“Talk to the hand.” It was such a beautiful phrase—until everybody and their grandmother started using it. To replace it, may we suggest this cuff? It features the Morse code for a question mark—a perfect nonverbal response to any office speak/just plain ridiculousness you encounter during your day. Plus, it has beads on it, making it super especially cool.

Project Rating: Fling
Cost: $25
Necessary Skills: Cross stitch

Materials
- 18 × 8-in. piece 14-count Aida fabric
- Embroidery hoop, 6 in.
- Tapestry needle, size 22
- Embroidery scissors
- Shears
- 1 button of your choice, with shank
- 18-in. length of 1-in. wide black grosgrain ribbon
- 2 skeins cotton embroidery floss, black, DMC 310
- 1 skein cotton embroidery floss, ecru, DMC Ecru
- 2 yds. of FireLine (This thread—frequently used in beading—acts just like nylon thread but is way stronger.)
- Thread conditioner (Beeswax works, as does a product called Thread Heaven.)
- Beading needle, size 10
- 1 gram size 11 delica seed beads, black
- 1 gram size 9 seed beads, black
- Iron
- 2 sheets double-sided fusible stabilizer (We used Steam-A- Seam 2 Double-Stick Fusible Web.)

Construct the Cuff

1. Mount your Aida fabric in your embroidery hoop.
2. Using three strands of floss, cross stitch the charted design on the next page onto your Aida fabric.
3. Turn the piece over and use your embroidery scissors to clip any thread ends to 1 in. in length.
4. Following the instructions on your package of double-sided fusible stabilizer, adhere the ribbon to the back of your piece, making sure the ribbon is perfectly aligned with the area that is cross stitched. Be sure that the ribbon fuses completely with the cross-stitched fabric; if there are any loose portions, repeat this step, following the instructions on the package until they are securely fused.
5. Using embroidery scissors, carefully cut away the unstitched portions of Aida cloth, taking care to avoid snipping any of your stitches or the ribbon.
Cross stitch your design using this chart.

Key: * = black  X = ecru

Not Your Mama’s Stitching
Carefully cut away any excess ribbon on the ends of your piece. You should be left with a 7-in. strip of stitching backed by ribbon.

Bead the Cuff’s Edge

Again using your embroidery scissors, cut a 2-yd. length of FireLine.

Grasp one end of the FireLine and slide it back and forth across the thread conditioner until the wire is lightly coated.

Thread the FireLine through your needle.

Situate the piece so that it’s long-side up. Then, in the lower-left corner, insert your needle—if possible, between the fabric containing your stitching and the ribbon—and push it all the way up the short side of the piece from bottom to top.

Make a knot, capturing a bit of the upper-left corner of your piece. Then snip the excess tail on the right side of your piece.

Your next step is to edge your piece in size 11 delica seed beads. First, pick up two delicas. Draw your needle through the edge of the piece, a second time back toward your knot. Then, pull your needle back through the first two beads.

Pick up three delicas and again draw your needle back through the piece in the opposite direction, coming up near the knot. Pull your needle back through all five delica seed beads—the ones you added in step 12 and in this step.

Alternate between adding two and adding three delicas at a time. After adding new beads, always go back in the opposite direction through the edge of the piece toward the knot and back through four to six beads each time. (Going back through the edge and the beads over and over will strengthen the bead edging.) Continue in this manner until the entire piece is edged in beads.
Adding the Closure

15 **String** 43 size 9 seed beads onto your thread, positioning them at the base of the thread.

16 **Draw** your needle through beads 11–43 a second time to create a loop.

17 Pick up 10 more beads.

18 Draw your needle through three or four of the beads you stitched onto the opposite edge of your piece.

19 **Reverse** direction and, pulling your thread around the bead through which you just emerged, go back through a few beads.

20 **Draw** your needle back through the loop you just added to reinforce the attachment; then **draw** the needle back through the original 10 beads to reinforce the loop end of the piece.

21 **Pull** your needle and thread through the corner of your piece and **knot** it as inconspicuously as possible (that is, make the knot inconspicuous, as opposed to making **yourself** inconspicuous as you tie the knot). **Snip** the excess thread.

22 **Thread** your needle with 2 ft. of FireLine. Repeat step 10 on the opposite end of your piece, but this time, come up in the center of your piece, through the Aida fabric, about 1⁄4 in. from the edge.

23 Making several passes through the cuff and the button shank, **secure** the button to the piece, finishing with a couple of inconspicuous knots.

24 **Wrap** the cuff around your wrist, using the button and loop on each end as a closure. Then, next time someone asks you a really stupid question, **flash ’em the cuff**. They can talk to your **wrist**.
Let's Get Digital
by Roxane Cerda

Many of the steps you took to create your cuff can be used to complete other nifty items, such as a strap for your digital camera. The strap will be longer than your cuff, so use a bigger piece of Aida—8 × 12-in. should work just fine. Also, substitute the button with hardware for a cell-phone strap (available at most bead stores). If you like, substitute the skeins of floss with new colors—we used light orange spice (DMC 722), dark orange spice (DMC 720), and ecru (DMC Ecru); substitute the black seed beads for ones that complement the new color scheme; and substitute the 1-in. wide grosgrain ribbon with ribbon that’s only \( \frac{1}{2} \)-in. across, choosing a color that works with the new scheme. Then do the following:

1. Follow the steps in the sections titled “Construct the Cuff” and “Bead the Cuff’s Edge,” substituting the 8 × 8-in. fabric with a piece of 8 × 12-in. fabric, and using the chart provided here as your guide. (Alternatively, make your own chart using standard graph paper and an area that’s 140 squares by 8 squares.)

Cross stitch the variation design using this chart.

**Key:** • = dark orange, / = light orange, × = ecru

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2  Using an embroidery needle and two strands of the ivory embroidery floss, sew the cell phone hardware to the ends of the piece. When you’re finished, snip all but about 1 in. of the remaining thread and tuck the ends between the Aida fabric and the ribbon to conceal them.

3  Using the hardware, connect the strap to your camera. Then buy a disguise and stalk the celebrity of your choice.