



Low tech Mama

Antonia Kidman is a thoroughly modern woman: single mother to a brood of four kids, her youngest still under 2, TV presenter and producer, and a regular at celebrity events (looking glamorous to boot). It seems there's nothing this 38 year-old can't tackle. Except, maybe, technology ...

An avowed technophobe, Kidman laughs as she tells us that she keeps putting off the time when she'll have to learn all about the ins and outs of the latest gadgets. Or better yet, if she leaves it long enough, she may be able to delegate the whole lot to her children, Lucia (10), Hamish (7), James (5) and Sybella (23 months).

"I'm waiting for Lucia to get a little bit older and then she'll be able to do all that stuff," admits Kidman. "Hamey's pretty good with it too. I totally delegate all that technology stuff."

But while Kidman doesn't have the time or energy to learn about the technologies themselves, she has a strict policy about technology within her family. Her family life is structured around interaction, so she only allows her kids to encounter technologies that promote that interaction.

That's not to say that the Kidman kids are totally cut off from the technological revolution. The family computer sits in the dining room and the kids access the Internet from the public space. So far Kidman hasn't seen any need to get 'Net Nanny' style software because she can see where the kids are surfing and trusts them not to go into forbidden spaces.

"I haven't enacted a Net Nanny, I have an enormous sense of trust towards Lucia and she's earned that," says Kidman. "My son is in Year 3 and they've signed up for *Mathletics* this year so he'll get onto the computer more."

While Kidman is keen to guide her kids' online adventures for as long as possible, it is not to avoid encountering the online media and their obsession with all things Kidman. The hoopla about sister Nicole's hassles with the paparazzi might be enough to

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"Lucia doesn't have an iPod and I don't want her to have one because I don't want her to put in her ear-phones and close off," explains Kidman. "I think it's a habit and if you grow up disconnected you just live that way. We've got a smallish house, it's not an enormous house and that's a choice thing. I like that we live together, I like the interaction that a smaller space forces and that's a deliberate choice."

put any sister off the media. But in true laid-back Kidman style, Antonia doesn't let the gossip media bother her.

"I guess because of Nicole and stuff, I tend not to take too much notice. For me it's not a huge thing, I don't really acknowledge it. You can't dwell on that stuff."

While her extended family receives an enormous amount of media attention, they also manage to remain very down-to-earth

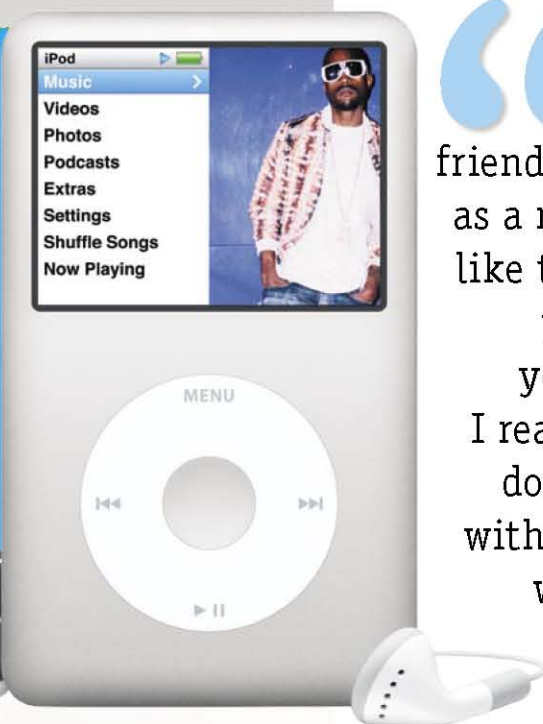
While she's no techno-freak, Antonia Kidman has two devices she absolutely adores: her iPod shuffle and her FOXTEL iQ.

Currently playing on Antonia's iPod:

- Stevie Nicks: Rooms on Fire
- Jessica Simpson: Still Beautiful
- James Taylor: Your Smiling Face
- Kayne West: Love Lockdown

Recorded on Antonia's FOXTEL iQ:

- Mad Men Season 2
- Australia
- The Tudors



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and practical. Antonia's parents, Janelle and Anthony, live 10 minutes walk away from Antonia's home and provide her with enormous support, especially with the children.

“They are highly involved in the children's lives and they provide me with enormous emotional support,” says Kidman. “I find them very practical common-sense people, I bounce things off them if I'm perhaps unsure of something.”

Kidman's parents have always played a vital role in her children's lives. They were present at the births of each of her children, and have supported Kidman throughout their babyhoods. Kidman says that her first child's babyhood, the year from zero to one, was quite a shock to her.

“Zero to one was the biggest surprise for me,” says Kidman. “After that it wasn't a surprise at all. But having said that it was a very welcome surprise. I was very ready to have children and I enjoyed the changes she brought into my life, I was really ready for that. I really enjoyed that stage and I guess that's why I continued to have children because it brought such purpose into my life.”

It wasn't just the babies themselves who brought wonder into Antonia's life — the connections with other parents gave her inspiration as well.

“While that first year was scary and all the rest of it, thinking ‘Oh God is she ever going to sleep?’ I enjoyed the friendships I formed with other mothers. I got a lot of comfort from that.”



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It was those turbulent years of early motherhood that gave Kidman the impetus to create her television programs *The Little Things*, *The Bigger Things*, and the hugely successful *From Here to Maternity* which saw her receive the ASTRA award for 'favourite female TV personality' the past two years in a row.

"Everything that I get involved in has some kind of personal perspective," says Kidman. "The whole event of childbirth profoundly moved me, and that was the inspiration for *From Here to Maternity*."

"I think the labour ward has all the drama of the emergency room but also has that really uplifting ending. Even now watching the show I really love that moment of birth. Birth is just a wonder for me and I love that process. I think I should have been a midwife," laughs Kidman.

Kidman finds that spending time with couples in the months leading up to, and immediately after, the arrival of a new baby is incredibly rewarding.

"I think it's a really interesting time in your life. Those three months: before the babies are born and then after they come home. It's a really nice time to step into people's lives, when they are going through so many changes."

But it wasn't only the pleasure of spending time with new parents, and new babies, which drove Kidman to create, produce and present three seasons of *From Here to Maternity*. She also wanted to take away some of the fear and mystery surrounding the whole birthing process. She hopes that showing viewers couples going through the process might encourage others to trust their instincts more.

"I think there is so much fear surrounding motherhood and childbirth," says Kidman. "I hope that the show might demystify some of that fear. I wanted to make people a bit more aware of what's involved in childbirth. I hope that people will watch it and learn to trust their instincts more — I think we've stopped trusting our instincts."

Antonia is a presenter on FOXTEL's *W channel*. •