

Geek-speak argot of the moment

EVER get a bout of snow blindness when you're faced with new technology and gadgetry? You know — the times when you step inside the door of one of those stores, doing your best to stay focused, but your mind goes all white fuzz?

You've purposely gone in search of the latest stuff, just to know what people are raving about, and then your brain unplugs of its own accord.

It's like a cerebral default setting — parachuting you into safe mode: "That'll do. He had no idea what he was at."

Not to freak you out even further but James Bond's back — not in an exploding cigarette case or telescopic cuff links way, but in the cool argot of the techie breed — geek-speak is the argot of the moment.

All of which leaves you abjectly adrift somewhere between the anoraks and the action heroes. And while they seem to be able to talk to each other perfectly intelligibly, you struggle: "Sorry! Did someone say firewire?" Frightening.

Well, if you don't want to disappear altogether, you've got to storm their tower of Babel. Right? And just like in all the best films, you better "tool up" before you do. Unfortunately, this brings you back to your high noon: the high street.

Beware, on your first foray into any electronic emporium, chances are you'll fall into conversation without readying yourself, and the sales team will twig there's something up. Don't panic. Pull it together. But be prepared — these people are good. Hot-housed in the classics, they spout Greek at will — megabytes, gigabytes, hertz and more hertz — so, just keep nodding.

Trust me. You WILL forget virtually everything, in a matter of days. Where you might consider you're now in covert operations when enquiring about bits and operating systems, you will instead be more like Ali G to your unsuspecting



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The Last Word

assistant, as you push them to explain RAM, one more time.

But unlike 007's expendable enemies, the sales folks aren't automatons, they're trying to save you from last century oblivion, and drag you into a future-proofed place; knowing only too well that only a fraction of your new PC's myriad functions will ever be clicked upon by your cordless mouse. Or even twiddled on your trackpad.

So, look closely as you leave the premises, there could be a tear in their eye. Not for the joy of the sale, or the imminent end to a fleeting acquaintance-ship, but lamenting your choice not to pursue the second year of the warranty.

It can only signal the inevitable: you'll be back someday — all in a heap — processor banjaxed and arguing the toss. Q never had it so bad. Then again, Bond pretty much detonated everything in sight. Maybe you're not so geeky after all.

