

Confessions of a FEMALE GADGET-LOVER

by Kayla Cross

Yes, it's true. I love gadgets. I love wrapping my fingers and my brain around the newest cell phone, PDA, or digital camera. I'm currently yearning to build a relationship with an iPod of my very own, but I haven't saved enough money yet. In high school, I never cared about James Bond; I always wanted to be Q – the scientist who imagined and created all the amazing gadgets 007 used to save the world.

Unfortunately, society tends to stereotype women in relation to technology: incompetent, scared, uncomfortable. These theories can be refuted in the person of one young lady I know, age 11, who aspires to run Microsoft one day. And she is not alone. Most female 'tweens, teens, and twenty-somethings are very tech-savvy. Still, women traditionally have passed technological tasks and decisions (hooking up stereo speakers, setting the clock on the VCR, and deciding what kind of digital camera to buy) to their husbands, brothers, fathers, or even male friends.

Good news! Times are a'changin'. Like me, today's woman is not only comfortable but capable and innovative when it comes to using technology. In fact, according to www.cnn.com, women accounted for more electronics sales than men in 2004 – \$55 billion of the \$96 billion spent.

And Women's Ministries groups across the United States are catching this technology train, learning to use technology as an avenue of outreach and ministry to women of all ages. They are not only helping their younger generations with technical knowledge find a place of ministry to use it, but they are also touching new generations of women through technology. Many of these are women they might never reach through traditional means.

This trend is showing up everywhere. Apparently, I'm not the only female gadget-lover. Even General Women's/Girls' Ministries is riding the technology wave for all it's worth. Their websites are updated regularly and always include downloads to aid local churches in their WM and GM

programs. Forms, promotional materials, and presentations are available to conference and local WM leaders on CD-ROM.

The most exciting development in Women's Ministries is a new outreach launched in January 2005. Three different online Bible studies are available at www.iphc.org/wms. Each study lasts eight weeks and is focused on a different female demographic. "The Diamond Monologue" is a study on purity of heart and clarity of thought for single women. "Life in the Fast Lane" is biblical fuel for busy women with families. "Soul Spa" is a weekly opportunity for women who mentor others, or are thinking about mentoring, to rejuvenate in the Word.

This new thrust to reach younger, tech-savvy women online is a great idea. It worked on me. I wonder if they'll notice that I'm doing all three Bible studies at once? I just couldn't decide. ♣

Ten Ways to Touch Tech-Savvy Twenty-Somethings

1. Develop a ministry website.
2. Stage online Bible studies.
3. Create an online event calendar with links to maps, ads, etc. (Update information regularly because they surf regularly.)
4. Set up an email mentoring ministry.
5. Establish chatroom accountability groups.
6. Put MP3s of powerful teaching on church, conference, or ministry websites for downloading.
7. Use I-Zone 200 mini-Polaroid sticker photos to personalize name-tags and prayer partner cards.
8. Use digital cameras to add interest to church bulletins and newsletters.
9. Email a list of next week's events to subscribers as a supplement to the Sunday bulletin.
10. Use a listserv to alert members of prayer requests and special announcements.

