

# THE CHANGE AGENT

Adult Education for  
Social Justice: News,  
Issues, and Ideas

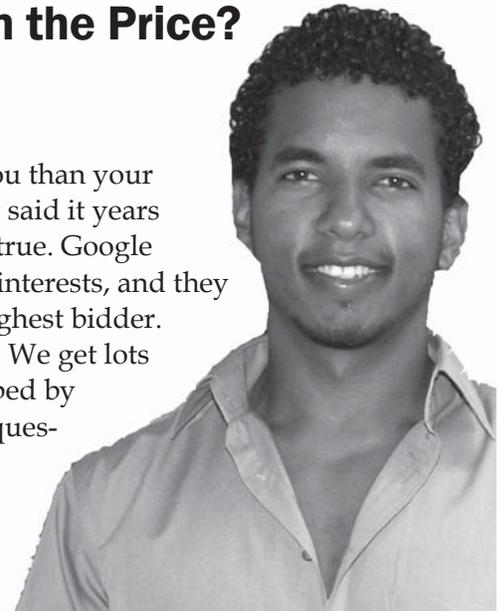
## TECHNOLOGY

- You Are the Product: 1
- Expensive Technology: 3
- Where Would I Be without My Phone: 4
- I ♥ iPad: 5
- Technology Mania: 6
- Telephone Technology: 7
- “You Made It; You Deal with It”: 8
- How “Green” Is the Internet: 10
- Disconnection by Internet: 12
- Real Feelings in Real Time: 13
- Notes from an Internet Addict: 14
- Technology is My Lifeline: 16
- Technology Connects & Disconnects: 17
- Is Technology Changing Your Brain: 18
- Driving with High-Tech Tools: 20
- Bled to Death: 21
- Finding Felix: 22
- It Hurt. I was Furious: 24
- Social Media: 25
- Digital Footprints: 26
- The Computer is My Family’s Tool: 28
- Using Technology for Education: 29
- The Flipped Classroom: 30
- Savvy Consumers: Beware of Free: 31
- Films that Start Conversations: 32
- Education on the Go at TV411.org: 33
- Using Technology to Solve Problems: 34
- Dragon Naturally Speaking: 36
- How Times Have Changed: 37
- Technology in the Care of Others: 38
- Restaurants and Technology: 39
- How Can You Use QR Codes: 40
- Closing the Digital Divide: 41
- Using Technology to Make Music: 42
- Should We Regulate the Internet: 45
- Tweeting for a Cause: 46
- Internet for All. Really?: 48
- A World of Conflict in Your Phone: 50
- Digital Disconnect: 52
- Latest Technology: 54

## You Are the Product! Google Sells You to the Highest Bidder; Is It Worth the Price?

*Romenigüe dos Santos*

Google knows more about you than your own mother does. Somebody said it years ago, and today we know it’s true. Google knows most of our likes and interests, and they sell this information to the highest bidder. What do we get in exchange? We get lots of great applications, developed by them, totally for free. So the question is: is it worth it?



### Can’t Eat These Cookies

Google uses a technology known as cookies to learn about what you do and what you search for on their Web pages. (Cookies are small programs placed in your computer that collect information about you and give it to Google.) For example, when you use Google to search for something like “gyms,” Google knows you are interested in working out and probably other healthy things.

Moreover, Google doesn’t use cookies just on their Web pages. They also use it on several thousands of other Web pages. Consequently, they know much more about you than you could imagine. Every day they get complete reports of the Web pages you visited, purchases you made, content you read and shared, music you listened to, videos you watched, and ads you clicked on.

*Continued on p. 44*

*The Change Agent* is the biannual publication of The New England Literacy Resource Center. Each issue of the paper helps teachers incorporate social justice content into their curriculum. The paper is designed for intermediate-level ESOL, ABE, GED, and adult diploma classes. Each issue focuses on a different topic that is relevant to learners' lives.

In New England, *The Change Agent* is available free of charge in limited quantities through NELRC's affiliated state literacy resource centers (SABES, CREC, Vermont Department of Education, Literacy Resources/RI and RI PD Center, New Hampshire Department of Education, and Maine Adult Education). Contact these centers to learn how to receive your free copies. PDF versions of *The Change Agent* can be downloaded from our Website.

**Submissions. Our next issue is on immigration.** See the "Call for Articles" on the back cover. We welcome submissions from teachers and students as well as activists and thinkers from outside the field. For submission guidelines visit <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)> or contact us at 617-482-9485 or [changeagent@worlded.org](mailto:changeagent@worlded.org).

#### Subscriptions

Individual, bulk, and electronic subscriptions to *The Change Agent* are available. See the back cover and/or our website for details.

*Editor:* Cynthia Peters

*Proofreading and editing help from:* Sydney Breteler, Araceli Mendez, Andy Nash, Leah Peterson, Carey Reid, and Lou Wollrab.

*The Change Agent* is published by the New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education  
44 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210  
(617) 482-9485  
[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)

No information in this magazine is intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate or political party.



## From the Editor

When we decided to focus on the theme of technology, I wondered if people would have much to say. But it turns out, when you invite students to write about a topic that matters to them, they do so passionately and critically. And so this issue is full of first person stories, critical analyses, and moving reflections on the ways technology is affecting everyday life, our communities, our democracy, our environment, our families, and our education. For learners working on their basic skills, these articles provide an accessible, engaging context that is both relevant and educational. Whether you have embraced smart phones and social media in the classroom or have dodged the "wired" revolution altogether, you'll find a great deal of compelling content and learning opportunities here.

And if you're hearing a lot about **COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS (CCR)** standards based on the **COMMON CORE**, and you're wondering how to integrate these into your classroom, *The Change Agent* is a great resource. See <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/extras)> for information about which articles and activities in this issue are aligned with which CCR standards.

## Look out for—Article Leveling and a FREE WEBINAR

If you are a teacher, be on the lookout in September for a free webinar on how to use this issue of *The Change Agent* in the classroom. To aid in your teaching, visit our website and download a Table of Contents that lists the reading level of each of the articles.

## Some Articles are Available in Audio

Researchers say that listening to articles read out loud while you follow along with the text is a great strategy for improving reading comprehension. To access our online materials—including all back issues and audio—please subscribe by visiting <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)>.



## Meet the Editorial Board

*From left to right:* Karisa Tashjian, RI Family Literacy Initiative; Romeniguo dos Santos, ESL student, Pawtucket, RI; Akira Kamiya, ALRI; Andy Nash, NELRC; Erik Jacobson, author of *ABE in the Age of New Literacies*; Tina Fang, Family Literacy Initiative in Providence, RI; Cynthia Peters, editor of *The Change Agent*; Priyanka Sharma, National College Transition Network; David Rosen, Newsome Assoc. *Not pictured:* Bob McIntire, ME Office of Adult Educ. and Family Literacy.

# Expensive Technology

## Saying No to My Daughter (and the Phone Companies)!

Leonardo Espinoza

Technology is so expensive. It creates problems for families who don't have the money to buy all the latest devices. How do other families afford them? In my case, I have a big problem with my 13-year-old daughter. She wants me to buy her an iPhone that costs \$400 to \$600. I say, "No, it's too expensive."

**Now my feelings are hurt because my little girl is mad at me.**

Do you want these types of things for your kids? Don't spoil them like that; give them love instead. I completely disagree

with buying expensive phones for little kids. I understand that you want to check whether your sons or daughters are okay, but why must we use expensive phones for that? Now my feelings are hurt because my little girl is mad at me. I love her a lot, but what can I do? It is what it is.

My question is: why do phone companies introduce new phones so often? They should stop thinking only about their pockets and think more about poor families that don't have anything to eat. Please have some care for others! When you die, you might wish to take your money with you, but, too bad, you can't.



Leonardo Espinoza, pictured above with his 13-year-old daughter, is a student at the Elk River Learning Lab in Elk River, MN. He is from Ecuador. He is working on his basic skills so he can get a better job. He has three children.

### Extension Activities

**Leonardo poses several questions in his essay.** Go back through the article and identify the questions. Share your responses.

**To improve your spelling and vocabulary,** make a list of words in this article that *sound* exactly like other words but have different meanings—for example, “so” and “buy.” Next to the word, write down another word (not necessarily from the article) that sounds the same but means something different. For example, “sew” and “by.” How many can you find?

*Hint: There are at least 12.*

# Where Would I Be Without My Smart Phone?

*Marie Andrieux*

Technology is always with me on my path through daily life. My day begins and ends with technology. Where would I be without my smart phone?

## Morning

I wake to the alarm of my smart phone. From then on, I'm attached to it. On my way to work, if I am late, I use my phone to call my job. I look up what time the subway will come and find out if there are delays. Sometimes, I text my son to make sure that he is awake for school. My smart phone is very important to me. I stick to it throughout my day, but at work I have to put it on vibrate so I can focus on my job.

## Noon

I use the Internet for my job as a nursing assistant at a hospital. I take a computer cart around to my patients so I can enter their vital signs. I put in weight, height, blood pressure, temperature, and pulse. This information is immediately available on the patient's computerized chart. I contact my coworkers who are at the other end of the floor on my smart phone to avoid shouting and disturbing the people on the floor. This also saves us time while keeping information confidential. With technology, everything is possible.

## Afternoon

After a busy day at work, I turn to my smart phone again. I check on my children and my husband. I look to see if I have any emails or text messages; I respond to them. I make a few phone calls. I chat online. I use the calendar to plan the rest of



my week. I schedule appointments and create "to do" lists.

My smart phone is also my emergency device. We live in a world of emergencies. When you have family, you always have an emergency. Some are real emergencies and some are "kid" emergencies. They are all important to me though.

## And Night

At the end of the day, I am glad I have a smart phone. My smart phone helps me get home. It alerts me to transportation delays. It helps me find a different way to get home if necessary.

When I get home, I try to give my smart phone a rest and spend real time with my family. Before computers and smart phones, this is what we did, and I make sure we continue to spend real time together daily.

---

*Marie Andrieux is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center. Marie works in a NYC hospital taking care of geriatric patients. She is the proud mother of two children, Jeff (a college graduate) and Emmanuel (a high school student).*

# I ♥ iPad

Sheila Dawn Prag

## An App That Vocalizes for Me

My life has been changed in so many wonderful ways now that I have my iPad. I can let people know what I'm thinking and how I'm feeling. My cerebral palsy hinders me from moving and speaking the way I would like. My fingers work well enough to type. I have an app that I use that helps me communicate. It is called Assistive Express and it is designed for people who have difficulty with their speech. I type what I want to say and it can even predict words for me to shorten my typing time. Then a natural sounding voice vocalizes my words for me.

## Surfing from My Chair

I love my iPad because it allows me to reach out to my sister anytime that I want to chat with her. I can use Skype, Facebook, and all the social media that is out there connecting us to each other. I can surf the Web, and my iPad can take me to places that I will never get out of this chair to see.

## Hit "Talk" and Add My Two Cents

Getting my education has taken on a whole new slant. I can work on math or language problems on my iPad. When there is a discussion going on in class, I start to type my thoughts. I hit the "Talk"

### There's an App for That!

**What is "app" short for? What does it mean?**

**What apps do you use? Share your favorite apps with your classmates.**

**Use your imagination. Dream up some new apps that could help you at work, at school, at home, or in your community.**



button and I get to put my two cents in! Lots of times, I make people laugh. (I have been told I have a great sense of humor.) I feel good because what I think matters to the people who are in class with me.

## Participating Helps Me Feel Like I Belong

I love to go to the movies, and my teacher always asks me to share my "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" reviews. I used my iPad to make my own pie chart last week, and the rest of the class liked it so much, they wanted to make one, too. I guess what I'm trying to say is that this wonderful technology helps me to feel like I *belong*.

Here's the thing. My body may be disabled, but my mind is sharp. I like to think I am funny and I have a lot to offer. The iPad is the vehicle that lets me keep pace with all that is going on around me. It is truly a gift and a blessing. I am ever so grateful.

---

*Sheila Dawn Prag is a student at the Adult Learning Center in New Brunswick, NJ. She is revered by her classmates who admire her quick wit and desire to succeed.*

# Technology Mania

Mariama Diallo

Why are people willing to stand on line for hours to get the newest product? When a new version of the iPhone comes out, I notice that people are already talking about the next one. They believe the

## Why are people willing to stand on line for hours to get the newest product?

the market? Do you really need to upgrade your technology or do you just want to be in style or show off your cool new toy?

Technology is a big part of our daily life. We use technology to learn at school, to pay our bills, to communicate with friends and family, and so much more. People need technology in order not to be left behind. But sometimes, instead of being thoughtful about what products we need, we fall into what I call *technology mania*.

I think the problem is not with technology, but with the way we crave it. We are constantly bombarded with messages that these new products will solve all our problems, make us feel like we are connected to others, and bring us hap-

hype that the next one will somehow be better than the new one they have in their hand.

Is it necessary to always have the latest gadget on

piness. The companies bombard us with these messages to make money, lots of money. I wonder why we can't resist their messages. I guess some people have a need to brag about what they have, some have a need to feel better about themselves, and some just follow the trends.

We need to resist these constant messages. After all, there will always be newer, bigger, better products on the market. Technology is not a fashion statement but it is a necessity to get on in our world.

**The companies bombard us with these messages to make money, lots of money. I wonder why we can't resist their messages.**

Mariama Diallo is a GED student at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center in New York City. She is from Senegal and has lived in the U.S. for the past eleven years. She aspires to be a social worker after she earns her college degree. She is a proud mother of Fatoumata, a fifth grader.



## What Do You Think?

**Do you like to have the latest gadget?** Why or why not? (Maybe you're wondering what all the various gadgets are and what they can do. If so, see p. 54 for more information.)

**Why do you think** there is often a new and slightly improved gadget on the market?

**Look at the phones on the next page.** Which ones do you think got fixed when they broke? Which ones get thrown away?

**Share what you know** about the production cycle of electronic gadgets. Then read the articles on pp. 8-9 and 50-51.