the regional website had set me straight.

### NO WAY TO GET THERE

As we crawled inch by inch along Hwy. 7, it became clear to me and my husband there was no access to the recycling centre, which could be clearly seen on the north side of the clogged highway.

Muttering something under his breath (my husband) and mouthing cheerful "Oh well, we'll just turn around" inanities (me), we finally found our way to McCleary Court.

There again, staff were welcoming and gave us instructions and helpfully handed me a brochure with a map that clearly showed the centre was not accessible off Hwy. 7 (too late).

We deposited our toilets in the appropriate bin and headed back into traffic for home.

At least the garage looked much cleaner and greener when we returned from our Conscientious Environmental Resident Adventure.

Marney Beck is a York Region Media Group editor