

March 2020

ion

Better living through technology

Women in tech

The struggles,
the successes,
the support
system

RECOMMENDATIONS

What to watch, read,
download this month

Game-changing
smart home gadgets

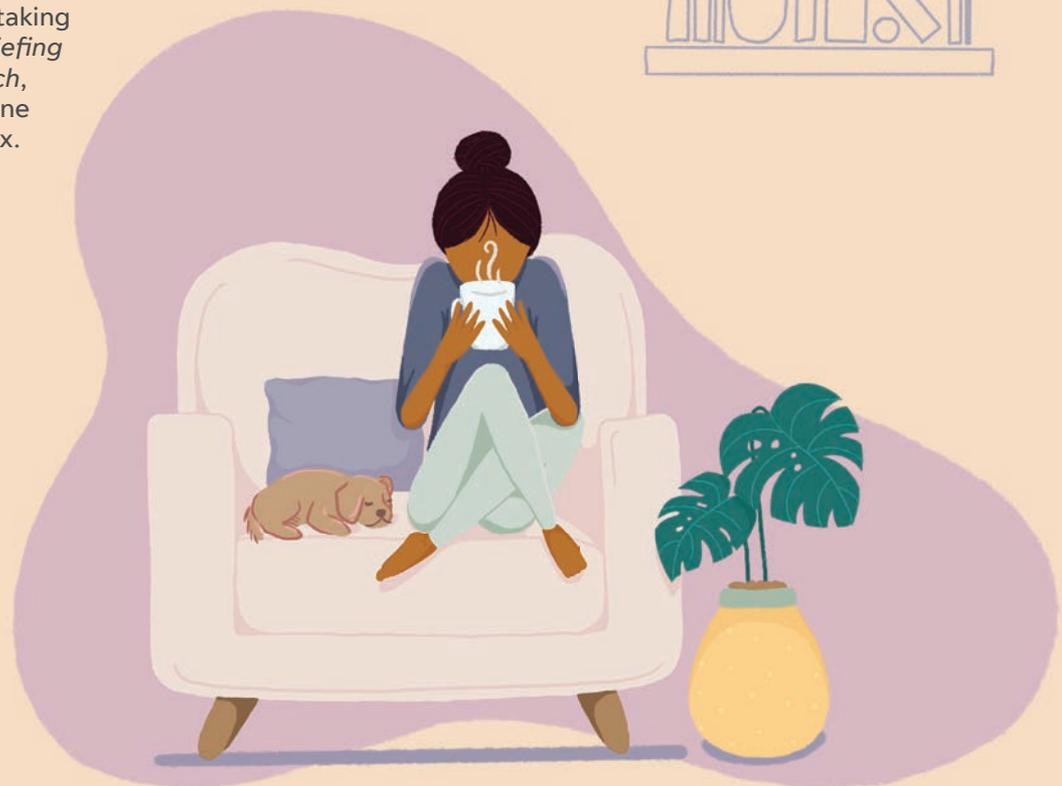
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FROM THE EDITOR

Questions and answers

Many of the story ideas I get come from friends' and family members' questions. Like when my mom was telling me about a TV commercial where a group of diners paid each other back via their smartphones. "I don't even know how that's possible," she said.

Mom, the story on page 12, on what's called "peer-to-peer payment apps," is for you.

A friend wanted to know what I'm reading, so I raved about the book I preordered on my Kindle to drop March 3, Hilary Mantel's "The Mirror & The Light." Other recommendations for this month on streaming services and other media start on page 7.

And you readers have been great about sending in questions. I've been asked most about TVs — what do all the letters stand for, how do I know what will work with my antenna/cable box/streaming service, etc. I've reposted a great guide from our partner Reviewed.com at our Facebook page, facebook.com/ionnewsmag, to check out if you have similar questions.

So what's your story idea or question (same thing, a lot of the time)? Email me at ion@gatehousemedia.com. 

Best,



Lisa Glowinski
Director, More Content Now
Gannett



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WHAT IS ION?

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Q&A

Your tech questions answered

Q: I'm interested in online dating, but it seems so scary. What are some precautions to take?

Kelvin Coleman, executive director of the National Cyber Security Alliance, emphasized that you do need to be wary of who you're interacting with online, and how. He provided some tips.

- Watch out for “catfishing” and “spear phishing” schemes — where someone is not who he or she claims to be, or someone gains your trust in order to steal information and money. If something seems too good to be true in the world of online dating, it probably is. Big red flags: If someone breaks plans repeatedly and keeps making excuses about why they can't meet in person; if they ask you for money for any reason, including to travel to meet you; if they ask for details about you such as your birth date and address.

- Use mainstream dating sites. If you follow a link to a dating website and it looks shoddy, or the language or photos on the site don't look right or ring true, steer clear. If something doesn't seem legitimate, it almost certainly isn't. Ask friends what sites worked for them.

- When it comes time to meet someone in person, choose a public place with plenty of people around, such as a coffee shop. Do not let yourself be talked into meeting inside a private residence when meeting someone you don't know. Tell a friend where you are going and with whom, and check in with them during the date.

- Don't overshare! Guard your personal information until you know exactly what kind of person you are dealing with. Know your privacy settings on the dating site. Until you've done your due diligence and learned about a person you want to see, do not give them more information than they need.

- Not using a dating site anymore? Delete your profile.



Q: I've moved to a new community. What are some safe places online to make friends?

- **Newcomers Clubs:** Active clubs sometimes have several regular activities to choose from. Online, search for “Newcomers Club” and the name of your town or a nearby town.

- **Meetup.com:** The popular online platform boasts dozens of groups in larger cities, centered around everything from hiking to book clubs to pets and more.

- **Social media:** Does anyone in your LinkedIn network reside in your new town? Maybe you could meet up for lunch with someone on a common career path. Do any of your Facebook friends have friends in your new city? See if you can connect with them for a drink, a game of golf or whatever you might both enjoy. Also look for Facebook groups in your new area — some neighborhoods have groups, as do people with common interests.

- **Apps:** Bumble BFF — from the makers of dating app Bumble — can be used for finding platonic friends. If you have a dog, the BarkHappy app can match you with other dog owners interested in play dates. As with any social media-turned-real life interaction, use caution and meet in a public place.

- **Volunteering:** It's not just a great way to give back. It can also be a perfect way to meet like-minded people working for a cause you care about, whether that's the environment, animal rescue or human services. Try volunteermatch.org to find the perfect opportunity.

— Carolyn Sperry, ION 

DO YOU HAVE A TECH QUESTION?

Let one of our experts find the answer for you.
Send it to ion@gatehousemedia.com.

passion



30 WOMEN IN TECH

The struggles, the successes, the support system



ON THE COVER

Ashley Sumner is CEO and co-founder of Quilt, a networking site for women. See her story on page 42.

diversion

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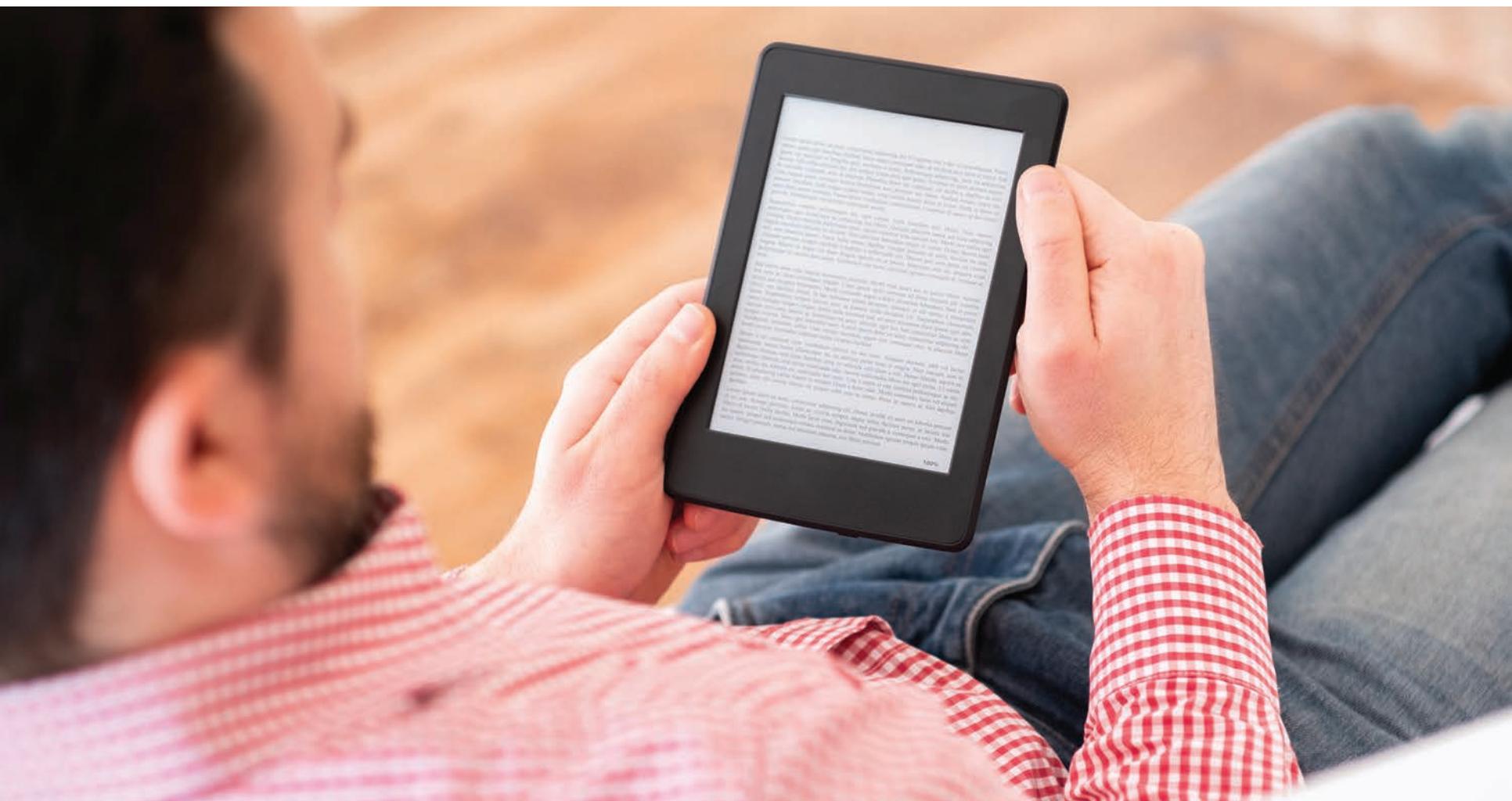
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RECOMMENDATIONS



What to ***watch, read*** and ***download*** this month

“March is a month of considerable frustration — it is so near spring and yet across a great deal of the country the weather is still so violent and changeable that outdoor activity in our yards seems light years away.”
— Thalassa Cruso, British-born presenter and author on horticulture whose gardening show on PBS, “Making

Things Grow,” endeared her to many as “the Julia Child of horticulture.”

Bottom line: This is a great month to check out what’s new in streaming, in theaters, in podcasts and e-books.



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

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NEW BOOKS

Books out today include “The Mirror & the Light” by Hilary Mantel, prize-winner author of “Wolf Hall” and “Bring Up the Bodies.” “Mirror” closes the trilogy of the final years of Thomas Cromwell. Also, Suze Orman has a new book out: “The Ultimate Retirement Guide for 50 and Older.”

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DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS

(spring forward)

SELECTION SUNDAY 15

The teams are chosen for March Madness, the annual NCAA men’s basketball tournament notorious for its brackets and Cinderella stories. Games begin March 17 and continue Thursdays through Sundays until the winner is crowned April 6. Many set up multiple TVs in their homes or offices to watch the first week’s frenzy, but you can also see everything online; start at ncaa.com/march-madness-live/watch.

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‘LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE’

Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington star in the Hulu adaptation of Celeste Ng’s best-selling 2017 novel. Two mothers in Shaker Heights, Ohio, become intertwined through secrets.

**ST. PATRICK’S DAY**

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NEW BOOKS

A movie tie-in edition of A.J. Finn’s “The Woman in the Window” is out today – the film starring Amy Adams and Gary Oldman will be out in May – and Alicia Keys’ “More Myself: A Journey” is also in bookstores physical and digital.

March 2020



WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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THIS MONTH

Bestselling author, researcher and speaker Dr. Brené Brown is launching a weekly podcast, *Unlocking Us*. According to a release, the show will feature conversations that “unlock the deeply human part of who we are, so we can live, love, parent and lead with more courage and heart.” It will launch at the SXSW festival in Austin, where Brown will make two featured stage appearances.

HILLARY DOC

A four-part docuseries on Hillary Clinton starts on Hulu, following her 2016 campaign.

NEW IN THEATERS

“Pixar’s *Onward*”
“*The Way Back*”

SXSW

13

Austin, Texas’ annual South by Southwest festival welcomes thought leaders and superstars in film, interactive media and music March 13-22. See what it’s about and stream some of the conference at sxsw.com/live.

NEW IN THEATERS

“*Bloodshot*”
“*My Spy*”
“*Sometimes Always Never*”

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NEW IN THEATERS

“*I Still Believe*”
“*A Quiet Place Part II*”

SPRING BEGINS

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MLB OPENING DAY

If your favorite baseball team is miles away or you want to be able to replay games after work, MLB.tv is your best bet. The streaming app is \$121.99 a year and includes all teams. Watch on most iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android and Amazon devices, as well as Roku, Apple TV and Chromecast. You can also listen to radio broadcasts if you want to keep it old school. mlb.com/live-stream-games/subscribe

MAKING THE CUT

Amazon is bringing back Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn for a new fashion competition show, airing twice weekly for five weeks. The beloved “*Project Runway*” creators and hosts are making it work, to riff on Gunn’s iconic advice.

NEW IN THEATERS

“*Mulan*”



POD PEOPLE

For *side hustle* superstars

By Matthew Girard
ION magazine

Nearly half of Americans have a side hustle, according to a 2019 Bankrate.com survey. From ride-sharing apps to food delivery apps to freelance apps, it's never been easier to supplement your salary or to earn a little extra money. To help you get the most of your side hustle, here are a few podcasts about maximizing your part-time business.



The Side Hustle Show

With the aim of helping people start a side hustle all the way to growing a business, host Nick Loper gives listeners actionable tips on a variety of topics. Loper is joined by guests to dive into the details of making money online and offline. Episodes include tips on passive income ideas, self-publishing, software and app development, and freelancing. Recent episodes include “Decade in Review: My Most Important Moments and Lessons from the 2010s,” “Marketing a Local Business on YouTube: \$40k on the Side Hosting Walking Tours, with Rob Pitingolo” and “How to Start a Side Hustle: 7 Key Steps.”

Find it: sidehustlenation.com/side-hustle-show

Suggested listening if:

You come from a business or sales background and want to translate your skills to tech.

Entrepreneurs on Fire

Host John Lee Dumas interviews the hottest entrepreneurs around to learn about how to start a business. Dumas finds out each guest's greatest struggles and inspiring moments along their journey of creating their business. Thursday episodes feature Dumas answering questions from listeners and providing his advice. Recent episodes include “The CORE Marketing Method: Grow your business, reduce risk, and attract new customers with AJ Rollsy,” “Building a Business on Sleep with Matteo Franceschetti” and “Power Habits: The New Science for Making Success Automatic with Noah St. John.”

Find it: eofire.com/podcast

Suggested listening if:

You come from a business or sales background and want to translate your skills to tech.





Side Hustle School

For the side hustlers who are not interested in quitting their day job or creating a startup, host Chris Guillebeau is hoping to help people learn to think and act creatively in today's economy. With quick daily episodes, Guillebeau offers different stories of people who started a side hustle and what challenges they faced along the way. Recent episodes include "Classroom: Deciding on an idea," "Flimsy notebooks inspire crafty construction worker" and "Q&A: How can I sell flash cards to pharmacy students?"

Find it: sidehustleschool.com

Suggested listening if:

You find a bit of daily inspiration beneficial.
Or you have a really short commute.

The Fizzle Show

Focusing on passion-driven side hustlers and entrepreneurs, hosts Corbett Barr, Chase Reeves and Steph Crowder share advice to help entrepreneurs and business builders who want to earn a living doing something they care about.

Weekly episodes feature modern business essentials, self-employment, motivation, productivity, audience growth, blogging, podcasts, content marketing and work-life balance. Recent episodes include "How do I get people to sign up on my website?," "Nathan Barry: From self-taught to \$20 million in annual revenue" and "Bryan Harris – You Don't Need Courses, You Need Results."

Find it: fizzle.co/show

Suggested listening if:

You're serious about building a business – Fizzle has tools like coaching and training in addition to the podcast. 



GO WITH THE FLOW

What apps should I use to pay someone back?

By Chanelle Bessette
NerdWallet.com



Whether it's paying a friend back for coffee or splitting gas money on a road trip, giving money to friends and family is a task that tends to come up regularly. If you don't relish the idea of hitting the ATM or unearthing your checkbook every time you need to fork over some funds, then you may want to consider using a peer-to-peer (P2P) payment service.

Peer-to-peer payment services are apps or app features that allow you to send money to other people — often by searching for their phone number, email address or username — quickly and usually for free. Here are some of the most common P2P services available, along with the benefits and drawbacks of each. 





Zelle

What it is: Zelle is a service that is offered by most major banks in the U.S. and allows people to send money to other Zelle users either through their bank account or the Zelle app.

How it works: After setting up a Zelle account either through their bank or the Zelle app, users can send or request money by entering another Zelle user's registered email address or phone number. If the recipient doesn't have a Zelle account, they will have to set one up in order to send or receive money.

BENEFITS:

- Money transfers happen quickly. Money transfers to other enrolled Zelle users tend to happen within a matter of minutes. If the recipient isn't enrolled in Zelle, they'll have to enroll before they can receive money.
- Zelle is compatible with many banks and credit unions. Quick, direct money transfers between different banks and credit unions is one of the biggest benefits of Zelle. Unlike some other money transfer services, Zelle transfers money directly into your bank account, so you don't have to wait to move it out of a third-party app.

DRAWBACKS:

- You can't connect a credit card to pay others. There are other peer-to-peer payment apps that allow users to connect credit cards for payment, which can be helpful if there aren't enough funds in your bank account or app account.
- This service typically requires a smartphone. If Zelle is available through your bank, you can usually use your bank's desktop login to send money. Otherwise, you'll need a mobile device like a smartphone or tablet to send and receive money through the Zelle app or your bank's app.
- You can't send money to international bank accounts. Zelle only works with domestic banks.



Venmo

What it is: Venmo is an app that allows users to send money to each other via linked bank account, Venmo balance or credit card. The service is owned by PayPal, but it has some different functionality compared to PayPal's peer-to-peer money transfer service. One of Venmo's most interesting draws is that the app also offers a free, optional debit card that allows users to spend money from their Venmo account balance.

How it works: Users download the Venmo app and create an account. They can then link a bank account or credit card to fund their Venmo account; then they can send, request or receive money from other Venmo users.

BENEFITS:

- A lot of people use Venmo, so it can be a convenient way to go cashless. At the end of the first quarter of 2019, PayPal announced that Venmo had 40 million users, which makes it a very popular way to send, request and receive money.
- Free, optional debit card. Users who opt in to the Venmo card can use the debit card with retailers, and the card will draw upon the user's Venmo balance for funding. The debit card also gives users cash back for shopping at certain retailers, which is added to a user's Venmo balance.

DRAWBACKS:

- There's a fee to send money via credit card. Venmo charges 3% of the transfer total to send money via credit card.
- Venmo charges a fee for instant cash-out transfers to your bank account. There's a 1% fee — with a minimum of 25 cents and a maximum of \$10 — if you want to transfer your Venmo funds instantly to your bank account. Otherwise you'll have to wait one to three business days to receive your funds for free.



Cash App

Cash App

What it is: Cash App is a money transfer app created by Square Inc. that allows people to send money via their Cash App balance or linked bank account, credit card or debit card. The service offers an optional debit card — called a Cash Card — that allows users to spend the money in their Cash App balance as well as receive “cash boosts,” which are savings that are applied to various vendors.

How it works: Once Cash App is downloaded to a smartphone or tablet, users create an account and link a debit card, credit card or bank account. Once their Cash App account is set up, they can send, request and receive money from other Cash App users as well as invest in stocks and buy and sell bitcoin.

BENEFITS:

- Free, optional debit card. Cash App gives users the option to receive a “Cash Card” debit card that allows them to spend their Cash App balances at different retailers.
- “Cash boosts” can help users save money. Users who have the Cash Card can use Cash App to activate “cash boosts,” which are discounts with certain retailers that are automatically applied to a purchase (e.g. 10% off of a DoorDash order). Only one cash boost can be active at a time, but users can easily switch which cash boost is active in the app.
- Users can use the app to invest in stocks and buy and sell bitcoin. A unique feature of Cash App is that it allows users to invest their money in individual stocks as well as buy and sell bitcoin, potentially allowing them to earn money through the app.

DRAWBACKS:

- There’s a fee to send money via credit card. Cash App charges a 3% fee to people who use a credit card to send money.
- A fee for instant deposits. Cash App offers free standard cash outs — which take one to three business days to deposit to your linked debit card — but if you want an instant cash out deposit, Cash App will charge a 1.5% fee with a minimum of 25 cents.



PayPal

What it is: PayPal is a payment service that runs the gamut of helping people with personal money transfers, online purchases and e-commerce. Using PayPal as a peer-to-peer money transfer service, individuals can send money to each other via a linked bank account or a debit or credit card.

How it works: PayPal offers many different functions, perhaps the most popular being payment services for online merchants and buyers. But PayPal also offers P2P money transfers for registered users. Once you’ve created a PayPal account, you can send and request money by searching for another user’s name, email or phone number and then filling out the amount you want to send or request.

BENEFITS:

- The service is widely used and has many payment functions. In addition to peer-to-peer transfers, PayPal allows users to buy and sell online and is integrated with many online retailer checkout pages.
- PayPal has high transfer limits. You can send up to \$60,000 — but may be limited to \$10,000 — in a single transaction. This amount may vary depending on your currency and whether your account is verified.
- There are multiple methods of payment for transfers. Users can send money with a debit card, a credit card, a bank account, PayPal balance and PayPal Credit. PayPal Credit is an individual credit line that’s offered by PayPal, and it can be used to send money to friends and family.

DRAWBACKS:

- There’s a fee to use a credit card, debit card or PayPal Credit to send money. Sending money via linked bank account or PayPal balance are the only free ways. The other options all charge a 2.9% transaction fee, and PayPal Credit has interest rates that are on par with credit cards.
- Transfers can take some time to move to and from your bank account to your PayPal account. Free transfers from PayPal to your bank account usually take one business day but can take up to three to five business days depending on your bank’s clearing process. If you want to cash out to your bank account immediately, PayPal charges a fee of 1% of the amount transferred, with a maximum fee of \$10.





Google Pay

What it is: Google Pay is a digital payment app that allows users to make purchases and money transfers with a digital wallet.

How it works: Google Pay is an app that can be downloaded to Android (running Android Lollipop 5.0 or higher) and Apple devices (iOS 7 or higher) and allows users to not only send each other money but also pay retailers for goods and services if they have a point-of-sale near-field communication reader. Users must download the app, sign in with a Google account and link payment and banking information. Then they'll have access to sending money and making payments.

BENEFITS:

- Google Pay can be used at checkout with a lot of retailers. Google Pay isn't just convenient for P2P transfers; it can be useful for day-to-day shopping too. If a merchant has a point-of-sale system with an NFC reader, your smartphone has NFC turned on and you're enrolled in Google Pay, then you should be able to tap your smartphone at the kiosk to pay.
- It can be used on Apple devices like iPhone and iPad that run with iOS 7 or above. Whereas the Apple Pay Cash app works only with other Apple product users, Google Pay can be downloaded to Android and Apple products alike.

DRAWBACKS:

- Only available in the U.S. For U.S. territories, Google Pay is only supported if a linked debit card was issued by a U.S.-licensed bank.
- You can't use a credit card to send money. Google Pay doesn't allow users to link credit cards as a form of payment.



Apple Pay Cash

What it is: Apple Pay Cash allows Apple users to send and receive money in the Messages app, which is compatible with more recent versions of iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch and Mac.

How it works: Users enroll in Apple Pay with their compatible Apple device and, after linking a debit card in the Apple Wallet app, they are able to send, request and accept money from other users through Messages.

BENEFITS:

- You can use Apple Pay at checkout with a lot of retailers. Like Google Pay, the Apple Pay app can make retail transactions fast and convenient. As long as you're enrolled in Apple Pay, have an Apple device with technology that supports NFC and are shopping with a retailer that allows NFC payments, then you can use the app to quickly pay for things.
- Convenient for Apple users. If your friends and family are part of the Apple ecosystem, Apple Pay Cash can be handy for sending, requesting and receiving money.

DRAWBACKS:

- It doesn't work with non-Apple devices. Apple Pay Cash is limited to Apple devices like iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch and Macs with appropriate operating software. Apple Pay Cash can't be used on Android devices, which means it might be a limited way to send money to friends and family if they don't have iOS products.

Social media money transfers

What it is: Some social media and communication networks allow users to send peer-to-peer money transfers to each other. Facebook Messenger and Skype are a couple of examples of services that allow people to send, request and receive money via linked bank account.

How it works: Users can usually easily enroll in a social network's P2P payment system by linking a bank account, debit card or PayPal account. When they want to send or request money, they can send a payment message over the platform to another enrolled user. If another user is sending you money, it should automatically appear in your linked bank account.

BENEFITS:

- Money transfers usually happen quickly. If both parties are already enrolled with a linked bank account, they should be able to send and receive money instantaneously. Transfer speed may vary depending on how long it takes to enroll in the money transfer service or if your bank takes a while to post money to your account.
- It's a convenient way to pay or request money from friends and family. If your friends and family are already using the same social networking site as you, then it can be easy and convenient to send money.

- Some apps allow users to send money abroad. Facebook Messenger allows U.S. users to send money internationally, although some countries are ineligible for the service. Skype also allows users to send and receive money internationally to and from a limited selection of foreign countries.

DRAWBACKS:

- Usually limited to very basic transfer features. Social networks don't typically offer the additional bells and whistles of debit card offers or smartphone cash register transactions. These social networks also might not allow users to send each other payments with credit cards.
- The danger of scams. Perhaps more so than other payment services, social networks can be attractive to scammers since they're much more personal platforms. Be on the lookout for payment requests from other social network users that you don't know in person or that seem out of character for people you do know. Cybercriminals can hack accounts or spin tales that are meant to tug at your heartstrings before they ask for money. Some common tactics include romantic scams, lottery scams, donation scams, inheritance scams and loan scams.

Summary: Top peer-to-peer payment services

SERVICE	BEST FOR	NOTABLE FEATURES
Zelle	Instant bank transfers	Money is transferred directly into user's bank account; compatible with broad range of banks and credit unions.
Venmo	Those with a broad group of fellow Venmo users	Widely used; free debit card available.
Cash App	Investors	Retailer discounts; ability to invest in stocks and bitcoin.
PayPal	Frequent online shoppers	High transfer limits; multiple methods of payment.
Google Pay	Digital wallet users	Accepted at many retail registers; can be used on both Android and Apple devices.
Apple Pay Cash	Apple aficionados	Money can be sent via messaging app; accepted at many retail registers.
Social media money transfers	Dedicated social-media users	Some apps allow money to be sent abroad; convenient for mutual users of apps like Skype and Facebook.

OTHER MONEY-SENDING OPTIONS

If you're looking to send money internationally through non-bank methods or via cash pickup, the above methods might not work for you. Services like TransferWise, MoneyGram, Western Union and others tend to help people who are in different situations. 

GO GO GADGETS



THE BEST smart home tech

By Sarah Kovac and Rachel Murphy
Reviewed.com

COMING IN 2020

At the 2020 CES tech show in Las Vegas, we saw hundreds of smart home gadgets that were designed to make our lives easier, more affordable, more fun or some combination of those. Many of them won't ever hit the market, and many others will be launched but fail to live up to their hype.

However, some of this tech really is going to improve people's lives. These are the products that really impressed our smart home team.

1. Eufy Video Doorbell

Eufy's Security Wi-Fi Video Doorbell is our favorite smart video doorbell for the money because it offers free, encrypted local data storage, custom activity zones, clear audio, and a reliable connection. So, naturally Eufy's latest announcement, the Eufy Video Doorbell (battery powered), caught our attention because it offers all the same bells and whistles — and then some.

The new Eufy Video Doorbell is wire-free, touting a battery life of up to 180 hours per charge. It offers Smart Human Detection and it plays nice with Amazon's Alexa and Google Assistant. It's expected to be released early this year for \$199.



2. Legrand Drivia Smart Electrical Panel

There are multiple ways to turn a home into a smart home. You can buy smart appliances, you can switch to smart bulbs, you can install smart switches, you can use smart plugs. If you think that sounds like a lot of effort, you're right.

That's why we find the Legrand Drivia Smart Electrical Panel so exciting. It's installed by a professional where the home's existing electrical panel is, and it can control everything that uses electricity in a house. It doesn't just turn on and off power to whole rooms — you can tell the app what each appliance and fixture in a room is, and you can power each one on and off through the app. One piece of equipment can make your whole house smart.

The Legrand Drivia Electrical Panel will be available in France early 2020.





3. BodyGuardz Portable Over-Door Camera

The Portable Over-Door Camera from BodyGuardz is like a smart doorbell you can travel with. It connects via Wi-Fi and slides on the top of most standard doors using an adjustable metal bracket. With two 1080p HD cameras offering a 135-degree view and a clear video display screen, the wire-free camera is a secure way for apartment dwellers and travelers to see what's happening outside.

The device boasts a battery life of up to two months, detects motion, sends alerts, and lets you use two-way audio to chat with front door visitors via the BodyGuardz app (coming soon). The camera is expected to be released later this year and cost \$279.

4. Hatch Restore

Hatch Restore is an all-in-one night-light and sleep aid that claims to help people sleep better and was designed by sleep experts. Restore, which can be controlled via the Hatch app, is small enough to fit on your nightstand so you can wake up with a light that mimics the sun rising and create customized sleep routines. It also functions as a white noise machine, reading light, and it displays certain colors for periods of time to help you with controlled breathing exercises.

Restore should be available in early 2020 at Amazon and other popular retailers where Hatch is currently sold. It's expected to cost under \$150.



5. Wayzn Smart Sliding Glass Door Opener

Wayzn is a universal smart sliding door opener — and it was designed to replace traditional doggie doors. The app-controlled device, which integrates with smart cameras like Nest, sends a notification to your phone when motion is detected at the door, prompting you to open or close the door for your pooch remotely. But it's not just for pets — you can control the door from the app on your phone if you ever get locked out, too.

It takes just minutes to install, and no tools or drilling are required. The smart slider fits most standard sliding glass door tracks. It's expected to be available for purchase later this year for \$399. However, you can reserve one now at wayzn.com/checkout-page.



6. Swann Wi-Fi Security Tracker Camera

Swann is known for DIY home security solutions, and this year they're introducing several new smart products that integrate not only with Swann's security systems, but with Google Assistant. The Wi-Fi Security Tracker Camera has a 180-degree view and facial tracking to help you keep tabs on who comes and goes from the house. The Security Tracker Camera can notify you on your phone when it spots a person at the door, and you can teach it to recognize those who live with you or visit often. The camera will be available for \$79, and there are no subscription fees associated, which is becoming more and more rare in the world of smart security cameras.





7. Coway Airmega AP-1512HHS

Coway is known for their innovative home health products, and their latest air purifier is the first to integrate with Amazon Dash Replenishment via Alexa. The purifier offers Wi-Fi connectivity to the Coway IoCare app, so you can control the purifier remotely, check the air quality inside of your home and get updates about the air quality in your area. Our smart home staff writer, Rachel Murphy, has the Coway Mighty, which is basically the same product as the Coway Airmega AP-1512HHS without the smart functionality, and it's really helped improve her daughter's allergies thanks to its three-stage filtration process. It costs \$299 at cowaymega.com.

8. Sengled Edison Filament Bulb

Smart bulbs have from their inception been all about how they can change the look of the room. They can make it brighter, they can make it purple or green, they can make it look like someone is home when you're on vacation. But the bulbs themselves have been pretty boring in appearance at best. Sengled's new Edison Filament Bulb is a shining deviation from that norm. It looks just like a gorgeous vintage bulb, and it would fit in seamlessly with many decor styles. In our testing, Sengled has performed well and we loved the energy-monitoring feature in the Sengled app.

The Edison Filament Bulb from Sengled will be available for \$29.99 per two-pack.



GURU OF GEEK



Want a house? Print it out



By Marlo Anderson
For ION magazine

“Hey, honey,” you shout across the room to your significant other. “Did you notice that house being built down the block? Let’s go check it out!”

As you get closer, you realize there are just a couple of workers on site. However, the site is very busy with activity. Robots are moving some type of powder mix to a machine that is making walls much like how soft serve ice cream works. As you watch in

amazement, this CNC concrete pourer that many people refer to as a “home 3D printer” makes remarkable progress. Over the next few days, finishing crews arrive to install doors and windows, and a week later, your new neighbors are moving in.

Companies like ICON are already printing houses and expect that they will be able to build houses for about 50% less than traditionally constructed homes and offices. Other companies are creating machines to lay brick, build infrastructure and much more. The entire construction industry will be disrupted over the next few decades.





Job site safety will also improve. Job site robots work without needing a break, lift heavy objects and work in areas not safe for humans. Construction workers will become more proficient on digital tablets to guide machines throughout the work day.

3D-printed homes will help address a worldwide crisis on affordable housing. However, this technology could have an impact on the nest egg people have built up in their homes. If houses cost 50% less to construct, what will happen to the value of traditional-construction homes? Current homeowners should pay attention as this technology could eventually impact the equity of their home. This is hard to predict, but it is something to watch if you plan on retiring in the next 10 to 20 years and want to use the value in your house to help with your retirement plans.

The first permitted 3D-printed house in the U.S. was constructed in Austin, Texas, in 2018 by ICON.

Currently, ICON has deployed its 33-foot-long printer, Vulcan II, to Mexico in partnership with the nonprofit entity New Story to print a community of 50 homes. As we move forward, this will become the norm for new developments and what may have taken many months to build will now take mere days. Just as amazing is that the quality of these new homes is superior to what traditional homes are now.

If you are going to be shopping for a home in the next few years, you will have more choices than ever in price and construction options. Your dream home may be just a mouse click away.

Ten years from now, when you decide to walk your robotic dog while waiting for your drone to fetch a pepperoni pie from your favorite pizza place, you shouldn't be surprised when you see a new house on your block that was not there a few days earlier. Change is coming quickly and hopefully will improve the human condition.



Marlo Anderson, a serial entrepreneur and futurist, is the host of Living With Technology, formerly The Tech Ranch, a popular radio program featuring technology for everyday use. His followers affectionately know him as the "Guru of Geek." Find out more on Twitter @GuruOfGeek and marloanderson.me.

ICON's 3D-printing process for home construction uses robotics, automated material handling, advanced software and a proprietary concrete mixture called Lavacrete, which ICON officials have said withstood every structural test the company has put it through. The homes are "printed" with a computer-controlled concrete pumping machine. [PHOTOS COURTESY OF ICON]



HOW DO I ... ?



Make my podcast successful

By Steve Lapa
For ION magazine





Joan Bulger-Kay and Paul Teutul Sr.
record an episode of their podcast
“Behind the Scenes at OCC.”
PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE LAPA



STEVE LAPA

Nobody knows for sure how many podcasts live on the Internet, but current estimates start at 700,000. How do you stand out in a crowd of 700,000? I thrive on the challenges in competitive media, and I could clearly see the opportunity in podcasting. But what content could I create that would stand apart in the most crowded space in media?

Rewind to 2014. A friend invited me to lunch with the star of the hit reality TV show “American Chopper”: “Come meet Paul Teutul Sr. and see if he is ready for a nationally syndicated radio show.” Millions of fans around the world followed the battling Teutuls as they designed and built world-class customized motorcycles.

Paul Sr.’s iconic tattoos would stand out anywhere. But it was his raspy voice that captured my attention. Years of shouting through bike builds on and off camera had given him his own

language and a voice as unique as his look.

Lunch quickly turned into a story-filled flow of consciousness. He starts with businessman Donald Trump demanding he appear on “The Apprentice” ultimately partnered with Adam Carolla. On to one of Teutul’s favorite celebrity customers, Bill Murray ... and Billy Joel? not really a shop favorite SHAQ? Well, here’s how you test-ride a bike built for a seven-foot superstar.... Teutul used words to create vivid visuals. I could picture and hear him behind a mic. But timing is everything in media and we weren’t there – yet.

Fast forward to 2019, when Teutul was ready, but radio was too confining.

He needed a bigger, more creative runway. He was the perfect fit for podcasting, now a \$425 million business. I pitched “Behind the Scenes at OCC.” The stories behind the stories, never before told on TV. Teutul got the concept, but would the transition from reality TV to reality podcasting work?

I walked him through the similarities:

- Be yourself.
- We roll tape and capture everything (on mic).
- The magic is in the editing.
- When guests appear give your listeners all-access.
- Your producer will help keep the session track.

And the differences:

- Each episode is an entertaining and engaging story not told on TV.
- Our studio has individual microphones; one person per mic.
- Everyone can NOT talk at once. The brain processes one voice at a time.
- Have an outline to guide each segment. Know where we are headed.

The first recording session was a free-flowing exchange with Teutul leading a cast of Orange County Choppers crew members. Winding their way through a maze of stories they landed



on “How it All Began.” Rules like everyone not talking at once and staying on track were out the door in the first 10 minutes. But magically it sounded like the party you missed where everyone says, “You should have heard the one about”

Content is king, and this was funny, raw and, most of all, entertaining. Teutul and his OCC crew were turning reality TV into reality podcasting. The stories you hear every week are honest, never scripted or rehearsed. The Behind The Scenes at OCC podcast is all about being entertaining and engaging, and it’s well on the way to standing apart from the other 700,000 podcasts.

Steve Lapa is an executive and entrepreneur with a career that spans over 40 years in radio, TV and digital media. He has owned, operated or managed at 28 different radio and TV stations from South Florida to San Francisco. He formed Lapcom Communications and successfully acquired, developed and sold broadcast properties. Lapa currently produces several podcast and radio syndication packages. Current Lapcom projects include Behind the Scenes at OCC with the cast of Discovery Channel’s “American Chopper,” the popular Trip Sisters digital brand, FARKANDSCHNITT with Fark.com founder Drew Curtis and nationally syndicated radio host Todd Schnitt, and several new titles on the runway. Find out more at twitter.com/slcaster. 🇺🇸

HOW DO I ... ?

Make tech part of your team

For ION magazine



JANICE PRESSER

If you lead an organization or a group, or even a scout troop or family, you probably use the T word several times a day. Teamwork, that is, not tech.

You already know how to team with people: understand the other person's point of view, choose your mode of communication to align with what they are likely to receive, and make sure you acknowledge their communication back.

It's no different with your tech, so let's expand on those basics one at a time.

First, do you understand what your tech is?

Tech is a general word that applies to a lot of new ways to access content, whether that's entertainment, or something that helps you do more than you can do without it. You don't need to know about every kind of tech and how to use it. You just need to be able to access what you want.

Tip: When someone recommends something involving technology you're not familiar with, ask them how they like to access it. There's probably more than one way, and maybe even a choice you already are comfortable with. For instance, if you don't want to listen on your phone, you can use a podcast app on a tablet or

computer, or just get to the website it's housed on and listen without downloading it.

Second, do you communicate with your tech in a way it understands?

There's a great temptation to talk to things we know won't answer us. You know this if you've ever promised your car engine you'll feed it some gas as soon as you get to the station as you begged it not to stop cold. And, you know what happens when you upgrade to a new version of anything and too late you realize that you're not prepared to learn a whole new way of doing routine tasks you're used to. You probably get very frustrated and your upgrade is the recipient of some unhappy language, even though you know that's not going to fix the problem.

Tip: Sometimes it's a matter of just letting your tech know what you really want, in a way that it can alter your user experience. If you don't see a place called "settings" or "preferences," look for the icon that most people call the wheel. That's where you set some of the ground rules for your tech, in the way it's been programmed to understand. For instance, if it's a food and exercise tracker, you can probably set the time you get reminders — or turn them off entirely.



Third, do you acknowledge what you've received is what you wanted?

You probably call this step “feedback” if you're a manager, and you know it's important to achieving your team's goals. While your tech is not likely going to change in response to your feedback, no matter how useful, the people who developed the tech really value what you have to say, so let them know how you're using tech and how you'd like to.

Tip: Remember, technology is just another way to get

the content you want, whether that's music, news, advice, art – just about anything – in an easier, more convenient way. Humans are still very much involved, and you – and your tech – are on the team!

Dr. Janice Presser is the founder of Teaming Science, the author of seven books on teaming and a consultant to executives. See her work at TeamingScience.com and DrJanicePresser.com. Contact her on Twitter @DrJanice, at DrJanice@TeamingScience.com or at [LinkedIn.com/in/drjanice](https://www.linkedin.com/in/drjanice). 

COVER STORY

TECH *support*

We celebrate Women's History Month in March, according to the American Library Association, in honor of the March 8, 1857, New York City factory women's protest over working conditions. Those protests spurred others on March 8, including one in 1908 where 15,000 women marched in NYC for shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labor, according to the Christian Science Monitor — founded in 1908 as a daily newspaper by Mary Baker Eddy.

American women are still fighting for equal rights at work — in pay, in representation, in work-life balance. One industry where their struggles have been documented is tech, but do real women in tech feel at a disadvantage?

We asked several across the country, and learned about several groups — online and in real life — for women in the industry to share successes, find support and gather ideas.

INSIDE

- 32** Real women in tech talk pay, sexism, loneliness
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- 42** Networking site encourages in-person meetups





Women in TECH

The struggles, the successes,
the support system

By **Melissa Erickson**
ION magazine

Just by taking a place at the table, women are revolutionizing the face of technology. She may be a flagship woman in a male-dominated company speaking on behalf of 50% of the world or a key player in a software division that genuinely reflects the diversity of America.

As colleges increasingly graduate women educated in tech fields, it may seem that women are approaching parity with men, but the numbers are not there yet, and many say they're not even close. Struggling with sexism, the pay gap, loneliness and finding a work-life balance, women often join like-minded communities for support, growth and opportunity.



Allison Esposito Medina, founder and CEO of Tech Ladies. PHOTOS COURTESY OF TECH LADIES

REPRESENTATION IS IMPORTANT

With more jobs than candidates, great job security, easy-to-find flexible working conditions and high compensation, tech is one of the best fields to work in, said engineering consultant Emily Maskin.

“It’s not hyperbole to say that working in tech lets you shape the future of our world,” she said.

As technology becomes more advanced, we’ve seen instances of bias built into products, which impacts women and marginalized groups, Maskin said. For example, early versions of digital assistants were not built to respond to questions about rape or domestic violence, and facial recognition programs work better with white faces than other ethnicities.

Biases may not be intentional, but “it’s critical to have as much representation as possible in engineering so we can create a future that’s representative of and accessible to us all,” Maskin said.

THE PAY GAP

Lauren Hasson was an established software engineer when a younger male colleague with years less experience pulled her aside to gripe about his pay.

“Not only did I find out he was making exactly what I was making, but the company had hired him at 50% more than what I was hired at,” said Hasson, founder of DevelopHer, a career development platform for women in tech that champions the importance of bridging the gender income pay gap.

Statistics show that 63% of the time men are hired at higher salaries than women for the same role at the same company, according to a study by Hired.com of more than 2,600 tech workers.

“I didn’t point fingers or say, ‘You should give me more money.’ I realized I needed to advocate for myself,” said Hasson, a software engineer in apps and information security for a San Francisco Bay area financial tech company. She invested in learning how to negotiate and in less than two years tripled her salary.

While not all women have trouble self-advocating, some do.

“It’s not enough to do the work and hope to get noticed. You need to know you’re an asset and your value,” Hasson said. “Don’t wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder or for an invitation to sit down at the table. Find a chair and sit down.”

SEXISM

Sexism scandals have rocked the tech industry. From rude comments to toxic environments, women in tech exist in an overwhelmingly male-dominated space. About 25% of computing jobs are filled by women, and that number has been in a steady decline for years, according to National Center for Women & Information Technology.

“Sexism in tech was surprising to me,” said Allison Esposito Medina, founder of Tech Ladies, a global community of over 100,000 women in tech with an exclusive job board. “I thought I would be working with forward-thinking people building cool, cutting-edge products. I thought they would be progressive thinkers, but it’s extremely male-dominated. It can almost feel like it’s the 1950s.

“It’s not that bad, but it hasn’t gotten that much better even after MeToo and women speaking out. It can be a tough field for women,” said Medina, who has worked at Google, Oyster and FourSquare.

“Sexism is a challenge in all industries, not just tech or gaming or Silicon Valley, and it isn’t just affecting people across the tech field or the United States,” said Carrie Drake, president of Women in Technology, a professional association. “This is a challenge around the world. We don’t want to create a space where men are afraid to work with women, but we do need to create a space where we all feel safe and confident to do our jobs.”

It’s not just the men.

“I have found that the men in the industry are normally pretty encouraging of me being a programmer and actually understanding the technology. It’s other women that make comments that are more sexist,” said Christina Stroh, chief operating officer of StroTek, a home automation integration company in Pearland, Texas. For example, other women assume she works for her husband’s company.

“Society doesn’t understand women can be computer nerds, too,” she said.



◀ LONELINESS AND PROVING YOURSELF

Not being taken seriously or seen as qualified to do a job because of gender is a real struggle often because a woman is the only female in the room, said Noemi Quezada, senior developer at Endertech.

“It is true that it was almost always the case that I was one of the only women in the room,” said Judith Spitz, executive director of Cornell Tech’s Break Through Tech initiative.

“Early on in my career I was so focused on establishing myself and getting ahead in retrospect I didn’t pay attention to it. Later when I was established I had the leisure to look around the room. Once you notice it you can’t ignore it,” said Spitz, who had a 30-year career in tech at Verizon.

“Many of my friends who are also in the tech industry have reported similar struggles leading to feelings of isolation, lack of confidence and feeling stuck because they cannot visualize a path of growth in their careers,” Quezada said.

“There is a laundry list of struggles for women in tech, particularly from a venture capital/angel investment perspective. I’ve found that women are expected to prove themselves while men can sell based on potential success,” said Elizabeth Eddy, co-founder and CEO of Lantern, a free, digital source of guidance for navigating life before and after a death.

“It’s lonely sometimes. When I do go to training and conferences I would love to be seeing my female friends, someone that understands every aspect of my life, and that isn’t there,” Stroh said. “I have learned to accept it. It’s my career, sure, but it’s not my life. It’s a hard industry already because of the constant change. I would love for younger women to not have to deal with feelings of exclusion as well.”

At Tech Ladies meetups, attendees can share, vent, learn and have fun.



“You don’t need to, and arguably you shouldn’t try to, act like a man or be ‘one of the guys’ to get ahead. It’s playing into the narrative that men are inherently doing everything right, and it doesn’t even work because women are often penalized for the same behaviors men are rewarded for.”

— **Emily Maskin, engineering consultant**

“Be confident in your skills. Diversity of thought is important to the growth of any industry and your skills add value.”

— **Carrie Drake, president, Women in Technology**

“Find a go-to group of women in the industry that you can rely on when you’re struggling or need advice”

— **Cadran Cowansage, CEO and co-founder, Elpha**

WORDS OF WISDOM

““It’s not enough to do the work and hope to get noticed. ... Don’t wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder or for an invitation to sit down at the table. Find a chair and sit down.”

— **Lauren Hasson, founder of DevelopHer**

“Be a great storyteller. The value of being able to communicate your value to others in a clear and engaging way is incredibly important. ... Also, don’t let anyone else tell your story.”

— **Judith Spitz, executive director,
Cornell Tech’s Break Through Tech initiative**





FAMILIES AND UNFAIRNESS

“One of the main struggles of women in tech in my circles is facing children. A lot of us are very familiar about how productivity and chances for promotion are affected by child-rearing,” said Jessica Thiele, director of marketing at VL OMNI, a serverless platform for e-commerce integration.

While male peers are entering the family phase and returning to work shortly thereafter, “all the women I’ve met in my industry do not have kids. We can’t afford the time,” Thiele said.

Many women feel that the option to pause for children

simply isn’t available, “yet male counterparts don’t seem to have this issue as they (presumptively) have partners/wives at home who are taking the responsibility of childrearing and allowing their male partners to continue to build and flourish in their careers. Us women — we have to choose,” said Thiele, who sees her “fertility window” starting to close.

“I’ve spoken with my partner about being a stay-at-home-dad, and he’s open to it,” she said. “I think culturally we need to keep pushing the fold. These male peers of mine can’t be blamed for having the means and support to have kids, and the right biology that they don’t have to carry to term. But they’re clearly taking advantage of a difference in how the system treats men and women.”

FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

“So much of what happens in business takes place outside the office, and women are often excluded,” said Cadran Cowansage, CEO and co-founder of Elpha, a professional network for women in tech. Women-centric communities help level the playing field so women have an opportunity to share advice and build relationships behind the scenes.

Online or in person, creating a sense of community and support is advantageous because it allows members to tap into resources for growth and opportunity. “It is valuable for any group to learn from one another and see other people like them in the roles they hope to achieve one day,” Drake said.

“I enjoy support through talking to women in a like-minded local entrepreneur group,” said Stacy Caprio, founder of Accelerated Growth Marketing. “We meet in person in Chicago and are able to talk through our challenges and help each other out. I enjoy the group being all women because it is easier to relate to a lot of the struggles people are going through, and it is comfortable talking it through in an all-female environment.”

“I’ve turned to the female founder community through Facebook groups and a standing breakfast meeting with a group of female tech founders/execs to get support, vent, etc.,” Eddy said.

“When it comes to sharing experiences and finding like-minded support I turn toward external communities like Girlboss, Quilt and Elpha where I can connect with other women who are career-driven and can empathize with being a woman in tech,” Quezada said.

BETTER TOGETHER

Looking to connect with other women in tech? Check out these organizations and resources:

ELPHA

elpha.com

Elpha is a professional network where women in tech can learn from experts, discover resources, opportunities and friends.

DEVELOPHER

Developher.com

A career development platform for tech women by tech women, DevelopHer empowers women to negotiate for the salaries they deserve.

WONDER WOMEN TECH

wonderwomentech.com

Wonder Women Tech is a nonprofit organization that produces year-round programming and conferences that highlight women and the underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, arts and math industries.

TECH LADIES

hiretechladies.com

Tech ladies is a community that connects women with the best opportunities in tech, and connects companies with the best women techmakers.

TECHWOMEN

techwomen.org

TechWomen, an Initiative of the U.S. Department of State, empowers, connects and supports the next generation of women leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics from Africa, Central and South Asia and the Middle East by providing access and opportunity needed to advance their careers.

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Womenintechology.org

Women in Technology’s aim is to advance women in technology from classroom to boardroom through leadership development, tech education and networking. Look for a local chapter.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR WOMEN & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ncwit.org

The National Center for Women & Information Technology is a non-profit community that works to improve awareness and motivate change to increase the participation of women and girls in the field of computing innovation and development.

PODCASTS

- Women at Work from Harvard Business Review
- Women Rule from Politico
- Women in Tech hosted by WeAreLATech’s Espree Devora
- Mind & Machine hosted by August Bradley
- Rocket, an “accelerated geek conversation”
- The Future of Everything from the Wall Street Journal 



Addressing a community need

By Melissa Erickson
ION magazine

Driving through her new hometown six years ago, social and tech entrepreneur Jasmine Crowe saw that, like most big American cities, Atlanta is home to hundreds of people who are experiencing homelessness and hunger. She felt compelled to do something.

“My background is in the social impact space,” said Crowe, founder of Goodr, a food waste management company that uses blockchain technology to inventory excess food and relieve food insecurity, making it easier for restaurants and companies to put surplus food to use.

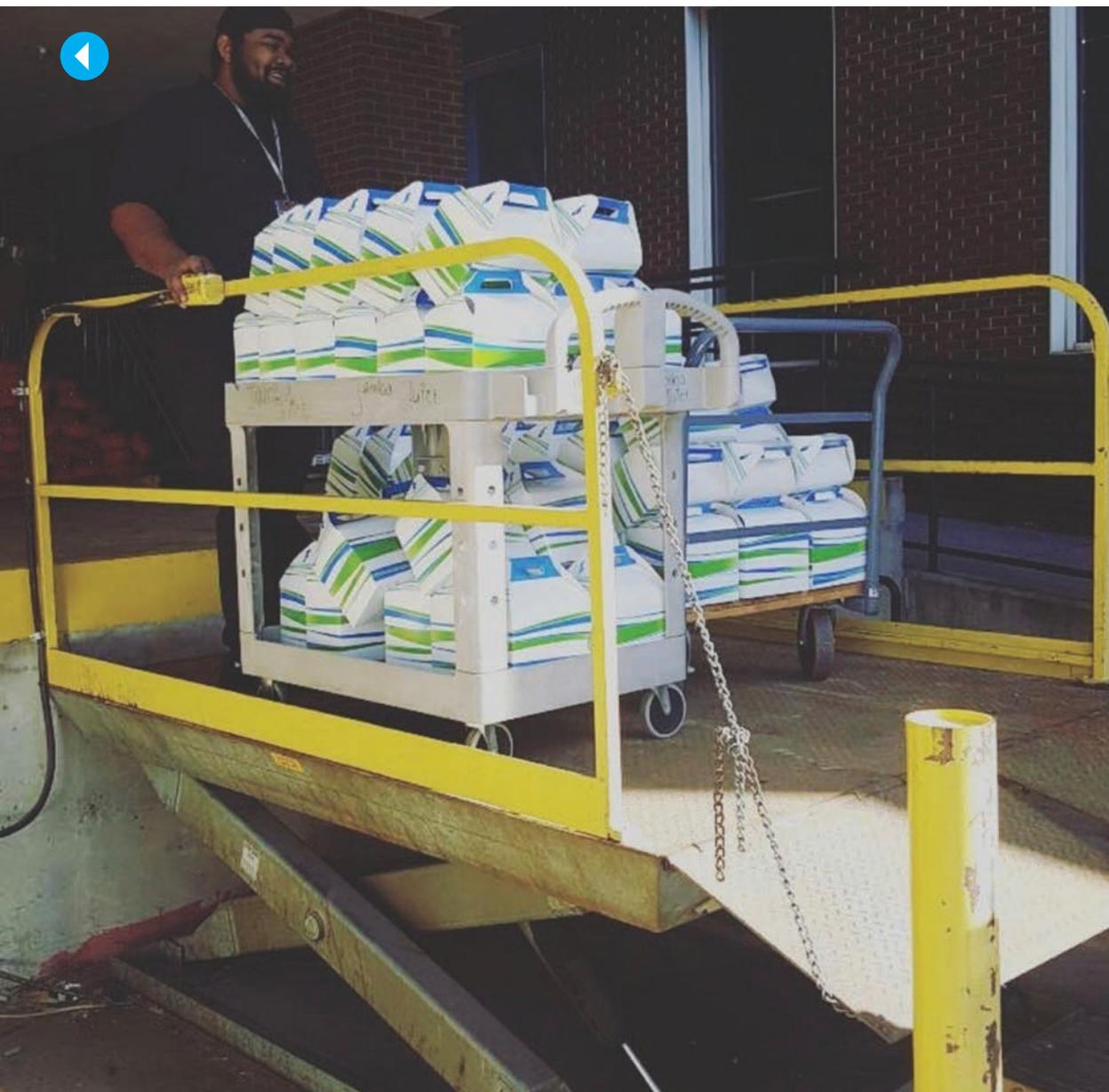
Crowe’s “service journey” drew her to help others early on. She founded BlackCelebrityGiving.com in 2011 as a media platform to bring together celebrity philanthropists and community organizations.

“I worked with celebrities to help them form and run nonprofit organizations to define their giving footprint and use their star power for good,” said Crowe, who also previously worked in sales and as a recruiter for higher education.

After moving to Atlanta, Crowe became particularly passionate about the issues of hunger and homelessness when witnessing the need firsthand. In 2013 she began hosting Sunday Soul, a series of biweekly events that fed up to 500 food-insecure people in her Atlanta neighborhood. During the rest of the month she spent hours couponing, preparing and cooking meals and organizing the restaurant-style events.

Jasmine Crowe, founder of Goodr,
a food waste management company
PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOODR





Crowe's interest in food waste peaked after a video of one of her Sunday Soul pop-up events went viral on Facebook.

"People asked me who donated the food, and the answer was nobody. At that point I started to look into what happened with excess food," she said.

Food waste is a huge problem in America, with between 30% and 40% of the food supply going to waste, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Americans waste over 133 billion pounds of perfectly edible food each year, much of that coming from restaurants and grocery stores," Crowe said.

America produces enough food; we just don't get our surplus food to the people who need it.

"When you look at the numbers and see that we waste 40% of the food we produce, it's clear that hunger is not an issue of scarcity and that the answer is not to grow more food but rather find a better

system to distribute the food we already have," Crowe said. "At Goodr we view hunger as a logistics issue, and we're looking to solve what I call the surplus food supply chain problem by making sure that we get surplus food into the hands of people rather than landfills."

After a year or so of research and fundraising, Goodr launched in 2018.

"Currently we have just under 20 employees based in Atlanta. We work with businesses like Hartsfield-Jackson airport, Netflix, Papa John's, WeWork, SAP and Georgia World Congress Center," Crowe said.

Goodr uses a blockchain platform and a secure ledger that tracks an organization's food waste from pickup to donation. When a company signs up to participate, it uses the Goodr app to request a pickup of unused food, which Goodr delivers to a nonprofit located nearby.

For companies, it's a triple-win solution, Crowe said. Not only do they qualify for tax deductions, they also reduce food waste and help get edible surplus food to local communities in need. Using Goodr's dashboard participants can see real-time data where food is delivered, access impact reports, view environmental savings, and see which nonprofits and causes they are supporting, she said.

With a bit of revolutionary flair, Crowe says that food should be viewed as a utility rather than a commodity.

"Food waste is the largest source of waste in our landfills. I think it should be viewed as a utility, as businesses are already paying to throw it away," she said. "By having a separate waste stream for food waste we can ensure that food that is edible doesn't end up in landfills and that we get edible food to people in need."

Operating in six markets — Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C. — Goodr continues to evolve and grow.

"We opened our first office in Atlanta last year. That was a big accomplishment for us, and we're so grateful to be based in the place where we started," Crowe said.

The company recently began offering new services such as organics recycling and a software distribution model that allows businesses to manage their food waste and set up a donation.

“My goal for Goodr is to grow to 20 markets in 2020 and look to expand internationally soon. I would love for us to begin opening community grocery stores as well,” Crowe said. “I have so many plans and goals but I take it one day at a time.”

Fundraising and sales have been the biggest challenges.

“I can’t say I have overcome either one but I continue to push and keep going because I believe in what we’re building and the power that lies in ending hunger and reducing food waste,” she said.

During her limited downtime, Crowe enjoys traveling, reading and spending time with family and friends. She also encourages others to think about food waste.

“I don’t believe that we should be composting edible food when we have people that are hungry. I think composting should be solely used for food scraps and food scraps alone,” Crowe said.

Tackling hunger in America is an ambitious goal, but Crowe is driven.

“This is not an easy journey. My goal is to keep going and never give up.”

Find out more at goodr.co and facebook.com/GoodrCo. 🇺🇸



Jasmine Crowe hosted Sunday Soul pop-up events before launching Goodr. Goodr evolved out of her earlier charitable hunger-related work.

Creating *connections*

By Melissa Erickson | ION magazine

Ashley Sumner wants to revive the art of good conversation. The CEO and co-founder of Quilt wants to bring like-minded women together to talk, network, create and engage. Using tech, Sumner created a rather traditional way for women to connect both online and in real life with Quilt, a platform that facilitates small-group gatherings. Download the app, join a conversation of interest, then head out to a meetup or networking event nearby in a member's home or other location.

"Today, we are a community-powered platform built on mobile technology that connects women in real life," Sumner said. Quilt aims to bring women together in genuine, supportive ways to help lift each other up personally and professionally.

In a digitally driven world, socialization is self-care, said Sumner, who was born in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, and moved to New York City at 17. She attended New York University Tisch School of the Arts, graduating with a degree in theater and a minor in psychology.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF QUILT



After initially pursuing a performance career, Sumner gravitated to a profession that unites people: matchmaking. She secured a sales job at a startup matchmaking company, which led to her own company in her early 20s. She continued finding commonalities building community for brands including NeueHouse and Wanderlust.

“Through this experience, connecting people and working for community-based businesses, I was inspired to use technology to create a more accessible and affordable solution specifically in support of women on their journey,” Sumner said.

In 2017 Sumner launched Quilt with business partner Gianna Wurzl, who also gravitates to bringing together like-minded women. Wurzl was a co-founder of One Roof, a female-focused coworking space in Melbourne, Australia.

“Our goal is to inspire women to connect in real life around topics they care about and build community through authentic conversation and support. Our community will open their homes for conversation, usually on a volunteer basis,” Sumner said.

While the home is a safe, welcoming container, Quilts — what members call these meetups — are happening on hikes and in other places like cozy coffee shops.

“Some women aren’t comfortable opening their home but want to lead a conversation, so she can get creative as long as it is private and welcoming,” Sumner said.

Quilt is also a marketplace for women to open their homes and offer physical space to other female entrepreneurs looking to work, Sumner said.

Currently operating in Los Angeles, Quilt is now in beta phase in San Francisco and New York City.

An earlier iteration of Quilt focused on female entrepreneurs, freelancers and corporate professionals, but Sumner and Wurzl realized anyone, from young women to new mothers to retirees, could benefit from a shared space. A monthly membership starts at \$37 while a yearly one is \$297. The app is free.

“Our conversations are on anything from money, leadership and power to sexuality and desire to growth and relationships. Essentially any topic where a woman might be going through a lifestyle change and craving conversation,” Sumner said.

Quilt carries a bigger impact because it empowers women to build their own community, whether it’s for coworking or quilting.

“Women deserve a safe space to connect, have fun and share their experiences. It’s from this feeling of safety that we can create. It is our right and something we haven’t had access to,” Sumner said.

Here’s how it works: “The idea is that a woman hears about Quilt, downloads the app and is instantly invited into the Quilt home (the app) from there she can connect with women in the community one on one, she can join a group thread by city or topic, and she can find local conversations to come offline for,” Sumner said.

The typical Quilt user is hoping to foster deeper connections with women who are in similar places in life, Sumner said.

“The community is Quilt. Technology is affording us the opportunity to bring community to women who need it, when they need it, where they need it. It’s been beyond beautiful to experience how vibrant our online community is, because they’ve connected in real life. Everyone is so supportive of one another and plays multiple roles: One day they are attending, the next they are leading a conversation,” Sumner said.

Over 2,500 gatherings out of homes have taken place since Quilt launched.

“While we want that to be millions because that means that many women have felt support around the world, we’ve worked our butts off to support all 2,500 to happen safely and successfully. We are very proud of that,” Sumner said.

There have been challenges. Sumner said she needed to learn to overcome an inability to openly talk about the hard stuff.

“At the point I decided to lean on the people around me, including our team, we grew stronger and the company really started to evolve and grow beautifully,” said Sumner, who considers her greatest strengths emotional intelligence and the ability to read a room.

To find success sometimes you have to slow down to speed up.

“As a VC (venture capital)-backed tech start-up, there is a lot of pressure to go fast. To show results. There is little room for reflection and intuition in this world, but I have been carving that time out to make sure that every decision we make comes from a grounded, heart-centered place,” Sumner said.

For someone who is thinking about starting something new, Sumner offers the following advice: “Everyone will have an opinion about what you should do. Graciously listen, but don’t let yourself get distracted and try to please everyone. It’s impossible. Stay true to who you are and confident in your vision.”

In her free time Sumner enjoys the movement-based workout Dance Church on Sundays, sipping wine and listening to great live music.

Quilt is expanding to more cities in the future and continuing to build and improve its mobile experience so more women can access it, Sumner said. If you’re interested in Quilt coming to your city, email hello@wequilt.com, and apply to be the first host.

Find out more at wearequilt.com and facebook.com/wearequilt.



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— Ashley Sumner

COLUMN



I, robot vacuum

At 1 a.m. on a Sunday, I woke up to hear the robot vacuum vacuuming. The next night it started at 2 a.m., and then Tuesday it was back to 1 a.m.

“What the heck is going on with that thing?” asked my husband as we heard the vacuum banging on our bedroom door to get in.

“Obviously, it wants to clean in here,” I said half-asleep.

“Yes, I understand that,” he said. “But why does it want to clean in here at one in the morning?”

“I dunno. Maybe it prefers to clean by moonlight?”

I decided that either my vacuum was possessed or I fed it after midnight and it turned into a Gremlin, or some joker at the factory set up a middle-of-the-night vacuuming schedule just to tick some people off. I opened the bedroom door and the vacuum rushed in to deal with what it thought was a late night dog hair emergency. I hit the off button and it let out two beeps to let me know how disappointed it was not to be allowed to take care of our fictitious cleaning crisis.

The fact that it was even turning itself on at all was a surprise to me. I hadn't realized that the vacuum could actually be set to run itself. But when I Googled this phenomenon the next day, I found out that if I had actually read the manual I would have learned that the robot vacuum could not only run itself when I'm not home, it could also let me know when it was done. It wouldn't however, feed or walk the dog, make dinner or pick up my dry cleaning, so honestly, I'm not really sure why I was bothering with it at all.

But anyway, the only way to set the vacuum up to do vacuum things was to download a vacuum app that would let me control all the vacuum settings. If I didn't do this, it defaulted to its factory settings, which, for



TRACY BECKERMAN

some reason, was to suck up the dog hair on our floors at 1 o'clock in the morning.

After I downloaded the app, I set the vacuum to clean at 10 a.m. each day, but not to notify me when it was done or when it encountered a foreign object that was in its way or when it couldn't finish the job because it had fallen off a cliff (the vacuum's words, not mine). There were myriad notifications I could opt to get if I so opted, but I didn't because, really, I had better things to

do than be at the beck and call of my robotic vacuum all day.

Confident that I was now fully robot vacuum-literate and would no longer be bothered by late night cleanings or egregious notifications, I went on with my life.

But then one day while I was at lunch my phone pinged and when I looked at it, I saw that I had an urgent notification, so I clicked on it.

It was my robot vacuum.

It wanted me to know that it was its birthday.

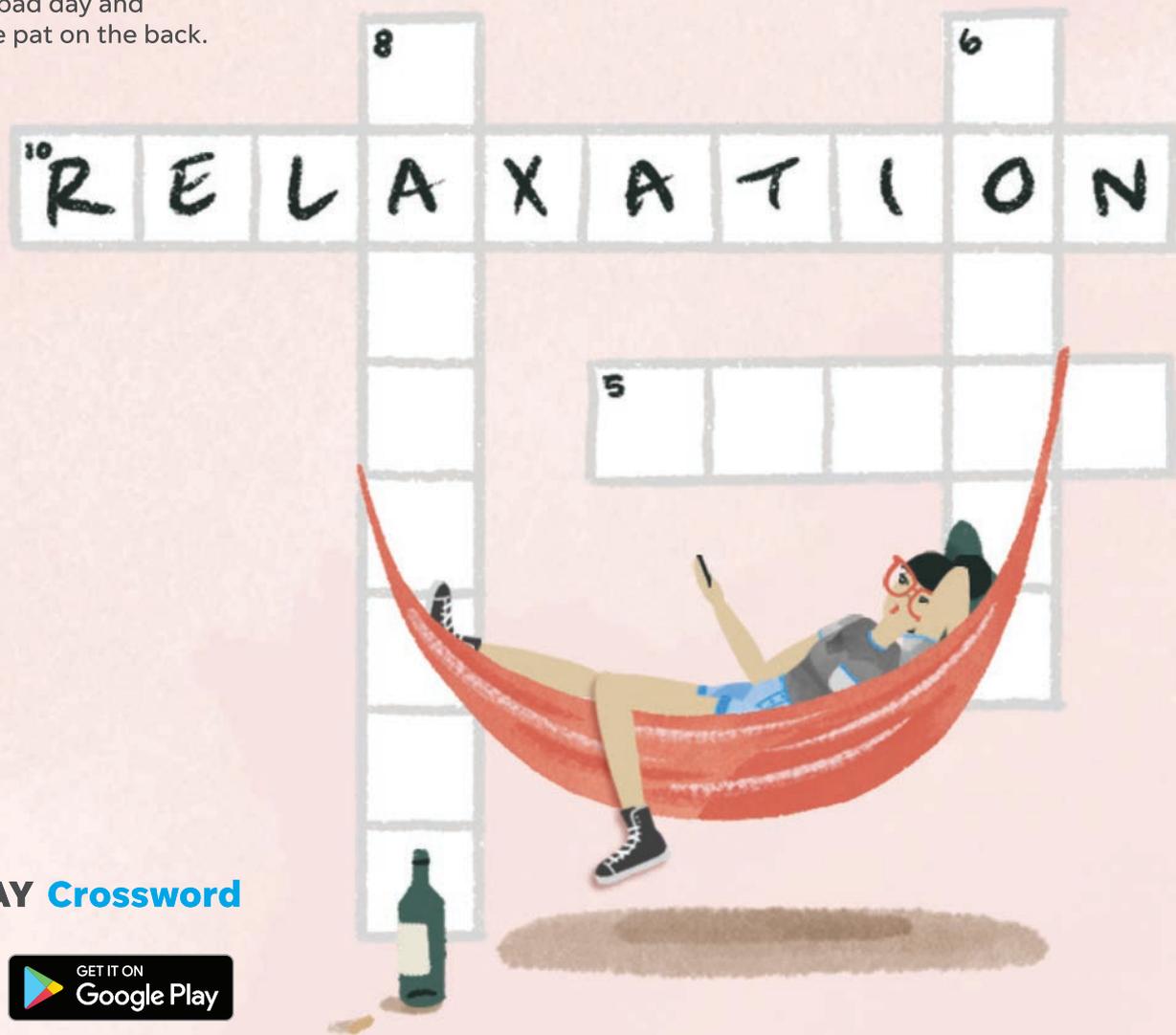
I was floored (no pun intended). I had not seen this particular notification in the settings, which meant that it was either factory programmed to let me know this information or it was just taking it upon itself to tell me.

Realizing this was something I only had to worry about once a year, I decided to let this one go, and focus on the more important issue: If I got the vacuum cleaner a birthday cake and it left crumbs on the floor, would it be too much to ask it clean up after itself?

Tracy Beckerman has written her humor column, “Lost in Suburbia,” for Gatehouse Media and Gannett since 2008. Her monthly column for ION is “Lost in Technology.” Follow her on Twitter at @TracyBeckerman. 🇺🇸

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