Stop ruining technology with nostalgia

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New technology is supposed to be an improvement over old technology. It should be more efficient, faster, smaller, or simply just *better* than its predecessors OR it must offer something so unique, so amazing that you forget that it, in fact, does nothing [1]. It's the reason smart phones, tablets, and ultrabooks are outselling dumb phones, computers, and laptops of days gone by. People like improvements.

So, why are we so obsessed with finding ways to take new technology and give it the nostalgia treatment?

Music Box

Let's take a look at Joelle Aeschlimann [2]'s Little Boxes project. Aeschlimann, from EcoleCatonaled'Art de Lausanne, has created a series of wooden knobs that, when attached to your iPad, turn the tablet into an old-fashioned hand-crank music box. The knobs have a small rubber tip on the bottom that interacts with the iPad much like a stylus would. When the crank is turned, the iPad generates music and a visual effect for the viewer.

My problem is "The Little Boxes" lack the aesthetic value of a true music box, while adding nothing to the experience. It's the equivalent of playing the piano on an iPad. Yes, it's mildly entertaining for a minute, but if I'm going to go old school, I'd rather just have the music box and not an updated imitation.

Typewriters

Would you like to turn your quiet Mac into a loud, clacking typewriter? Me neither. I grew up using typewriters alongside computers , but I don't long for the days of the clicky-clacky. The Noisy Typer 1.0—that's *honestly* its name—is software that changes your gentle clicks into giant clanks. It covers everything from your keys to

your scrolling, so you can really irk whoever else is in the room. The Noisy typer is a Free Art and Technology Lab speed project by Theo Watson. I like to think the worst part about things like texting and typing are the clicking noises, particularly if you're somewhere public like on a train or in an office. I just can't get behind a project that makes technology *louder.(*If you need me, I'll be the curmudgeon in the corner of the quiet car talking about all the kids and their noisy technology.)

Rotary phones

Consumers spent *years* demanding smaller phones. We've progressed from the old cellphone that required you to carry a giant bag, to brick-sized phones featured heavily in 90s sitcoms, and finally to the smart phones, which is basically a computer in your pocket. So, *why* would you want a rotary attachment for your tiny, evolved iPhone? The Retro Pink Handy Handset plugs into the audio jack on your phone, leaving you to hold the phone and the headset. If you look to the product details [3], you'll notice it says "this retro phone headset doesn't really make sense…" and they're trying to *sell* this to you. Just to be clear, the people selling this clearly acknowledge its total lack of actual use. Yes, it will keep the phone away from your head, but so will a Bluetooth or any number of hands-free devices that don't require you to physically hold the phone to your head.

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