

---

UCF Forum

---

4-20-2016

## He Used the Internet - I Used the Encyclopedia

Rebekah McCloud  
*University of Central Florida*

 Part of the [Communication Technology and New Media Commons](#), and the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/ucf-forum>

Information presented on this website is considered public information (unless otherwise noted) and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate byline/photo/image credit is requested. We recommend that UCF data be acquired directly from a UCF server and not through other sources that may change the data in some way. While UCF makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information, various data such as names, telephone numbers, etc. may change prior to updating.

---

### STARS Citation

McCloud, Rebekah (2016). He used the internet - I used the encyclopedia. UCF Today, 2016-04-20. Retrieved from

This Opinion column is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in UCF Forum by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).



## He Used the Internet—I Used the Encyclopedia

By **Rebekah McCloud**  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, April 20, 2016

I was talking recently with one of my students who will graduate in May. He told me about his first year in college and began his reminiscence with: “Back in the day...”

He’s 25 and I thought to myself: Back in what day? Back in the day for him was five years ago.

Most of his conversation centered on technology. He talked about getting used to devices such as smart phones, tablets and video games.

He talked about how social media has changed the way people communicate. He talked about changes in the classroom, such as the use of graphing calculators, clickers, eBooks and web courses.

Indeed, he has seen some changes.

I have thought about our conversation many times and it makes me smile. I compared my first year in college nearly 45 years ago to his.

- He used a graphing calculator. I used a slide rule. I was a teacher when I saw my first calculator.
- He used a smart phone. I used the dorm’s push-button wall phone. (At home we had a desktop rotary phone.)
- He played video games. I played board games.
- He sent messages via social media. I sent messages via the post office.
- He used email. I used the U.S. mail.
- He used a laptop or tablet to type his papers. I used a manual typewriter. I received an IBM Selectric as a graduation present.

- He used eBooks. I used hardcover books; every now and then a paperback novel.
- He took web courses. I took all of my courses in a classroom, face-to-face.
- He used clickers. I raised my hand.
- He used the internet. I used the encyclopedia.
- He searched the library holdings electronically. I used the card catalog.
- He used apps. What's that?

When did technology become such an integral part of our language and the way we view the world?

For someone in my generation, this is scary and thrilling at the same time. In the 1960s, I read and watched science fiction about the future. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* were books that made me think "what if and what then."

Gene Roddenberry's TV show, *Star Trek*, talked about a time in the future, such as stardate 2016. It seemed so far away. But it's here!

Roddenberry didn't quite get all of the technology right. But as I think about it, just like today, most of the conversations by the characters—Capt. Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy and Mr. Scott—were laced with tech terms (warp speed, transporter, food replicator, photon torpedoes, phasers, holodeck and tricorder, to name a few).

After my conversation with my student, I started making a list of technology-related terms that crossed my path. In just two weeks, I'm up to 75 terms from "aggregator" to "Zip drive."

I'm sure there are many more that I didn't jot down. And, who knows, I just might embrace tech speak and utilize it in my conversations more often...or not.

Nevertheless, I think scientist Roy Amara, past president of the Institute for the Future, had it right: "We tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run."

*Rebekah McCloud is director of the University of Central Florida's PRIME STEM/Student Support Services Program. She can be reached at [Rebekah.McCloud@ucf.edu](mailto:Rebekah.McCloud@ucf.edu).*