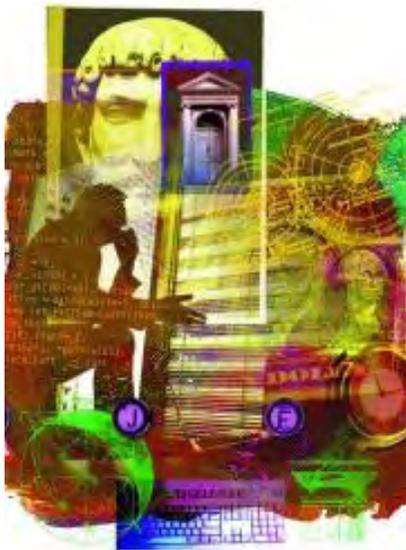


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 07/31/09



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Whether implementing favicons or adding a button for your RSS feed, it's the little things that count.

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## [Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#) by Wally Wang

### Browsing with Safari

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### Programming in VB.Net

As Rob begins a series on learning how to program a computer with VB.Net, we are also introducing a new column feature where Rob will propose a problem and solicit solutions from readers.

## [Worldwide News & Product Reviews](#) by Charles Carr

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An Easy Upgrade Path from Windows XP to 7?—Laplinsk's PCmover promises an easy upgrade path for XP users to Windows 7, even if Microsoft doesn't; The Move to Stop Dumping Techno-Trash in Developing Countries—Basel Action Network is calling on consumers, manufacturers and retailers to make a commitment to never allow their old e-waste to go to recyclers that will simply export it to developing countries; A Recording Studio on Your Desktop—A review of Line6's UX2.

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Answers for "Anyone Know a Good Registry Cleaner?"

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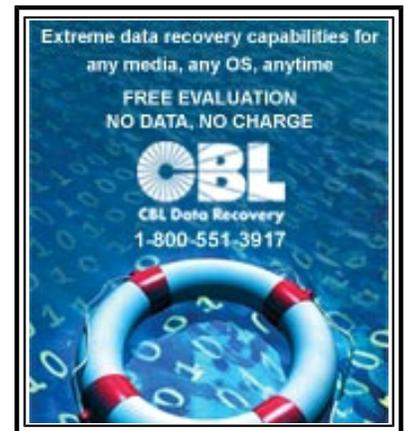
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Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.

"ComputerTutor Kudos," "Screenplay Software Options," "Microsoft Update Catalog," "Free Screenplay Software," "Windows 7 Is Worth It"



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## Digital Dave

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

A reader is frustrated with their cable broadband and Internet experiences; a reader wants to share files between an XP computer and a Win7 machine; more discussion on a reader's issues with SP3 yields news of a surprising SP3-Athlon conflict.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I, and most of the country, want broadband Internet access. I have Time Warner cable, which provides RoadRunner and EarthLink. I've had bad experiences with both, especially EarthLink; although RR decided to block my personal e-mails and let through only the junk. After three weeks, I quit.*

*Are there alternatives to either RR or EarthLink? My understanding is I must get broadband through my cable service and, therefore, I must use either RR or EarthLink, but the company seems accountable to no one—with no standards for systems or customers that it must comply with. (I asked EarthLink if talking to someone outside of India was possible—not that he knew.)*

*Also, since paying for e-mail service seems to get you squat, is there an e-mail service you recommend? FYI, my e-mail likely isn't working.*

*J. Christensen  
San Diego*

Dear J.,

There are numerous alternatives to using the cable companies, although none are without disadvantages. Depending upon how you use the Internet, most will be suitable.

If you check with your local phone company, most likely they will offer DSL, which is delivered over phone lines. Often they can offer excellent download speeds, but their upload speeds are usually slower than cable. For the average user, this is not normally a problem.

Another competitor to cable is satellite Internet. This is usually offered as part of a package for satellite television. The main drawback to satellite Internet is latency (delay). In most cases, this isn't a problem, but if you're participating in online games, this could be an issue.

If you have a good cell phone signal in your house, then you may want to consider cellular broadband from a cell phone company. While the G3 speeds do not match that of cable, they are more than adequate for most Web browsing. (The cell companies are only beginning to roll out the G4 network, which will offer extremely competitive Internet speeds.) You can get a cellular modem or card that will plug right into your computer.

If you are not happy with your current Internet service, it can be worthwhile to investigate the alternatives. Be sure to learn about the weaknesses of each before you make a move. The right fit depends upon how you will be using the Internet.

As for e-mail, there are plenty of places to get free e-mail: Gmail ([gmail.google.com](mailto:gmail.google.com)) from Google, Hotmail ([hotmail.com](mailto:hotmail.com)).

com) from Microsoft, Yahoo Mail (*overview.mail.yahoo.com*) from Yahoo, just to name a few.

Digital Dave

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have Windows XP Pro on one computer and Windows 7 on another. How do you share files?*

*Richard  
Chula Vista, CA*

Dear Richard,

In brief, sharing files on a Windows computer is as simple as sharing a drive or folder. To do that, open Windows Explorer (Microsoft flag key plus E simultaneously or All Programs/Accessories in the Start Menu) on the computer with the files that you want to share and right-click on the drive or folder icon. Select "Sharing and Security..." (XP) or "Share with" (Windows 7), depending upon the computer, then enable the appropriate sharing. For added protection, you may set the sharing to read-only (no writing or changing files) or full-control (make any changes or deletions).

Then, on the other computer, you should be able to see and use the files by finding the computer in the Network portion of Windows Explorer. ("Network" can be found toward the bottom of the list of drives and folders in Windows Explorer in both XP and Windows 7. Open the tree structure by clicking the plus sign (+) next to Network. The other computer should appear in the list.) You will probably need to log on to the remote computer. (Be sure to implement appropriate passwords to protect against intruders.) The shared drives and folders should be visible and accessible.

For an easier, more permanent solution, once you've accessed the drive or folder, you can map it as a drive on your computer. Right-click on the remote drive/folder, and select "Map network drive..." This will give you the opportunity to set up the remote drive as if it were installed in your computer. If you select "Reconnect at logon," then the remote drive will be available every time you log on—as long as the other computer is on the network. You should be able to do this in both directions, to and from each computer.

Digital Dave

*Last week, there was a question about installing Windows XP SP3, which elicited the following responses:*

*Dave,*

*Maybe Sally did not want SP3 because she (or someone she knew) had an experience like mine. I downloaded and installed SP3 about a year ago, and it crashed my system. Had to pay \$100 to get things corrected. I found out later that MS had not vetted SP3 for AMD Athlon processors. This is inexcusable in my book.*

*James Adair  
San Diego*

*I am running an Athlon CPU and Windows XP SP3 on a generic computer I put together, and it ran without problems—maybe Mr. Adair has some other problem he is unaware of.*

*Ray Gille  
San Diego, CA*

Dear James and Ray,

I think that I might be able to clear up what actually happened between certain (not all) AMD processors and Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3).

There was indeed a serious problem for many Windows XP users with AMD CPUs when they tried to upgrade to SP3. In many cases, the computer would go into a continuous reboot cycle. In the spring of 2008, it was quickly reported by users and echoed in *ComputerEdge*, as well as, many other sources. It did not happen to all AMD-based computers, but primarily affected OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) computers, especially HP models.

The problem was neither with Microsoft nor AMD. HP (and others), when building AMD-based computers, used an image of Windows XP that was made for Intel CPUs. This was probably a common shortcut. When SP3 came along, differences in the Registry entries required for AMD processors and Intel caused the problem. If a clean installation had been done with the original XP machine, as would be the case for Ray and anyone building their own computer, there was no problem. At the very least, HP and other computer makers should have used an AMD image of Windows XP for AMD processors.

In the past year, many steps have been taken to protect against this problem, including the upgrade-blocking program mentioned in last week's letter. Since that blocking program has since been disabled, I would think that the issue in SP3 has been resolved. However, to be safe, if you have an AMD-based computer running Windows XP SP2, you may want to do some further checking before upgrading to SP3.

The Jesper's Blog ([msinfluentials.com/blogs/jesper/archive/2008/05/08/does-your-amd-based-computer-boot-after-installing-xp-sp3.aspx](http://msinfluentials.com/blogs/jesper/archive/2008/05/08/does-your-amd-based-computer-boot-after-installing-xp-sp3.aspx)) (the most widely read source for this situation) has done an excellent job of keeping up with the problem. If you follow the steps outlined, you should be able to safely upgrade to SP3. I stand by my last week's recommendation to upgrade to SP3, if you plan to keep running Windows XP.

Digital Dave

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## Favicons and How to Make Them

**“Create tiny logos for your favorite Web sites.”** by Michael J. Ross

If you have spent any time using the Internet, you are probably familiar with favicons—small images that get added to your browser's bookmarks to designate a Web site as a favorite. Here's how to make your own.

There are a wide assortment of improvements you can make to a Web site—some more related to content, such as adding an RSS feed, and others more related to the styling of the site, such as adding foreground and background images, improving the typography, and adding a favicon. In this article, we will take a closer look at what favicons are and how you can create and use your own.

You may not be familiar with the term "favicon," but if you have spent any time using the Internet, you are probably familiar with what they look like. The term is a contraction of "favorite icon," which is derived from its usage: A favicon is a small image—like a tiny logo for a Web site—that gets added to your Web browser's bookmarks when you designate the particular site as a favorite. Favicons are small square images, usually 16 x 16 pixels, but can also be 32 x 32 pixels. The Wikipedia entry ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Favicon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Favicon)) has additional information on favicons.

That Web site, as is to be expected of Wikipedia, also has a nice favicon of its own, which can serve as an example. When you visit the Wikipedia home page ([www.wikipedia.org/](http://www.wikipedia.org/)), you may or may not immediately see a small image of a "W" in your browser's address field and on the current tab in your browser, depending upon which brand and version of browser you are currently using.



Figure 1. Wikipedia favicon.

If you are using any version of Mozilla Firefox ([www.mozilla.com/firefox](http://www.mozilla.com/firefox)), then you will certainly see the Wikipedia favicon in your address bar, just to the left of the Wikipedia URL.



Figure 2. Favicon in Firefox.

This should be the standard behavior among all browsers. If you are still using an older version of Internet Explorer, then you will probably see different behavior, since Microsoft generally does not follow industry standards, preferring instead to try to break them by creating its own. If you are using IE version 8, for example, you will see the same behavior as with Firefox. But if you are using IE version 6, then when you first land on the Wikipedia home page, and that site has not been added to your IE Favorites menu, you will not see the favicon.



Figure 3. Favicon in IE 6 pre-favorite.

If you designate Wikipedia as a favorite site (always a good idea, since Wikipedia is a terrific storehouse of information), then you will see the favicon in your address bar, similar to what is displayed in Firefox.



Figure 4. Favicon in IE 6 post-favorite.

In addition to being displayed in the address bar, the favicon appears in the Firefox Bookmarks menu and in the Internet Explorer Favorites menu, just to the left of the Web site's name.

### Making Your Own

While you may be hesitant about trying to create your own favicon, there are a number of online tools to make it fairly straightforward. There are basically two different methods you can use for creating a favicon: You can create it by hand, or by taking an existing image and converting it to a favicon. We will examine tools that can help you in either case.

Any substantial image editor will allow you to create a 16x16 or 32x32 image, and save it in the icon format (with the file extension ".ico"). However, you don't have to purchase Photoshop or any other high-powered application to get the job done. There are alternative applications available that are dedicated to creating icons, of all varieties. Icon Craft ([www.iconempire.com/iconcraft/](http://www.iconempire.com/iconcraft/)) and IconForge ([www.cursorarts.com/ca\\_if\\_d.html](http://www.cursorarts.com/ca_if_d.html)) are just two examples of commercial icon editors that possess all of the capabilities needed to create icons for your sites. However, they are not free, nor are they open source (in case you are a programmer interested in exploring their source code).

If your budget does not allow a paid program, consider one of the free programs out there. For instance, Icon Sushi

no longer has a dedicated Web site, but can still be obtained from several reputable shareware/freeware sites, including CNET's Download.com ([download.cnet.com/Icon-Sushi/3000-2195\\_4-10547564.html](http://download.cnet.com/Icon-Sushi/3000-2195_4-10547564.html)). My current favorite is SnIco Edit, available from any number of sites, including Utilidades-Utiles.com ([en.utilidades-utiles.com/download-snico-edit.html](http://en.utilidades-utiles.com/download-snico-edit.html)). It too used to have a Web site, but apparently SnideSoft is no longer in business (a sign of the times?).

Using an image-editing tool to create your favicon has the advantage that you will have pixel-perfect control over the way it looks. But the downside is that making any image by hand can become incredibly time-consuming and frustrating. Moreover, if the image in your intended favicon is fairly complex—and not just a couple of letters or boxes with sharp vertical and horizontal lines—then the final results will probably look suboptimal, unless you want to spend even more time manually adding the dithering and other effects called for when trying to make that complex image look as realistic as possible, using so few pixels. Lastly, favicon desktop programs are now out of favor, and consequently the software vendors that used to develop them all seem to be disappearing.

These are some of the reasons why most Web designers and developers now use favicon generators, which take a larger image and shrink it down to 16x16 or 32x32 pixels. Some of these tools even allow you to specify scrolling text, if for some perverse reason you would like to subject your Web site visitors to a flashback of the cheesy site decoration that littered the Web during the 1990s.

There are countless favicon generators available, but here is a sampling: ConvertIcon ([www.converticon.com/](http://www.converticon.com/)) is a free and simple service that allows you to upload a GIF, JPEG, ICO, or PNG image, and then convert it into an ICO or PNG image, without losing quality. FavIcon from Pics ([www.htmlkit.com/services/favicon/](http://www.htmlkit.com/services/favicon/)) has come through for me time and time again. Other well-regarded services are offered by companies such as Dynamic Drive ([tools.dynamicdrive.com/favicon/](http://tools.dynamicdrive.com/favicon/)), Favicon Generator.com ([www.favicongenerator.com/](http://www.favicongenerator.com/)), graphicsguru ([www.graphicsguru.com/favicon.php](http://www.graphicsguru.com/favicon.php)), and Salvatore Sanfilippo ([www.antifavicon.com/](http://www.antifavicon.com/)).

Finally, if you don't want to spend any time making your own favicon, and a standard computer-related icon would be sufficient for your needs, then be sure to check out famfamfam.com's Silk Icons ([www.famfamfam.com/lab/icons/silk/](http://www.famfamfam.com/lab/icons/silk/)), a library of icons licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 license (which means that you can use any of the icons for any purpose, and even modify them, as long as you link back to famfamfam.com, so they get credit).

## Adding Your Own

Once you have created a favicon for your site, you will want to add it to your home page. Upload the favicon file to the root directory of your Web site. This is typically done using an FTP application, such as FileZilla ([filezilla-project.org/](http://filezilla-project.org/)). Alternatively, your Web-hosting account probably includes some sort of file-management tool, which would be a more efficient approach if you plan on uploading only the single file. But if you're actively managing a Web site for which you create the files, you probably are already using an FTP client.

Next you will need to update the HTML code in order to display the favicon. Let's assume that you have named the file favicon.ico (the standard name used by most sites). Open up your home page HTML file (it might be named index.html or default.html, or something similar) using your favorite text editor. Find the head element in the code; this consists of the opening tag, the closing tag, and everything in between. Insert the following line of code into the head element:

```
<link rel="shortcut icon" href="favicon.ico">
```

In this case, the Web server will look for the favicon file in the directory containing your home page HTML file. But if you would like to use the same favicon for all of the pages in your site (a recommended approach), and some of those files are located in subdirectories off the root directory, then you will need to take into account the fact that

your favicon file is not located in the current directory for those nested HTML files. The quickest way to resolve this issue is to provide an "absolute path" to your favicon file. Let's say that your Web site domain name is example.com. You would use the following line of code instead:

```
<link rel="shortcut icon" href="http://www.example.com/favicon.ico">
```

## Favorite Favicons

If you're having difficulties coming up with ideas for your site's favicon, consider using your site's logo as a starting point. If the logo is relatively square in dimensions, and not too detailed, then it probably will look fine shrunk down to the favicon size. Otherwise, you can take a distinctive portion of the logo, cropped as a square, and shrink that down. Or, you could take the initials of your company's or organization's name, and create a large image with those initials, using your brand colors.

If none of those ideas suit your purposes, then perhaps you could derive some inspiration from outstanding favicons created by others. Daniel Burka's list ([www.deltatangobravo.com/archive/2004/march/favourite](http://www.deltatangobravo.com/archive/2004/march/favourite)) is a good place to start.

Regardless of how you create your favicon, you will most likely find that it can add a bit more visual appeal to your site. Lastly, do not feel limited to just a single favicon. Every page on your site can have its own; simply specify each individual favicon filename in the link tag.

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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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## RSS for Your Web Site

“Nowadays, no site is complete without an RSS feed.” by Michael J. Ross

Years ago, only the most cutting-edge Web sites had newsfeeds. But nowadays, any decent site has one. What's the best way to create your site's RSS feed, and make it available to your visitors?

RSS, an acronym for "Really Simple Syndication," can be thought of as both a format and a standardized delivery mechanism for distributing syndicated news online. In other words, it allows you to broadcast content to anyone who has chosen to subscribe to your RSS feed. By utilizing a generally accepted format for the content, every RSS feed is made easily readable by specially designed desktop or Web-based applications, referred to as RSS "readers" or "aggregators"—the latter term suggesting how multiple RSS feeds can be combined into a customized news stream, for consumption by the user.



For example, if you are interested in keeping up-to-date with the latest high-tech news, you probably have some favorite technology news sites, such as Digg.com ([digg.com/news/technology](http://digg.com/news/technology)) and Slashdot ([slashdot.org/](http://slashdot.org/)). You could visit each one of them individually, searching for news, every day (or every 10 minutes, depending upon how far away your cubicle is from your employer's).

Yet this manual checking of news would be quite time-consuming, especially if you want to check the latest news on dozens of sites, or if you are interested in news on only a few topics. In the latter case, you would have to scan through all of the latest news items, manually picking out only those that interested you. But with RSS, you can now subscribe to the RSS feeds of all of those Web sites via your aggregator. If desired, you could additionally filter out any news items that do not match the criteria that you have chosen, and also weed out the ads and pop-

ups, if any.

### Relatively Slick Symbol

Years ago, only the most cutting-edge sites had newsfeeds. But nowadays, any decent site has one. They are easily spotted because the site's home page will somewhere display some sort of RSS icon. It may take the form of a small orange rectangular icon that reads "RSS" or "XML," and is typically located at the bottom of the Web page or near the search field for the site.

RSS icons can also take the form of a small orange square, with a white dot in the bottom-left-hand corner, with two wave-like curves flowing outward, indicative of the broadcast nature of RSS. These icons are quickly becoming the standard.



Figure 1. RSS feed icon.

Users of the Web browser Firefox ([www.mozilla.com/firefox/](http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/)) should be familiar with this new RSS icon, because when the user is visiting any site that offers an RSS feed on that page, the orange symbol is displayed in the browser's address field. To quickly add that particular site's feed as a Live Bookmark, simply click on the icon. If you are logged into Google, it will display a subscription page, allowing you to add the feed to your Google home page or Google Reader, their aggregator. Users of Internet Explorer 7 and 8 should see the same RSS icon in the Command toolbar (which by default is located underneath the Favorites toolbar and to the right of the window tabs).

The public's familiarity with RSS feeds will probably increase over time, as RSS becomes more integral to Web sites and desktop applications. Internet Explorer version 7 introduced built-in support for RSS. On the desktop, Windows Vista added support for the common RSS formats—in addition to making it much easier for programmers to integrate RSS into the applications they develop for that particular operating system.

## **Really Special Site**

If you have a Web site, then you are probably quite interested in learning techniques for attracting additional visitors, both first-time and long-term. It may appear at first glance that syndicating your site's contents in the form of an RSS feed, would defeat your goal of attracting return visitors, because once they have subscribed to your newsfeed, why would they ever need to return to your site?

This conclusion would be overly simplistic, because it fails to understand the potential of RSS newsfeeds. First of all, the news items that you create for your site's RSS feed can be limited to the highlights of your site's content, and can include links that visitors can follow to read the details on your site. (Admittedly, this goes against the spirit of saving visitors' time through syndication.) In addition, an up-to-date newsfeed—one that includes the full contents of each post, and not just links—demonstrates to the online world that your site is not only technically savvy, but is designed to make people's lives easier; all of this can encourage those people to recommend your site and its newsfeed to others.

An RSS feed does not have to be considered a pale shadow of your visually rich Web site, limited to dull text. RSS feeds can be spiced up with images, audio extracts, embedded video clips, and other types of multimedia—all of which can help make your site's feed stand out from all those other ones competing for people's attention, time, and recommendations.

## **Ready, Set, Syndicate!**

Once you are convinced that it would be in your best interests, and those of your visitors, to enhance your Web site with an RSS feed, then you come up against the biggest challenge of all, which is figuring out the best way to create your site's RSS feed, and making it available to your site's visitors. Fortunately, these steps are not as difficult as you might imagine, and there are several straightforward ways that you can accomplish them without needing a degree in computer science.

One method is to use a tool that takes the syndicated content delivered by the RSS feeds of other Web sites, and combines all of it into a new RSS feed that you can then publish on your own site. Tools that can perform this operation include CaRP ([www.geckotribe.com/rss/carp/](http://www.geckotribe.com/rss/carp/)), Feed Mix ([www.extralabs.net/](http://www.extralabs.net/)), Feed Combiner ([www.feedroll.com/feedcombiner/](http://www.feedroll.com/feedcombiner/)), and Jawfish ([www.geckotribe.com/rss/jawfish/](http://www.geckotribe.com/rss/jawfish/)). The prices and capabilities of these tools vary, so be sure to do your homework. This approach has the advantage that you do not have to learn how to format an RSS feed, and you don't have to spend any time creating new content for that feed. Yet it has the disadvantage that you might run afoul of copyright law if proper attribution is not given, and it also means that you are completely dependent upon other sites for your newsfeed's content.

If you have some original content that you would like to offer the public as your own newsfeed, and you also have the technical skills and interest to do so, then you could program a custom script that automatically creates a feed from your Web pages—just as I did for my site, using the Perl programming language. But this would involve your

creating a script to match your site's structure, and running it either locally on your own computer prior to uploading the RSS file to your Web site, or running it dynamically on whatever Web server is hosting your site.

For nonprogrammers who want to create an RSS feed with their own content, and are willing to do so manually, then an RSS editor is the best choice. Such programs include RSS Editor ([www.rsseditor.net/](http://www.rsseditor.net/)), RSSeditor/Win ([www.rss-info.com/en\\_rsseditor.html](http://www.rss-info.com/en_rsseditor.html)), and Mozilla's RSS Editor ([rsseditor.mozdev.org/](http://rsseditor.mozdev.org/)). Speaking of Mozilla, its flagship Web browser, Firefox, can be utilized as an RSS editor through the use of the RSS Editor add-on ([addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/344](http://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/344)).

If your site has original content on Web pages, and you don't want to spend time manually creating a feed from that content, then a more automated and time-saving approach would be to use an application that scans your site's contents and automatically generates an RSS file. One such application is Tristana Writer ([www.tristana.org/writer/](http://www.tristana.org/writer/)).

To add the RSS file to your HTML pages—thereby making it available to visitors to your site—you need to include a special line in the element of each Web page. For instance, let's assume that you have named your newsfeed file RSS.xml, and placed it in the root directory of your Web site. (This approach is the default, used by most sites.) Then if you were to include the following line in any HTML file in the root directory, a visitor to that page would see the icon for your newsfeed and be able to subscribe to it easily:

```
<link href="RSS.xml" rel="alternate" title="RSS" type="application/rss+xml" />
```

Regardless of which approach you choose, your Web site would likely benefit from its own RSS feed. Nowadays, no site is complete without one. What site visitor counters were in the late 1990s, RSS feeds are in this new decade. Yet unlike visitor counters, RSS feeds have the advantage that they are actually useful.

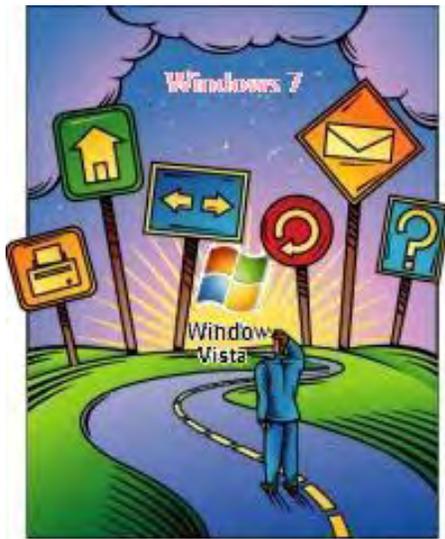
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Michael J. Ross is a Web developer ([www.ross.ws](http://www.ross.ws)), writer, and freelance editor. He creates Web sites that help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into profitable online businesses.

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# Windows Vista Tips and Tricks

(and some Windows 7)

## Windows Vista and Windows 7 Tips and Tricks

**“The Computer Management Tool”**  
by Jack Dunning

Windows Vista has a feature called Computer Management that groups many tools into one window, making it easy to dig around in the inner workings of your computer and the operating system—in some cases, maybe too easy.

Over the last year or so, we have been looking at various tools for digging into the Windows Vista operating system. Part of the confusion with Vista is finding the tools even when we know they are there. If you know the name of the program, then you can generally type it into the Start Search field of the Start Menu. Often you can also find it in the Control Panel, or listed under Administrative Tools in the Start Menu—if you have Properties set to display it (right-click on the Start Menu, select Properties/Start Menu tab, then "Customize..."). After a while it's difficult to remember all of the various tools. Some are obscure, while others are handy to have within easy reach.

Windows Vista has a feature called Computer Management that groups many of the tools into one window, making it easy to dig around in the inner workings of your computer and the operating system—in some cases, maybe too easy. Many of the old tools, such as the msconfig.exe programs, are relics of the past. They continue to be useful for an occasional quick adjustment, but there are other devices that offer much better control. The most important tools for working with your computer are included in the Computer Management console—at least most of the ones that I occasionally check, plus a few that I don't know what to do with. (Windows 7 includes Computer Management with what appears to be the identical programs.)

To open Computer Management, select it from the list of Administrative Tools (see Figure 1). This may be on the right side of the Start Menu, or under All Programs in the Start Menu, depending upon the configuration of the Start Menu. You can also type "computer," "management," or merely "com" or "man" into the Start Search field, and select it from the top of the Start Menu. There may be a way to reach it through the Control Panel, but it wasn't immediately apparent to me.



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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Browsing with Safari” by Wally Wang

There are some unique features in Safari that you may not know about until someone actually points them out to you. Also, expect more businesses to release their own apps to promote and market themselves; recent reports show a steady erosion of Windows users and the continued growth of Macintosh users; and a tip on making your Mac automatically load your favorite programs.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Safari is one of the few Apple programs (besides iTunes) that runs on both Mac OS X and Windows. Although you could use Safari like any other browser, there are some unique features in Safari that you may not know about until someone actually points them out to you.

First, there's Safari Top Sites, which is a way to create multiple home pages by displaying thumbnail images. Just click on the Top Sites icon, and you'll see thumbnail images of your most frequently visited Web sites.

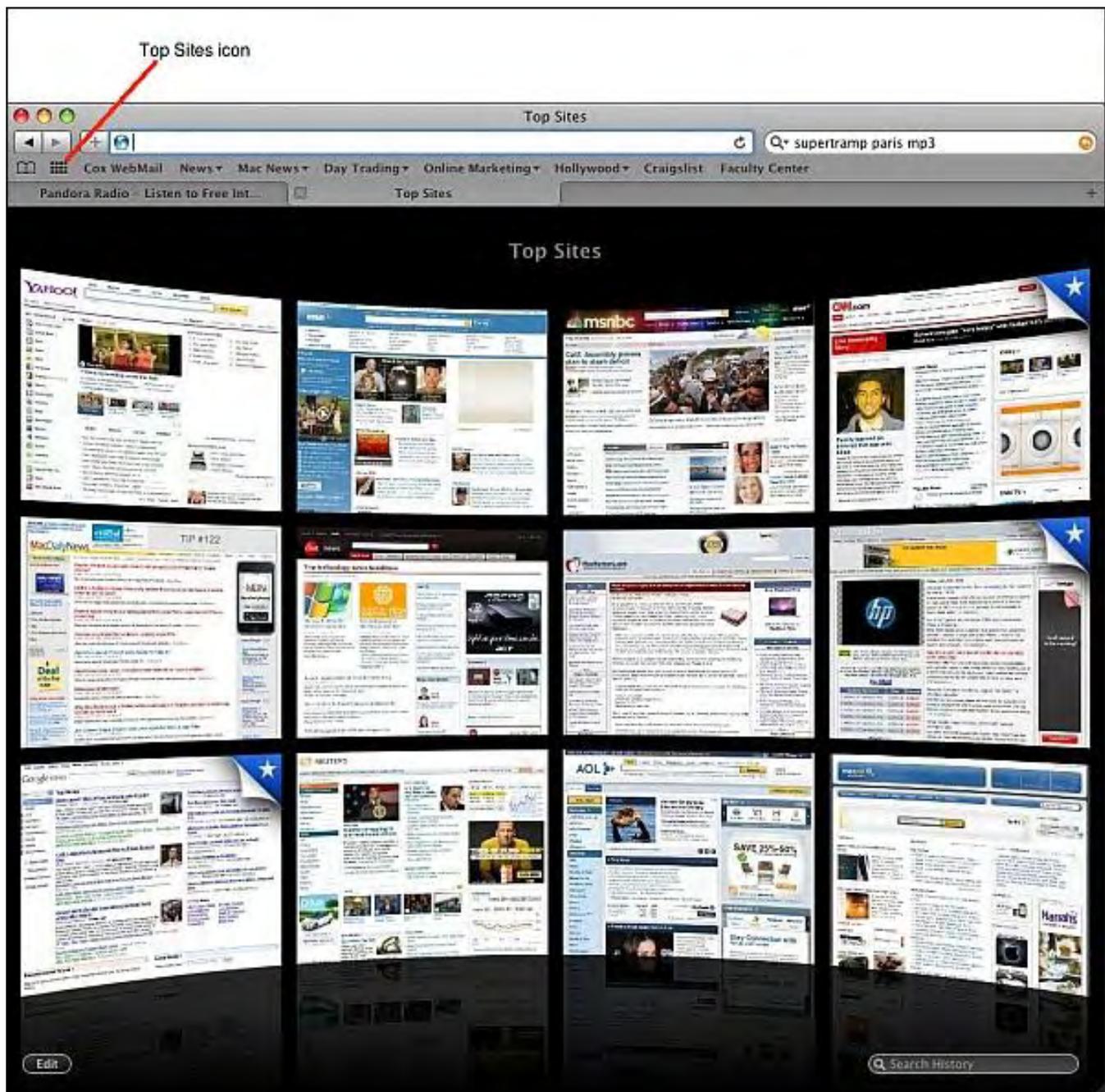


Figure 1. Safari's Top Sites.

Just click on the thumbnail image of any Web site displayed, and Safari immediately takes you to that particular site. If you see a Web site displaying a star in its upper-right corner, that's Safari's signal that the Web site has changed since the last time you visited it.

If you start visiting different Web sites, your list of Top Sites keeps changing. In case you don't want to lose track of a Web site, or if you don't want a particular Web site to appear on your Top Sites list at all, you can edit this Top Sites list.

Click on the Edit button in the lower-left corner of the Top Sites screen. This displays an X and Push-Pin icon in the upper-right corner of every thumbnail image. To remove a Web site, click on the X icon. To keep a Web site always displayed on your Top Sites list, click the Push-Pin icon. To save your changes, click the Done button in the lower-left corner of the Safari window.



Figure 2. Editing the Top Sites list.

To add new Web sites to your Top Sites list, type that site's address in the Address bar (such as [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)) and then press the Return key. This loads your chosen Web site and also displays a little icon to the left of the address in the Address bar. Drag and drop this icon over the Top Sites icon in the upper-left corner of the Safari window, and this will add that site to your Top Sites list.

Like most browsers, Safari can display tabs. Just press Command+T to add a new one. Once you have two or more tabs displayed, you can add additional tabs by clicking on the Plus icon way over on the right side of the Safari window.

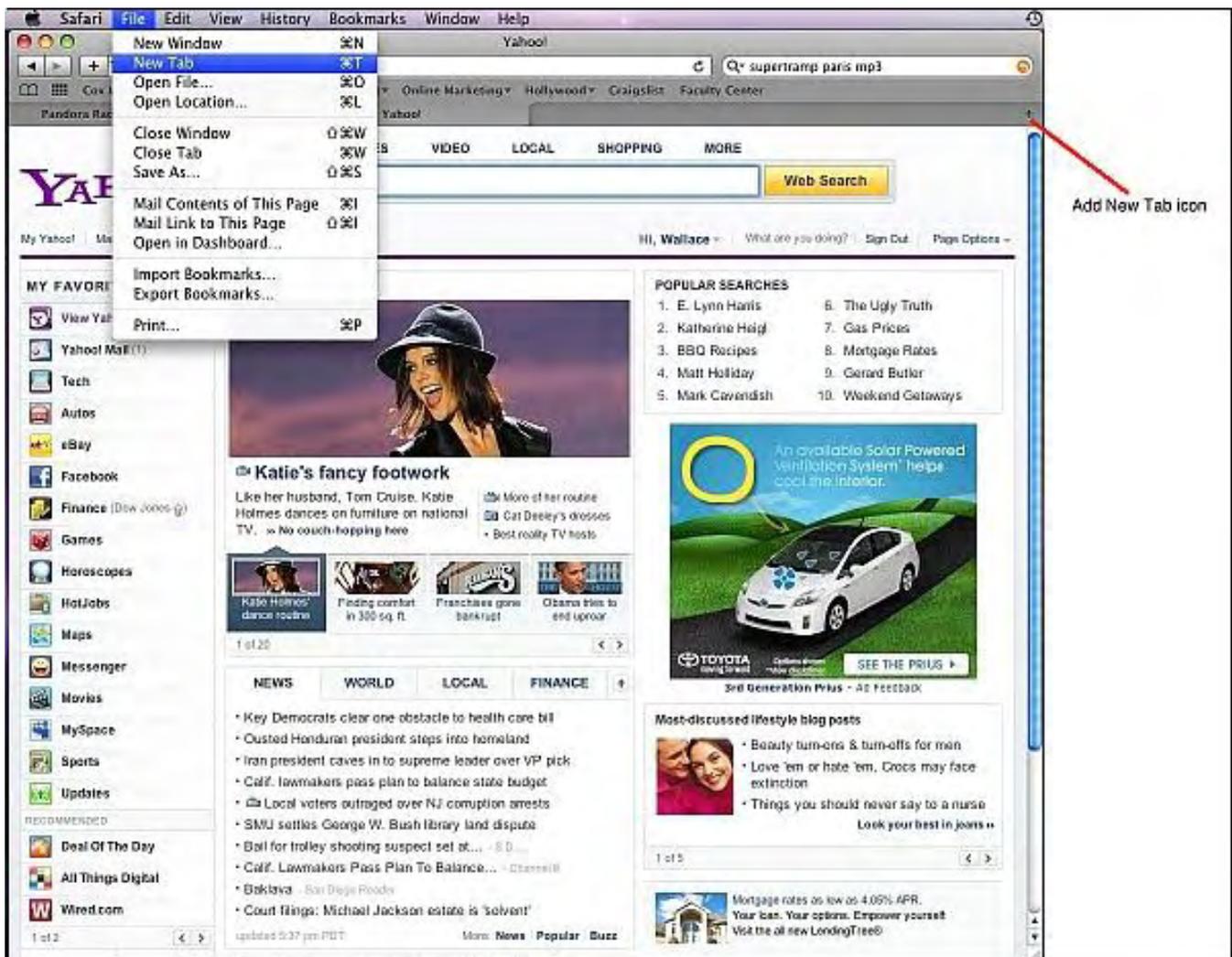


Figure 3. Two ways to add additional tabs.

In case you want to separate your tabs so they appear in separate windows, just drag a tab down until you see a "ghost" thumbnail image of that Web page. Then release the mouse button to display that site in a separate window.



Figure 4. Dragging a tab down displays that site in a separate window.

If you have multiple Safari windows open and want to condense them into a single window with multiple tabs, just choose **Windows/Merge All Windows**.

### Corporate America Embraces the iPhone

Many companies have strict policies on the types of mobile phones their workers can use. This is mostly to simplify the task of supporting so many devices, yet individuals keep sneaking iPhones into an organization, forcing them to adapt whether they like it or not.

While corporations may still be fighting a losing battle to lock the iPhone out of its networks, big companies are simultaneously embracing the idea of releasing their own unique iPhone apps for marketing purposes.

Whole Foods Market offers an app that lets you select different ingredients, and then it shows you several recipes you can make with those ingredients. This lets you use up what you already have at home, or help you creating a shopping list (buying stuff at Whole Foods, no doubt), so you'll pick up the right ingredients for whatever meal you want to prepare.



Figure 5. Whole Foods provides a recipe-searching app.

Pizza Hut has an even more unusual iPhone app. Just register at its main site, download the Pizza Hut app, and you'll be able to order pizza directly from your iPhone. This can come in handy when you're on your way home and want a hot pizza waiting for you when you get there. Of course, you could always use your iPhone to just call Pizza Hut to order some food, but where would the fun be in that when you can use the iPhone's touch gestures to pick out your pizza like playing a video game?

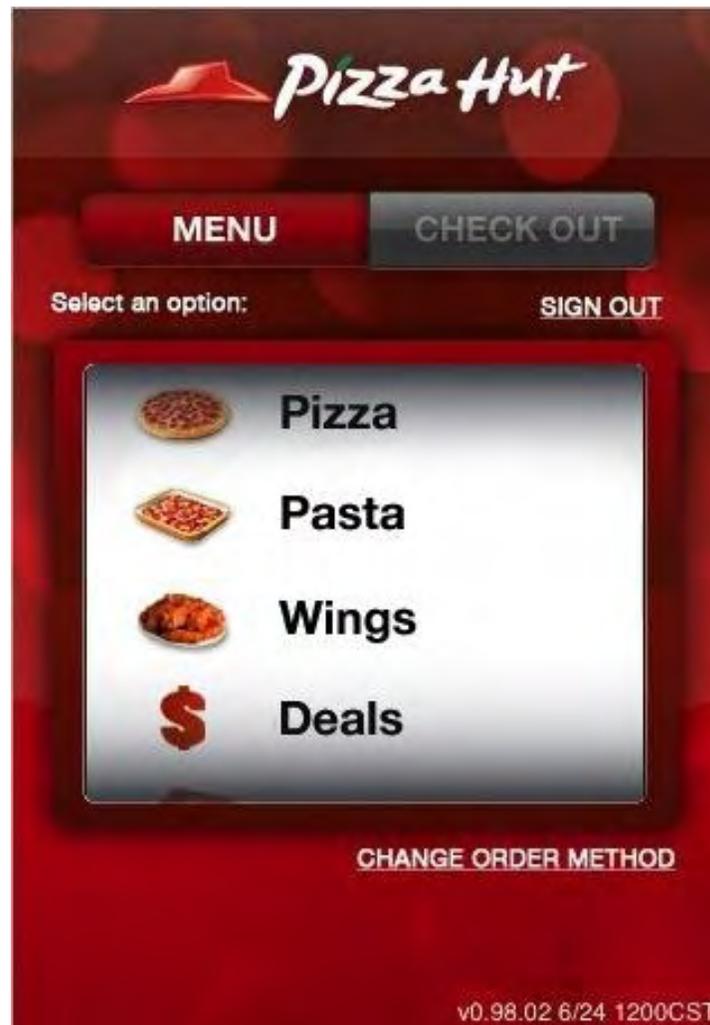


Figure 6. Pizza Hut's app lets you order pizza.

Expect more businesses to release their own apps to promote and market themselves. With so many specialized iPhone apps available, the rationale for buying any other smartphone keeps dropping dramatically.

### More Signs of the Windows Apocalypse?

Microsoft recently announced a 17 percent drop in revenue over the previous year. Of course, the company blamed the recession for this drop, ignoring the fact that Apple recently posted its best non-holiday quarter with a 4 percent growth of Macintosh computers, despite Microsoft's assertion that Macintoshes simply cost more just for a logo.

The real question is, why are people still buying Macintosh computers, despite the higher prices, while fewer people are buying Windows PCs despite the lower prices? If the recession is to blame for lower PC sales, why isn't the same recession affecting Macintosh sales in the same way?

Microsoft is pinning its hopes on the release of Windows 7, but here's something that could put a damper on its efforts. If you're using Vista and happy with it, why would you want to upgrade to Windows 7? Switching to Windows 7 from Vista isn't suddenly going to make you more productive. Windows 7 might run a bit faster than Vista, but are Windows 7's advantages compelling enough to shell out more cash for an upgrade?

If you're currently using Windows XP, switching to Windows 7 means buying a brand-new PC, transferring all your data to this new PC and reinstalling your software while learning the nuances of a different user interface. How many people want to go through this hassle just for the privilege of using a new operating system? After all, if Windows XP is working just fine, why bother switching to Windows 7 at all? If you're going to switch to a whole

new computer, why not switch to a Macintosh and eliminate the headaches of using Windows altogether?

The number of people still using Windows XP still exceeds the number of people using Vista. Chances are good the majority of Windows XP users will just stick with Windows XP, while the majority of Vista users will just stick with Vista. For those people willing to buy a new computer, a small minority will switch to the Macintosh while the rest will opt for Windows 7.

All of this means a steady erosion of Windows users and the continued growth of Macintosh users. The chances that Windows 7 will ever become as dominant as Windows XP is practically zero. Windows 7 works, but so does Windows XP and Vista (with service packs installed). Now Microsoft will have the dual problem of trying to convince both Windows XP and Vista users to switch to Windows 7. Good luck.

\* \* \*

If you regularly use the same programs every time you turn on your Macintosh, here's a way to make your Mac automatically load your favorite programs.

Right-click on a program icon displayed on the Dock to display a pop-up menu. Then choose Open at Login. Now, every time you turn on your Macintosh (or log in to your account), your chosen program will start automatically.



Figure 7. Selecting a program to start automatically.

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 participle with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

- Microsoft Office 2007 for Dummies ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470009233?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470009233](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470009233?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470009233))
- Beginning Programming for Dummies ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702))
- Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468))
- Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541))
- Steal This Computer Book 4.0 ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050))
- Visual Basic Express 2005: Now Playing ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593270593?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593270593](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593270593?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593270593))
- My New Mac ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271646?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271646?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646))
- My New iPhone ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-)

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956)

• Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon Fisher and Gerald Fisher ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894))

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 ([cybersportstoday.com/](http://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)), using the techniques he learned from a professional Wall Street day trader.

Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com) and at his personal web site ([www.wallacewang.com/](http://www.wallacewang.com/)).

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## Rob, The Computer Tutor

[Rob, The Computer Tutor Asks for Problems and Does VB.Net](#)  
"Programming in VB.Net" by Rob Spahitz

As Rob begins a series on learning how to program a computer with VB.Net, we are also introducing a new column feature where Rob will propose a problem and solicit solutions from readers.

### Solutions

Now that we've wrapped up Microsoft Excel and Access, and now that we're starting a new month, I've decided to change directions a bit. Every few weeks, I will propose a problem and solicit solutions from you! I'll also offer my own solutions, which may be better, worse or simply different. By getting different viewpoints, we should all learn from the experience.

For example, if you're a regular reader of other articles in *ComputerEdge*, you'll see some great answers from Digital Dave, many of which seem to be hardware and network-oriented. From Wally Wang, you get very Mac-centric views (although he has spent plenty of time in the Windows world). Our fearless leader Jack offers an industry-overview perspective. We get a variety of snippets on how to do things in the Unix/Linux world and, of course, most of my articles represent productivity tools in the Windows world. *ComputerEdge* also gets a variety of other contributions from various authors, each with a different perspective.

If presented with a computer problem, I suspect that collaboration between these authors would lead to some interesting solutions. And you, as a reader, might have better or more creative solutions. That's why I want to hear from you.

For example, this week's magazine topic is, "Little Things for the Webmaster to Do." This leads to a discussion on things related to Web page setup, design, implementation and maintenance. Where do you start? How do you get a Web page up and running? How do you add some fancy bells and whistles? So let's start with a simple problem.

*Problem 07/31: I want to create a Web page to show off some of the pictures I just pulled off my camera. How do I do this?*

Send me your solutions (through the e-mail at the end of the article) by August 10. Solutions can be as simple as "use this Web site" or as complex as build your own Linux server, connect it to the Internet and make them available through an IP address.

However, some rules: The solution must be accurate and safe for the readers. That is, don't tell me to go to a Web site without telling me the proper page and all the steps required by that Web site to get the pictures there. And safe? I don't want to use a service that could take my pictures and use them improperly. I also don't want a solution that requires opening the case of the computer or messing with the Registry.

Now, onto our next tutorial topic: Visual Basic.

### VB.Net History

Today, we begin our series on learning how to program a computer. In the Excel and Access articles, we played a bit with programming in Visual Basic (VB) using VBA to talk to the application and do something interesting. Now we'll start working with what I'll call "VBA for Windows." That is, VB that works to make your Windows

experience better.

First, some background, VB is Microsoft's latest generation of a programming language called BASIC, created as a graduate project in 1964. BASIC is an acronym for Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. It was a very simple way to work with complex computer commands back in the days when people were still manually connecting wires to make computers work. Some of its predecessors, COBOL and Fortran, were too complex for the average person to understand, so BASIC was a way to make it easier for the average person to program a computer.

When the first personal computers started appearing in the late 1970s, Apple Computer, Commodore and Radio Shack (and others) presented their own versions of BASIC to allow you to better manage recipes (and do a few other things that people didn't really need computers to do). Each of these offered a different version of BASIC to manage the computer. You would create some computer code to solve a problem, then maybe save it. Each time you shut off the computer, you had to reload the code, usually from a cassette tape. A few years later, IBM got in the mix and presented a more business-oriented approach to computerized solutions. Then, of course, the Mac had its grand entrance, and these two dominated the market (causing the others to fade away) until Linux appeared as added competition.

Through all of that, people would buy computer programs to handle certain tasks, such as balancing a checkbook or drawing pictures. Since IBM was really just offering hardware, it used an operating system (OS) from Microsoft to handle the processing of the pieces. This OS contained a file called BASIC that could perform simple programming tasks. Microsoft eventually developed this into something called QuickBASIC and, when Windows came out, a version for Windows called Visual Basic.

Things changed over the years from Visual Basic. At first it was a simple tool for creating Windows forms. If you wanted to do anything serious on your computer, you looked elsewhere. However, by version 3 (around 1990), VB was offering some better ways to handle all the basic tasks needed for any computer. Version 4 offered a transition from 16-bit to 32-bit processors, but little more. Version 5 improved memory management while enhancing the use of Windows-like components. Version 6 offered Web connectivity as we approached the turn of the century.

With this decent product on the market, Microsoft offered a great tool for the average person to create a Windows application. However, it charged about \$999 for this privilege (or more if included as part of a suite of other software development products). Meanwhile, Sun Microsystems had released something to the industry called Java, which was another programming language. Since it was free, many small software developers started heading in that direction. Microsoft had to do something. Furthermore, many "true" software developers didn't respect VB because it was so easy to use (and therefore not a serious product). These developers created components that VB could use to make things work even better, but trying to incorporate them was quite a challenge.

So Microsoft took a radical new approach. In 2001, it released a product called Dot Net (or ".Net"). The idea was that all software developers could now use the Internet or other networks to share pieces, rather than the previous design of creating everything yourself in one place. Microsoft integrated all of its software development products into this new delivery and made it available—wait for it—*for free*. Well, free for one year. It turns out that Microsoft chose to keep it free, probably because the competition was still lurking around the corner. Among other things, one part of this product was VB.Net (aka VB 7.0). This product was very much like the previous version, but some things changed to make it compatible with other development tools, which typically worked with 64-bit processors.

So here we stood with a new version of VB that caused the old stuff to break. VB developers hated it because they actually had to learn how to use better tools that were different enough that they couldn't just jump right in. However, like any good tool, as you play with it, you get better and better at using it effectively.

My goal is to show you how to use VB.Net effectively.

## VB.Net 2010

As of this writing, VB.Net stands at version 2008 (aka VB 9.0) after having gone through version 2002 (originally just VB.Net), version 2003 and version 2005 (aka VB 8.0). Lurking on the horizon is something currently referred to as VB.Net 2010 (aka VB 10.0).

Since I have not tried 2010, I figure I might as well be the guinea pig. I'll go through the steps to download and install this and see what happens. If things work out, then great. If not, we'll find a solution!

First, where do you look? Well, since this is a Microsoft product, start at *www.microsoft.com* and notice a tab called All Products, which contains Visual Basic, as seen in Figure 1. Click on that.

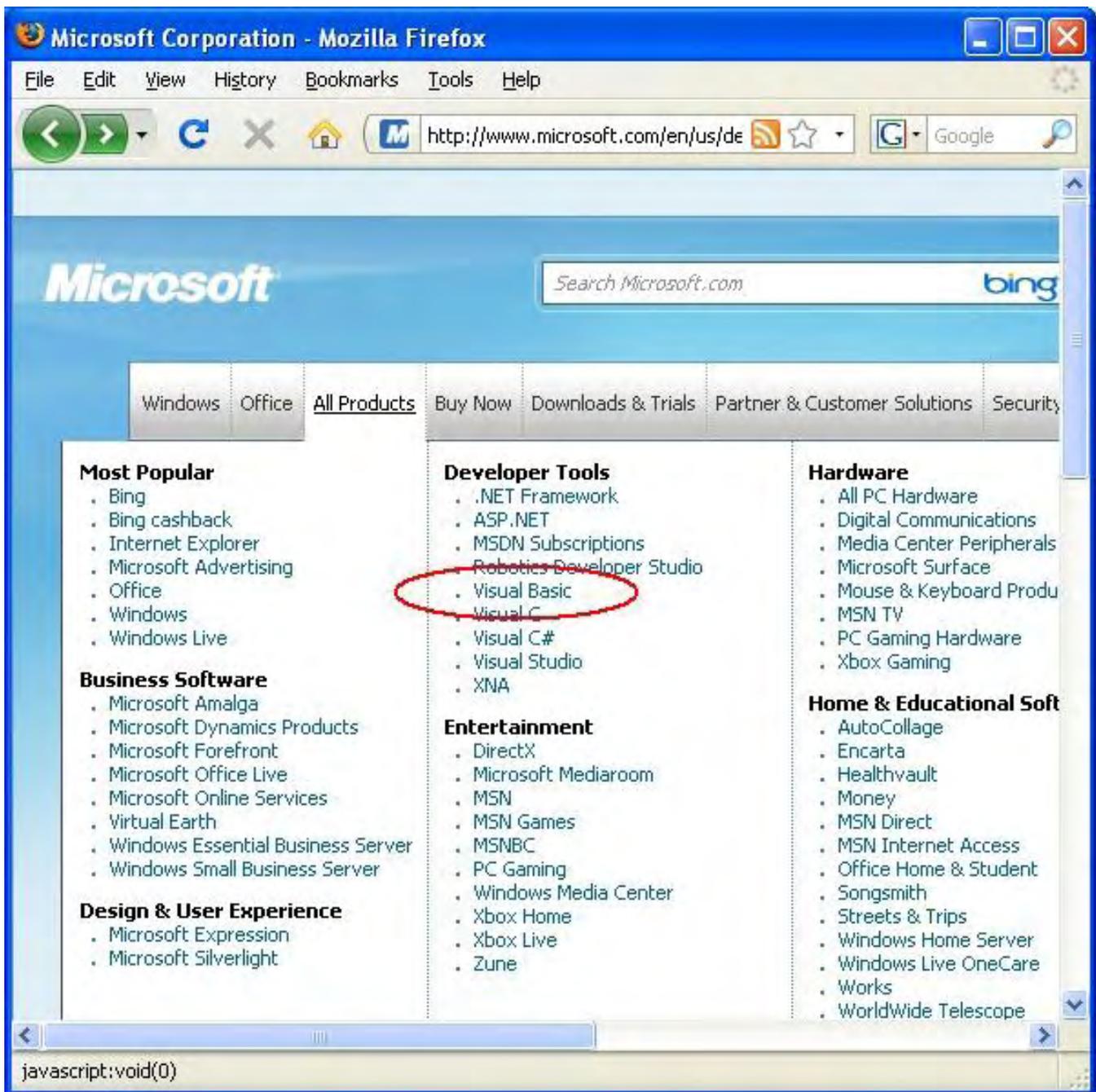


Figure 1. Microsoft Web site and Visual Basic.

When you click on that, it takes you to the Visual Basic area. Near the top left, as seen in Figure 2, you can see the latest version available for download, Visual Basic 2008 Express Edition. This is the one I recommend

downloading for now. However, again, I'm going to try to get the 2010 version. If that fails, we'll revert back to the 2008 edition.



Figure 2. VB 2008 Express Edition Download.

Near the top, you see a Downloads tab. Click that, and the first link in the list is Visual Studio 2010 and .Net Framework 4 Beta 1. Now, understand that this is a beta product, meaning that it is not quite ready for the market. It's been reasonably tested, but may have other issues that are still being investigated. Also, the new .Net Framework version 4 is apparently required. FYI, the Framework is a structure used to support common development between Microsoft's development tools. This is what allows for smooth integration between its products and will soon be an integral part of all Windows versions. To use VB.Net, you need an appropriate version of the Framework. If you have Vista or Windows 7 (or XP with the newest service pack), you probably have a version installed.

Click on the link to get Visual Studio 2010. Visual Studio is the name of the suite of software development tools

that includes VB. At this page, again click on the link with the same name. This page now presents you with information about how to handle the download. I'll give my own review, but feel free to examine that. In the second section, Download the Beta, is a link called Visual Studio 2010 Professional Beta 1 ([www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=75cbcbcd-b0e8-40ea-adae-85714e8984e3&displaylang=en](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=75cbcbcd-b0e8-40ea-adae-85714e8984e3&displaylang=en)). That takes you to the download page seen in Figure 3.

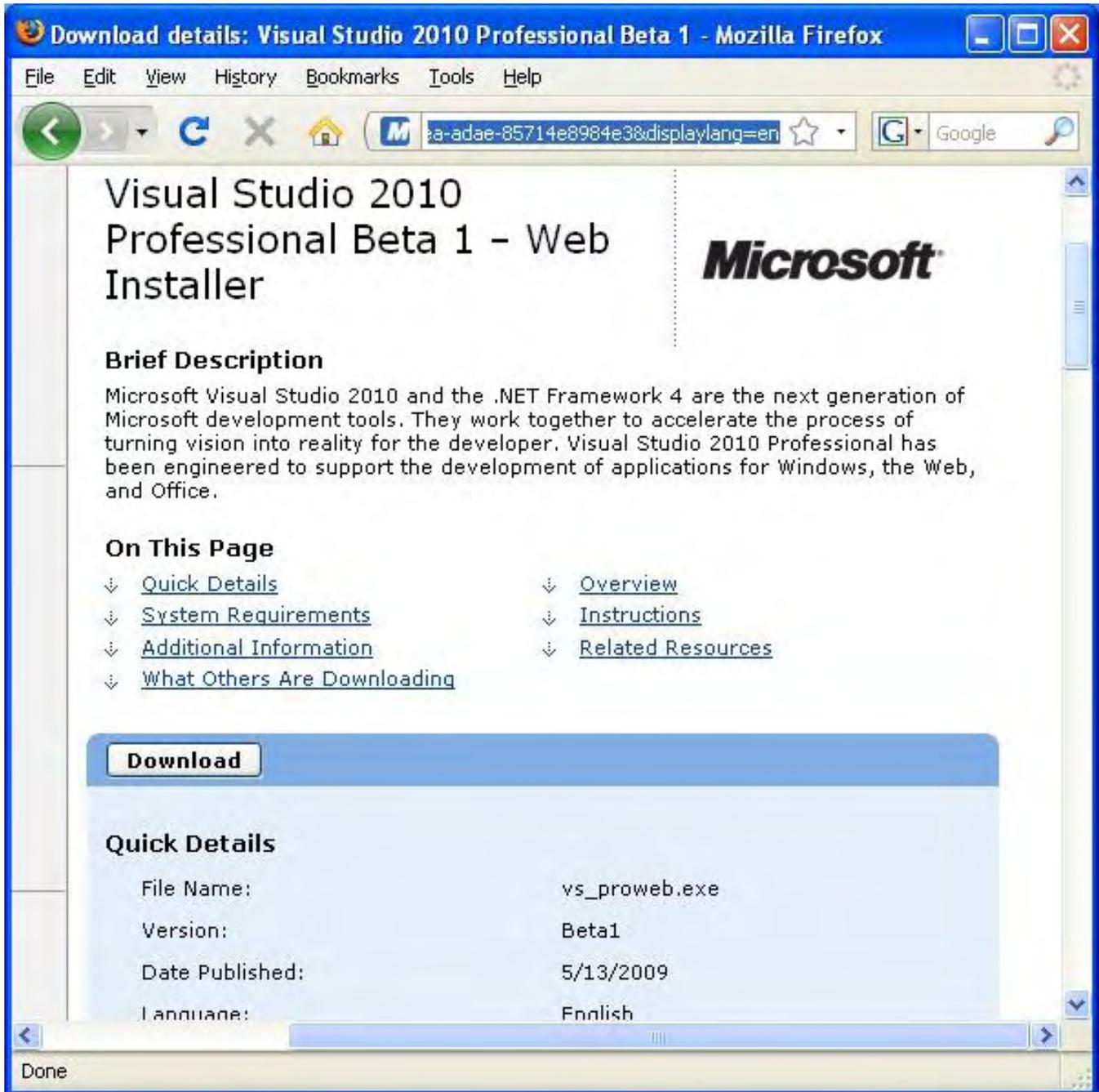


Figure 3. VB 2010 Download Page.

Please note that if you download this product, you do so at your own risk. I suggest making a system backup before proceeding, since beta products can have side-effects on your system. I have chosen to install mine inside a Virtual PC session to reduce this risk. (Check the Microsoft site for Virtual PC for information about this product.)

When you're ready, click on the Download button. It takes you to another page and should launch a download of the file "vs\_proweb.exe." Click the OK button to continue, and run it when it completes. Since it's a small file, it should download quickly. After running it, several screens will flash before a setup window appears, as seen in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Visual Studio 2010 download and setup.

Click the Next button, read and agree to the license terms, and click the Next button. On the next screen, select the box near the top left to "Install full support for: .Net Development Environment." If you'd like only VB, click on the Customize button at the bottom and choose that. I'm going to select everything. Understand that some of my future screens may look different because of this. Either way, click on the Install button when done. Depending on what you selected, your download will go through and get the various pieces over the next couple of hours (using DSL). After that it will start installing, which may require some reboots (twice for me). If all goes well, you should get a "Success" screen at the end. Click on the Finish button, and you're ready to go. You'll have a new entry in your Start menu, ready to explore more.

Next week, we'll open VB.Net and see what's in there. Meanwhile, don't forget to e-mail me your solutions to the problem presented earlier.

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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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## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

“The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.” by Charles Carr



An Easy Upgrade Path from Windows XP to 7?—Laplink's PCmover promises an easy upgrade path for XP users to Windows 7, even if Microsoft doesn't; The Move to Stop Dumping Techno-Trash in Developing Countries—Basel Action Network is calling on consumers, manufacturers and retailers to make a commitment to never allow their old e-waste to go to recyclers that will simply export it to developing countries; A Recording Studio on Your Desktop—A review of Line6's UX2.

### An Easy Upgrade Path from Windows XP to 7?

According to Laplink ([www.laplink.com](http://www.laplink.com)), "Microsoft, in a break with past practice, has decided to not support a direct upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7."

Hey, it's even worse for the entire continent of Europe (which, merely coincidentally I am sure, slapped MS with an immense fine not too long ago). Microsoft will not offer any direct upgrade options to European users whatsoever—not even for Vista users.

Coming to the rescue is Laplink's PCmover, a product the company promises will offer an easy upgrade path for XP users to Windows 7.

"Outside of Europe, to upgrade a computer running Windows XP," says Laplink, "Microsoft requires users to first upgrade from XP to Vista and then from Vista to Windows 7. Alternatively, XP users (as well as Vista users in Europe), must copy all data to a safe location, install the full version of Windows 7, and then reinstall all their applications and restore their data by hand."

Laplink claims to have the problem licked with a fast, simple solution that doesn't even require copying data to and from an external drive:

1. Install PCmover on the Windows XP or Vista computer to be upgraded.
2. Run PCmover and select the "Upgrade" option.
3. Install Windows 7, selecting the "Do Not Reformat" option.
4. Install and run PCmover, which will automatically restore all applications, files and settings.

That sounded almost too good to be true, so I decided to double-check: "Will Laplink allow XP users to do a *clean* install of Windows 7 without having to reinstall *any* apps?" I asked the company rep.

He replied, "Charles, with PCmover we offer the consumer or business two options:

1. In-place Upgrade 1: The option to reformat the hard drive and do a clean install of Windows 7 (files, programs and settings are retained). In-place upgrade *with* reformat (clean install)—yes, PCmover will allow this without the user having to reinstall any apps (and retaining all data, settings, etc.), but the user needs to have an external location (such as network drive or external USB hard drive) that PCmover can use to (temporarily) 'park' stuff while you reformat and load W7 as a clean install (reformatting the hard drive).

2. In-place Upgrade 2: An actual upgrade from XP to Windows 7—not reformatting the hard drive (files, programs and settings are also retained). In-place upgrade and *not* reformatting (not a clean install)—PCmover will do this

without the user having to reinstall any apps (and retaining all data, settings, etc.) and no need for external storage."

"PCmover is the only program capable of automatically performing this task," said Thomas Koll, Laplink's CEO. "Other products fall short. Disk imaging software cannot easily restore across different operating systems, while file transfer programs can't handle applications. Without PCmover, users must copy all data files manually to an external drive, upgrade to Windows 7, and then reinstall all the applications, data and settings by hand. Not only is this time-consuming, but many users will lose important data or applications."

And, according to Laplink, PCmover isn't limited to in-place upgrades for Windows 7, but supports users moving from any version of Windows (95 or later), whether on the same hardware or migrating to a new PC.

Other options include:

- **Transfer Applications:** Transfer all or selected applications to your new PC.
- **File & Folder Selectivity:** You decide which files and folders belong on your new PC—or copy all of them.
- **Undo:** Quickly reverse-transfer at any time with PCmover's easy "undo" feature.
- **Easy-to-Use Wizard Interface:** Click through a simple wizard to set up the move. In a few minutes, PCmover will start to transfer your programs, files and settings in one easy step.

We look forward to putting PCmover through its paces when Windows 7 becomes available October 22.

### **The Move to Stop Dumping Techno-Trash in Developing Countries**

Basel Action Network (BAN), a group that describes itself as "a global advocate for responsible toxic management practices," is calling on consumers, manufacturers and retailers of computers and electronics "to make a commitment to never allow their old e-waste to go to recyclers that will simply export it to developing countries.

"BAN asks all consumers to only use so-called 'e-Steward' qualified recyclers—a group of industry leaders that will not allow such damaging exports. Further, BAN announced that they will soon be posting an ongoing report card on their Web site of all major computer manufacturers and retailers which will give pass/fail grading on whether the corporate policy forbids export to developing countries. Already, Dell and Sony have received high praise from BAN and the Electronic TakeBack Coalition for having committed not to export the e-wastes under their control.

"The call to cease unsustainable and unjust exports of techno-trash comes on the wake of yet another major media exposé, PBS's Frontline, which recently depicted the horrors of primitive electronic waste processing in countries such as Ghana and China. This expose follows a previous 60 Minutes report, and a scathing report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) last fall."

"Enough is enough," said BAN's Executive Director Jim Puckett. "Our government sits on its hands and refuses to prohibit this type of toxic waste dumping the rest of the developed world has outlawed a long time ago. There's no excuse for this dirty trade other than pure greed. We have excellent U.S. recyclers and refurbishers here that are sick and tired of losing business to the dumpers. They can do this important job in an environmentally sound and ethical way without pushing costs and harm on to the backs of the children in Africa and Asia."

"Currently, the truly responsible recyclers in the U.S. and Canada face unfair competition from thousands of unethical waste recyclers in North America. These companies are more accurately described as waste shippers," said Marshall Johnson, CEO of Asset Recovery Corp., an e-Steward recycler based in Minnesota. "We strongly support BAN's efforts and urge consumers and businesses to only use qualified e-Stewards. This is the only way to ensure their old electronics will be safely recycled here at home."

More information at [www.e-Stewards.org](http://www.e-Stewards.org), [www.ban.org](http://www.ban.org) and [www.computertakeback.com](http://www.computertakeback.com).

## A Recording Studio on Your Desktop

First off, I play the guitar, not the mouse. I want to make music, not have to figure out a lot of settings and technical terminology. But that doesn't mean I don't know what sounds good and want something that delivers the sonic goods. Line6's UX2 ([www.line6.com/podstudioux2](http://www.line6.com/podstudioux2)) (about \$200) is exactly what someone like me needs. It's as simple as pie, but can you still dig deeper and uncover more features than just about anyone could ever need.



Line6's UX2

The first surprise was how easy the UX2 was to set up. I plugged it into a USB port, installed the drivers, and plugged in my axe. The lightweight unit (truth be told, it actually could be built a bit more solid) comes with several programs, but I didn't even need to install them to be able to start doing amazing things in Sony's Acid loop program.

But the real fun began when I installed the programs.

POD Farm is the first one you probably should check out. It has an unbelievable number of sounds and effects for the guitar with extremely quiet inputs and outputs.



POD Farm

Another program, Riff Works, has surprisingly realistic-sounding rhythm tracks. Just play guitar (or bass or keyboard or mic or whatever) over the tracks, record your tune and export it to WAV file. I did not have a single problem with latency—the phenomenon where live sounds are recorded out of sync with computer sounds.

Then there's Gearbox, a program very similar to Pod Farm, but you can also import music from CDs or files and play along.

Tone Port is a program that connects you to very informative online lessons from Line6.

Abelton Live Lite is a 16-track recording studio on a disc. It's a basic version of much more expensive full product that still has enough features for most demos or non-Abbey Road-level projects. Wait a minute, come to think of it, didn't the Beatles record that classic on much less-capable gear?

Some quick specs from Line6:

- Up to 24-bit/96 kHz recording. Super quiet inputs and outputs.
- POD Farm plug-in (Mac AU/RTAS/VST and Windows RTAS/VST)
- Eighteen immortal guitar amps (modeled after Fender Deluxe Reverb , Marshall JCM-800, Vox AC-30 Top Boost, Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier and more) coming through 24 guitar cab configurations.
- Five bass amps and five bass cabs

- Twenty-nine essential stompbox and studio effects (modeled after EP-1 Tube Echoplex, Ibanez Tube Screamer, MXR Phase 90, LA-2A studio compression and more)
- Six crucial mic preamps (modeled after Neve 1073, Avalon Vt737, API 512c, and more)

The UX2 works with just about any sequencing program, Windows or Mac: Cubase, Sony Acid, Logic, Garageband, Pro Tools, Cakewalk Sonar and lots others.

Now that the UX2 has made it easy for me to make music the way I want to, I actually look forward to learning how to do new things on its terms for years to come.



Review contributed by Corey Diamano

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In addition to being an editor and columnist for *ComputerEdge* and *ComputerScene* Magazines, where he has written hundreds of feature articles and cover stories over the past decade, Charles Carr has also penned well over 1,000 non-tech newspaper and magazine articles and columns for various publications, including two widely-read columns each week for San Diego's *North County Times* newspaper.

Carr has covered such diverse topics as pesticide use in area schools, invasive background checks for county volunteers, asthma awareness, the debate over standards-based grading, potential vulnerabilities in electronic voting machines, and Southern California's devastating 2003 and 2007 wildfires. He has also written many humorous pieces.

Carr has also edited dozens of stories and articles written by others which have appeared in major publications and web sites across the country.

He has been a contributor and technical advisor to *L.A. and San Diego Parent* magazines and receives dozens of requests a year to appear on Southern California television and radio stations to talk about important events in the tech world.

Carr has judged many writing competitions including San Diego Press Club and Time-Warner Communications contests and was sole judge for the national NAPPA Tech Toys awards for five years (which his kids really appreciated). He was recently a judge for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition.

He has won many writing accolades, including Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Consumer Writing and Best Arts and Entertainment, and has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

Carr will soon publish his first book, *What a World*, a collection of his best writings.

Learn more at [www.charlescarr.com](http://www.charlescarr.com).

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# ComputerQuick Reviews

## News and Reviews from Readers and Staff

### ComputerQuick Reviews

**“Answers for "Anyone  
Know a Good Registry  
Cleaner?"”** by  
ComputerEdge Staff

Last week, Burt G. asked a question about Registry-cleaner programs. Our readers have heeded the call.

*Last week, Burt G. asked a question about Registry-cleaner programs:*

*Dear ComputerEdge,*

*I have downloaded and tried a couple of Registry-cleaner programs highly recommended (by whom?) on their Web sites, only to need to do restores to undo monumental screwups. Would you consider providing a list of programs that your readers have found satisfactory? I realize that you could be inundated with recommendation pitches from sales departments. I am concerned that the recommendations I found in computer magazines are "selling" the program recommended for their advertisers.*

*Burt G.*

### **Revo Uninstall**

There were a number of responses from other *ComputerEdge* readers:

Hello, *ComputerEdge* People!

You people are great. I have learned so many things from your weekly e-mail.

In this week's issue, you asked for information about Registry cleaners. Revo Uninstall ([www.revouninstaller.com/](http://www.revouninstaller.com/)) is one of the very best I have found for removing any unwanted items from my computer. It will not only remove the program, but it cleans any unnecessary bits from the Registry, and it is free, including the easy-to-follow instructions. (See the CNET Editor's Review ([download.cnet.com/Revo-Uninstaller/3000-2096\\_4-10687648.html](http://download.cnet.com/Revo-Uninstaller/3000-2096_4-10687648.html)).)

If there is a better one, I have not found it. Also, most of the so-called *free* downloads advertised in PC magazines generally are not free, and generally create more problems with my computer than they solve.

Thanks for all that you do.

Arden Heinrich  
Denver, Colorado

### **CCleaner**

I recently downloaded the CCleaner ([www.ccleaner.com/](http://www.ccleaner.com/)) freeware Registry cleaner and disk cleaner combo. I saw

it referenced in a book about speeding up your PC after installing/uninstalling awhile.

Although it was a bit scary to delete all of the "issues" it found—mostly from uninstalls that didn't completely clean up after themselves—I went ahead and let it clean all of them (after taking its advice to allow it to back up my current Registry). I also cleaned up files on my disk. And the company, Piriform ([www.piriform.com/](http://www.piriform.com/)), also has a freeware disk defrag (called defraggler).

I've only used it for a short while, so I can't say whether or not it's a solid product, but so far, I'm very pleased. (See the CNET Editor's Review ([download.cnet.com/ccleaner/?tag=mncol](http://download.cnet.com/ccleaner/?tag=mncol)).

Roger Crowley  
Poway, CA

I have been using CCleaner for about a year for Registry cleanup. I always back up the cleanup, but have never had to restore the backup. I have never had a problem with this program. It seems to work very well at cleaning up garbage in the Registry without causing problems.

Grady Johnson  
San Diego, CA

### More Suggestions

OK, I've used three:

- Ace Utilities ([download.cnet.com/Ace-Utilities/3000-2086\\_4-10145494.html?tag=mncol](http://download.cnet.com/Ace-Utilities/3000-2086_4-10145494.html?tag=mncol)) (\$29.95)
- Tweaknow Powerpak ([download.cnet.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-18512\\_4-10262639.html?tag=mncol](http://download.cnet.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-18512_4-10262639.html?tag=mncol)) (Free)
- Norton

I tried several ways to figure out which is "better." They all gave approximately the same results. I'd use Ace, then Tweaknow, then Norton to see if the latter two found something Ace didn't. Nope. Then I'd wait about a month, then run Norton, Ace, then Tweaknow. Still no change. And finally, well, you get the idea. A month or more in between, and the program I ran found a lot of unnecessary stuff, but none of them actually proved better than another.

Over all, on an XP machine (and very old 9YO Dell desktop), speed increased greatly. And on a wireless Linksys system, this makes a *huge* difference. On a Sony Vaio running Vista, you could notice a slowdown. I ran all three, and each one found the same number of problems and fixed them all. There was a noticeable increase in speed on a very good machine.

Derrick Denessen

*Before you jump whole hog into any Registry cleaners, you may want to check out the following links submitted by Les Irvin:*

### Wisdom of Using Registry Cleaners for Routine Cleaning

Check out the following:

1. Do I need a Registry Cleaner? ([www.whatthetech.com/2007/11/25/do-i-need-a-registry-cleaner/](http://www.whatthetech.com/2007/11/25/do-i-need-a-registry-cleaner/)), 25 Nov, Posted by Blair in Windows ([www.whatthetech.com/category/windows/](http://www.whatthetech.com/category/windows/)). Article by Bill Castner.
2. Why your registry doesn't need cleaning. ([blogs.techrepublic.com.com/security/?p=370](http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/security/?p=370)) Date: November 29th, 2007, Author: Mike Mullins

3. Why I don't use registry cleaners. ([www.edbott.com/weblog/archives/000643.html](http://www.edbott.com/weblog/archives/000643.html)) Published April 19, 2005 by Ed Bott

Les Irvin

*I glanced over the articles submitted by Les. They are well worth reading. All of them mention CCleaner in some way. Apparently, it is not too aggressive, and you don't want a Registry cleaner that is overly ambitious. Some of the programs may find and "correct" many issues that will cause you other problems. Always create a restore point before you use any Registry cleaner—if you use one at all.*

Jack Dunning

### **New Question: What Is the Best Laptop for the Price?**

What is the best laptop to buy for the price these days? I need one with plenty of memory, that is fast and easy to link to satellite or whatever so I can use my laptop almost anywhere. I need very good graphics, a large screen, and it should not too heavy or bulky.

Thanks for your assistance.

Julian Calhoun

*A pretty big question, but if you have any thoughts, please let us know.*

### **Subject: True Image 11.0**

This program can transfer backup data to a second installed hard drive, but will not recognize an external drive. My efforts to solve this problem with the customer service people results only in receiving difficult instructions that have not worked. Other instructions involve Registry changes, which are unwise for the uninitiated to attempt. Ultimately, they just stopped responding to my concerns. Now, I just manually click and drag data.

Jim Butts

### **We Want Your Opinions About Hardware, Software and Web Sites**

Over the years, *ComputerEdge* has had great input from our readers. In particular, people have submitted short reviews of equipment, software and Web sites that they really like. In some cases readers have offered tips (such as avoiding flakes on Craigslist). ComputerQuick Reviews is our column dedicated to highlighting those things that you most like and want to recommend to others. The problem is that if this column doesn't appear, it becomes forgotten and less likely to receive input from you.

We have decided to include this feature in every issue as a reminder that this is your magazine—even if we don't have any new reader reviews. If you would like to see the type of reviews that we have run in the past, then check out ComputerQuick Reviews ([webserver.computoredge.com/sitemap.mvc?feature=Columns&columnedcode=persrev&column=ComputerQuick%20Reviews](http://webserver.computoredge.com/sitemap.mvc?feature=Columns&columnedcode=persrev&column=ComputerQuick%20Reviews)) in the *ComputerEdge* Site Map. You will find that they are quite varied. We would like to see more. Consider this column a gentle prod saying that we would like to hear from you.

You can send us an e-mail at ComputerQuick Reviews Submissions ([ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)).

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*The purpose of this column is to give our readers an opportunity to express their opinions about products and services that they have found particularly useful. If you have had experience with hardware, software or a Web site*

*that made you say, "This is really great! I want to tell everyone about it," then this is a good place to do it. While we do want to post warnings, we are not interested in slamming the obscure bad products, because there are too many of them. We would like to hear about those things that you would recommend to your best friend. The only caution is to please use proper capitalization (do not use all caps) and complete sentences. If it takes us too long to edit the piece, it may be a long time before it's published on this site.*

*Please send your personal reviews to [ComputerQuick Reviews Submissions \(ceeditor@computoredge.com\)](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com).*

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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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## EdgeWord: Google Android, Windows 7 and Apple



“Computer Industry Musings” by Jack Dunning

Jack takes a look at the outlook for Android-based cell phones, Microsoft's EU predicament, sagging MS sales and more.

The major cell phone companies and cell phone manufacturers, except for Apple, which builds the iPhone, are taking an increased interest in Google's Android Linux-based cell phone operating system. There are a number of new cell phone models sporting the operating system due out later this year and in 2010. Since it's open source, Android is much less expensive to install on a computer/cell phone. Plus, hardware companies, such as Motorola, Samsung and Sony Ericsson, are not going to sit back and watch Apple's iPhone take all of the cell phone market—not to mention the service providers such as Sprint and Verizon.

Some people who watch the market predict that the number of apps developed for the iPhone will maintain Apple as the dominant player in cell phone hardware. They may be right, but the Android phone will sell at a lower price—plus there is evidence that the writers of iPhone apps are already hedging their bets by rewriting their software for Android and BlackBerry devices.

Microsoft may be completely cut out of this market, since it doesn't make the cell phone hardware. Not many companies will pay to install software on their phone models when there is a free alternative. The only problem I see for the cell phone service providers is their desire to own a piece of everything that their subscribers do (ring tones, apps, etc.). With an open-source Linux operating system, it may be much more difficult for them to control their users.

\* \* \*

Technically, Microsoft is not punishing Europe for its recent rulings against the company by forcing clean installs of any Windows 7 upgrades—even over Vista. The problem was caused by Microsoft removing Internet Explorer from the Windows 7 installation, which is an integral part of the operating system—or so I'm told. That's why you can't uninstall Internet Explorer in Vista.

Now Europeans will be forced to choose which Web browser they want on their computer. It's tough when you have to choose between various free browsers. I recommend Google Chrome—for now. Internet Explorer crashes too much, and the latest versions of Firefox have some quirks that I just can't get past.

\* \* \*

The sagging sales for Microsoft are only partially due to the economy (or the love affair with the Macintosh). Many people are waiting for Windows 7 computers to hit the market before they buy. If you buy a Vista machine today, you will qualify for a free Windows 7 upgrade, but who wants to mess with upgrading a new computer. Waiting until the October release date seems like a viable option. Until then, Microsoft will sag. I predict a Microsoft boom in the last quarter of this year. Even the huge number of discounted copies of Windows 7 sold as pre-orders will not be recognized until they are shipped in October.

\* \* \*

Anyone know how many people are running Windows on their Mac? If it's a decent percentage, then it would support my contention that Microsoft and Apple are not really in competition. Every Mac sold is a potential Windows machine with the use of virtual machine software (Parallels or Fusion). That's another Windows sale for Microsoft. Do you think Microsoft cares which hardware is running Windows? The Mac is just a high-end, quality machine that will run Windows as well as Apple software.

\* \* \*

The fact that Apple owns 90 percent of the over-\$1,000 computer market only points out that Apple is one of the few computer builders that still sells computers for more than \$1,000. More power to them. Profits are merely the costs of the future—a requirement for the future.

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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: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

**“Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.”** by ComputerEdge Staff

"ComputerTutor Kudos," "Screenplay Software Options," "Microsoft Update Catalog," "Free Screenplay Software," "Windows 7 Is Worth It"

### **ComputerTutor Kudos**

[This letter is in regard to Rob Spahitz's July 17 ComputerTutor column, "More Solutions and Troubleshooting."]

Good article. I write software (php) for an education grading system, and this looks like an interesting alternative that I could pursue.

-Mark Burton, Albuquerque

### **Screenplay Software Options**

[This letter is in regard to Michael J. Ross' July 17 article, "Screenplay Software Options."]

Interesting article—an application I had not considered. I teach a computer class and I will pass this along to our journalism teacher.

-Mark Burton, Albuquerque

### **Microsoft Update Catalog**

[This letter is in regard to Digital Dave's July 17 column, where a reader wrote in looking for help applying Windows Updates to various machines.]

I never thought I would thank someone for sharing the MUC [Microsoft Update Catalog]. What an awesome utility! I shared it with our Certification & Accreditation team (U.S. Navy).

Thank you!

-Kurt Danis, Colorado Springs

### **Free Screenplay Software**

[This letter is in regard to Michael J. Ross' July 17 article, "Celtx: Free Screenplay Software."]

Excellent article.

Would you also please include an article about free book-writing software, especially for publishing a hard copy later?

Thanks,

-Dee, San Diego

## Windows 7 Is Worth It

[Regarding Jack Dunning's July 17 Windows Vista Tips and Tricks column:] I installed the Windows 7 RC update over Vista, and everything is working well. I like the new and improved user-interface features and think it is worth the price.

If you have Vista, then Windows 7 will be definite improvement.

—John, JW Overland Consulting, San Diego, CA

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