

Technically Stressed

By: Rebekah Mulari

In this era, everyone has some sort of device. Due to this fact, most of life was online. Whether it was to entertain themselves, allow them to work from home, or to have easy to access schoolwork. Most schoolwork would be posted online, so all the students needed a computer or laptop of some kind, and everyone did, except for Logan Samson. He was an average height, with dark brown hair, and a blue jacket; and the only 8th grade middle school student who did not have a computer of his own. While he had the iPhone 11, everyone else already had the iPhone 17! This has not changed, and it did not seem like it ever would; but little did he know, that at this very moment an anxious computer was being delivered to his house.

Logan found himself riding the bus home after a long day at school, with his heavy backpack plopped next to him. He was looking down at his phone, playing some kind of block dropper mobile game. If he had happened to look up, he would have seen his grandma's car exiting the driveway. And he would have seen the medium sized box, that was the perfect size to fit a computer. "Thanks Mr. Brown." Logan said, not even having looked up from his phone. He exited the bus and walked up his front lawn. He reached for his keys in his back pocket, as he took the keys to the doorknob, he noticed the box. He did not think much of it. "Mom's probably ordered more perfume." Logan shrugged to himself. He picked up the box and brought it inside with him.

"Mom, I think your package arrived!" Logan shouted. "Actually, that package is yours." He looked up and his parents were standing there. "What do you mean?"

"Well, we know how hard it can be to be the only kid in school to not have a computer."

Logan's face lit up.

"So, we pulled some strings, and got you one of your own."

Before she was able to finish her sentence, Logan was already ripping apart the tape and cardboard. Rambling about thanking them and having the best parents ever. By the time he had gotten through the rapping, he had gotten, disappointment. Instead of seeing the latest flat screen, light up mouse and keyboard of his dreams, he saw a thick screened 1980s model computer. It appeared the computer was looking at him, as it saw the disappointment in his eyes. Logan slowly, looked up, took a deep breath, and said, "Thank you family, I love you so much." In a slightly agitated voice. He picked up the box and was ready to run into his room. "Logan, wait." He stopped. "We knew how badly you wanted a computer, but they are a lot of money, so your grandma gave you her old one." His mother said. "This thing looks like it could be a grandma." Logan whispered under his breath. "Oh, it's ok!" He lied, "I am glad you got me this, but I need to start my homework so, I'll go now." He walked quickly into his room, dropped the box onto his desk and screamed into his pillow.

"Great, now, instead of being the poor kid, I am going to be the kid with the old broken stuff." He said aloud. "I mean, come on! Do my parents know anything about the social ladder of middle

school? I one of the oldest students there, but some of the 6th graders are cooler than me!" He noticed some static from the computer. "Well, time to see if grandma's computer will even turn on." He waddled over to his desk and plugged the computer to the wall. "Hey champ," His dad poked his head through the door, "You need any help getting it to turn on? I could help you set up your account." "No dad, I got this." Logan responded. "Ok son, just checking in." his dad said as he closed his door. The truth was Logan did want some help, but he did not want his dad to make his account name LoganSamsonAge14 or something. Once he finished doing the settings and junk, he wanted to install a new game his friends were into. He began the downloading process but then he said, "Oh right, this game is probably to advanced for this old computer." After Logan said that the loading seemed to go even slower than before! "Come on!" he moaned. "I'm going to have dinner, maybe the loading will finish after that."

Logan was right, the game had finished downloading by the time he had finished dinner, but once he got back to his computer, he had received a notification from his online class. The notification read: "Book Report Due in 30 minutes". Logan had forgotten all about this project. "How am I going to do this? My computer can barely work, and I haven't even read the full book yet! I probably won't be able to open the document before it's due! I am the unluckiest person in the-" "Will you stop!" Someone interrupted in a, glitchy, voice. "You are stressing me out! How could you possibly think I could work with all this pressure?? Uh oh." The computer was talking to him, it had a shocked and stressed face. "I-I-I cannot talk, re-reboot required?" It shut off but turned back on immediately. "Error, failed. I cannot even do this right. Ha-ha. I am the most broken hard drive in the world. How can I be anything like the flat screen of his dreams? I am a grandma?" There was static electricity coming from it, Logan thought it was going to overheat and explode, but he was already too confused and was trying to understand what was happening. "Is this some kind of artificial intelligence?" he thought. Logan got tired of its rambling, "Ok, just calm down!" It suddenly stopped talking. Logan wanted to say something, but he felt weird talking to an inanimate device. He was hoping it would say something, but it was waiting for Logan to give he a command of some kind. He fell back into his chair and sighed, "How is this even possible?" "Oh, it is simple really!" the computer spoke. "My code is right here, 1000111010101100111001- new notification! Book Report due in 20 minutes."

"Twenty minutes? How long has it been?"

"It is, 8:41!"

"That's not what I wanted!"

It stopped.

"I want to finish my book report on time so I can get a grade better than a C for once!"

"If I help you with your book report, will you like me?"

"Yes! I need your help! Wait... like you?"

"Yes! According to my data research you do not like me. I am not a good enough computer for you. So, I must work harder so you can be happy. But I guess, even my best is not adequate for you. I will admit, I may be malfunctioned, why else am I not working?"

When Logan heard this, he realized what was wrong.

Rebekah Mulari, Age 14

“You’re not malfunctioned, you’re just stressed.”

“Stressed?”

“Yeah, when I am stressed, I can’t do any of my work right until I can calm down. Maybe if you calm down, you can work properly. What makes you happy?”

“Well, my purpose is to help you succeed, or at least that is what I feel. I, maybe, your book report!”

The screen changed from a face to his unfinished book report. “Right! I still have to do that! Will helping me make you feel better?” A thumbs up emoji appeared on the screen and an online version of the book he was reading appeared and some of the key text was highlighted. He quickly finished reading (the important stuff) and got straight to work. The computer made grammar suggestions and helped with smarter wording and in ten minutes he was able to submit his report with time to spare. He fell back into his chair and let out a long sigh of relief. “Finally, I don’t have to use my brain for the rest of the day.” Logan said to himself. “Do you want to use your brain for one more thing?” the computer asked with a smile. “What do you mean?” Logan asked. The screen changed and the game he wanted popped onto the screen. “Oh, it worked!” Logan exclaimed. He made his own account, but before he began to play, he said, “I am really happy my parents got me this, thanks.”