

Title:

Hats Off To Technology: Five Reasons Why

Word Count:

488

Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

The next time you send an e-mail to your family, plan a vacation online, or send a photo of your newborn to your parents, you may want to tip your hat to technology. Technology, and its use, is an integral part of our everyday lives. It is so pervasive, we would be hard-pressed to live in a world without it.

When Sandra Johnson was young, she thought an engineer was a person who drove a train. A few years later, she became the first black woman in the U.S. to earn a Ph.D. in electrical engineering. Now a Chief Technology Officer and Senior Technical Staff Member for IBM's Systems & Technology Group, Dr. Johnson believes it is imperative for black families to incorporate technology into their daily lives. "There are any number of reasons blacks can't live without technology," Dr. Johnson says. Here are her top five:

1) Technology Levels the Playing Field: From small and medium-size businesses to visual, literary and recording artists, to information dissemination-technology brings the world to our fingertips. This offers a special advantage to members of the black community who have traditionally encountered obstacles to success in these and other areas. Technology levels the playing field, so that black voices can be heard, black offerings can be marketed and creativity and innovation can flourish.

2) Economic Empowerment: Technology enables blacks to do some incredible things at the click of a mouse. They can shop for just about anything, pay bills, plan vacations, purchase entertainment, wine and dine at reduced cost and use online services to find the best banking services.

3) Strengthens Family Ties: For many who are no longer living in physical

proximity to their closest relatives, technology enables them to communicate on a regular basis in a cost-effective manner. They can exchange photographs, share videos, send e-cards, text message and call from one place to another at a fraction of what the cost was just a few years ago.

4) Careers in Technology Are Awesome: A career in a technology-related field can be extremely rewarding. It can also improve your quality of life. Technology skills are unique and in short supply, the work is exciting and gratifying and the financial rewards are relatively high.

5) Great Futures for Your Children: Through technology, the world is literally at your children's doorstep. Technology enhances the education of black children. Just imagine what could happen if black children spent time designing or improving games for the Xbox 360 and PS2, or used their ingenuity to create videos, films, music and literary works. The possibilities and opportunities associated with technology are endless.

According to Dr. Johnson, there are a number of programs available, including Black Family Technology Awareness Week, that provide technology access and training. "If America is to maintain its competitive advantage," she says, "we must encourage our children to join the next generation of innovators, scientists and engineers, and our adults to build and improve their technology skills."