

Don't sweat the tech.



SMARTER ACCESS

Now that you have a basic understanding of what media you use, it's important to determine the most efficient way for you to divide your time. Answer the following questions:

1. Realistically, how many times a day must you check and answer your email account(s)? Are you setting this standard or is work?
2. How often is the content you check being updated? For example, are the blogs crucial to your persona/ professional life being updated throughout the day? Or only at night? What's the minimum number of times you would need to check in (for each service that you use/ each blog that you subscribe to).
3. Does your current workflow allow you to focus only on one content area (email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) at a time without having to multitask? For example, could you identify 10 minutes four times a day to work on email without distraction or interruption? If not, can you change your workflow?

Below is a list of suggestions for accessing your content in smarter, more efficient ways.

- You don't have to be a member of Twitter to follow someone's tweets. Simply look for the orange RSS button on his or her profile page and subscribe to it. You'll automatically receive updates.
- Speaking of RSS, using a reader is a simple and effective way to follow content in one place. Now that you have a list of the essential blogs you read, try subscribing to them via an RSS reader. There are lots to choose from: Google Reader, NetNewsWire, Bloglines, etc. Readers are usually free and easy to set up!
- You can also subscribe to online calendars, via RSS, to help you stay on top of meetings, conferences and more.
- Most social networks have the option of sending you a text or email message with new updates in your network. If you're strategic and disciplined about how and when you check your messages, this might be a way to help you cut through the chatter and get to the meat of your social conversations.
- Don't be afraid to delete old content! Achieving an inbox with a zero balance may be unrealistic, but try to get any noncritical feeds, podcasts, email messages, etc. off of your screen.
- Any feeds, podcasts or other content that you've passed over three or more times without actually reading should be deleted.
- Cut back on subscriptions. Take another look at the list you created - which feeds, Twitter users, Facebook applications can you live without?