Mine

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When I first got my Macbook, I was seventeen and I hated it. The only plus side was that it was mine. I’m not a selfish person, so I don’t know why simple ownership of something was such a big deal to me. Maybe it came from growing up in a family of seven and rarely having sole possessions. Maybe it came from my overall lack of privacy as a child. Maybe it came from all the forced sharing—or maybe all these things. At the time, there were few things in the world that I could truly call “mine.” My room, my car, my computer. Oddly enough, none of these things were actually mine. Everything in my house belonged to the family. Of course there were primary and exclusive users, so I’m pretty sure that my Father-At-Law only added the family clause as a legal precedent in case he ever needed to revoke said privileges.

When I was young, hand-me-downs didn’t just apply to clothing in my family. My room wasn’t mine until I was sixteen and, by default, the oldest. Same with the car. I got all of my sister’s things only after she was done with or had outgrown them. I drove a Chevy Aveo plastered in Marine Corps stickers to compensate for the Barbie horn and overall lack of masculinity encompassed by the egg-on-wheels. I slept in a powder blue room with sparkles on the ceiling that I couldn’t paint over because less than a year later the room would be passed down to another sister. I grew up using a rain-cloud-colored Gateway computer with pink and blue stickers all over the side because my sister thought it was cute. I spent more time peeling off stickers and consequently getting yelled at than I did actually using the computer.

Growing up, in an effort to be fair, we would rotate computer usage every half-hour. I would get home from school at two-thirty and use the computer until three o’clock and then my sister would have it until five. I wasn’t very good at telling time. As I got older, I did eventually catch on and started fighting back. Just before my time was up I would write simple pieces of code that would mess with my sister during her time. Many fights ensued regarding the validity of each other’s computer usage. I was learning hexadecimal coding, C++, and HTML. She was learning 2 LOL @ her BFFL <3. This continued for a few years until my sister (of course) got her own laptop for Christmas. I was stuck with the old one for a few more years, and while I didn’t have to share it anymore, it still didn’t feel like it was mine.

Then I got it.

It was the third gift I opened on Christmas morning. I wasn’t exactly surprised because the two preceding gifts had been an Apple Mighty Mouse and a box of Apple Insurance. At first, I flashed my well-rehearsed OMG-this-is-THE-best-present-EVER smile because I had asked for a Playstation 3 and I didn’t particularly want a Macbook. Having been a Windows-user my entire life, it was like slapping me across the face—with a Macbook. What followed, however, were days laced with discovery, sprinkled with love, and full of bliss. It was perfect. If there were laptops back when Goldylocks was arbitrarily breaking into houses in the forest, I have no doubt in my mind that she would have eaten, sat on, and slept with my Macbook. It was just right. It was black (my favorite color), but more importantly: it was mine. I very rarely went anywhere without my Macbook and if I wasn’t using it, I knew where it was. Always.
If it wasn’t in my hands, it definitely wouldn’t be in yours. I don’t know why though. It wasn’t so much that I was embarrassed or ashamed of its contents. I was more scared of the harm that might come to it if I am not in constant control. I’m not going to lie, I don’t trust you. I care for my Macbook in the same way that a new mother cares for her child. I clean it, coddle it, and rest it on a pillow when I’m sleeping. It’s expensive, but not because of the price tag, but because of the emotional and personal investments I make into it every day.

Okay, fine. Maybe I’m a little embarrassed. I am a pack rat and that is exemplified by a 160-gigabyte hard drive filled to 85% of its capacity. I cannot remember ever deleting a file. Folders flowing into folders that delve deep into my history. Lyrics to my high school prom song, pictures of past relationships, sappy love poems from the heart of a 16 year-old, and my feeble attempts at comedy writing. Or maybe I’m scared of what you’ll think. I have hundreds of papers, projects, Photoshops, cards, poems, stories, videos, pictures, and movies saved on my hard drive. Each one providing a window into my soul and allowing you an unobstructed view of different aspects of my life and that scares me. My teenage humor didn’t seem to age well.

Maybe it’s my innate lust for control that drives my fear of allowing you an honest look into my world. Maybe it’s my chronic insecurity as a person. Maybe it’s my unquenchable desire for acceptance. Maybe it’s all of these things.

It is.

My laptop contains snapshots of my life and personality. It has managed to capture who I truly am as a person. It’s more than just a motherboard, video card, and some aluminum. It’s a scrapbook of my life—filled to the brim with stories, memories, and experiences. By allowing you to look through my scrapbook, I am afraid that you’ll see the real me, instead of the carefully calculated personality I present to you every day.

What am I really afraid of? That you won’t like my scrapbook.