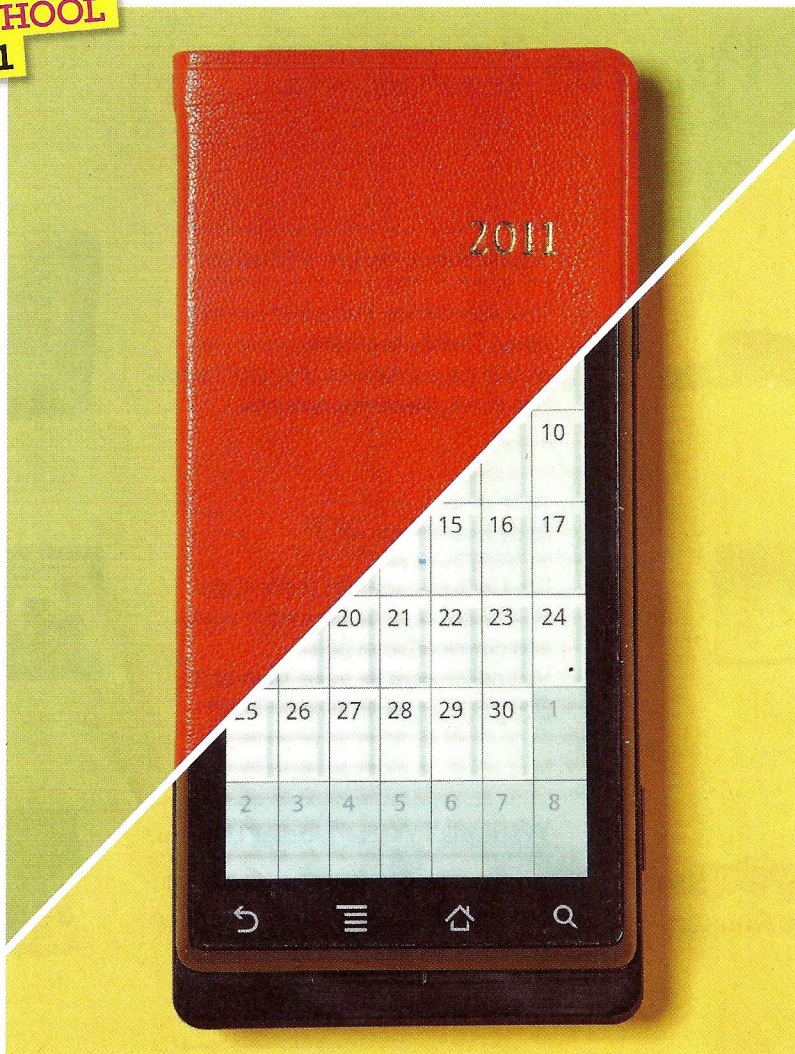


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Streamline Your Family Calendar

BY TARYN MOHRMAN

When you make your kid's doctor's appointment do you type it into the calendar on your computer, punch it into the one on your cell phone, text your spouse so he can add it to his, then e-mail yourself a reminder to paste it onto the wall calendar in the kitchen? And you still fear that on the day of the appointment you'll check the one calendar you forgot to update ... and miss it?

If you are nodding along, you're so not alone. Thankfully, there are smart scheduling assistants out there that can do the work for you, so you can stop spending time organizing the technology that's supposed to keep you, ahem, organized. Our guide to digital calendars will help you finally make peace with your planner and help you focus on experiencing life's events instead of constantly trying to remember when and where they're happening.

5 THINGS TO LOOK FOR

These digital scheduling features don't always come standard, but we consider them absolute must-haves!

1 | AUTO UPDATES "A calendar that updates in real time is essential," says Jodie Watson, organizational expert and founder of supremeorganization.com. If your daughter's after-school program is cancelled, your spouse or sitter needs to see the change of plans before school's out.

2 | COLOR CODING Besides providing info at a quick glance, color-coding your calendar will allow you to spend less time typing in events. "You won't need to enter Sam's Soccer Game, you'll just write Soccer Game (and assign it blue) because you know Sam's events are blue," says Watson.

3 | EASY ACCESS "Your digital calendar should work on all of your devices and be easily accessed from anywhere," says organizational expert Peter Walsh, of Los Angeles. Programs that offer mobile apps are ideal since they don't require you to log on to the Web.

4 | MULTIPLE USERS Moms often want a service that is designed for more than one person to have access to the calendar, says Ellen Faye, certified organizer coach, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey. When another adult or older kids can log in to view and edit events, it's no longer up to one person to oversee everything for everybody.

5 | SIMPLE SHARING Find a program that can e-mail friends or family a private, read-only link to a particular calendar or event rather than one that requires people to sign up. A URL that automatically updates info is also preferred: If it's clicked on days later, it will reflect any recent changes. Turn the page for some digital calendar options.

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