

# How do you do. . . . Hey, how ya doing? . . . Hey!

Hey, you. Yeah, you. How many times did you say "Hey" this week as a greeting?

More than Hi or Hello, I'll bet. Have we said Goodbye to Hello?

The death of the salutation is most obvious with e-mail. Back in high-school business class, the salutation of a letter was something you actually spent time considering. Dear sir or madam. Dear John Smith. To whom it may concern.

Now, most e-mail simply begins with the first thought of the sender.

It's in casual conversation that the absence of Hello and Hi is most noticeable.

When I'm walking through the office or the neighbourhood, I hear a litany of "Hey, Bill."

Sometimes, not even names are exchanged. One person says, Hey. The



**BILL BEAN**

other says, Hey.

According to the Oxford Canadian Dictionary, Hey has its roots in Middle English. (It was a nonsense space-filler for Shakespearean writers, as in "Hey, nonny nonny.") The dictionary says that Hey is an interjection "calling attention or expressing joy, surprise, inquiry, enthusiasm, etc." The Random House Dictionary notes that until the 1960s, it was an informal greeting in such southern U.S. states as Mississippi, Georgia and the Carolinas, but has spread widely since.

I recall from my childhood that when Hey was used to preface a sen-

tence, one's elders might offer the gentle admonition, "Why use 'hey' when straw is cheaper?"

While Hey once opened a lengthier greeting (Hey, how ya doing?) it has devolved to the stripped-down Hey. Simple acknowledgment is apparently enough these days to maintain the tenuous connection of acquaintanceship. Say Hey; keep walking.

Hey, what's happening here?

Randy Harris, professor of linguistics, rhetoric and communication design at the University of Waterloo, sees the ascendancy of Hey as a symptom of the levelling of the social order:

Society, he says, used to be stratified, citing how a pharmacist, for instance, was once considered to have a somewhat elevated social status. Now, there's nothing special about being a pharmacist: there are several in any

grocery store pharmacy. "Everyone is middle class," Harris said.

With that levelling of social divisions comes a dissipation of formality. The tea-and-biscuit set greeting of "How do you do" was replaced by the Tupperware party set greeting of "Hello."

As well, society is speeding up. Language has to speed up to keep pace. The two-syllable Hello, with its long, drawn-out final "o," gave way to single-syllable Hi. Then, the long "i" vowel sound in Hi was replaced by the more abrupt "a" vowel sound in Hey. The phoneme shift is to less, not more.

You can see this trend to truncation clearly in text messaging. Okay became OK in written language, and then simply "K" in text-speak.

Harris also said that language changes. "If language is primarily

about communication and understanding one another, it shouldn't change, but instead, it's mutable . . . it changes. This change demonstrates that language isn't just about communication; it's also about how people see each other and themselves."

Just as "How do you do" brands one as, perhaps, a stuffy tea-drinker, "Hey" brands one as the cool dude with droopy pants, au courant musical tastes and far too busy a life to waste any time in excess conversation.

Imagine such cultured and erudite playwrights as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe meeting today in the town common. "Hey, Will." "Hey, Chris."

Hey, shorter plays.

• *U can reach Bill at bbean@therecord.com. K?*

## GADGETS



### SPYDERTV

The SpyderTV retails for \$279.99, or can be ordered directly from Datacolor (\$229 US). While the price may seem high for a product that you use once and then put away, Datacolor suggests you recalibrate every six months.

Datacolor: [www.datacolor.com](http://www.datacolor.com)  
Available in Canada at Henry's, which has a Waterloo store; [www.henrys.com](http://www.henrys.com).

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# TV tinkering lives up to its hype

During the course of a month, I will often try out several products looking for one that would be a good fit for this column.

Sometimes a company will send a demo unit and, before even opening the box, I have a pretty strong feeling that the product won't make the cut. I had this feeling about Datacolor's SpyderTV.

Let's face it. A product that claims to read your television's screen and tell you how to adjust the settings to "see your favorite shows and movies just as the director intended" seems a bit far-fetched.

I recall buying a DVD that purported to do the same thing, and I was never able to tell if I was adjusting the picture correctly and, when I was done, I could not notice any real difference. I assumed the SpyderTV was a high-tech version of the same thing.

Well, was I wrong! In fact, I would say that if you are spending significant money on a new television, you would be crazy not to invest in SpyderTV to ensure you are



**TIM JACKSON**

experiencing the full potential of your new purchase.

In simple terms, SpyderTV uses an electronic "eye" to analyze test patterns shown on your screen to determine your optimal television settings. The process takes about 20 to 30 minutes and is straightforward.

In addition to the SpyderTV unit, you will require a DVD player and a computer.

A laptop is ideal because the computer will have to be in close proximity to the television during the calibration process.

The SpyderTV unit is connected to your computer using a USB cable and is secured to the front of the television screen using a suction cup. Once connected, you simply start the software and it walks you through the calibration steps.

### THE CALIBRATION PROCESS

You start by telling the computer some basic information about your television, such as the type (LCD, plasma, CRT or rear projection) and the types of settings allowed by your model (brightness, contrast, tint).

Then you are asked to provide the minimum and maximum range for each setting.

For example, on my television, settings such as brightness and contrast can be adjusted from -30 to +30. This manual process is my only real beef with the SpyderTV software. I wish they had compiled a database of common television brands and their range of settings, so that each individual user did not have to enter this background information.

Once the type of television and the calibration ranges have been entered, the testing starts.

Each setting is measured using test patterns on the DVD. With each setting, you are asked to move the value to various points in the range.

For example, you will be asked to set the contrast to -30 and take a reading. You then move contrast to +30 and take another reading. Next, you will set it to 0 and read again. For each setting, up to seven readings will be required before the SpyderTV software identifies the optimal adjustment for your television.

When all is done, you receive a report detailing the optimal settings for your television.

So how do you know it works? On the included DVD there are several photos and videos that demonstrate the effectiveness of the changes. The first is a photo of a black panther with a black background. After making the suggested adjustments on my television, the animal stood out clearly from the background and all elements of the photograph were well defined. When I returned my settings to where they were before I started, the panther and the background blended together and much of the detail was washed out.

Another test picture features a

man and woman wearing white garments and sitting in front of a white background. In the "after" version, the various shades of white were visible and distinct whereas with the "before" version they all melded together.

I can't emphasize enough how pleasantly surprised I was with the before and after comparison. What I had assumed was going to be a gimmicky gadget did in fact make a real difference.

SpyderTV is one of the more user-friendly products I have come across. In addition to written instructions, the DVD includes a full walk-through of the process showing you what to expect at each stage. Once you start calibrating, the computer software uses an easy-to-follow wizard that walks you through the process one step at a time.

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# Readers add voices to grandparent name game

Dear readers: Many of you responded with heartfelt stories and no-nonsense comments to a writer (Jan. 20) who expressed angst over what name to assign non-biological grandparents. She and her hubby felt "uncomfortable" calling his divorced parents' mates Grandpa or Nana.

### Here is a selection:

■ My divorced grandmother married "Papa T" when my mom was in grade school. He was more of a father to my mom and more of a grandpa to me than my "blood" grandfather could ever have been. Papa T took me fishing, read me stories, sang songs, and even played dollies with me. My mom named me after Papa T, as it was a gender-neutral name, which I wear with pride. Blood lines don't matter as much as what's in the heart.

■ The expectant parents need to grow up, quickly, before the baby is born. Sharing blood doesn't make you a



**DEAR ELLIE**

parent or grandparent. Children don't recognize blood ties, but they'll realize the lack of respect held for any "imposters." To the writer: Let your children call them Grandma and Grandpa, then allow the relationships to flourish where they may.

■ Children benefit from having positive relationships with several older adults, and new parents also benefit from having a wide circle of family support and backup. If Granddad's partner is a good person, willing to commit to being a grandparent, then recognize that with the name he or she prefers. If Grandma is seeing someone new, then include Grandma's sweetie in invitations, but take your lead from Grandma about when and whether her sweetie

has become a committed partner.

■ In my family, the grandparents are called Nanny and Poppy. They're the only grandparents our children have known. I didn't want to become yet another "Nanny" when one already exists. I suggested using the cultural background of both families. My husband is Irish and the Gaelic term for grandmother and grandfather are seanathair (shanahar) and sean-mhathair (shanmahar). We combined "nanny" with the "shan-mahar" and I'm now called Shanmy. My husband is called Shanmpa. These are unique titles found only in our family! Create your own legacy!

■ I was told to call my stepmother's father Uncle Joe. For 12 years, we spent time together shopping, walking and just hanging out, until he died when I was 18. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't wish that I called him Grandpa because that's exactly who he was to me.

■ My daughter has three grandmothers and two grandfathers. We started off

calling them all specific names, but she developed her own versions. At age two, she loves them all dearly and couldn't care less whether they're her biological grandparents or not.

■ As you so astutely pointed out in your column response, children are wonderful at coming up with their own monikers. The maternal grandmother is Grandma Kitty (it has to do with a stuffed kitten she gave him for Christmas one year). It's too bad that the person who wrote you was so hung up on biology — there aren't too many families left today where all members are blood relatives (including theirs!). They should get over it!

■ I feel sorry for the person who wrote you, if she has to question what to call the step-parents in her life, and in the life of her child. It either means that she doesn't have a loving relationship with them and/or doesn't understand it.

■ One of our grandchildren was raised from the cradle to know the dif-

ference between the "real" and "not-real" grandparent. The relationship with this child was often remote. The other grandchild has never been made aware of the family dynamics; every one of us is "real" grandparents to her.

■ Instead of worrying about what to call them, she should be happy that her child will have such an abundance of love (not to mention the babysitting opportunities!). If she should worry about anything, it's the often too-short time that grandchildren have with their grandparents and remembering that, cherish every day.

■ We're ever grateful to our children for allowing all the many grandparents to bond, and the grandchildren love to be spoiled by us all.

■ Parents have to give their kids more credit; it's not that confusing to have two (or more) grandmas and grandpas.

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