

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

And Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith,

Augusto Pinaud 0:23

I am Augusto Pinaud,

Francis Wade 0:24

I'm Francis Wade.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:25

We are back again this week to talk about something that I think all of us who are of a certain age have experienced over the course of time, which is a transformation from older technology to newer technology. And what we're going to really be talking about today is really the current state of productivity in light of that technological change. You know, I can remember back to my first computing device, so to speak. I received a ti 83 from my aunt as a hand me down. It was a The reverse calculators they used to call it and then I remember the first device I actually bought from myself with my own allowance and that was a Casio our 500 little spell checking dictionary device and what a long way we have come from way back then, but it really does say something about technology. Okay, so can you give us a little bit background in terms of what we're going to be talking about today and and how it affects our personal productivity?

Augusto Pinaud 1:29

You know, I'm not I'm not that also all that I will share today it's been several things I have. But the reality is that when you look into productivity when you look back into into the past and you talk about those devices my first device was also a Casio I don't remember the model but I remembered you could not back that up so it was a painful If you lose, if deleted, given I was young enough or anything formation may not be that irrelevant, but, but it was painful. And when the Palm Pilot came to the market, I remember how excited I was to the fact that you could back that up. So there was not going to be, you know, losing stuff anymore. But what I want to talk or discuss today is those four pillars that came from that time that has been somehow degrading into more powerful tools, but less obvious tools and how that has affect the current state of productivity. Before we start recording the show, you know, we were talking about, you know, those devices and we were talking about the planners, you know, the justa

paper planner, you know, one book one page calendar per, per day, and how our PDA sort of the beginning of the PDA basically bring four buttons, calendar, contacts, tasks, and notes. That need was really The beginning you know, I remember walking in into what it was a Franklin Covey stores in the malls in the states and looking at those planners and looking at those, you know, and I'd imagine the possibilities and but those planners, were still basing it on the on those four pillars, you know, the calendar, the contacts a task and the notes when you fast forward now to 2019 what you found is rarely those four things and I will even argue in many cases, None. None of the manufacturers do really strong task management, you know, or context is okay. calendar may be the best they do, but how that affect, you know, our generation and even the generations before you know, what are the solutions we come to in order to make that happen? You know, when the iPhone came out, my biggest thing With the iPhone was you could not do tasks, you could not sort notes, there was a lot of problem that was quickly solved by third party software. But in a way, it was leaving a really powerful divide device with, you know, big shortcomings from the productivity perspective. And if you look today on my iPhone in front of me right now, you know, I was thinking of this, as we were talking before we start recording the show. You know, the four applications on the bottom of my iPhone are for writing for a journal for organizing and task management. You know, it is interesting for me, there is no calendar context or notes on this

Raymond Sidney-Smith 4:45

when I look at my own phone and think about how I manifest what I do productively on especially the dock, the main series of buttons at the bottom of the page. In my case, my phone has five spots in the doc and, and so in the center is his calendar. But then remarkably enough on either side is a folder for contact apps, then Google Maps because I just use it as much as I do for traveling. then to the right of the calendar is my browser, my Chrome browser. And then to the right of that are my task management apps, and task and project management, all of those combined into another folder. And that's because above that, I've created a widget. I'm on the Android OS. And so I've created I've added a widget for my taskmanager above that with all of the features that I like to use within that software. So it's all really readily accessible to me all of that to say that probably not much has changed for me since then. With regard to the way in which I think about the you know, the people PDA and, and back then, you know the Palm OS on my devices. And today with regard to using a small device that's with me all the time that it has access to my calendar and my tasks, specifically my my contacts on my notes, those are much more blended. But I do know that when I transitioned from, from the palm over to the first iPhone, I, I was already migrating everything to Google. So I already migrated everything to Google Contacts. And so my transition was just once digitally, it went from the Palm OS. I uploaded that to Google Contacts. As far as I can remember, maybe there was some period where that went to Yahoo, but I'm not sure. And then, and then it went

into Google Contacts and that's where it's been ever since. I've I've actually never maintained a contact database outside of Google Contacts. And then that has always synchronized with all of my other devices. So it's a it's a pretty unique circumstance, I think, for me in the sense that while the devices have gotten smarter, the devices have gotten faster. My usage of those devices for those functions have not actually changed all that much.

Francis Wade 7:26

I'm looking at my Android phone, and I'm asking the same question, but and what strikes me is that the the four apps that Augusto mentioned, none of them were internet based, so they weren't cloud based. Initially, they were really meant for standalone devices. So when I had my I guess, it See I had a I had a hp something or the other what it was, but this was like the early 90s. I tried to put in the contacts and I tried to put in tasks. I tried to do different things with it. Which should, theoretically allowed you to do. But once the phone was in the phone, it was a device once the device died. That was the end of it. I started to use the palm and had to re enter all this information. And I could sync with my laptop, but there was no cloud access. But I think the the game changer has been closed access because all of the the content that I have in contacts, calendar, tasks, and notes are all no cloud based. And the way I use the device is to access the cloud. It's, it's a portal to the information that I have safely secured somewhere. So it's a it's a device has changed from being the source of the information, which it used to be to being just one access point. Now, having said that, I think Augusto's point is is is valid, which is when you win, you win those were the four primary buttons on your PDA. Essentially, the manufacturers were training you to operate the device in a particular way and to use it for a particular purpose. So it was it was, it was like giving someone a radio tune to tune to one channel, you know, the point of the radio is to listen to a one channel. And there's no other point other than that don't have any choices. But there's a whole argument. It's bigger than the one that we're making, or that we're examining today. But it's somewhat true, which is that when you take the friction away, and you give people more choices, and then you don't give them a roadmap as to how to navigate these choices, they often make a mess of it. And I think that's what Augusto is alluding to. When people are given the freedom to download any app and they aren't even there's not even a hint as to what they could use their device for. In terms of productivity, then the chances are that the choices they'll make won't be productive. Just because you've removed all of the friction and all of the signposts that would tell them that this device is a productivity device as opposed to this device is a gaming device or this is a social media device, or this is a leisure device or this is a movie device or this is a scour the internet for whatever you want device. And I think there's something there's something to be said for. How do you reintroduce if not friction, but at least signposts?

Augusto Pinaud 10:30

Not necessarily friction. And I agree with you, the cloud was the big changer. I remember at some point, setting up the early versions of Exchange servers so that way, my iPhone, synchronize with the computer on the phone or with Outlook at the time, so that way, I could have the same calendar everywhere and it was painful at that time. I mean, even even for a person who understood technology you have access to To do things It was painful to have, when you can now set up Google for to give an example or any of them, you know, apple, iCloud, whatever, and have all synchronized, you know, almost flawless even when we, even when we complain, that doesn't work, it is really flawless so and that without any doubt make these devices really, really powerful and we start looking into things that, hey, we're, we're simply impossible to consider before you know, before at least before the cloud are all these opportunities, you know, from the productivity point of view, making us more productive of less productive you know, and when you accept Ray apparently but but I have seen more people not having easy access to those four things than the access Not only that, if we look, if we go and look down into our our three devices, how many of those forms basic thing. So calendar notes context, on task are the ones that come with a device. No. And you know, and in my case, my context or my calendar is, but notes as well as project management and task is not I don't even I don't even play with reminders in my case that he's what he's the iOS based thing. I don't use it. So I don't know many people that do use it. So I, I wonder if the extra step to add or figure it out these devices aren't really not helping productivity are not helping the people who are new. We're not talking to people who experience you know, the paper planners, I'm trying to see the people who maybe haven't maybe have not experienced jet, the productivity and they simply don't know that.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:56

So I think the question you're positing here gousto is does it help hinder to the end user for them to have to add their own apps to the dock. And my thought and just initial response is the manufacturers, the current manufacturers of the primary two operating systems on which these devices set, which is Google's Android OS and Apple's iOS and the iPad OS. Now, the, the reality is, is that their goal is to sell you something. And that's not necessarily untrue, or that is, it's also true of HP and their creation of Palm OS and Garnet OS back then. It was true of really all of the prior PDA operating systems that on some level, although I that's not true, I would actually argue that some of the open source operating systems that were created for PDH did not Have a specific business model associated with it. But let's just for argument's sake, let's say that currently the two major operating systems, Android OS, and Apple iOS, their primary goal is to sell you things through the app store. So for them to make apps that would help your productivity, it can only be to the effect of keeping you glued to your phone. So of course, the email application ends up being the first thing they put on your screen, because people are

practically addicted to their email. I hate to use the word addicted but I think people are heavily influenced by their email. And they they have a they have a draw to constantly checking their email in that fashion. And calendar just seems too basic that they couldn't not put that on your phone in terms of basics. And then the browser will which, again, is another very influential piece of technology for you to not access the primary mode of your smartphone is, as we've been talking about the cloud. And so accessing the internet, through your browser seems to be the most basic items, but the other parts just don't seem to be in the forefront of their their mind. And I think I guess it goes to the point of, you know, Francis was making that you might want to use this device for many different things. You know, if I wanted to, I could make my phone completely an entertainment device, and not have anything else associated with work or school or anything, any other kind of category of life on that device. And so, the flexibility is there, and I'm not sure if that's a good or a bad thing.

Francis Wade 15:53

I've heard that you you, the car manufacturers could could make cars more could make them faster. I heard that there's a few tweaks it could make. Everybody could be flying along at 100 miles an hour with little or no strain on the engine. And they put in limiters to make sure that people don't have total access to higher speeds because they end up killing themselves. So it's a bit of friction that they I think, as the story goes, there's some friction that they put in to make it less likely that people will fly along on the highways that do speeds the highways, at least in the US, certainly here in Jamaica are just not meant for that kind of speeds and the autobahn is so you know, there is more flexibility over there. Take away some of the friction and maybe not so many people that but there is there's usefulness in in shaping people's choices. And I think when with ocpd is had those four buttons, the contacts, calendar, tasks and notes, the four buttons as you picked up your PDA are thought Oh, this is my productivity device because it is it is built for that purpose. And that's not the case with phones today, as you said they want to sell more of them. So they've lifted all of the limitations taken away all the friction, taking away all the signposts, and they've made them super, super flexible, which is fine. But then where does someone learn to use the four as goes to puts it the four basic productivity tools or even what they are? Where does that lesson come from? And right now, it doesn't come from anywhere. It doesn't come from the manufacturers who are agnostic or whatever, doesn't happen in school. Doesn't happen in the workplace. It is no sort of even beginning sense that mastery of at least notes a little bit more flexible for me because that's more of a convenience, because you could use paper, but mastery of of cloud based contacts mastery of cloud based calendar and mastery of cloud based tasks are Three skills that a no everyone needs to it's not a question of, do you need to manage money? Do you need to become more expert at these over time? If you hope to be a

professional, a functioning adult, you must become more you must master these fiscal, let's say three skills. And there's no indication anywhere that that message is being taught you don't run into it. Unless you're extremely self motivated another kid you pick up something like seven habits or GTD or you pick up a productivity book. But that's the minority you know, most people sail along sail through college probably isn't until they get well into the workplace when they already have some bad habits in place. That it occurs to them that Geez, and I'm getting a lot of demands on my time. I need to manage them somehow. Well, what should I do? Should I keep using my memory? Oh, maybe I should use a post it note. That probably doesn't happen. for the average person until they hit maybe 25. But then they already have a kid. And they I've had people who tell me Oh, you know, I got home and forgot my kid at daycare. Where does that come from? same same problem. So there's no, there's no indication that these skills are important, or that the tools would make a difference to that. That's just not taught.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:20

I'll push back in the sense that I'm not sure where the manufacturers, the technologists who are developing these platforms and this hardware, their responsibility begins and ends to teaching us how to be productive. The problem I have is that if we want to teach productivity, then why not teach finances? And why not teach coding? Like where does their where does their responsibility begin an end to teaching society how to live their most productive liberal lives and from my perspective, I am a liberalist in the sense that I believe that we should live free lives as, as having as much freedom as possible, while still staying within the confines of what's necessary to keep society intact. As someone who really fundamentally believes that I have agency over my life. The the important part here is, for example, like if we if we wanted to teach financial, you know, intelligence, financial literacy, we would be teaching emotional regulation and delayed gratification. And if we were teaching productivity, well, in my perspective, that takes a requirement to show people that they should not just have a task app, but they should have a project management application. And they should also have not just a calendaring application, but they should also have a routine or habitual behavior based management system. So those are not things that are very easily pushed into say a task. Calendar application out of the box. Those are fairly customized and specific, not only functions, but they're also very tailored to the personal. They're very personal implementations, people need to implement those, the way in which they best learn, and adopted new habits, build new habits, and so and so forth. Does that make sense? What would be your response there to what's the responsibility of the device makers and the operating system developers to really what should be taught on the device?

Augusto Pinaud 21:36

I don't think it is the manufacturer's responsibility. I mean, to a certain extent, I agree if you look into the Palm Pilot, as much as I as much as I think Hawkins was a really cool dude, I don't think he was doing this to he was solving a problem but he wasn't thinking on teaching people productivity he was looking to solve a problem and that is complete. Finding, okay when when Samsung Apple, Google, all of them come, they're trying to solve a problem. And they are trying to cater to what their vision of what the people need or people will buy. You know, a famous quote from Henry Ford says, If I will have us people, they will have asked me for a faster horse. And I believe that's true. The, the, the argument is not easy. I think that's a responsibility. No, I think that's everybody's responsibility. But I need your own responsibility to understand, hey, I need tools to do this better. Okay. There is a moment on your professional career that project management may not seem that critical. And there is another moment where, oh, I should have learned this a long time ago. Again, usually don't at least that was my own experience. Okay. Project Management was something that at the beginning of my career, I I couldn't understand. I couldn't grasp Suddenly we're like, oh, I shouldn't have learned this from years ago now. But and that is fine. But the problem to me comes on how these people will find this information because they seems to be, at least from my perspective, a massive gap between the productivity people, okay? The people who knows these tools and these quote unquote secrets and the secret handshake, okay, and the people who grabbed their phone and now Okay, and what I do this well, I can listen to music go to the web, and I know this but can do the other part. And and I wonder, again, I don't I don't think this is any any way the manufacturer responsibility, but where comes, how we can reduce and close that gap because it hurts people at the end of the day

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:51

to play devil's advocate here and sort of extending my argument. I have always long believed that the Development Community software development and software developers and mass have a responsibility to, to designing software that solves problems, but they shouldn't be leading the changes they should be following society's design desires, that is, what does society need in order to grow? How does our great experiment in human civilizations prosper? So there is a huge responsibility, you know, like the fact that we have a huge amount of racial bias in facial technology, facial recognition technology, the fact that we have all of these ways in which natural language processing and even for example, when I talk to my Google Home or Alexa, it understands me almost every time you know minus internet connection glitches or you know, the occasional glitch, it always understands me. Does it understand you Augusto There's a clear bias. And it's built at the software development level. And at the same time, while I believe that they have to be stewards of great software, and again, I'm just playing devil's advocate here, but is the better bet then for them to give you a blank screen and an app store and

letting you figure it out?

Francis Wade 25:21

I think there's a commercial opportunity in here isn't there apart from something like a built in ability for a smartphone to turn itself off if you're driving? So it there apparently they're the I've heard I don't know if this is true, but I've heard that they could put in capability to detect whether you're driving or not, as in your texting while driving or using your phone while driving. They're there they could build in enough smarts into the hardware to figure that out and then turn off the service but they don't want don't want those what I heard and then if it's true,

Augusto Pinaud 25:52

I currently currently you can be done. If you text you text me while I'm driving, my phone will reply automatically. As I'm driving, I will reply to you when whenever I stopped driving, is that an app or is that a built in built in? Oh, okay, so it's built in on the iOS I don't, I'd like to say was iOS 11 but don't quote me on

Francis Wade 26:14

because I'm pretty sure Android doesn't doesn't have that yet. But it's a choice that the manufacturers have made. That's so that's that one is more clear cut because it's a safety. You don't want that consumers because they don't, they don't buy any more phones. But on the software side, so the opportunity would be that somebody should step in and see we're here are the here though. If you're 15 years old, here are the here's a recommended environment for you to download almost or here's a suggestion as to what you could be using that your is and and your

Augusto Pinaud 26:50

partner what initiate this is so my daughter is coming now to the timing of school where calendar homeworks and projects And oldest, he's a reality and fine you buy them a device because she has a device? Is that device set up for productivity? Now? Does she have an easy way to set up for productivity? No. When her friends have set up, no, there is no chance she has no by her own, she has no opportunity to win that game. And, you know, it is interesting, because when, I don't know, I'd say we had better tools, or maybe our tools were us poorly thought but from the productivity perspective, but it felt like okay, we knew there was these things, and we figured it out these things and the more I look on, it may be that I'm looking in the wrong places, the harder the harder is to find this information for people to use for people to really get out of there. And again, it could be that I'm looking on the wrong place. That is a possibility. But that's that's what I'm Look, you know, and the more icon people to that comes to to get coaching from me in productivity and they leave on their inbox. Okay, I'm not talking about Inbox Zero, I'm talking. their inbox is their calendar, their tasks, their everything, their notes.

Well, I emailed that information to myself when you get these people I'm not talking about it's not about successful people are okay, who are coming here and they have never had a task to manage. Okay, but they wonder how they're drowning. They live on the inbox and well when the inbox I had the coaching client who has 5000 unread emails on his inbox, I don't even know how many read they were after we cleaned them. But what you do is 5000 emails, 35,000 emails on my inbox, I need to confront corruption. There is no way I can process that. But I may have answered my own question, but Hi, how can we help people to find that first broke to pull themselves out and and to move forward into this.

Francis Wade 29:08

Yeah, that sounds like an instructional problem. Because there's a Yeah, there is a you're right your observation is right on the money that when you bought you bought the old PD, it taught you what was important because it only gave you a few options. So you know you you got it and you knew that's what it was for. And you used it for that purpose. And that was it. You know, you didn't even you naturally you naturally took the lead of the manufacturers because that's what the buttons, the buttons that were in there and the apps that were built in came with that and that's what it was for. It was it was a no brainer. You didn't even think it was transparent to you because it was built that way. No, all those signposts are gone. And there is I agree with you there is there's a and volume of email has gone has its hi so so they have to have to manage the email because it's It's coming in every day in bigger volumes. And they don't have any task management habits to, to back up the influence of messages. So they're caught between this rock and this high place. And I agree there's no, there are no signposts there is no instruction, there is no, what cost management is something that you start, according to the research in your early teens. But you do it by self taught methods. And self taught self taught methods plus software equals disaster in many cases, but not all. But in many,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 30:35

to clarify, also, just jumping back really quickly, Android does have a driving mode, that if you're on the latest version of the Android operating system, so you know, some people will not have this, if they're probably I think Android seven or prior, but maybe seven or later, I believe it is. Again, don't Don't hold me to that. But I want the latest versions of Android OS has a driving mode and you can set that up. Automatically so that as soon as you connect to your car or start moving fast enough, it actually registers and kicks in driving mode. So it is available now on both operating systems to be aware that you're driving and to then limit access to distracting things. I think I think your point is well taken, Francis, that we have technology that can set up behavioral interventions that can be better for us. And that manufacturers have also taken a perspective that for safety, we are they put in these behavioral interventions to keep us

from doing certain things. And this is what Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler the the the authors of the nudge, I'll put a link to that in the show notes has kind of posited here, right? These these societal nudges in a direction in order to help us help facilitate a decision that's more beneficial for society. The thing that I'm really pushing on, though, is the fact that these these major telecommunications and technology companies have a huge responsibility, if in the sense that the governments of the world have not united in what is what is best for we as humans to to be more productive, right? It's the stay in the narrow vein of personal productivity and not into the other aspects of global health and global poverty or global wealth or any of those things. But the very slim space, the domain in which we talk about on a weekly basis, is personal productivity. And the reality is, is that we just haven't, we haven't defined that as a species. So to leave that on technologists shoulders, I think something that you said was really well was really important to Cousteau, which is the salience of how when Jeff Hawkins developed palm and the reality is is that he developed that as a ski morphic representation of the planner, just as you said in the introduction. So there was a natural replacement of a notebook or an agenda diary that had those functions already built into it, you you had a calendar of some kind in your planner, you had some kind of task list. In your planner, you had some kind of notes section, and you probably kept the few people in your address book in either another notebook or in that same planner. So I remember my planners had like a cool map and a time zone map and such in the back of it, it was very useful as almost like having a Farmer's Almanac light in the back of that little planner and I really enjoyed using it. But the reality is is that you know when you develop that you The palm had those four applications, it had a calculator, and it had a an encryption tool so you could encrypt private notes. And so even back then there was a, an understanding of protecting personal information and very forward thinking of them, you know, back in the mid 90s. And so with With that in mind, the people who purchased those were self selecting. They were people who knew that they needed that when someone gets a cell phone today gets a smartphone especially, it's because society told them that they have to have this piece of technology. It's not because they self selected into being more productive. And I wonder how that changes our perspective on what people should do when they get this new technology in their pocket.

Francis Wade 34:51

Well, how about this if Augusto gave his daughter as a how to see the right way but a frictional smartphone, he you know, Christmas time he breaks the smartphone onto the box and he says, You've worked really hard and Santa brought you a smartphone. Yay. And he says, however, this one is geared to teach you certain productivity lessons for the first three months. And once you've mastered them and you're using the smartphone, at least for productive purposes, then lift the restriction and allow you to download Instagram and Facebook and yada yada Yeah, Snapchat and blah, blah, blah. But until then, you will

mask that you have to master these default the following apps.

Augusto Pinaud 35:36

And that's where that thing will stay in the box and never be charged.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:39

I would disagree with that though. Remember that we have we have on the Apple iOS platform, we have parental controls. And on the flip side, on the Google side, we have family link, which is a very akin to parental controls on iOS, and we limit children and their access to safe pornographic material. And violent material and other kinds of materials and time based access to internet and so on and so forth. I know that my Google onhub has the ability to cut off internet to specific devices at particular times. And so the goal is to, is to put guard rails up, it's like bumper bowling. So that so that these young minds can hopefully healthfully use technology until they're capable of taking the training wheels off all kinds of mixed metaphors this morning. And, and get get on the road to greater success with the technology than not. And a lot of this has to do with development of emotional regulation. And that's important. So it's not like it's not important to me. I'm, I just feel like it's really important for gusto to have that conversation with his daughter. about what's important and how to be productive. And, and the app that I installed for personal productivity probably is not all that useful to his daughter. So so so if the manufacturer installs out the gate of a on in the case of Apple Apple reminders, well, the I'm not quite sure that app would appeal to the, to the great masses of people who use it. They're probably using the wrong tool is basically my point. And for Augustus daughter, it's probably also the wrong tool, because she's in, in in grade school, the needs that she has is so fundamentally different. And so this is where kind of my ongoing desire is, is that there be a kind of a wizard that walks people through the initial steps when they start Their devices. And so you boot up your device and it says, asks a few questions. And based on those questions, those answers then starts to facilitate recommendations for how the device should be implemented, and what tools should be available. And not that you're not capable of doing those things except in the case of, say, a minor, where the parent or guardian then has the ability to decide what can and can't be done. But the but from an adult perspective, it starts to provide suggestions. And those suggestions should all come they should come from the common not from from the technologists, that is through the wisdom of the crowd. There should be suggestions provided with the appropriate reviews and disclaimers and so and so forth all presented. What do you think about that? What do you think about the idea of we the Users democratically providing our other users the guardrails to how to use the system. And that helps to better guide one another in the implementation of of how we use the tools that are given to us

Francis Wade 39:19

go home and try that. That was still

Augusto Pinaud 39:22

I will come back and report Good luck.

Francis Wade 39:26

I think it's a great idea. I think it's a it's the training wheels, the the idea that there is something to be learned, and that friction free use. I think what agosto is trying to prevent is his daughter becoming his future client in 10 years time and saying, Oh, my God, I don't know what's going on. I caught that and she's so she's, she's showing all the symptoms that his current clients are showing, and he thinks to himself, if I had just done something 10 years ago, I could have avoided all of this pain, but now I have to teach her all this stuff. And by No, she already has a whole bunch of bad habits that I could have prevented her from learning. I could have just tweaked the environment and nudged her in the right direction and she would be super productive as opposed to suffering today. Am I understanding other stuff?

Augusto Pinaud 40:17

Well, do you know i don't i don't i don't know if i can say she's that far on the road. But yes, I mean, partially Yes. Partially is how you give her unlike her many people, how do you give them that, that access to to, to those basic tools because the basic tools used to be obvious, they used to be in front of you know, you used to get the planner or the old PDA and that was it for things, you know, since 2007, I will argue, okay. They are not obvious anymore, and not everybody has found them, or figured out how to use them effectively.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:57

Well, I would say that if we if we if We were doing this all over again, if 1996 was the year that Palm OS 1.0 came out, right? If we were back in 1996, Palm OS 1.0 was was dropping, I would argue that email would have been one of those four or five apps would have been one of those four or five buttons. I have no question in my mind that we would have had email being one of those buttons, and potentially even beyond that, there would be a Facebook button. So I'm I'm not so

Augusto Pinaud 41:34

from the from the runner factor perspective, I hundred percent agree with you from the manufacturer perspective, the first Palm Pilot will have been released in 2016 instead of 1996. I agree with you will have been emailed text message on Facebook.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:48

And so that that's what that's what concerns me is that the the technologists are developing these based on ephemeral trends. That is All trends are presumably in some way, shape or form ephemeral, but the so they're they're basing their decisions on trends not on what is

really good for society. And so my question to you, as we close out on this episode is what what does it What does a user? What does our listener do right now? When they get their their new devices and on their current devices? What should they do to make their device more productive? Considering the history of where we've come from? that most likely when they installed their device, somebody made decisions for them? That may not have been the most productive choices for them. What What should our what should our listeners do to their phones?

Augusto Pinaud 42:49

I think I, I think would The first thing is understand what is the device for you know, and this may jump into a different topic. for a future episode, but when you look, you know, when I begin talking 2011 or 12, about the iPad being your main machine, you know and people laughing about it, because that time that machine may have not been so powerful, you know, just a year slaver 2019 now your people talking about what is called the multi pad lifestyle where people now it's not only having the iPad as their main machine but having them multiple, so they use it for different things and it comes with a phone exactly the same phones are so powerful now that it is healthy, to slow down for a moment and think what is the use I have for this device. Instead of trying to make the device do everything that at the end of the day, I will argue will make you less effective, no more effective

Francis Wade 43:54

and agree. In a prior episode I mentioned that I've I've moved Through an delegated certain tasks to each device so my my laptop is where I do my heavy lifting my big time creative work. My tablet is only for well not only but you know I mean it's mostly for consumption, sit back consumption where I don't have to work and interact but I'm not trying to create I'm not trying to do anything big I'm just absorbing, watching playing so I'm it's a more more leisure Li I guess. And then my mobile phone is for is the thing that goes with me everywhere. So whenever I need to have wherever I go as I put that gets a priority on my mobile phone and other things get get taken off. And I have I have pretty pretty slow old limited memory limited memory devices. So I have to be very careful about what I choose to put on each one which the once again the added friction Makes me have to choose very carefully, or think at least carefully about what I want to do where because I can't do everything everywhere. So I've had to think through what do I do with each one in each place. And I think there's something to be said for the added friction, if not the added friction that leads the discipline, or at least some guideposts that, that guide the user that instead of trying to think think of doing everything everywhere, which then leads you to be friction less, but also indiscipline and also distracted. Because if I had if I had Netflix everywhere, I'd probably be watching Netflix everywhere, and I don't want to do that. So I have to make choices and set up my own guardrails to see Netflix only on the tablet. Access to creating content only on my laptop, so that I am sort of trying to be most

productive using The best possible device in the right moment. But again, I'm am muddling through.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 46:06

So what I've done on all of my devices is I've decided which which software or which desktops aren't going to manage what kinds of things. So, for example, on my, on my smartphone, I'm able to create folders, obviously, but on my homescreen are all of my primary applications in folders. And they are where I spend 80 to 90% of my time, I shouldn't have to be swiping through screens to get to my most used applications. So I've just in essence, moved everything in there and organize it in such a way that I'm comfortable with access to things from two to three tabs, the each screen thereafter, I have been created as different modes. So there is an entertainment mode, there is a consumption mode on online The non entertainment so so things that are outside of, I have a lot of things that I like to read and and are not necessarily within the entertainment space, they're still professional in some capacity, if you want to call it that, or, you know, learning whatever it might be. So I have a learning screen. And that has all of my learning apps. And so those really helped me know the context in which I'm in when I'm looking at that screen. And so I like to organize based on some kind of mode that keeps you organized in your thought process while you're in that space. And so, you know, I have my dual lingo and my coding applications and anything else that I'm learning on that screen in the learning screen. And that is just really helpful to me, and I hope that's helpful to others. The other side to this is just like on a regular basis, whatever that regular basis is, maybe it's every six months, every three months, something like that, looking through your your app drawer. Just going through it and deciding, are these things still serving me? Are these things still useful to me? Am I still using these apps? Are these apps actually making or helping me to be more productive? Or are they not? And I think that could be a very healthy practice. And one that I actually do because I'm on the flip side of view, Francis, where I have, I have a device that has copious amounts of memory, it, I could install all the apps I ever wanted to install and keep installing them and you know, it wouldn't really make a blip on my radar. At the same time, I spend a considerable amount of my time making sure that I don't install everything and that when I install applications to test because I installed you know, pretty much every productivity software that comes out, I install it, I look at it, I pressure test it, I have to make sure that I then deleted from my system, right and all of its remnants, I go through a fairly rigorous process of making Making sure that I'm not putting more on the system that I need because it can be very easy to become lazy. And just let the detritus pile up. So for me, it's it's the flip side of that is that if you have the, the devices with, with all of these resources, it can become very slippery slope of well, it doesn't really matter because the it's not going to impact my overall operating. But you need to, you need to spend the time to make sure that you're not just starting to pile things up

because it's death by 1000 cuts. And this actually comes down to my principal as to why I organize documents, in folders and in a hierarchy in my system, and keeping the folders limited so that we don't ever have more than three tiers of folder structure. And that really helps me manifest you know, coordination between Evernote and my file hierarchy. But there's a greater reason which is So at some point, you can utilize search to find things easily. And then there comes a point where you have to be dependent on search to find things. And the moment that that doesn't work, then there's no other way to find the things that you were looking for. And that's the part that really bothers me is that you lose a sense of control at some point, in terms of being able to utilize a tool, when you just say, Oh, well, the tool will do it for me. there's a there's a level of responsibility there that I think everybody has

Francis Wade 50:32

this reeks of our commercial opportunity that you take away friction. People give people too many choices, give people infinite choices, and without guideposts. They make a hash of it. And I think there's some smarts to be applied between a gusto and his daughter, certainly because he has, he has time he has runway to shape her productive life so that she goes from being, you know, a young middle schooler to being productive adults. So he has maybe a decade there to, to make this this tremendous difference. But for the rest of us who are already, you know, out of the learning more than we're already into habit mode. I think there's a commercial product here, which is around training yourself and limiting your choices and putting on the blinders is the equivalent of being in the flow state. That when you're in the flow state, you turn stuff off, you close the door, you, you isolate yourself, you tell people around you not to not to bother you not to interrupt you. That's also a form of friction. I think this is a this is a similar in the sense that there's some training and there's some modification and some device device guideposts to put in and I think there's a commercial application that would guide someone through the steps of designing their productive environment. I think those are productive. I think there's a commercial product here. But that should be geared towards that. It's an opportunity.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 52:03

So if you're listening and you think that you could do it challenge challenge given. So thank you for that, Francis. Well, that brings us to the end of our conversation today. And so if you have a question or comment about this cast or something that we discussed, feel free to jump on over to ProductivityCast dotnet. there at the bottom of the episode page, you can leave a comment or a question, and one of us will be happy to respond. There. Also on productivitycast.net, you'll find the show notes with links to anything that we discussed. And if something is missing, feel free to just leave a note and we'll be happy to add that or clarify. You can also learn how to follow us and subscribe to the podcast there on the website as well. There's a

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Voiceover Artist 53:45

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.