


# The Leacock Medal for Humour

Canada's Award for Literary Humour

Awarded annually by Stephen Leacock Associates

Sponsored by 



## Adventures on the DraftKings™ Trans-Canada Highway

by

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Tied Third Place Winner in the 2023 Student Competition

Imagine a retrofuturistic kingdom of '80s "synthwave", where the items we take for granted today are replaced by hyper-electronic ones. You step off your hoverboard, don your 3D glasses to shield you from the chrome purple-pink horizon, press play on the TRON soundtrack, and immerse yourself in the fast cars, bright lights, and late nights of "the future". Where are you even going? It doesn't matter. Apparently, this is what commercialized dystopia is all about.

As you embark on your trek somewhere, you notice that your archaic iPhone 93 is overheating once again, and finally you realize it's time to make the decision you've been waiting to make for years. Enough is enough, just head into that Apple store and buy the latest product. Who cares if everything costs an arm and a leg? Everyone's just an avatar anyway; it's not like you can even see people's limbs. A holo-poster in the Apple store window catches your attention.

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### Technological development!

*Apple is proud to unveil the new Simultaneous Hearing-Output Union Tool—**"SHOUT"**— the first-of-its-kind, state-of-the-art messaging technology.*

Have you ever wanted to convey a message to a heightened degree, in a way that textmessaging simply cannot? Try SHOUT and you'll see drastic changes instantly.

With SHOUT, you no longer have to worry about passwords, battery life, data privacy, screen protectors, or whatnot, when you access your portable device. By completely eliminating the time-consuming and oft-inaccurate act of texting or instant messaging, this tool is a more energy-efficient way to convey your information from one location to another.

Varying greatly in size, SHOUT is the first in the industry to make use of the cutting-edge Haptic Audio Nodal Dilation Software (“HANDS”), which boosts the user’s volume and urgency of the messages conveyed by up to 75%, according to preliminary trials conducted by researchers at Tesla University. As all of us have read in our history books, our ancestors amplified their voices with a similar technology: they cupped their palms to their mouths and emitted loud noises to get other people’s attention.

To use SHOUT, users don’t have to concern themselves with any wires, or Bluetooth® technology, for that matter. To “SHOUT” (trend forecasters can see this becoming a verb in the near future), one must simply connect HANDS to their mouth and speak in an audio-enhanced voice.

And with the new SHOUT Pro Max Plus, users gain access to an even more effective form of communication. With the newest edition of HANDS, which can boost audio output by 80%, there’s no better way to get your message across. Usage is the same as the original SHOUT model, only the user’s voice must be heightened to a greater degree to take full advantage. When our ancestors used a precursor to HANDS, they were able to make louder noises when SHOUTing.

The only downside to SHOUT that reviewers have identified is its limited transmission range. Both the sender and recipient of the message must be located within the same general vicinity for the technology’s signal to be transmitted. Although there is no set distance, narrow indoor spaces are preferred.

With a reasonable price of just 0.34 Ethereum (0.42 for SHOUT Pro Max Plus), anyone can communicate in the newest, most trendy way.

Your mobile device is a far cry from SHOUT!

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This proposition really stands out to you– a more effective, cheap, and secure communication tool? That’s exactly what you needed! You walk in the Apple store, grab one of the SHOUTs floating in midair, and scan the flashing QR code to pay your Ethereum. Right as you’re about to leave, another sign within the store catches your eye:

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### **It’s finally here!**

*After years of customer complaints of limited storage and synchronization issues, Apple is proud to announce its new file storage software: “**MEMORY**” by Apple (Most Encrypted MacOS Online Repository for You). MEMORY is a secure cabinet for everything you don’t want to lose.*

MEMORY solves the dilemma millions of iCloud users face on a quotidian basis: too many files and confusing folders to keep track of, a hard storage limit hidden behind a paywall, and the everpresent chance of accidental file deletion. With software specifically designed to make files easier to access and incorporate into daily life,

MEMORY is the product for you.

Although its base price of 4500 Ethereum (over \$10,000,000 in WestJet™ Canada's former currency) can be a bit taxing, clinical tests and a bevy of WikiHow pages have made MEMORY's upside as clear as the synthwave sky is purple— in other words, very. MEMORY allows users to take their files, photos, and videos on the go with them in a compact, hands-free system, in the complete absence of a physical device!

MEMORY is best activated in a quiet space or other muted setting, but once running, it can grant the user access to a lifetime of captures and files.

Naturally, a technology this expensive comes with multiple methods for use. Once activated, users can elect to place a new file in one of two folders: Short Term, which deletes its contents every 30 minutes in an attempt to save storage space and reduce the lag that comes with retrieving a capture from a mound of similar ones, and Long Term, which allows users to access, laugh at, and relive different experiences or information deemed important for years, even decades.

As with any technology still in the beta phases, however, MEMORY can be somewhat slow and unreliable. To counteract this, MEMORY Pro (6000 Ethereum, or over \$14,000,000 CAD) provides for users the tools to speed up this retrieval process. These include RHYME (Repeated Head-Yielded Musical Engagement), in which a brief, repetitive melody is created to constantly notify the user of urgent information, and WAIT (Watch-Assisted Information Technology), in which the user can activate a program that gives them unencumbered access to archived files.

The only possible downside is the potential for file corruption— when a capture's contents are replaced or skewed by those of another— or unintentional deletion of Long Term files (referred to in the industry as “forgetting”, as a callback to the “Information Age”), both of which will likely be fixed in the next iteration.

It's our guarantee that MEMORY will grant you access to countless files you can't find in your iCloud currently.

Don't think twice before purchasing MEMORY.

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You make your purchase of these indispensable items, and, armed with your MEMORY and SHOUT, you hop back on your hoverboard and continue to speed down the DraftKings™ Trans-Canada Highway. As you make your way further and further northwest, exiting the province of Trontario, the beams of light around you become more and more blue, as the audio soundtrack gets slower and deeper. You feel chills on the back of your neck, and thanks to MEMORY, you realize that you've never felt this way before. You “forget” where you're even headed, but it's too late to stop now. A roadside holo-sign spurs your MEMORY: NOW ENTERING YUKON. Sooner rather than later, you realize you can't stay warm in your cowhide varsity jacket and Reebok shoes. You start to panic. The limited rations you packed are getting to be too much of a burden on your shoulders. This is so stressful, you just want to SHOUT.

(Product placement.) Welcome to the Yukon Territory, WestJet™ Canada's freezer. A place where your belongings can be preserved without worry of theft or misplacement. One of WestJet™ Canada's expansive territories that 99% of the population forgot was even a part of the country (but something they were more than willing to embrace if it meant that their surface area would exceed that of their naughty neighbours to the south).

Just like the ever-neon sun every morning (if morning even exists in your synthwave kingdom), an idea dawns on you. Who's stopping you from leaving your food here? It won't rot; the cold temperature will preserve it. Nobody's going to pass you by or steal it either— it's Yukon, for crying out loud. Nobody's ever been to this province before, and nobody ever will. It's just as much a part of Canada as Hawaii is a part of the U.S.

How do you escape this dystopian mess?

Press pause on the soundtrack and stop imagining.