Guides for Brides

Forget Something Old—Brides Are Using New Tech Tools To Plan Great Weddings ℗

(NAPSA)—"Will you marry me?" After those four magical words and the subsequent "yes!" comes the task of planning the big day. For a bride-to-be, this phase leading up to one of the most important and dreamiest days of her life can become overwhelming. But a bride all "wired up" with nerves can destress by becoming "technically wired" to help calm those wedding planning jitters. "Eighty-three percent of brides are now using technology to help them organize their wedding details and communicate with their vendors and their groom," says Sharon Naylor, wedding expert and author of 35 wedding books.

When a bride has to think about the reception site, flowers, invitations, the photographer, guest list and more, she should start by getting the tools that will help her reduce the number of things she has to worry about. Technology can help the bride (and her fiancé) get organized, stay connected to family and friends during the planning phase and, of course, keep expenses under control.

Take a look at the free technology that can make wedding planning feel like a skip down the aisle:

•**Bring the Web to your wedding.** Create a wedding Web site, for free. Your guests will need to know all sorts of information, such as directions to the reception and where you're registered. Make it easy on yourself and put all the wedding FAQs on your Web site, so you can easily share the URL with family and friends and not have to take hundreds of calls when you are so busy. You can even send out a save the date card with the Web address on it. There are many free services out there, such as Microsoft Office Live (www.officelive.com), that enable you to do many things very quickly and easily.

•**Get "social" before the big day.** It's also important for brides to connect with one another to share advice and get support and ideas during the planning phase. Brides have so many decisions to make, such as the dress style for the bridesmaids, decorations for the reception and even the flavor of icing for the wedding cake. According to TheWeddingReport.com, in December 2008, 59 percent of brides said that getting help and feedback from others is an important wedding planning activity.[1] Social media makes it a snap for brides to connect these days: You can start a blog and not only keep your family, wedding party and friends in the loop, you can invite other brides to view it and share their own experiences and stories.

•**Save dollars on "save the dates."** Speaking of save the date cards, why buy them when you can use free templates instead? Microsoft Office Online has plenty of free, easy-to-download templates that let you express your creativity without having to start from scratch, at http://www.office.microsoft.com.[2]

•**Let technology be your virtual wedding planner.** Use a free online storage and sharing site to create a workspace to connect with your countless wedding vendors. Upload your flower budget to share with your florist, or upload a list of your favorite songs to share with your DJ.

•**Focus on the three-carat diamond, not the three-ring binder.** Ditch the three-ring binder—it's so 1998. Online services, such as Office Live Workspace (http://www.officelive.com) allow you to store all your important wedding documents online and access them from the Web at virtually any computer. Let's say you get a frantic call from Mom in the middle of your workday, asking if you remembered to add your second cousin, Maggie, to the guest list. No sweat; just get on the Internet from your work computer and access your guest list. Now Mom is happy.

Put those nerves to rest. Let technology help brides "wire up" instead, allowing them to get organized, save money—and save their sanity.

For more information about free online tools to help plan your wedding, visit Microsoft Office Live at http://www.officelive.com.

---

[1] *Brides were asked to rank various wedding planning activities as "unimportant," "neutral" or "important."*

[2] *Microsoft Office must be installed for templates to work. A free trial is available for download on the Web site.*