

# ComputerEdge™ Online — 03/20/09



## This issue: The Latest Internet Scams

Scammers are jumping on the latest tech trends to steal your data and money. Let's get up to date on the newest schemes.

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## Digital Dave

“Digital Dave answers your tech questions.” by *Digital Dave*

A security "nut" wants to know how to protect his system; a reader is experiencing "nightmarish" problems with a Vista upgrade; a reader wants to "print to file" like in the old days.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I am somewhat of a security nut. I enter the Internet with DSL using XP Pro and Mozilla Firefox as a browser. If someone external gained access to my computer either by external assault or bug, can they obtain data from my floppy disk drive, CDs or external hard drives?*

*Elbert Johnson  
San Diego*

Dear Elbert,

Since you are a "security nut," I assume that you have antivirus and anti-spyware software running on your computer. In addition, you should have some sort of firewall protection for your Internet connection. If you haven't already done so, put in a router between your DSL modem and the computer. The firewall in the router will give you added protection, plus it makes it easy to share the connection with trusted friends and family. This will make it harder for intruders to get onto your network and your computer.

By default, the drives on your computer are not shared. That means that even if someone is on your network, they cannot access the drives on your computer. If you do have reason to share a drive on the network, be sure to add password protection with a strong password.

Generally, your firewall software and the protections built into Firefox should do a pretty good job of blocking outside intrusions. However, once someone gets inside the wall to your computer, either through a virus or spyware, there is little to protect your drives.

Most viruses get in through trickery and our own lapses in judgment. There is no software that will protect us from ourselves. The most important steps to take are in preventing yourself from allowing something nefarious into your system.

- Never download (save) an unverified attachment in an e-mail, link on a Web page, or from a pop-up at a Web site. If it's an unexpected e-mail from a friend, talk to that friend under separate cover to verify the document sent.
- The Internet browsers have built-in protections to prevent the Web sites from accessing your computer. If you are merely surfing the Web, you are in little danger of being infected. However, if you click on a link, then allow something to be downloaded, the risk begins. There are some add-ons for browsers, such as Adobe Reader and Flash, that can enhance the Web experience and need to be downloaded. Rather than downloading the software from any site that may determine that you need it, you should go directly to the parent site for the software.

- Be suspicious of everything, especially windows that pop up offering to solve your virus problem.
- Only install software that you know comes from a legitimate source. Even then, be cautious. If you are downloading software, be sure that it's coming from the correct site.
- If you are not sure about something, do a Google search for reviews on the questionable item.
- If reading files is a concern, to further protect your files, you can encrypt files or entire drives to make them unreadable for people without the proper key, which can be kept on a thumb drive. This should stop reading, although not deleting or altering.

The best protection is to prevent problems from ever getting on your computer in the first place.

Digital Dave

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have five Windows XP machines on a home/home-office network, and finally took the plunge and bought a new computer with Vista Home Premium. What a nightmare.*

*Problems include: program incompatibility (Office 2000, Acrobat 5.0, Nero 6.0, etc.), major difficulties with networking to XP machines, printer-driver problems, file-association problems, and this is just the tip of the iceberg.*

*Are these typical Vista problems everyone is having? If I return the computer and wait for Windows 7, will I still face the same problems. And, finally, what should I do?*

*Everett  
San Diego*

Dear Everett,

You do have a number of problems that—if you plan to stay with Microsoft—you will need to resolve, whether you're using Vista or Windows 7. Some of your problems, such as networking, may be easier in Windows 7, but a number of problems (drivers and incompatible software versions) are not likely to go away.

Both Acrobat and Nero are now up to version 9, and it's unlikely that the companies are worried about compatibility problems between your earlier versions and Vista. Plus, since Windows 7 is more like Vista than it is XP, you will probably have the same Vista problems when installing older software versions on a Windows 7 machine.

When I made my conversion to Vista, I started with one machine. I resolved driver/software problems one at a time. I didn't go whole hog into Vista until I had every problem resolved with that first machine. In one case, I was delayed for a number of months because a particular program would not work on the 64-bit version of Vista. Eventually, an update came out for the software and I was able to complete the transition. With all the good reviews of Windows 7, I don't think the next change will be as difficult.

Since you have already started, keep the Vista machine and work on the problems one at a time. In some cases, you may need to upgrade your software. In other cases, it may just be a Vista setup problem. What you learn now will not be lost on Windows 7.

For those in a similar situation, if you can, you may want to wait until Windows 7 is out—although that may not be until later this year or early next year.

Digital Dave

*Dear Digital Dave:*

*I have read and enjoyed the magazine since it was introduced in 1980-something. Your column is always first to digest, even in this electronic media age.*

*In the old days of DOS computing, it was possible to ask a program (application?) to "print to file," writing an output file in printer format on a diskette. Having done that, it was possible to take the disk to work and print the data (this is all before there was practical e-mail) using the DOS command "copy con <filename> lpt1 or to prn.*

*Since I now have a computer in the workshop that has no printer, I want to use this method to print file edits that are made in the shop, on the machine in the house. I cannot find any equivalent to the "copy con" function in the windows environment that has been thrust upon me.*

*Do you or your readers have a clue?*

*Thanks in advance.*

*Ralph Patterson  
San Diego, Calif.*

Dear Ralph,

I used to do the same thing in the old DOS days. Now there is an easier and more compatible way to transport documents for printing—PDF format files.

The beauty of PDF files is that they are portable across all operating systems and printers. (The Reader ([www.adobe.com/products/reader/](http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/)) from Adobe—also used for printing—is free.) When printed they will look the same on all printers. One of primary methods for creating a PDF file is through the print menu—similar to the old DOS "print to file" method. All that you need is a program that, once installed, adds the PDF format option as if it were a printer. Then, whenever you print to PDF, a file is created—ready to go anywhere, whether via e-mail or to the printer at the office.

There are many free programs for creating PDFs. A list of some of the better ones, such as CutePDF ([download.cnet.com/CutePDF-Writer/3000-6675\\_4-10206470.html?tag=mncol](http://download.cnet.com/CutePDF-Writer/3000-6675_4-10206470.html?tag=mncol)) (free version of a more comprehensive program), can be found at CNET's Download.com ([download.cnet.com/1770-20\\_4-0.html?query=pdf+writer&searchtype=downloads&filter=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows&filterName=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows&tag=ltcol](http://download.cnet.com/1770-20_4-0.html?query=pdf+writer&searchtype=downloads&filter=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows&filterName=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows&tag=ltcol)).

Read the reviews and check out the features before picking one for yourself.

Digital Dave

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## Online Fraud 101

**“Con artists have expanded their reach.”** by Wally Wang

The simplest way to protect yourself from online scams is to trust no one online, not even your own friends and relatives — and never send money.

If you're an experienced Internet user, you've probably heard of the Nigerian 419 scam. This is where you get an unsolicited e-mail from a stranger overseas, claiming that they need your help in releasing millions of dollars. In exchange for your help, this benevolent stranger is willing to pay you part of the money, which you can claim by paying an initial fee, ostensibly to bribe an official or pay bank fees.

If you send this unknown person money, they'll keep dangling the promise of millions of dollars awaiting you, but only if you continue sending additional cash to overcome an inevitable barrage of problems. Each time you send money, you'll be more inclined to send more to avoid losing the "investment" you've already made in this incredible offer. The con artists will happily keep up this pretense as long as you keep sending money.

### Fool Me Twice

If victims ever wake up to the fact that they've been conned, they'll have to face the shame of being duped for several months along with whatever amount of money they sent out while getting nothing in return. And now the con artists often circle back a second time around.



Suddenly, you may find another unsolicited e-mail, stating that a special antifraud division has tracked down the con artists who have scammed you. If you want this government agency to recover your lost money, you'll need to fill out some official-looking documents along with paying a processing fee.

Needless to say, many victims are so angry at the con artists and lusting for revenge that they'll eagerly fill



out this bogus document and send in the processing fee—only to have the vicious cycle repeat all over again.

Supposedly, this antifraud government agency needs to bribe more officials or pay additional fees to keep the con artists in jail so they can be brought to court. Once again, you'll need to keep sending money to

these con artists, who are very likely the same con artists who bilked you initially. (After all, how else would they know that you were conned in the first place?)

The original Nigerian 419 scam has ripped off people for thousands of dollars and continues duping people to this day. This added twist of ripping off the same people a second time, by masquerading as a government antifraud agency, is another development designed to catch victims off guard and steal their money before they realize what's happening.

### **Spear Phishing on Facebook**

As more people wise up to unsolicited e-mail scams, con artists are resorting to something called spear phishing. Where phishing involves sending out mass e-mails with the same scam letter, knowing that a small percentage of people will always take the bait, spear phishing involves targeting specific people. One of the most popular ways to spear phish is through social networking sites such as Facebook.

Like other social-networking sites, Facebook lets you reveal details about yourself, which any stranger can read. Plus, you can link to your friends and read personal details about these people, which a stranger can also read.

Now con artists will target a specific individual, using personal information found on that person's Facebook page and any of their friends' Facebook pages. If you suddenly receive an e-mail containing information that only you and your friends know about, suddenly that unsolicited e-mail sounds far more credible. Of course, the con artist is simply using your own information against you.

Even more insidious is that con artists will often contact you through Facebook and provide a link, which leads to an error message and an official-looking Facebook login page. When you retype your password and account into this bogus page, the con artist now has the information needed to hijack your Facebook account and masquerade as you.

Using your Facebook account, the con artist can now contact all of your friends with a frightening story of how you traveled overseas and lost your wallet and passport or some other sob story. Since your friends are receiving these messages directly from your Facebook account, they have no reason not to believe it isn't you. More than likely, they'll wire the necessary money to the overseas account that the con artist provides, and never see their money again.

### **Trust No One**

The simplest way to protect yourself from online scams is to trust no one online, not even your own friends and relatives. If a con artist hijacks an e-mail or Facebook account, receiving a message from a trusted source is still no guarantee that you aren't being scammed.

If you do receive a message from a friend, asking for money, contact that person through another method, such as by phone. Try asking your "friend" a question that only your real friend could possibly know.

Besides not trusting anyone on the Internet, a second golden rule is to never send money to an unfamiliar recipient. Even if you recognize the bank's name, don't follow the instructions given to you in an e-mail message, but contact the bank by phone or in person. Circumventing the con artist's communication channel can identify a scam by asking a bank official to verify the information you received.

Con artists are never going to go away. With the Internet, con artists have just expanded their reach.

For further protection, keep yourself educated about the variety of online scams out there by visiting OnGuard Online ([www.onguardonline.gov/topics/email-scams.aspx](http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/email-scams.aspx)).

To really protect yourself, never give money to anyone. That will protect you from con artists along with isolating you from most of your relatives, who can often be the biggest scam artists of them all.

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In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around *The Byte Buyer* dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for *Microsoft Office 2007 for Dummies*, *Breaking Into Acting for Dummies*, *Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies*, and *Mac All-in-One Reference for Dummies* from [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com), as well as, *Steal This Computer Book 4.0*, *Visual Basic Express 2005: Now Playing*, and *My New Mac* from [www.nostarch.com](http://www.nostarch.com). He is also the co-author of *Strategic Entrepreneurism* from [www.selectbooks.com](http://www.selectbooks.com).

Every Saturday morning from 9:00 am - 10:00 am in San Diego, you can hear Wally with fellow co-hosts Dane Henderson and Candace Lee, on the radio show CyberSports Today ([www.cybersportstoday.com](http://www.cybersportstoday.com)), which covers the video gaming industry on ESPN Radio 800 AM. Wally covers the military history side of the video game industry.

When not performing stand-up comedy or writing computer books, he likes to paper trade stocks with the video game Stock Reflex ([www.plimus.com/jsp/download\\_trial.jsp?contractId=1722712&referrer=wwang](http://www.plimus.com/jsp/download_trial.jsp?contractId=1722712&referrer=wwang)).

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## Scams Online

**“The Net is a moneymaking opportunity for fraudsters.”** by Michael J. Ross

The Internet makes it easier for everyone to make new acquaintances and make money—including scammers. Beware of spam that brings damaging forms of digital deception.

Charlatans and chicaneries of all types have probably existed throughout human history, originating not long after people had established rudimentary monetary systems for storing value, and languages for communicating transactions and other business deals—including the fraudulent kind. Swindlers of all sorts have continuously adapted their methods to fit the evolving milieu, seeking better methods of finding potential victims and convincing them that they can get something for nothing. (Even their lingo is rich in clues, as documented in *The Big Con: The Story of the Confidence Man*, David Maurer's study of urban anthropology and terminology.) Our modern era is no exception.

The Internet makes it easier for everyone to make new acquaintances and make money—including scammers. When e-mail usage reached levels high enough to attract the attention of shameless promoters, the world got its first taste of spam (and not the canned-meat variety). From those inauspicious beginnings, the flood of spam has reached the point that an estimated 95 percent of all e-mail messages sent in 2007 were spam. This is a phenomenal increase from just six years earlier, when the figure stood at five percent. Yet spam must seem to be a mere annoyance to those people who have fallen victim to far more serious and damaging forms of digital deception—including auction fraud, phishing attacks, fake charity requests, identity theft, Nigerian letters and many others.

There are numerous broad categories of Internet trickery, each with associated variations that tend to emerge when they best fit the current cultural climate and newsworthy events of the day. As people gradually learn of these newer scams, and governments and security organizations update their crime-fighting techniques, the effectiveness of those scams gradually declines. That's just about the time when another major event allows cyberspace con artists to cook up some new ideas, or a technology is introduced that can be exploited as a new vector for reaching prospective victims.

In this article, we will consider a few of the most frequently seen scams on the Internet, and what you can do to avoid falling prey to them.

### Charity Chicanery

Humans are, in most cases, humane. We are generally willing to help others, especially those who are suffering mightily from natural disasters and other circumstances beyond their control. This is particularly true of Americans, who have a long history of generosity among themselves and to the world at large. (In fact, Americans have the highest rate of charitable contributions, per capita—even during the Great Depression.) It is human nature to assist others in need. Sadly, it is also human nature that is targeted by the unscrupulous.

Charitable causes are a favorite hunting ground of modern fraudsters, because it exploits our willingness to help others, and does not rely upon the victim's own greed for making a quick buck. It typically takes the form of pleas for contributions to fake charitable organizations that claim to be helping the victims of the latest disaster, when in fact little or none of the money donated will ever be given to those victims. An example of this is the plethora of bogus donation requests that appeared in people's e-mail inboxes just hours after Hurricane Katrina had devastated the Gulf Coast of the United States—a natural disaster that claimed more than 1,000 lives and tens of billions of dollars. That tragedy didn't stop the merciless swindlers from trying to take advantage of others.

These types of cons are especially heartless, because they leverage sympathy for one group of victims to create a second group, the marks targeted by the scamsters. Avoid becoming an unfortunate member of the latter group by never assuming that a solicitation for financial help is coming from a legitimate requester. If you wish to donate to a

well-known charitable organization, such as the American Red Cross, contact them directly, rather than clicking on a link in an e-mail message, regardless of how legitimate it appears. To better determine which organizations would use your donation most wisely, check with charity evaluators, such as Charity Navigator ([www.charitynavigator.org/](http://www.charitynavigator.org/)).

## Slave at Home

Anyone sitting in rush-hour traffic cannot help but wonder at times if it would be better to turn in the corporate job, the fabric-covered cubicle and the hour-long commute, in exchange for some sort of home-based business. Even though there are some nontrivial downsides to freelancing from home—no steady paycheck, no health or dental benefits, less cash flow, etc.—the advantages can be quite alluring. This prospect must appear even more attractive to the growing number of Americans laid off in our current financial and economic meltdown.

People have an understandable desire to make a good living with fewer of the typical disadvantages, and an opportunity to spend more time with their families. Cyber crooks try to make the most of these wishes by promising to help people work from home. Their advertisements can be seen in all sorts of venues—including Craigslist ([craigslist.org/](http://craigslist.org/)), physical bulletin boards, and even taped to street signs. But they are usually distributed as spam. The schemes work by requiring victims to pay various fees upfront, using online payment systems that make tracking and recourse much more difficult. The fees are often claimed to be needed to test the legitimacy of the victim (note the irony), but truly have no payoff, since the victims are usually never given any paid work.

Even worse are the cases where the victims are put to work, receiving money into their own bank accounts and being instructed to wire it to accounts overseas—oftentimes in Eastern Europe. These "money mules" are promised a portion of the proceeds, and usually do not realize—until they get into trouble with authorities—that they are engaged in international money laundering. If you ever receive such a solicitation, either delete the spam message or forward it to the appropriate law-enforcement authorities. If you already have been hoodwinked, contact those authorities immediately. They include the Better Business Bureau ([www.bbb.org/](http://www.bbb.org/)), the Internet Crime Complaint Center ([www.ic3.gov/](http://www.ic3.gov/)), and the National Fraud Center ([www.fraud.org/](http://www.fraud.org/)).

## Subprime Scams

With the market in home loans cratering in the United States, the UK and other countries that had enjoyed the massive real estate bubble, countless people are on the verge of losing their homes to foreclosure, if they haven't done so already. The loss of your nest, as well as your nest egg, can wreak untold damage upon your credit rating, social status and feelings of self-worth. Little wonder that most at-risk homeowners are willing to do just about anything to retain their homes and the equity they have invested in them.

As expected, fraudulent schemes began popping up on the Internet just as fast as "For Sale" signs on suburban lawns. These schemes took the form of spam messages claiming to offer services that would allow scared homeowners to rescue their mortgages. Naturally, people who unwisely sign up for these programs end up forking over what little money they have left, but receive no protection for their home, or any other benefits. In fact, the victims can lose more than just cash: In one popular scheme, the victim is told that the so-called "rescue" organization can block the bank (which holds the lien on the house) from foreclosing on the property, provided that the victim pays fees upfront for the service, and also signs over the deed to the house. Since the scammer legally cannot—and does not—do anything to stop the foreclosure, the homeowner loses not only the money they paid to the scammer, but they also lose their house, and thus the equity that they had paid to the bank.

It may be difficult for some of us to imagine someone being so gullible as to sign over the deed on their property to a stranger, but desperate homeowners are apparently tempted to desperate actions. Do not join the ranks of these victims. As with any other questionable spam message, either delete it or report it. In addition, spread the word to others of the dangers out there—particularly to trusting people who may be more susceptible to cyber fraud.

Largely free of government meddling, the Internet has been likened to a modern Wild West, where citizens have the

freedom to express themselves, connect with others, and transact business all over the world. Just don't let any online outlaws wrangle you out of your money.

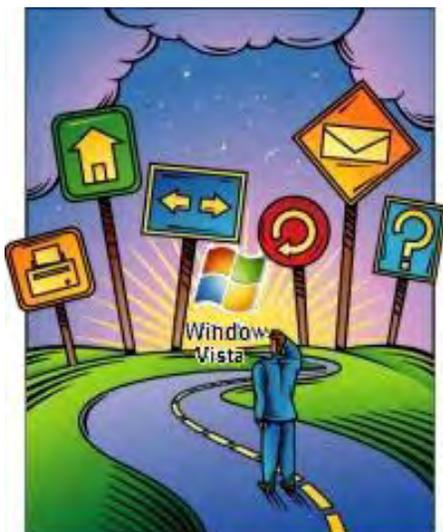
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Michael J. Ross is a Web developer ([www.ross.ws](http://www.ross.ws)), writer, and freelance editor. He creates Web sites that help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into profitable online businesses.

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# Windows Vista Tips and Tricks

## Windows Vista Tips and Tricks

“Saving Searches in Vista” by Jack Dunning

In Vista, you can create a saved search folder located in the Searches folder, so that the results of a useful file search can be readily accessed.

Last week, we discussed adding shortcuts to Windows Explorer to make it easier to navigate commonly used folders. It's worth taking a look at another feature of Windows Vista that appeared in last week's column: the Searches folder, which appears in the Favorite Links section of Windows Explorer along with the Recently Changed link.

To open Windows Explorer, select Computer from the right side of the Start menu, or hit the E key while holding down the Microsoft flag key (Flag+E). These both will open a window similar to Figure 1. The window will appear with an overall view of your computer system displaying installed as well as mapped drives and connected devices. In Figure 1, the Recently Changed search has been selected.

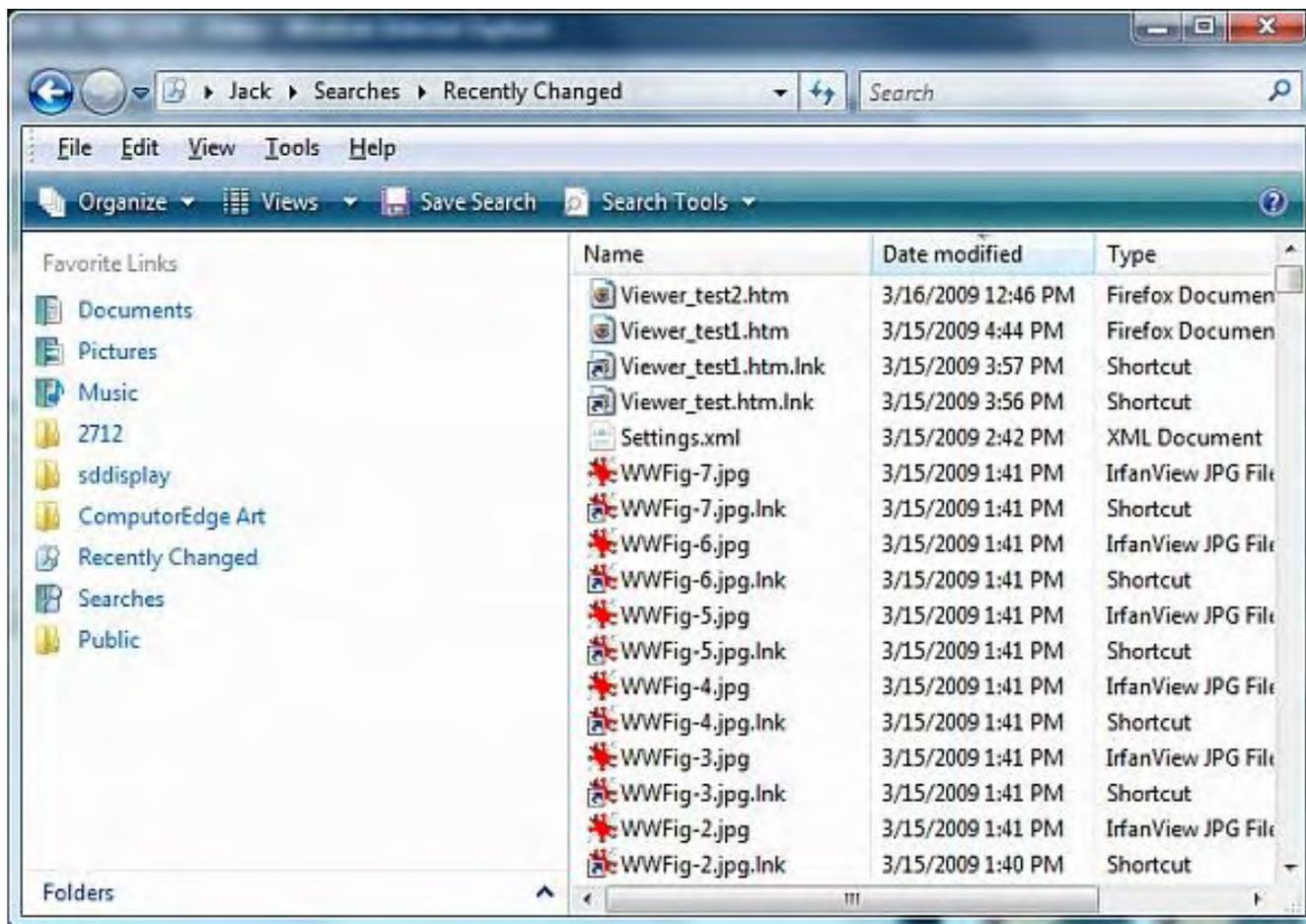


Figure 1. Windows Explorer in Windows Vista with Recently Changed selected in Favorite Links.

Recently Changed is a saved search folder (File Type: Search Folder, .search-ms) that resides in the Searches folder located in the Users/(User Name) folder. The link to the Searches folder appears just below Recently Changed in the navigation pane of Figure 1. The listing shows all of the most recently changed files. This is convenient if you need to locate something you were just working on. It is important to note that the files that are listed in the saved search window are the same files that you can access through the directory (folder) structure. If you delete a file in this view, it will delete the file in all views. Clicking the Searches link will provide a view similar to Figure 2.

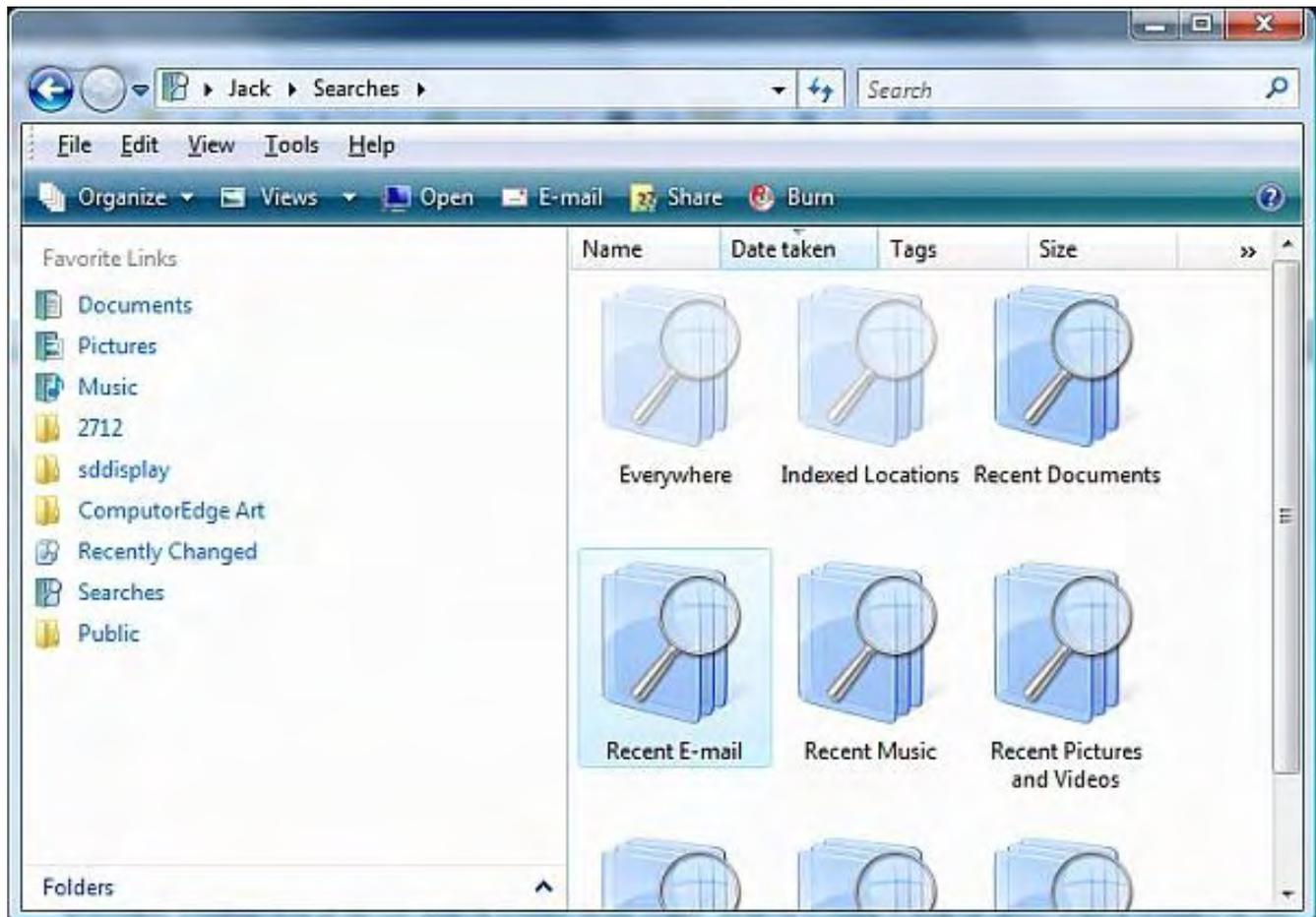


Figure 2. Searches link selected in Favorite Links.

The blue folders on the right are saved search folders. If you do a search of any type in Windows Explorer, a Save Search button will appear in the menu bar of the window. Clicking Save Search creates a search folder located in the Searches folder. If you have a particularly complex and/or useful search that you plan to use again, then saving the search as a search folder will yield the identical search without re-entering the search parameters. Opening (double-click) any of the search folders on the right will show the current search.

For convenience, there are some standard search folders that are set up by default. Everywhere will search the entire computer (Computer, Start Menu).

Dragging a search folder to the navigation bar will add a shortcut for that particular search and its results. However, all saved searches are merely a click away in the Searches folder. As shown in Figure 3, a search I created called viewer ("viewer" was the keyword in the search) has been added to the Favorite Links.

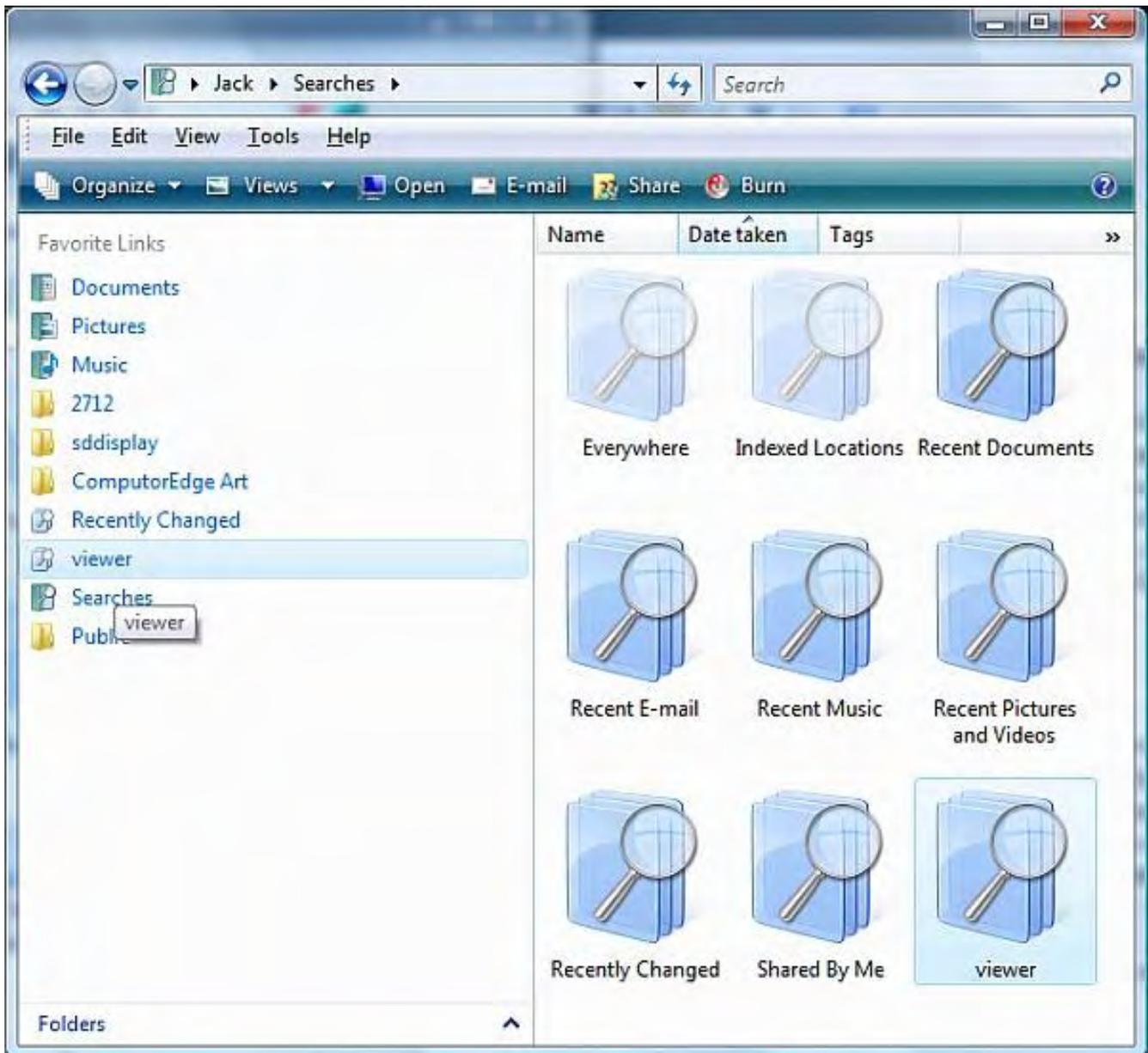


Figure 3. The search folder "viewer" is created and dragged to Favorite Links.

When selecting "viewer" from the navigation pane, the search will provide the latest results (see Figure 4).

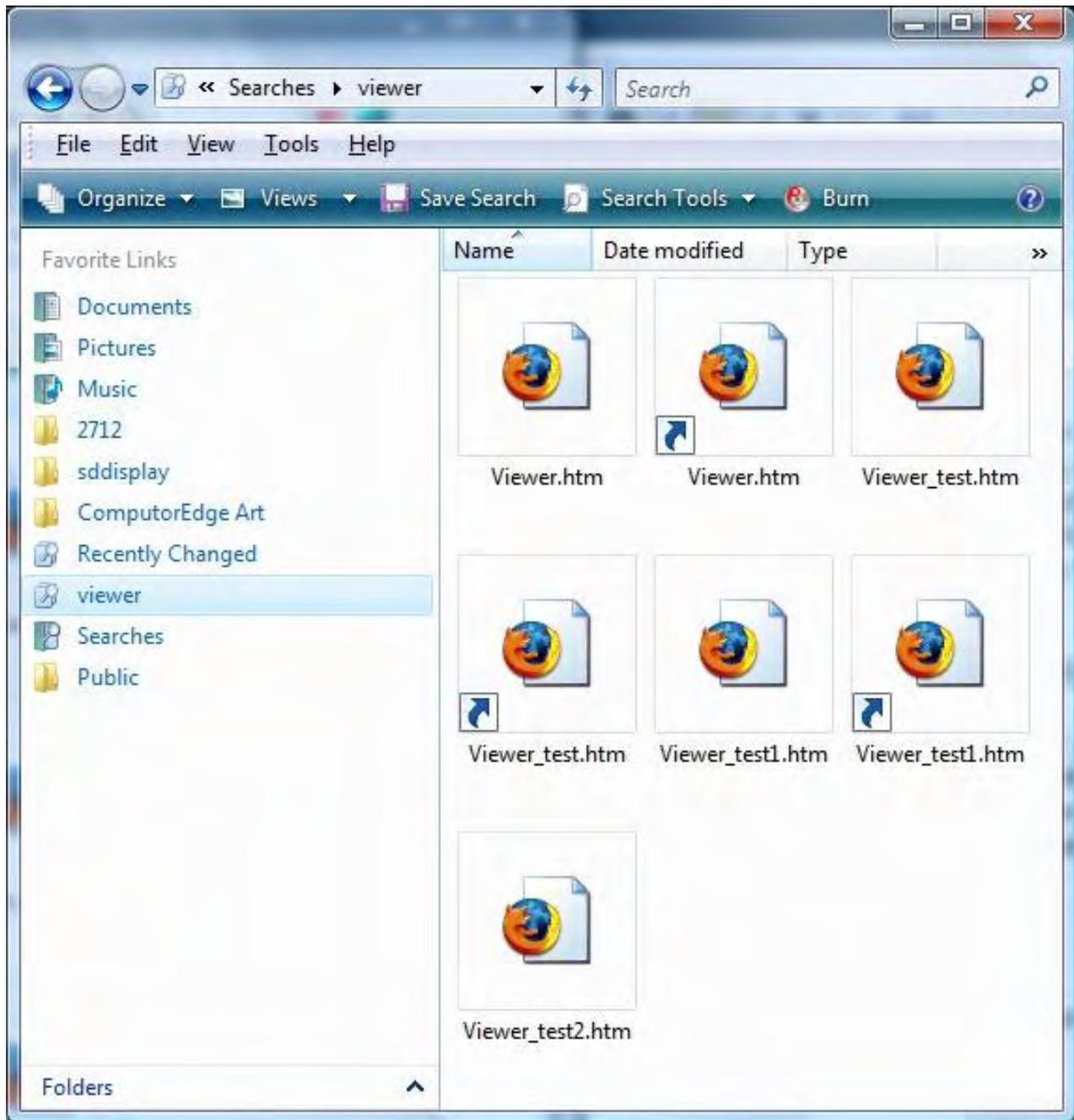


Figure 4. A look inside the "viewer" Search Folder.

This technique for saving searches is most useful when using the Advance Search and you have a number of filters applied. You can change the search parameters in the Advance Search at any time and re-save the search folder. If Advance Search doesn't appear at the top of the window below the search field, it can be added by selecting Search Pane from the Search Tools menu bar item.

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Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Best Free Macintosh Programs” by Wally Wang

With so many free programs available, you can boost the capability of your Macintosh and play games without ever spending a dime. Also, a look at Adobe's simple Web-page editor Contribute; and a tip on saving files and folders to your Dock.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Every Macintosh comes loaded with the free iLife suite that includes iPhoto (for organizing digital photographs), iWeb (for creating Web pages), and iMovie (for editing videos). If you hunt around, you can find a handful of other free programs that you may find useful.

If you're familiar with Windows, you may enjoy using the simple Paint program for editing graphics. To duplicate that feature on the Macintosh, download a free copy of Paintbrush ([paintbrush.sourceforge.net](http://paintbrush.sourceforge.net)).



Figure 1. Paintbrush lets you turn your Macintosh into an Etch-A-Sketch.

If you want a simple word processor, try Bean ([www.bean-osx.com/Bean.html](http://www.bean-osx.com/Bean.html)), which mimics WordPad in Windows. You won't get all the fancy (and confusing) features found in Microsoft Word, but you will get a lean little program for writing letters. In case you just want a pure text editor for writing HTML or JavaScript code, grab a copy of TextWrangler ([www.barebones.com/products/TextWrangler](http://www.barebones.com/products/TextWrangler)).

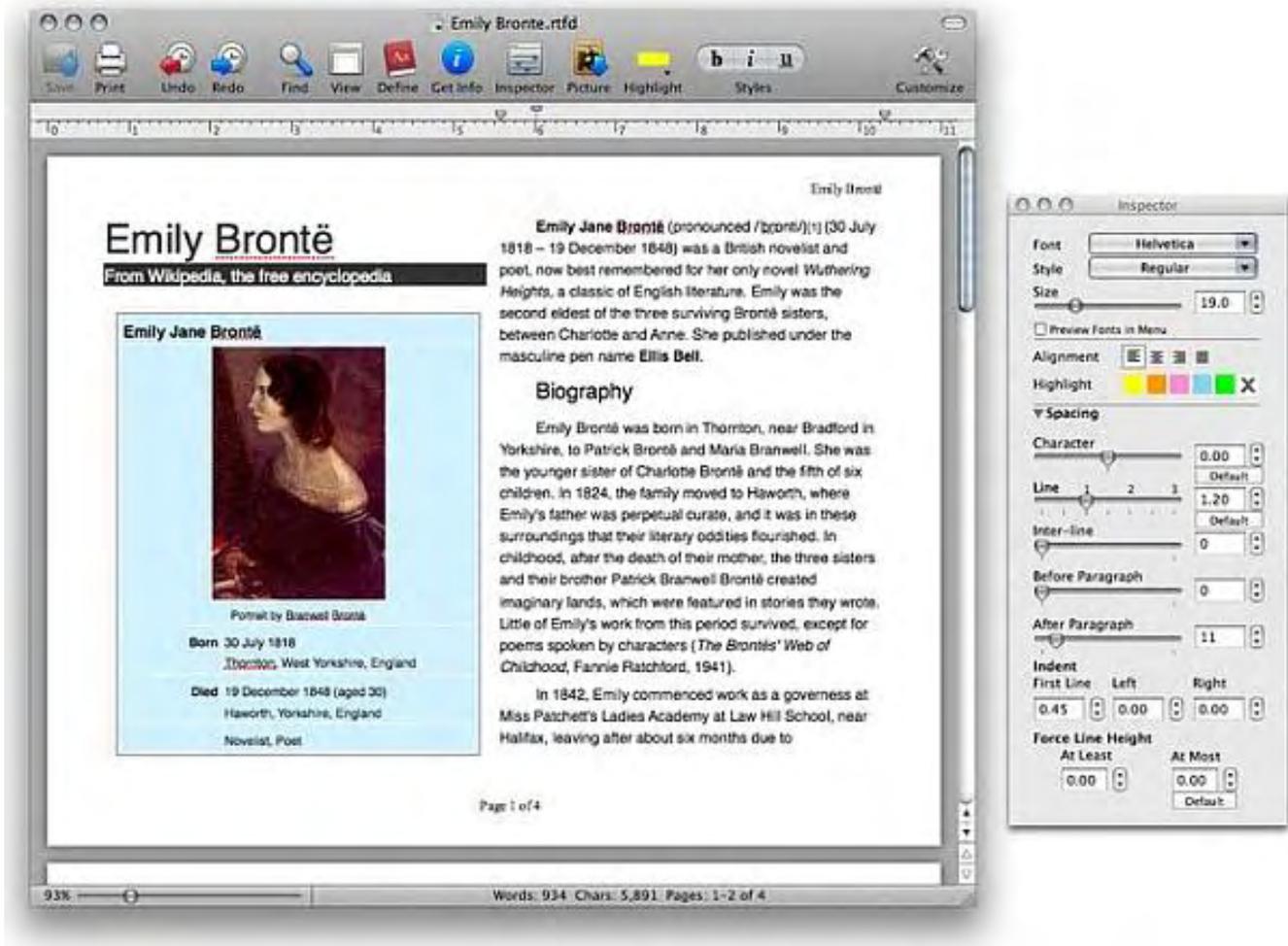


Figure 2. Bean offers a simple word processor.

If you'd rather not design Web pages in HTML, try a simple Web page editor called KompoZer ([www.kompozer.net](http://www.kompozer.net)). This program is actually based on the Nvu ([www.net2.com/nvu](http://www.net2.com/nvu)) program, which is also free. KompoZer simply fixes several bugs in Nvu. Since development on Nvu has slowed to a crawl, a band of hardy programmers created KompoZer as a way to build on Nvu's success.

For those who enjoy playing video games, download a copy of Zombies ([codenautics.com/zombies](http://codenautics.com/zombies)), a turn-based game where you try to survive a zombie outbreak. If you want to improve upon the game, dig into its REALbasic source code and modify the program yourself. To play another turn-based game that focuses on a fantasy world of elves and orcs, download a copy of The Battle of Wesnoth ([www.wesnoth.org](http://www.wesnoth.org)).



Figure 3. Play Zombies and kill the undead.



Figure 4. The Battle of Wesnoth lets you enter a fantasy world and kill orcs.

With so many free programs available, you can boost the capability of your Macintosh and play games without ever spending a dime. As the Macintosh grows in popularity, you can expect to find many more free programs flooding the Macintosh market.

\* \* \*

Creating and maintaining a Web site isn't difficult, but it's not as straightforward as you might prefer. Usually an organization assigns the maintenance of a Web site to a single person, and now all changes to that Web site must go through that one, usually overworked person.

Take a dozen coworkers who want to modify a Web page, and they all have to send their requests through this Web master, who more than likely won't modify the Web site fast enough or even exactly the way someone expects. That means endless delays, confusion and outdated Web pages.

One solution is to give everyone the ability to modify Web pages, but not everyone wants to dig into HTML codes and modify a Web page using a program like Dreamweaver. As an alternative, Adobe offers a simpler Web page editor called Contribute ([www.adobe.com/products/contribute](http://www.adobe.com/products/contribute)).

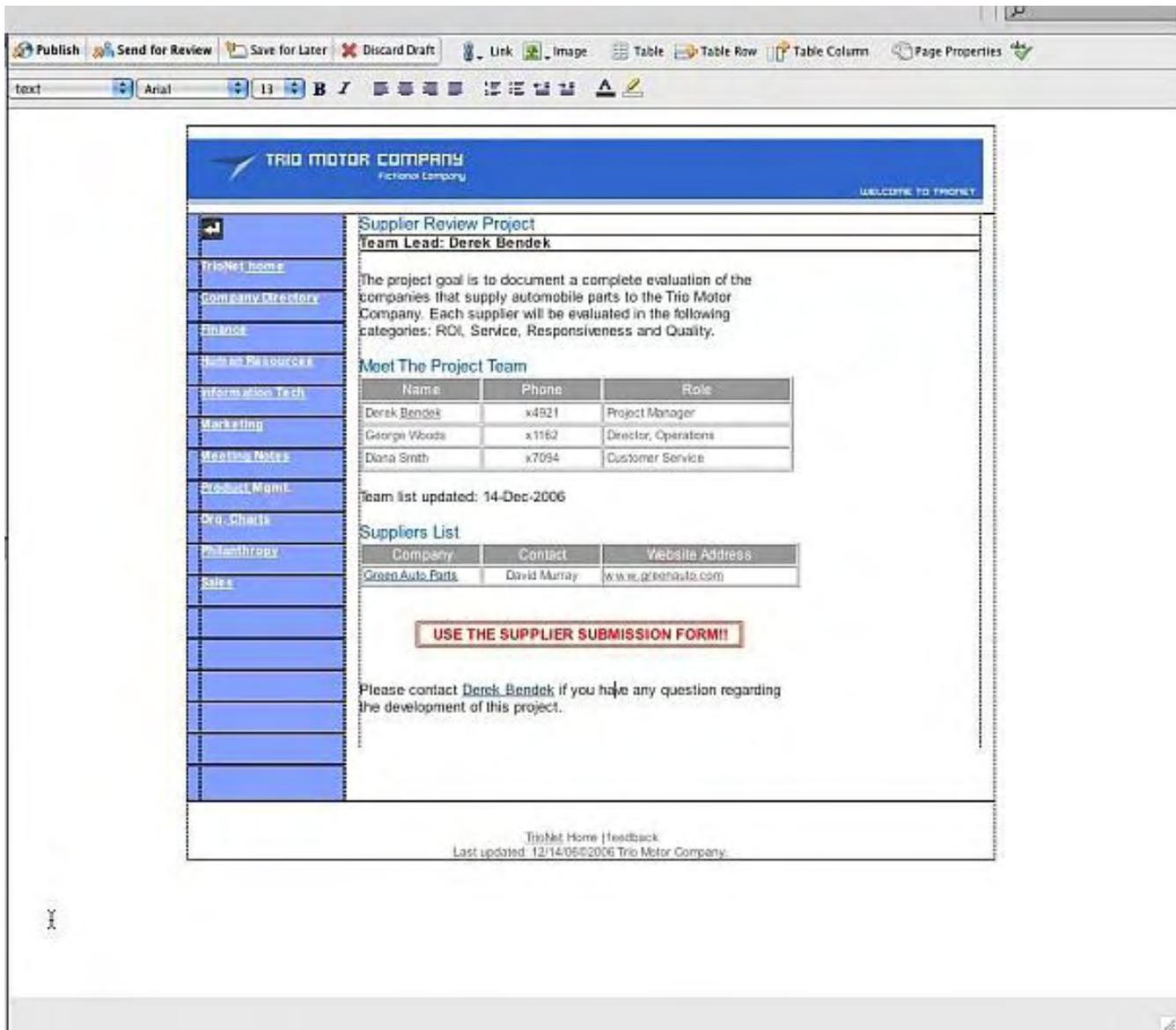


Figure 5. Contribute lets you edit a Web page like an ordinary word processor document.

The idea is that an administrator can install a copy of Contribute on each person's computer, define what actions each person can do (edit existing Web pages, add new pages, etc.), and then link each person to a specific Web site.

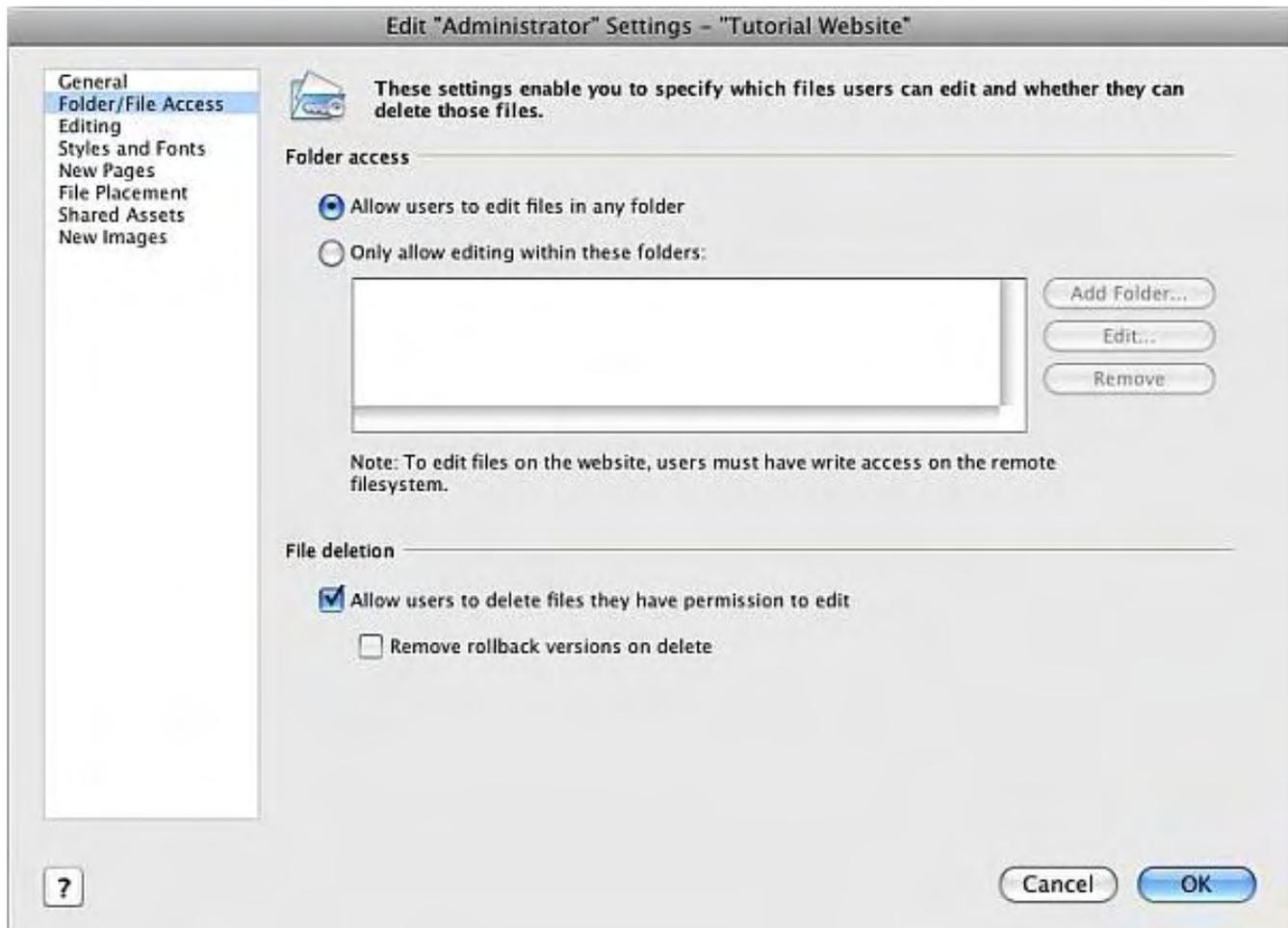


Figure 6. Contribute can restrict a user's access to parts of a Web site.

Now when that person wants to modify the Web site, he or she can load Contribute and edit specific Web pages as easily as using a word processor, and even add pictures, delete and modify text and insert tables. When you're done making changes, save them and post them. Users don't need to fiddle around with separate FTP settings, passwords, or folders. An administrator just needs to define this information once. From that point on, editing Web pages through Contribute is as simple as choosing a Web page, changing it and telling Contribute to publish it on the Web site.

If you need multiple people to update a Web site, but can't trust that they'll be able to do it on their own, use Contribute to guide people into modifying and posting Web pages. Users can update Web sites without needing to know anything more than how to click the Publish button that sends modified Web pages from your computer to the Web site server.

Besides letting you modify Web pages, Contribute can also link into popular blogging sites such as WordPress or Blogger. For \$199, Contribute is priced more for corporations than individuals, but its ability to let anyone make changes to a Web site (without messing them up by mistake) makes the program unique among Web page editors.

\* \* \*

The Dock displays icons that represent your most commonly used programs. To place a program on the Dock, you have two choices:

1. Drag the program icon on the Dock.
2. Load a program so that its icon appears on the Dock. Then right-click on that program icon to display a pop-up

menu. Click "Keep in Dock."

Besides letting you store program icons, the Dock also lets you store folders and individual files, but only if you drag them anywhere to the right of a dotted dividing line. By dragging commonly accessed files or folders to the right of this dividing line, you'll always have your files handy when you need them.



Figure 7. The Dock can hold both program and file/folder icons.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around *The Byte Buyer* dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

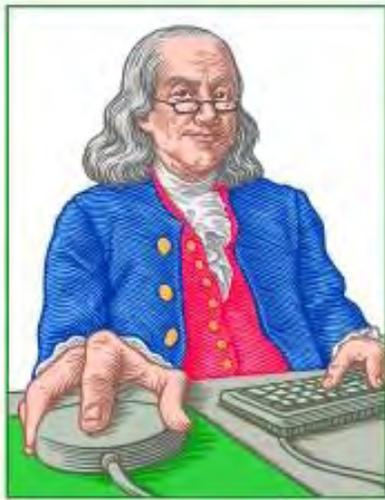
Wally is responsible for *Microsoft Office 2007 for Dummies*, *Breaking Into Acting for Dummies*, *Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies*, and *Mac All-in-One Reference for Dummies* from [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com), as well as, *Steal This Computer Book 4.0*, *Visual Basic Express 2005: Now Playing*, and *My New Mac* from [www.nostarch.com](http://www.nostarch.com). He is also the co-author of *Strategic Entrepreneurism* from [www.selectbooks.com](http://www.selectbooks.com).

Every Saturday morning from 9:00 am - 10:00 am in San Diego, you can hear Wally with fellow co-hosts Dane Henderson and Candace Lee, on the radio show *CyberSports Today* ([www.cybersportstoday.com](http://www.cybersportstoday.com)), which covers the video gaming industry on ESPN Radio 800 AM. Wally covers the military history side of the video game industry.

When not performing stand-up comedy or writing computer books, he likes to paper trade stocks with the video game *Stock Reflex* ([www.plimus.com/jsp/download\\_trial.jsp?contractId=1722712&referrer=wwang](http://www.plimus.com/jsp/download_trial.jsp?contractId=1722712&referrer=wwang)).

Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com).

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# LITTLE LINUX LESSONS

**"AN INVESTMENT  
IN LINUX KNOWLEDGE  
PAYS THE BEST  
INTEREST."**

Little Linux Lessons:  
Tips and Tricks from  
Users

**"Linux users share ideas and ask for help."** by ComputerEdge Staff

Some tips on Linux syntax—using upper and lower case, and when to use quotes.

## Sometimes You Need Quotes

If you're new to Linux, you may not realize that Linux is case sensitive. Unlike in Windows, the expressions "Users" and "users" are not the same thing. The capital "U" in the first expression makes the word totally different from the same word with the lower-case "u" in the lead spot. It's not bad once you get used to it.

Also, Linux does not deal well with directory names that contain spaces when working at the command prompt. For example, if you are accessing a directory such as "Test Test," the cd (change directory) command will show the following:

```
[ ~]$ cd Test Test
-bash: cd: Test: No such file or directory
[ ~]$
```

Linux is looking for only Test. You need to enclose the directory in quotes to have the space ignored:

```
[ ~]$ cd "Test Test"
[ ~/Test Test]$
```

You can also put a backslash in front of the space for the same effect without using quotes. If you want the function of special characters such as the backslash ignored, then it is necessary to use single quotes (') rather than double quotes (").

\* \* \*

## Give Us Your Linux Tips and/or Questions

*If you have an opinion on these or other Linux topics, then please let us know. Also, if you have another Linux tip that works for you and would like to pass it along (or have a question), please drop us a line at Linux Lessons (ceeditor@computoreedge.com).*

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This is a column for Linux and Unix-like operating system users. The goal is to give Linux users an opportunity to share tips, tricks and ideas with both fellow users and the *ComputerEdge* Linux newbies. Each week in this column, we will highlight the thoughts you submit to us. This is your column. As long as a submission is dealing with the

Linux/Unix-like world, we want to share it.

The tips and tricks may be short or long, and can include graphics. If there is a little technique or program that you use on a regular basis, then we want to hear about it. You may also pose questions for other Linux users to answer. E-mail your ideas or questions to Linux Lessons ([ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)). Be sure to put the word "Linux Lessons" in the subject line so it won't get lost in junk mail. We depend upon you to make this column a success.

Jack Dunning  
*ComputerEdge*

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*ComputerEdge* always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the article/column. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section.

If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com).

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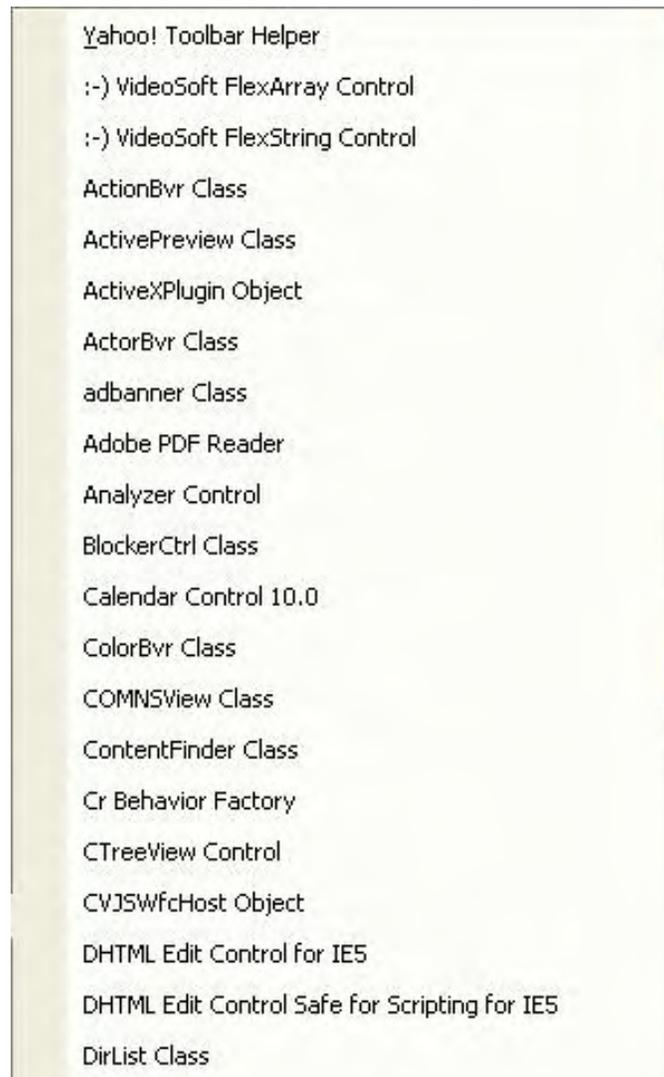


Figure 2. Additional tools.

This set of things is everything that Windows recognizes as a possible item to include in Access. Some of the items are ready for use immediately. Others can be used but require some additional help. Some are deceptive and really can't be used. And since these are the items installed on the local machine, they are likely to be different from one machine to the next. What that means is that if you use something here and you deliver this database to another machine, the other machine will not be able to use your form unless you also deliver the corresponding item.

These additional items present some potential problems. First, how do you know what the item is if all you have is the name? How can you deliver it with your database? Well, here's where it gets tricky. We'll answer that momentarily.

One other problem you have with these items is that some of them might have special licenses. If the item is part of a licensed package, you will need to read the user agreement to determine if you can simply send that item along with your database. If it's within your company and you have multiple licenses, you're probably fine. If you deliver it to someone who already has it licensed, it's probably installed and you don't need to send it. If you deliver it to someone without the license, you're really breaking the user-agreement unless it specifically indicates that it's OK to deliver it as part of your installation.

So let's pick one from Microsoft that we can deliver as needed. In the list, go ahead and select Calendar Control 10.0 (which may have a different number depending on which version of Office you have installed). Next, click near the top-left corner of your new form and you should see something like Figure 3.

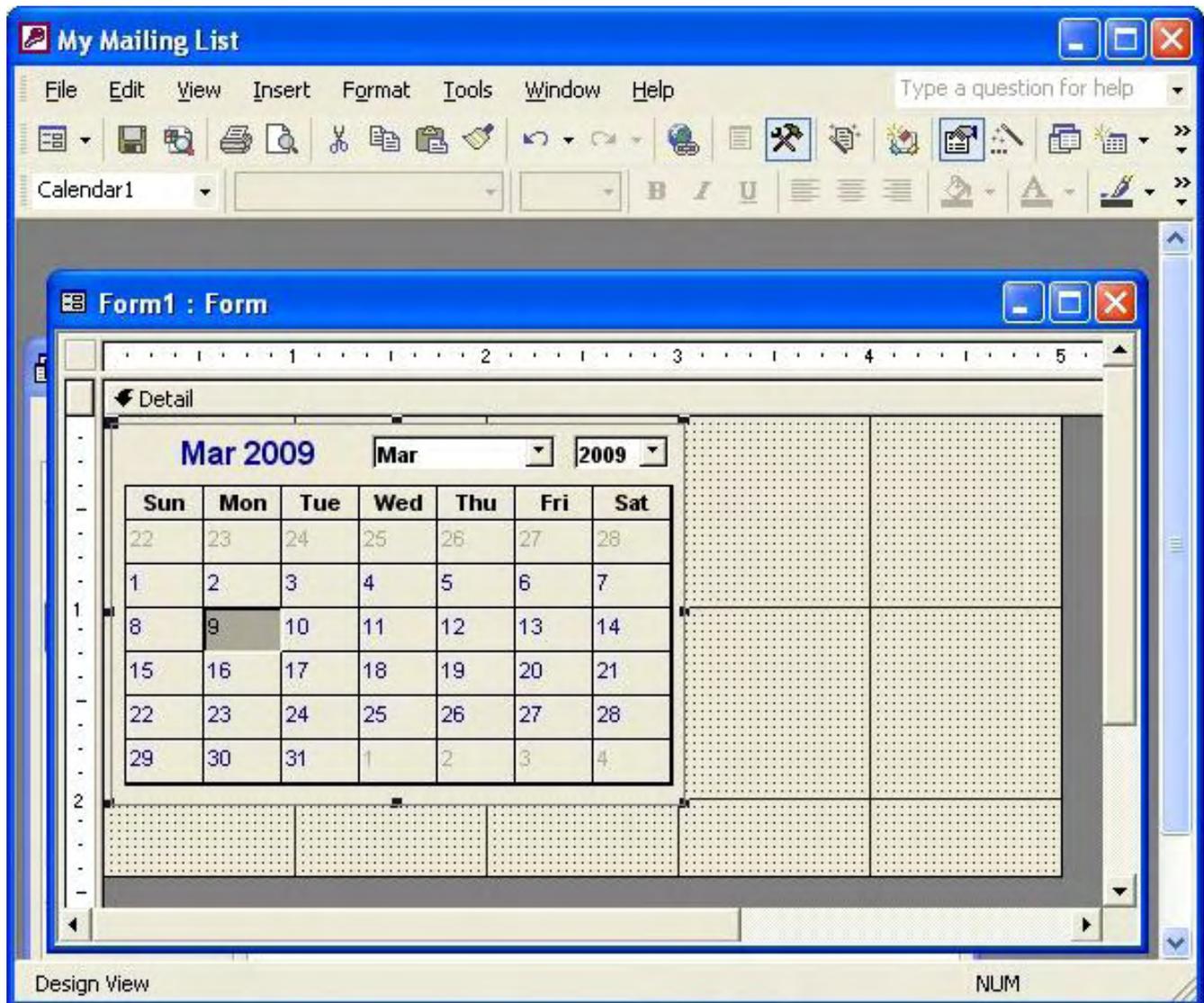


Figure 3. Form with Calendar.

First, you should be awed! I still am! You drop an item on a form and, ta da! Instant calendar, ready for use! Try it! Switch to Form view.

This is terrific, but how do we use it? Well, for one thing, you can connect the Control Source property to a date field in your database and it will simply work, thanks to Access. You can also use it to manage other things like asking people to specify the day they would like a series of events to start, and you can do something like create a schedule of events for it. For example, I could create a list of the classes I teach, one for each week for four months.

OK then, now assuming that you build this awesome form and want to deliver this to someone, what do you do about this item? First, since this is a Microsoft control that happens to come with Office, you can distribute it to anyone who has an Access license. (And I'm not sure about this one, but I think you can also distribute it with your database even if they don't have the Access license, but don't quote me on it.)

Next, how do we know what to deliver? The answer is found back in Visual Basic. As soon as you added the calendar to the Form, VB recognized it and flagged it for you. So proceed to VB (Alt-F11) then go to menu Tools/References, and you should see something like Figure 4.

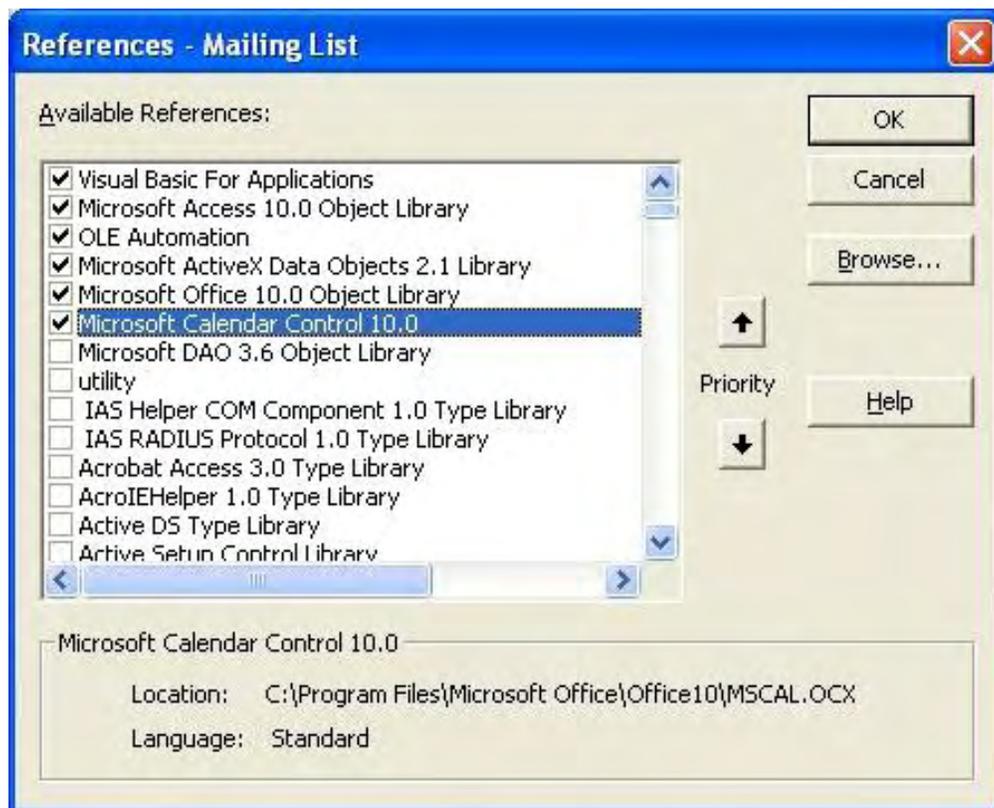


Figure 4. VB references.

In the list, you see a bunch of things that VB used to locate everything needed for its project, including Microsoft Calendar Control 10.0. If you select it, you see the path at the bottom: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office10\MSCAL.OCX.

An OCX file is the next generation of VB components. They used to be VBX files (Visual Basic eXtension files). They were then made more generic so they can work with things other than VB, so now they're OLE Control Extensions or commonly called ActiveX controls, although ActiveX has also gone through some updates. Anyway, if you deliver this file with your database and make sure it gets properly recognized by Windows (sometimes just by being in the right folder), then everything is fine.

Just for reference, here's how the other things in the above list work. First, VB requires Visual Basic for Applications to run. If this surprises you, then you just might need to reconsider your career as a rocket scientist! Nothing in the computer world comes along for free, so VB needs VB to know how to speak the language!

Next is Microsoft Access 10.0 Object Library, which allows VB to recognize my installed version of Access, which it thinks is 10.0 but Microsoft named Access 2002. (Yes, I'm still running that version too.) By VB referencing this, it can talk to Access and know how to do everything that Access offers. If you used VBA in Word, you would see a reference to the Word Object Library; for Excel you'd see the Excel Object Library, etc.

Next is OLE Automation, which makes the OCX files readable. OLE stands for Object Linking and Embedded, which is a concept of taking objects placed on a form and linking them to the project in such a way that other objects can interact with them. Again, the new term is ActiveX.

Next is Microsoft ActiveX Data Objects 2.1 Library. VB uses this to manage the queries that Access uses along with things like recordsets. Since this is such a complex group of things, it was put into a separate file.

The last thing selected is Microsoft Office 10.0 Object Library. This may seem odd. Although Access is part of Office, why would it have its own file? The answer is that all of the products in the Office Suite share a lot of pieces. Microsoft decided that it made more sense for all of these pieces to be located in one file rather than duplicated

across many files. For example, you might have a tool for evaluating equations in Excel, and another one in Access. Why not use the same one for both? But then do you put it into the Excel library? What if you purchase Access without Excel? You wouldn't get that feature! Should it be put in the Access library? What if someone purchases Excel without Access? The solution is to put it into a shared file that either one can use and deliver it whenever someone buys *just* Access, *just* Excel, or both.

By the way, the other items in the list are things that you may be able to use to enhance the functionality of Access. They often give you many of the features of things like the calendar. However, they will often be missing the graphical interface, which is the visual portion of a control. So although you can try to select items from here, if you want them to present a graphical image, you should use the Access tool box.

### **More Tools**

So back to the Access tool box. You may have decided that the calendar, as cool as it is, is also impractical for most forms. Specifically, if you are creating a "maintenance" form, where every field in a table has a corresponding control, the calendar may take up too much space. For this reason, Microsoft also created the Date & Time Picker. If you scroll down that list under the Microsoft items, you should see Microsoft Date and Time Picker Control 6.0. Add this to your form and switch to Form view, and you'll see that it acts like a Combo Box, but instead of a list of items, you see a calendar. I suggest using this in place of any form that requires data input! Note: There are a few minor drawbacks to this. For example, if you allow nulls in the date field, you have to enable the CheckBox property or you get warning messages when the value is null. But if you enable that property, the item automatically gets selected if they merely look at the calendar, meaning the item is no longer null. That's just something you accept if you use this tool.

You may find other interesting tools like the Common Dialog Control (see Figure 5), Web Browser and Winsock Control. Each of these and others can add additional functionality to your Access project to make it look more like a professional application.

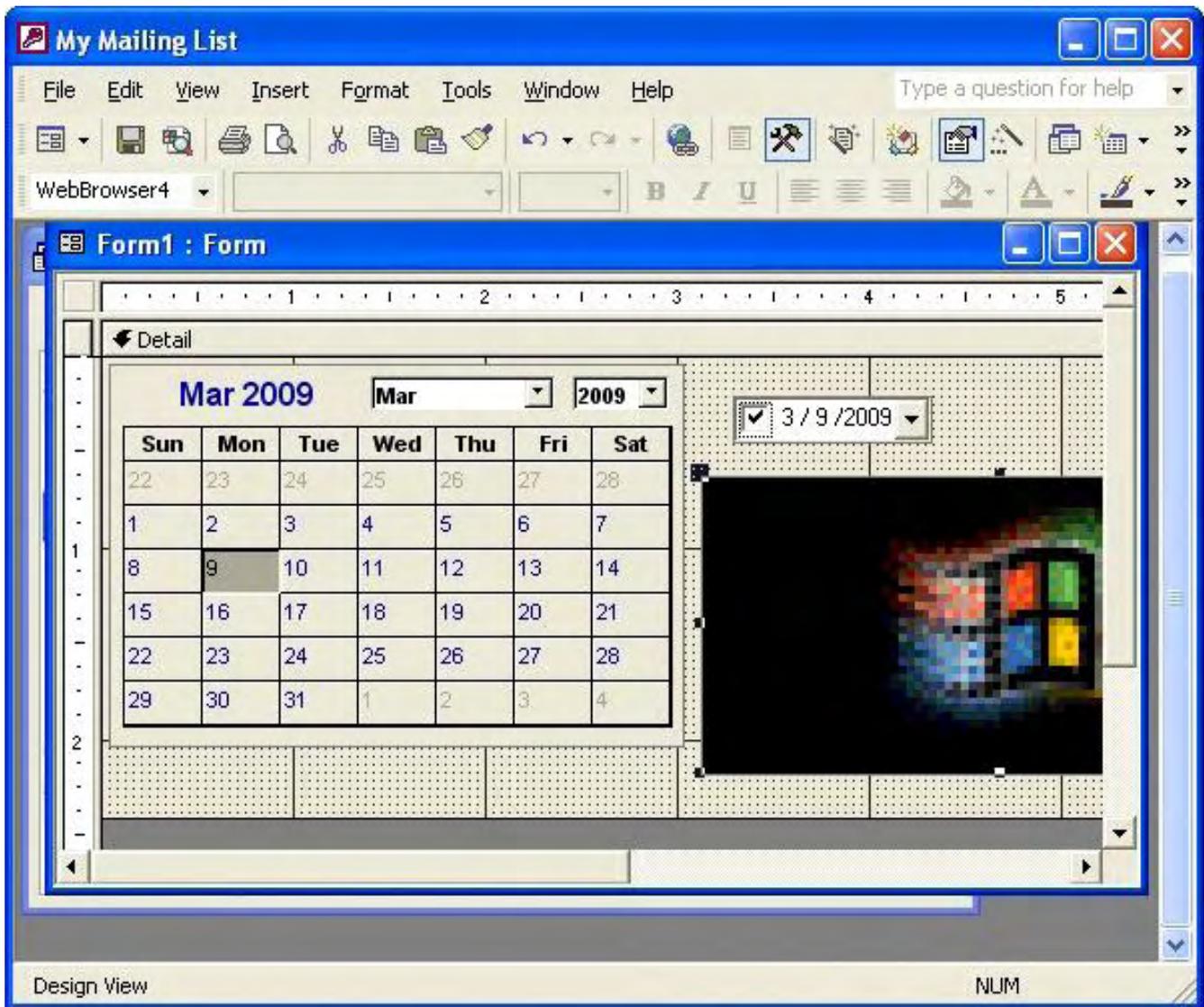


Figure 5. Common Dialog Control.

Next week, we'll get back to our Name and Address database to see if we can make it look more like something that people would actually want to use. This will require more knowledge of Access and VB. Stay tuned.

---

Rob has been in the computer industry for over 25 years and is currently a part-time teacher, offering classes in Excel, Access, Visual Basic, and a variety of other technical tools. He has loved *ComputerEdge* since 1990 and can be contacted at [RSpahitz@Dogopoly.com](mailto:RSpahitz@Dogopoly.com).

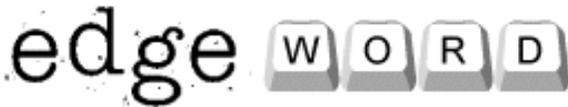
Looking for a great boardgame? Grab a copy from [DOGOPOLY.com](http://DOGOPOLY.com) ([dogopoly.com](http://dogopoly.com)) and have a dog-gone great time.



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## EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher

“Too Good to be True” by Jack Dunning



If there is a scam that works, it will find its way to the Internet. But remember, if an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.

If there is a scam that works, it will find its way to the Internet. You would think that people who use e-mail and the Web would be savvy enough to recognize when someone is trying to hoodwink them. However, schemes seem to thrive. The rule of thumb is, "If it seems too good to be true—it probably is!" Yet, too many people want to believe in instant success, free money and cheap Internet prescriptions.

Over the past number of months, I've noticed compelling commercials on the radio about an Internet moneymaking system invented by Ty Coughlin. The message was *too* compelling for my taste, yet I recently decided to look into what's behind the annoying commercials.

As it turns out, it isn't easy to sort through all of the information (or disinformation). There is no problem finding plenty of sites that will tell you that Ty Coughlin's Reverse Funnel System (RFS) is a scam. However, many of those sites are involved in scams of their own. (I'm probably using the term scam too loosely. I'm applying it to anything that looks too good to be true. Technically, many of the Ty complainers are selling their own approach to making money on the Internet. Whether they are scams, or not, may be in the eye of the beholder.) The attacks on Ty's system are referred to as Google bombing, or some variation of it.



Google bombing ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google\\_bomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_bomb)) is the act of flooding the search engines with Web sites containing keywords that confuse and bury similar Web searches for insightful information. When you do a search, rather than getting useful results you either get a bunch of sites that reinforce the disinformation, or you encounter a series of bait-and-switch sites—as in the case of a "Ty Coughlin scam" search.

When you do the Coughlin search, it initially appears that there is a flood of sites that prove Ty's system is a money-grabbing hoax. Yet, if you go to any of the sites, you will quickly see that they are almost all participating in similar moneymaking schemes. They gain your trust by explaining that Ty's Reverse Funnel System is certainly unworthy and should be shunned.

But wait! They have a system of their own that will work for you! Bad-mouthing the Coughlin scheme is being used as bait for a multitude of other questionable systems. They are piggybacking off Ty's radio advertising budget. Ty Coughlin's questionable practices and radio advertising have created an environment on the Web that helps other moneymaking schemes get search engine attention. Ironic, isn't it? I doubt if Ty Coughlin is endorsing any of these other "entrepreneurs."

As for the Ty Coughlin Reverse Funnel System (RFS), I did get a weak understanding of it. I don't really comprehend what makes the system a reverse funnel, other than the fact that—if you look into the plan—it will funnel money out of your pocket. There is a \$50 charge just to get information about Ty's RFS. If you decide to take the plunge, it will cost another \$3,000. Then, there is another \$5,000 for something or other, plus \$200 to \$300 monthly charges—I think for advertising. I wonder if the biggest source of revenue for Ty isn't the \$50 information fee.

The Coughlin RFS is selling for Global Resorts Network (GRN), which offers memberships for the opportunity to buy discounted vacations. (Not so coincidentally, their primo membership is \$3,000.) There is apparently no direct affiliation between Ty Coughlin and GRN. GRN offers commissions (to anyone I believe) for selling their memberships, while Coughlin's system is geared toward acting as a multilevel middleman for selling memberships for GRN. I ended up so confused that I don't really know if GRN is legitimate. If so, it is certainly being sullied by all of the chicanery. The bottom line seems to be, "If the scammers call it a scam, maybe it is a scam."

I did manage to find one site that seems to provide valid horror stories from victims. Ripoff Report ([www.ripoffreport.com/](http://www.ripoffreport.com/)) encourages people to post their unsettling experiences. The search feature on the site produced a number of reports for "Ty Coughlin," "GRN," and "reverse funnel system." The primary reason I believe the resulting reports may be useful is that the contributors did not try to sell their own system. For example, one individual ([www.ripoffreport.com/reports/0/377/RipOff0377754.htm](http://www.ripoffreport.com/reports/0/377/RipOff0377754.htm)) had used the Ty Coughlin system, but later dropped out. He said the system wasn't for everyone (or most people), but he didn't try to sell a moneymaking system of his own. I did find some of the banner advertising a little questionable, although all the ads were marked "Ripoff Report Verified Safe."

Whenever I hear one of these "Earn 50K a month!" ads, I change the station. If I get an e-mail that asks me if I want to earn more, I always say no—to myself. I'm not tempted by any of these offers because I don't believe any of them. I don't even play the lottery—any more.

My recommendation is to stay away from Ty Coughlin and all of the leeching anti-Ty Web sites that complain about Ty Coughlin. If you want a deal on a vacation, book your own directly with the hotels and airlines. I always seem to do better by going directly to the provider sites (airlines, rental cars, hotels), rather than even using sites such as Orbitz or Travelocity. If you want to make more money, develop new skills, start your own business, or go back to school. Don't listen to people selling a success system. The secret to their success is that people buy their system. That's all! It is a little more work doing things yourself, but it will save you putting too much money into get-rich-quick schemes.

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Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)

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## Editor's Letters

**"Readers write in with letters to the editor."** by ComputerEdge Staff

"FrontPage Problem Responses," "Pesky Malware Problem," "RSS Feed Constructive Criticism," "Mac Widgets"

### FrontPage Problem Responses

[The following letters are in response to Digital Dave's March 6 column, where Phil Martin wrote in needing help publishing a Web site built with FrontPage.]

[Dave gave] very good advice. I abandoned FrontPage long ago, and it seems that Microsoft has now done the same. They now market a product called SharePoint: a bloated, overpriced collaboration software used to create a company intranet. Microsoft's current HTML editor is called SharePoint Designer and is designed for editing SharePoint pages and sites.

My advice: Use an open-source Web server like Apache. Edit your HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, and other code with something like Dreamweaver. A decent hosting service should have a non-Microsoft (Linux) server running Apache to host Web sites.

-Pete, Roy, Utah

Good answer, Dave, especially the last paragraph about knowing HTML, CSS, and JavaScript files. I might have added a suggestion to use an editor suited for those languages, like EditPad Pro. And by the way, I am not associated with EditPad, I just like good engineering.

-Bruce Osterberg, Temecula, Calif.

### Pesky Malware Problem

[This letter is in response to Digital Dave's March 6 column, where a reader was dealing with a malware issue.]

A long time ago, I had the same problem with ad.yieldmanager. I ended up adding ad.yieldmanager to my "block list" through my e-mail, because that is where I was constantly getting it from. I would run my anti-spyware software, which told me it was removed, but as soon as I opened my mail, there it was again. So after reading about this, I was told to add the site to my e-mail's block list and I haven't had a problem since.

-Jerry Hughes, San Diego, Calif.

### RSS Feed Constructive Criticism

[This letter is in regard to Jack Dunning's March 6 article, "RSS with Internet Explorer Is Worth Exploring."]

I have been a loyal reader of *ComputerEdge* since *The Byte Buyer* days. I was very sorry to see the print edition "fold," and have been trying to follow the e-mail subscription. But I find that I ignore [the e-mailed issues] for months at a time, then try to scan a half dozen or more at once. So I've decided to unsubscribe and instead rely on your RSS feed and a live bookmark in Firefox; I've been using this successfully with Slashdot and Salon.

Here are my concerns, though:

1. I still feel that [your] Web site has an antiquated layout. Instead of trying to get everything onscreen simultaneously, I really think it's easier to browse if you have auto-expanding menus. This leaves more screen space for the current content. Maybe you could transition to a new CMS/template, e.g., Joomla and something from Rocket Theme? This would also allow your contributors to do their own posting.

2. It appears that the RSS feed is automatically using the full article title. Unfortunately this frequently makes the title too long to see anything descriptive in the RSS feed, at least in my Firefox live-bookmark. For instance, the regular Digital Dave column shows the same cut-off title each week, "Digital Dave: Digital Dave answers your tech." I would suggest that you give all authors instructions to either customize their RSS feed-title or customize their article/column titles so that they: a) are specific to that article or column; and b) are short enough to be legible in RSS.

Thanks for listening and good luck!

-Tony

### **Mac Widgets**

[This letter is in regard to Wally Wang's October 3 article, "Macintosh Widgets."]

Using the Mac widgets [info] is just what I was looking for. The consultant at my local Apple Store did not know how to change the Starry Night widget to reflect our local views.

-Beverly Sprague, Ypsilanti, MI

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*ComputerEdge* always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the article/column. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section.

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