Six Ways to Make Technology Last
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In a world where technology changes so quickly, it is difficult to stay current with only one income. It is even more difficult in the Adventist educational setting to keep up-to-date with the current technology where we barely have enough to pay for our teaching staff. There are times, however, when a grant or extra funding comes along to help buy a new computer, or when you decide to use your own personal finances to upgrade the schools technology. There are a few tips that I have picked up along the journey of upgrades, which I hope may be of use to any of you who are in the dilemma of upgrading with such a tight budget.

Tip #1 – Don't buy the cheapest and lowest quality. If you want to make whatever you are buying last, you need something that can handle a few years of change. You may be wondering why you would even need a 250 GB Hard Drive now, but in the future you may be using that space up faster than you can imagine. Even though you spend a bit more, it will be much cheaper than buying a completely new system in a year or two.

Tip #2 – Don't get the top of the line, full meal deal. In many cases the price of cutting edge technology, just because it's the newest and fastest, will be marked up and you are not getting the best deal.

Tip #3 – Be sure you actually need an upgrade. If your current technological needs are such where you can't run a needed program or application then it's time to upgrade. If you are able to run your applications smoothly, but it's taking you longer than your neighbour who has an Intel Pentium Extreme Edition Dual-Core with HT Technology, then that's ok. You are still functioning well.

Tip #4 – Budget for upgrades. You may have purchased your last computer by making payments. If this is the case, then consider making a similar payment for an upgrade once your initial payments stop. When it is truly time to say goodbye to your system, then you will be in a better financial situation to make that change.

Tip #5 – Be creative with the technology and software that you have. Many applications have features that you are not aware of. Make use of the resources and experts around you to learn how to use these features before purchasing new software.

Tip #6 – Once you have made your upgrade, stop looking through brochures and advertisements. You don't need to see what you are missing six months from now. It's also hard to see the computer you bought six months ago is actually $700 cheaper than when you bought it. One of my mottos has been to look at computer and technology options only when I am in need of getting an upgrade. What I don't know what is out there won't hurt me, especially if I'm still happy and productive with the current technology I am currently using.

This tip can also be applied to the gaming industry. You may be in a situation where you are feeling the pressure from your children to purchase the newest and latest game or game system. I personally feel that what you don't know won't hurt you, it only helps you. If, for instance, you always buy the latest video game console the day it comes out, you will be loosing a ton of money in the mark-up value. If you purchase everything a year behind, you will be amazed at how affordable it is to still make upgrades for the games and game systems. The trick is to stay a bit sheltered. Don't let your children be exposed to the latest game. They can see it for the first time next year. It will still carry its novelty with them and at half the price.

Be creative as you make use of your technology. Only when you are no longer able to do what you need to accomplish is when you should consider an upgrade.