

*Conquer CyberOverload: Get More Done, Boost Your Creativity, and Reduce Stress*

By Joanne Cantor

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Non-fiction

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Review by Steven King, MBA, MEd

Perhaps my tardiness in writing this review will affirm I suffer from cyber-addiction—or at the very least—cyber-overload. Earlier today, I read on my LinkedIn feed that FaceBook would probably unveil a new app for the iPad. This seemed like good news since I regularly check my FaceBook via my desktop computer, laptop, iPad, and Android. I agreed to write a review for Dr. Joanne Cantor a few years ago...once I received the book, I read it from cover to cover and then promptly placed the desire to write the review considerably down my list of priorities. I have a confession, on any given day, cyber addiction rules my life.

[Sorry Dr. Cantor, I hope the fact I earned a MEd during my truancy will offset my tardiness.]

*Conquer CyberOverload: Get More Done, Boost Your Creativity, and Reduce Stress* was written for technology junkies like me. Who, despite their best efforts, find themselves immersed in a quagmire of technology and cannot always say they have put in a full day, whenever they're asked. Maybe cyber-addiction is synonymous with cyber-ADD. Let me put down my Xbox controller and continue writing this review...

Dr. Cantor writes eloquently of a mantra that I believe every middle school, high school, and college student should read: *multitasking is impossible for the human brain*. Her expert analysis of what should be referred to as “task switching” illustrates why I had to grade such bizarre papers during my tenure as a public educator. It seems that the brain rapidly switches between tasks and when we stretch ourselves among a few choices our efforts struggle. Trying to do more than one thing at a time causes our working memory to review what was done earlier to remind us of “where” we left off. No wonder students struggle—and finally parents have scientific proof to corroborate that command: *Turn off the television so you can concentrate on your homework*.

At the end of each chapter, Cantor does not disappoint the reader by providing an excellent list of practical steps anyone can take to reduce cyberoverload in his life. A few tips worth mentioning are enclosed:

- Limit interruptions by determining an uninterruptible period—then commit to not checking email during this period.
- Make sure you do not have your homepage set up with an internet site that updates frequently—you are giving yourself an automatic interruption. (In other words, trying to read while FaceBook is active on your computer is potentially a very bad idea.)
- To be more creative, alternate from periods of focus to periods of relaxation.

Another excellent point which Dr. Cantor makes for students is to affirm that the brain needs time to absorb and process information. Gone from the incessant pace of our society is the time required to sit and ruminate. One sure way to rob your brain's ability of retaining information is to break away from a high-information environment (such as reading for a class) to another high-information environment (such as surfing the internet or checking email). Maybe we could curb the ever expanding physical density of America if more people would learn that movement is a low-information environment.

*The Ant and the Grasshopper*, one of Aesop's more popular fables, teaches that a consistent life of balanced effort will achieve maximum results. If your cyber-addiction has turned into cyberoverload...you will benefit from reading this book. If you are younger than 30 – you *need* this book. It is my hope that teachers, administrators, parents, and older students will buy this book; read it; and then pass it along to someone younger than they.