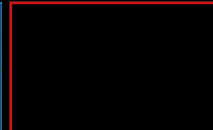


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A technogeek with a conscience

By
Reporter

Last week I went skiing with a new acquaintance, and as we rode up the chairlift he looked at my skis and said, “You gotta get new equipment.” I countered that I really love my skis (they are low-mileage, Salomon Xscreams, perhaps a five year-old design). My friend then said, “Look, you have the latest, greatest phone, why wouldn’t you also have the latest, greatest skis?”

It was a reasonable thing to say, I guess, and I did not have a ready answer for him, but having had some time to think about it, I figured it would make a good opening for this week’s column!

My old skis meet my criteria for having a great time up on the mountain. I recognize that ski technology continues to improve, but I don’t think this is a good reason to toss away perfectly good older equipment. My skis were state-of-the-art five years ago, and I don’t believe that skiers today, on their modern equipment, are having any more fun than I do, or than they were five years ago. The reasons for skiing were the same then as they are now — anticipation of the snow conditions, the camaraderie, the fresh air, the fantastic views, the rush of speed, the thrill of “hang time,” and the pride one takes in one’s mastery of the sport. These will always be the real reasons for skiing, and when my skis wear out, I’ll get a cheap pair of today’s technology (which will then be outdated), at a great price, because by then the next sleek new models will be seducing everybody

else.

On a more philosophical level, it is built into my DNA not to be wasteful. Perhaps it comes from growing up in a family that struggled financially; nothing was ever wasted. I am disgusted with the world's consumerist, throw-away mindset. If we all took care of our stuff, we would not need to replace it as often, and we wouldn't be chewing through our natural resources so quickly.

I drive a car that is 14 years old, but I take pride in maintaining it, and it rewards me as my faithful steed. I do not make payments on it, and I actually enjoy driving it. If I could, I would convert it to hybrid technology and keep it another 10 years. It's a matter of sustainability, which is a popular word around Whistler these days. I wonder how many of us walk the walk.

As for my new phone, I bought it because the old one stopped working, and the new one has many more useful functions. The old one is still serving, but as a toy for my daughter. End of conversation.

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Last week, I wrote about DataDot anti-theft technology, and as sometimes happens, somebody on the other side of the continent picked up my column from the online version and contacted me. In this case, it was a representative of DataDot Canada, Pat Cowman, and he has sent me some great information. He says, "DataDot Technology is the only product worldwide that has proven theft prevention statistics as high as 93 per cent." DataDot Canada has formed a National Bicycle Registry Program, whereby any bike owner who uses the DataDot technology will be registered in the system. The program is also a sponsor for CrimeStoppers and InfoCrime (Quebec). As early as March this year, there will also be a consumer Internet search page, allowing a buyer of a used item to check the item in the registry to see if it might have been stolen. It sounds like a product ripe for the times, especially here in Whistler where bicycle crime is a chronic problem. As Cowman so aptly put it, it's like DNA for your stuff. For more information on this interesting new technology, visit www.datadotcanada.ca.

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