

The house no-electronics zone

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Raymond Chen

In my house, I have designated two rooms as the *no-electronics zone*. No use of electronic gadgets is allowed. No television, laptops, PDAs, cell phones, handheld video games, you get the idea. The purpose of this section of the house is to *interact with other people face-to-face*.

Now, exceptions have been made for extenuating circumstances. For example, when some of my friends were without electricity due to a power outage, I invited them to my house, and they were permitted to use their laptops in what would normally be the no-electronics zone.

But those are the exceptions. So if you come to my house, remember: The living room and dining room form a no-electronics zone.

[Update 1pm] **Return of the nitpicker's corner:** Once again, people get distracted by the minutiae and miss the point of the rule. The purpose of the rule is to encourage face-to-face interaction and to discourage activities which cause people to withdraw from each other.

By electronic devices, I mean televisions, laptops, PDAs, cell phones, handheld video games, you get the idea. Digital watches, clocks, and lamps are acceptable, provided they do not prevent you from interacting with others. Checking the time is okay; playing Space Invaders on your digital watch is not. Digital cameras are acceptable if they are being used to take or share pictures. But sitting there sifting through pictures without talking to anyone is not.

If Professor Stephen Hawking comes to visit, his electronic devices are being used to interact with other people and are therefore acceptable.

I didn't feel the need to apply these common-sense rules to the basic principle, assuming that my readers understood the point I was making and didn't need a legalistic breakdown of what is and is not acceptable.

[Raymond Chen](#)

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