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By April Smallwood

Seeing as this is our technology issue, I've decided to step back into a time in my life when I got out and had no internet to surrender my existence to. Here goes.

I thought the lyrics to Banana's in Pyjama's were 'Coz on Tuesdays they will try to catch them on the Wes', as in Wednesday. I must have been picturing some serious ghetto-like Bananas. I figured 'on the wes' was the equivalent of 'on the flipside'. If you're like me then you're probably curious as to the correct lyrics, which are 'Coz on Tuesdays they will try to catch them unawares.' No shit. We were wrong. Or maybe, I was wrong. I don't mind standing alone on that one.

I thought Miss Piggie was a real try hard. Always up in Kermit's face. I still can't understand why he wasn't more assertive when she continued to boss him around.

I collected rubbers. Or erasers, if you will. I think it's the prerogative of every kid to have something to collect. Unlike those of you who accumulated now valuable basketball cards and silver spoons, I have a bag of old Macca's toys dating all the way back to 1986. No wealth have they brought me. None of my friends think I'm cool.

I fell in between the springs of my trampoline, oh I don't know, about seven thousand times. Those chunky springs really hurt. It never deterred me from jumping though. Maybe, for the afternoon that I fell, I'd go on trampo strike but more often than not I'd be up again in no time.

I laughed at the girl who peed herself on the first day of kindergarten. Out loud. I don't think children have compassion at that age. Watching the green carpet surrounding her gradually become darker ... I remember being scared, but not that scared.

I couldn't understand why adults tired so easily after play. I'd ask my Dad to kick some ball and he'd be puffed in three minutes. If I could change the world or human genetics I'd equalise the energy levels of kids and oldies.

I used to squirt friends of my parents that I didn't like. I'd do it with these rubbery toy balls that if you squeezed under water would fill up, ready to spray. Back then, tying my shoe laces was a triumph. If only life were as uncomplicated as it was at the age of six.

We live in an information age. With one click, any person, regardless of age or education, can access a wealth of information from any number of persons and places. But what dangers are we exposing ourselves to? Is there any way of protecting ourselves after we click? I investigate.

You have probably heard of Howard Stern, the most widely syndicated and perhaps most controversial radio broadcaster in the USA. Stern has considerable clout as a commentator but it is his frankness about sex and issues of race that make him particularly notable. Stern used this

formula of political incorrectness to fuel his great success through the 1990s.

However, since the rise to power of the conservative Bush government, it has been increasingly difficult for Stern to broadcast these opinions. Standards of broadcasting in the USA have become increasingly strict, with the Federal Communications Commission fining anyone wh

for the... in the... How... con... it Stan...

Because the regulation of the Internet is done by individual states, questions arise as to how there can be consistent or effective regulation. Different states have different rules about what is acceptable. In the USA, for example, First Amendment rights to freedom of speech prevent the censorship of Internet content. How can a national administration ever control what its citizens look at when they have free access to sites hosted in foreign states? Even one-party states like China are finding this a challenge, as they are forced into a difficult balancing act between harnessing the economic benefits of the internet while controlling its use through their 'Great Firewall of China'.

Be that as it may, Australian laws quite strictly regulate what is domestically accessible online. Since 2000, State and Commonwealth laws require any website operating through an Australian Internet Service Provider that contains 'objectionable material' to be closed down. The penalties for breaching this provision can include incarceration.

'Objectionable material' falls under three categories, each determined by the Commonwealth Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC). The first category includes sites that have been refused classification (RC). Like a film or a video game, any website that falls outside the standard categories of classification cannot be hosted. Second, any site that is rated X, that is it contains non-violent sexual material, is not to be hosted - this is a stricter standard than that applied to film. The third category incorporates R rated sites: those websites featuring material the OFLC considers to be suitable only for those aged eighteen or over. R rated sites are legal but access to them must be controlled by age verification systems which bar persons under eighteen from accessing the site.

The OFLC does not trawl through the Internet looking for this material. It is a complaints-based system that operates only when members of the public present a complaint about a particular site to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) who then forward the complaint to the OFLC for classification. Should the material be objectionable, the service provider may be required to shut the site down.

Such a system has many limitations. First, the system relies totally on internet users who find particular types of material objectionable to either search it out or stumble upon it by chance. The second and perhaps more serious fault in this system is that it does not guarantee that objectionable material in foreign states will not be accessed, even though it is unlikely that these foreign websites are being regulated.

The National Academies Press, a conservative US website, claims that in any given week, about 70 million people worldwide view at least one adult website; at least some of that number reside in Australia. Though present legislation may prevent persons accessing objectionable material

“To take away the right to say ‘fuck’ is to take away the right to say ‘fuck the government’.”

– Lenny Bruce

produced domestically, the legislation does little to prevent foreign material being accessed. On this point, Donald Robertson from ACMA is unapologetic. “No, we can’t regulate everything, but what law can?” asks Robertson. “There are laws against murder but that’s never stopped people killing.” Clearly, the level of regulation achieved under the complaints-based system is not exhaustive: Australians still have extensive access to objectionable material.

Despite this, the laws regulating Internet material are actually quite onerous. In many respects, the system of censorship applied to Internet material is much more extensive than that applied to offline content. One person passionately opposed to these laws is Irene Graham, the Executive

Director of Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA), a group that opposes undue censorship of online material. “The current laws on Internet censorship go way beyond the standards that ought to be accepted in a democracy” says Ms Graham. “There’s no justification for this. There’s no reason why Australian adults shouldn’t be able to view the same material online as they already see at the movies and on videos.”

But is that the case? Is there a greater need for strict regulation of online material? Remember that there are very real restrictions on accessing films. Children, for example, cannot go to a video store to rent adult films – there is somebody monitoring access to the films. Online, there is little in the way of this monitoring unless the website’s host has chosen to restrict access. Ms Graham remains unconvinced. “It’s true that there’s nobody physically there stopping you from accessing the material, but ultimately you cannot access the Internet without a computer. Whether it’s at home or in a library, there’s somebody whose responsibility it is to ensure that children do not access that material.” In other words, Graham believes that what regulation there is ought to come from Internet users or persons responsible for them, rather than the state.

Clearly there are a range of views on the issue of internet censorship, many of them irreconcilable. It will depend on your own sensibilities what conclusion you reach. What is clear is that it is impossible to adequately regulate what is placed on the Internet. The volume of information is simply too large and the points of origin of this material are too many. Even domestically, Australia’s complaint-based system places the onus of regulation on internet users because the state does not have the faculties to monitor all Internet material.

In this age of information we have all manner of material open to us and this tide is unlikely to be stopped. It is a wonderfully empowering situation, giving people the opportunity to share diverse opinions and interests with others, and everyone accessing this awesome database can learn from an all new body of information. But, at the same time, this privilege comes with new responsibilities: each of us must act responsibly and learn to handle information that will challenge, shock or offend. We must learn to read the waves.

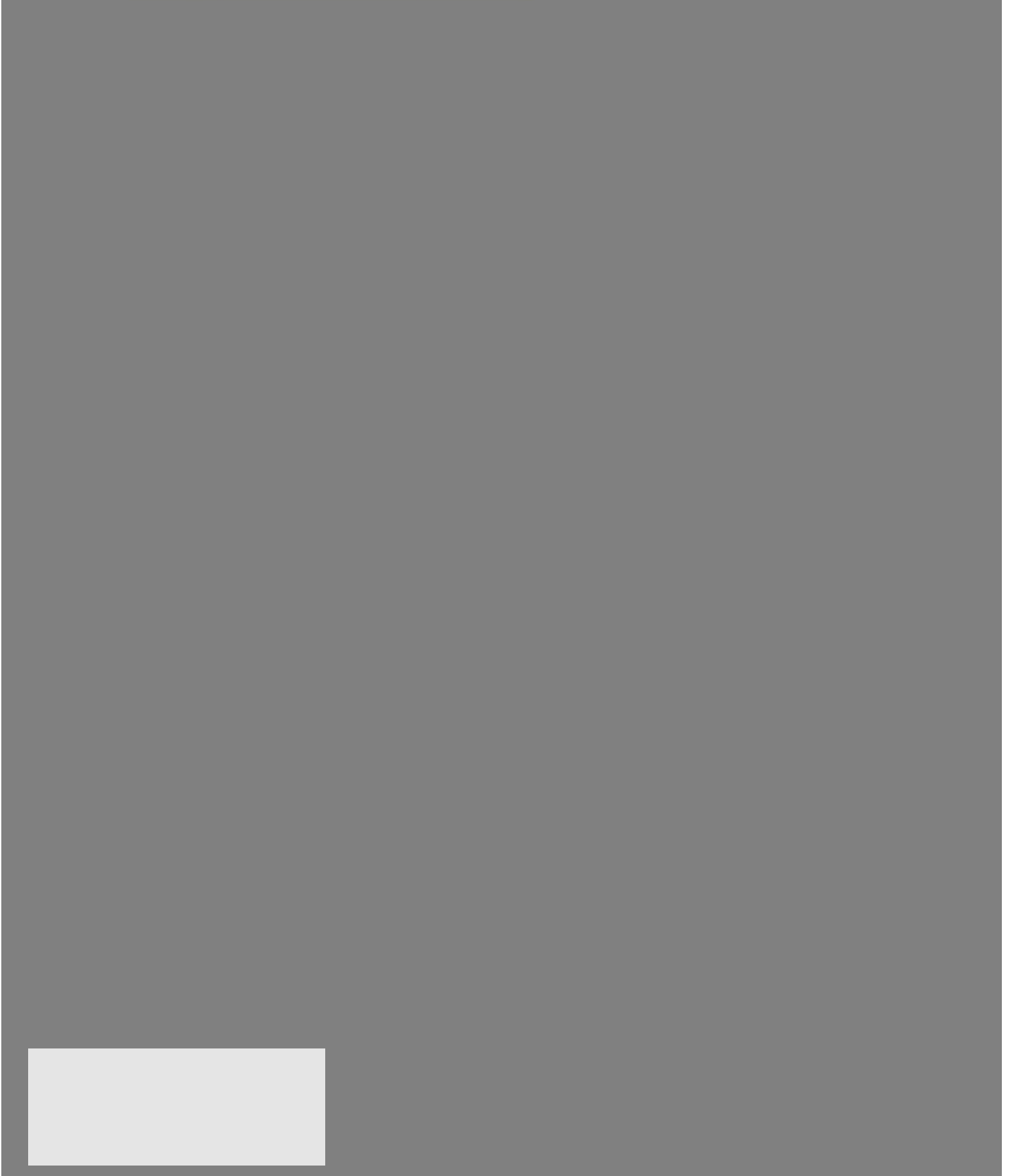
CASCADE DATA



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES



Sports Association



W E ~ « ² £ Z X « ¬ © Z | ¬ ~ y Z

crossword



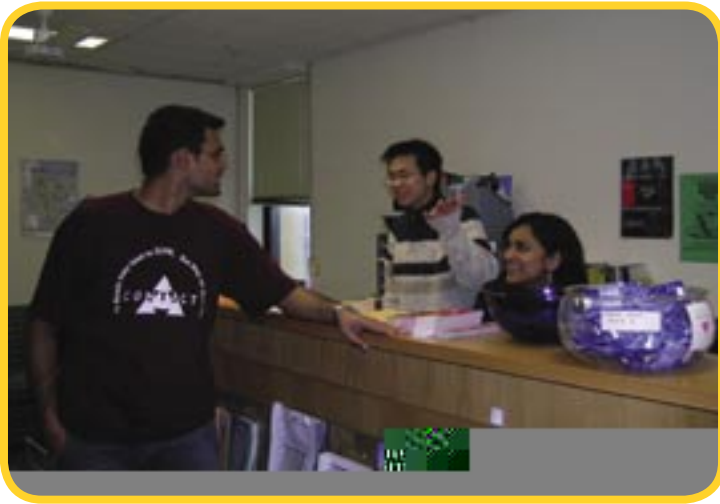
target

Make as many words as you can out of the nine letters.

The centre letter must be used in every word. Use each letter only once. No plurals or proper nouns.

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UNSW is a huge place and whether you are new or old you may have to occasionally step out of your comfort zone. Fortunately for you, there's a service available to help you find your way around the University and its bureaucracy. CONTACT is a one-stop shop for anyone feeling a little uncertain. **Rob Gascoigne** went to the Quad Building to talk with Mel Drinkwater and Steven Chan of Contact because they know everything.

What is Contact?

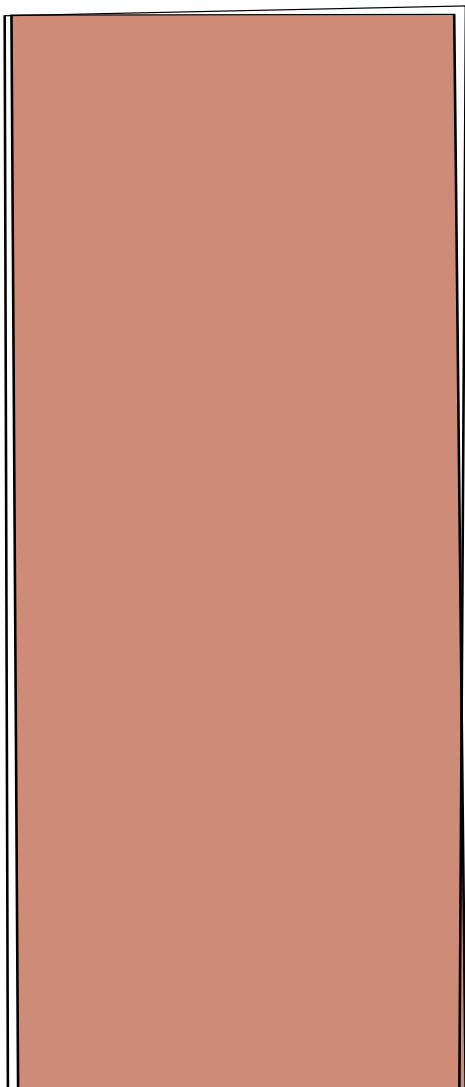
Mel: There's really two parts to Contact: there's information and there's referral. If you come in and ask us a question we can give you what information you need. If we don't have the information or you have a problem that needs to be sorted out elsewhere, we can refer you to the relevant person.

Have there been any particularly weird questions?

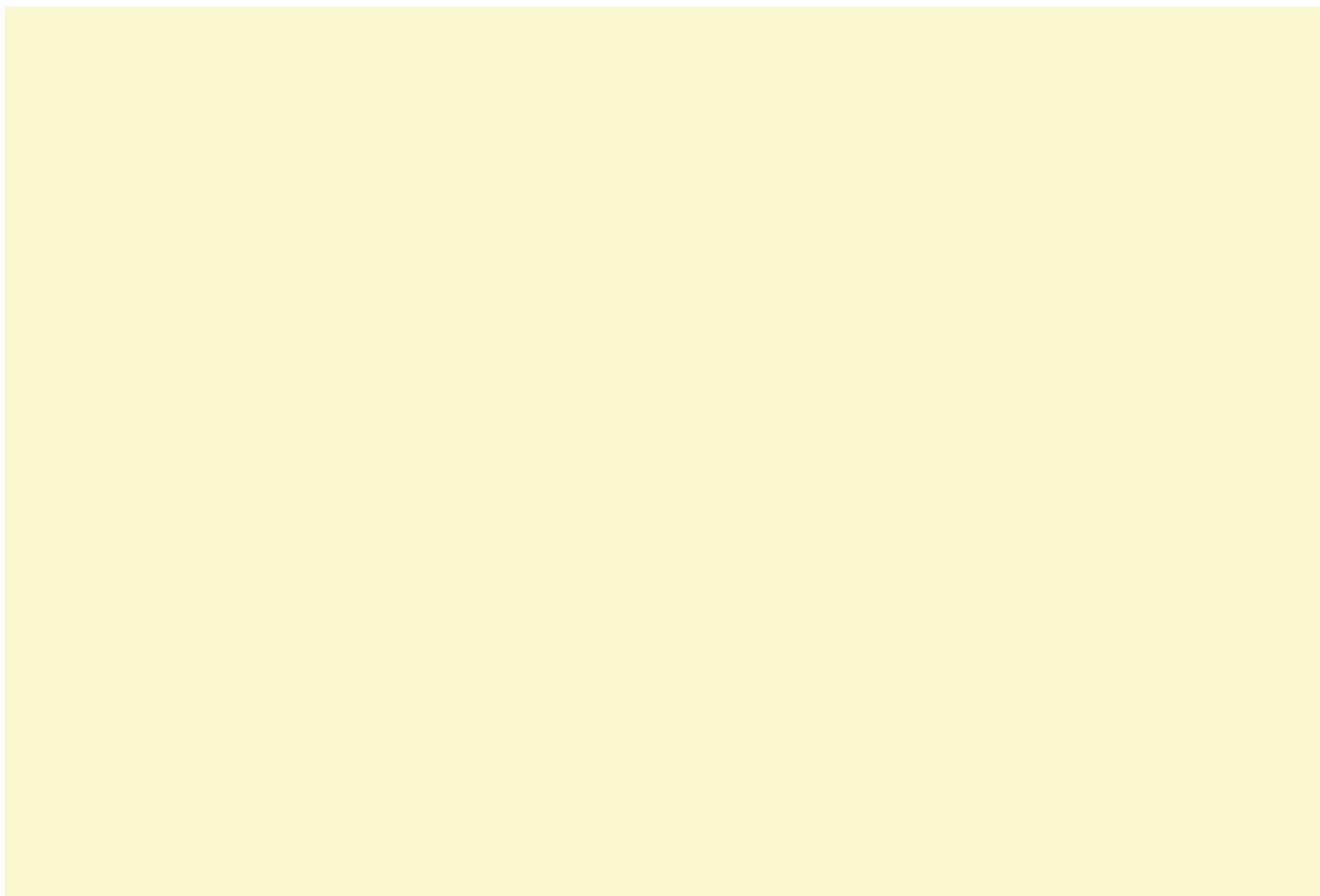
Mel: Yeah. The banner outside says "We Know Everything," so we occasionally get some really random queries. A little while ago someone came in and asked me if we knew who her mother was. Oh, and a few years ago someone came in and asked us about how they could go and watch whale migrations.

How did you sort that one out?

Mel: We M e M hA ries. A l ago hA D sorted ou R

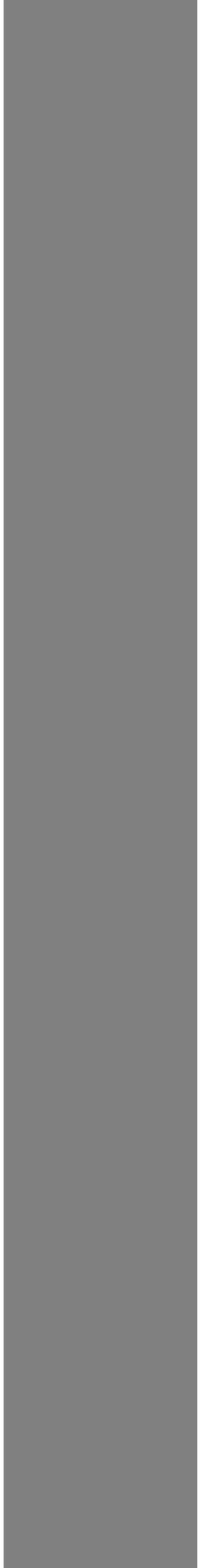


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There have been plenty of good inventions that have changed our lives for better or worse: television, the internet, mobile phones and sliced bread



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