

ComputerEdge™ Online — 08/07/09



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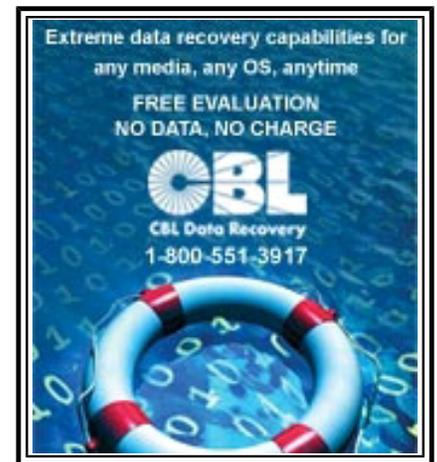
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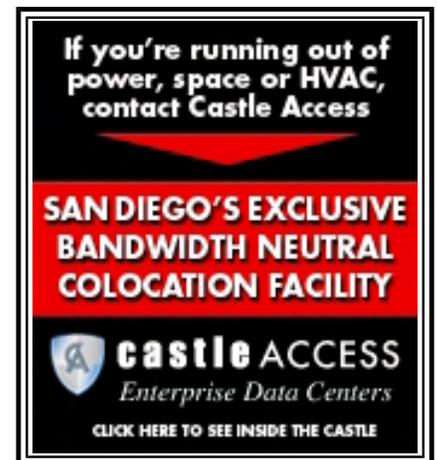
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Digital Dave

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

A reader wants to go from 1GB to 2GB of RAM on a Dell laptop; a reader is troubled by a Web site account's request for a password; is there any reason why a reader should not turn off his modem/router daily?

Dear Digital Dave,

I want to go from 1GB to 2GB of RAM on my Dell laptop.

- 1. What's your opinion about third-party suppliers?*
- 2. Most suppliers offer 2x1 gigabyte chips; however, one offers 1x2 GB, which I've not seen anywhere else. What is your suggestion on which way to go? If I go with the 1x2, could I keep the existing 1x512 chip to increase speed even more?*

*Gary
Groveland, CA*

Dear Gary,

I see no problem with you purchasing third-party memory modules. Buying memory directly from Dell for your computer may be more expensive without necessarily being better memory.

Memory has become a commodity, with the price primarily being dictated by market demand and availability. There are many companies producing memory, and they all must meet the specifications for a particular type of memory. However, some companies will exercise tighter quality-control standards than others. This means that their memory, on the average, will be more reliable and stable. Generally, you will pay a little more for this memory.

This is not to say that you can't get cheaper memory that will perform just as well as the more expensive brands. To a large extent, it will depend upon the luck of the draw. In my experience, when there is a computer problem, it is rarely caused by the brand of memory.

On your second question, it is important that you look up how much memory your computer will support. Computers are built to support a maximum amount of memory, although they are rarely delivered with that max installed. You can check the specifications in the owner's manual.

I found the following list at the Dell Web site for one of its laptops. This is not necessarily your computer, since you didn't say which Dell laptop you own; it is merely an example.

- Memory module connector two user-accessible SODIMM connectors
- Memory module capacities 256MB, 512MB, and 1GB
- Memory type 1.8-V SODIMM DDR-2
- Minimum memory 256MB
- Maximum memory 2GB

Another way to find out what your computer will take is to visit the Crucial Web site (www.crucial.com/systemscanner/index.aspx). There you will find a scanner tool that will tell you what your computer has in memory and how much can be added. (They will also try to sell you their memory, but it's not necessarily the best price for Crucial memory.)

If the maximum memory for your computer is 2GB, then there is no point in installing more than that limit. It probably either won't be recognized or won't operate properly.

When expanding your memory with only two slots, it is better to fill each slot with the same size memory module. That means you should go with the two 1GB modules rather than one 2GB stick. While using different-sized memory modules in each slot may work, I've seen random errors generated in these situations. When one of the sticks was removed, the errors would go away.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I'm going to create an account on a Web site that asks for a username—which isn't problem for me—as well as an e-mail address, including a password.

Does this mean the password I would use to access my e-mail, or do they mean that I can/should create one for the new user account?

Patrick

Denver, Colorado

Dear Patrick,

You are right to be cautious. You should never give your e-mail password to anyone or any Web site. If they are asking for your e-mail password, then they are probably phishing. There is no telling what they may do once they get into your e-mail.

It is relatively common for Web accounts to ask for an e-mail address. This is one of the ways that the site can ensure that a real person is signing up. However, if you want to protect your main e-mail address, you should get a free e-mail account from Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo. That way, if you ever have a problem, you can delete the e-mail account.

If you are opening an account on a Web site, you will want to create a new password. Again, never use your e-mail password—or any of your other sensitive passwords. Keep them well protected.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Recently, I have begun turning off my computer when I am sure I am not going to access anything for the rest of the day. Now I am also turning off my modem and wireless Linksys modem, mostly in the interest of saving energy. Is there any reason why I should not turn off the modems daily?

*Peg
El Cajon*

Dear Peg,

There are some cable and DSL providers that ask you to leave your modem on at all times. The reason for this is that their systems will routinely run checks on the modem, helping to ensure proper operation. If the modem is off, there is nothing to be checked. However, the decision is completely yours.

Another result of turning off your modem could be that when the modem comes back up, it may be assigned a new IP address by your provider. For most people, this will make no difference. Some ISPs routinely rotate IP addresses regardless.

One of the problems with turning off all of your equipment is the time it takes to get everything back up and running. In my situation, I use my computers so much—even when I'm away—that it would be impractical to shut everything down. Yet, if you go long periods of time without using your computer, it may be worthwhile to endure the startup periods.

If you are trying to save electricity by shutting down your modem, then you won't save much. The typical modem without Wi-Fi features draws less than 10 watts. Turning off one 25-watt lamp will save more. For further perspective, your computer probably draws more than 200 watts. Powering down your computer will have the most impact on energy usage.

If you are looking for longer life in your equipment, turning it off will not necessarily give you more longevity. When equipment is powered up, power surges occur, which tend to stress electronic components more than steady operations. The on-and-off cycle could actually shorten the life of equipment, depending upon the frequency.

Today, the unstable startup state is less of a problem than it used to be. It would be difficult to reach the number of startups necessary for a statistical difference in reliability these days.

If you are worried about outsiders intruding into your system, you will get just as much protection by disconnecting the data from the modem. This is the ultimate firewall. Don't forget to plug it back in when you want to use the Internet.

Ultimately, it is a personal decision. I can see turning off your computer to save energy—and possibly your wireless router, but I would tend to leave the modem up and running.

Digital Dave

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What's Important When Picking a Printer

“When you buy a new printer, make sure it's going to last.” by Jack Dunning

Consumers may want to buy a printer while they are still so cheap. If you're in the market for a new printer, take the time to evaluate exactly what you need.

Since the beginning of computer time, printers have been the traditional sidekick of the computer. Without a printer, there was no way to show anyone else all the cool things you were doing—such as creating a dot-matrix banner. This was before the time of high-resolution LCD displays, thumb drives and the Internet. Back then, high-quality printers cost tens of thousands of dollars. Now, you can get a low-end printer that will produce 1,200 dots per inch for about \$30—and that includes a scanner/copier. Printers with a built-in scanner have become a commodity. With rare exceptions, it's much cheaper to recycle a malfunctioning printer and buy a new one than it is to repair it.



Printer manufacturers are motivated to build cheap printers because of the follow-on sales of printer ink and toner. Each manufacturer has its own proprietary inking/toner system that keeps its customers coming back for more. There are alternatives for refilling ink and toner cartridges, but there are still enough people who prefer to buy the HP or Epson label that it keeps these companies doing very well in the sale of printer supplies. If it weren't for the ink and toner sales, printer manufacturers would be hard-pressed to



Brother Joseph is connecting his network of printers.

provide such sophisticated equipment for such a low price.

This marketing model—cheap printers, expensive supplies—may not last. Ironically, the seeds of its destruction have been built into the same printers in the form

of scanners. As technology makes better use of scanners, e-mail and PDF files, the demand for ink and toner will drop precipitously. That doesn't mean that printer manufacturers will go out of business—they will merely charge more for their printers/scanners.

In the meantime, get a printer while they are still cheap. If you're in the market for a new printer, it may be worth the time to evaluate what you need—although it's hard to make that argument when you can always get another printer for next to nothing. When I buy a new printer, I want it to last a long time. There are some key issues involved in the printer decision.

Inkjet Versus Laser

There are two basic types of printers on today's market: inkjet printers and laser printers. Inkjet printers use inks (at least four or more colors) to generate high-quality full-color output. They are generally less expensive and slower than laser printers, and not built for high quantities of printing. The quality and reasonable price make inkjet printers desirable for most home uses.

Unless you do a great deal of printing (usually in an office environment), you may be best off buying an inkjet printer. The inkjet will give you more quality options, such as printing high-resolution photo images. Color laser printers are available, but they are a little more expensive (\$300 and up), and the print quality does not compete with inkjet printers.

Laser printers use toner (similar to copiers) rather than ink. There are two reasons to prefer the laser printer for volume work. The first is speed. Laser printers are capable of greater speed (15 to 20 pages per minute). Inkjet printers claim similar speeds, but the reality is that when better-quality work is produced, the inkjets slow to a crawl.

The second reason for preferring a laser printer is because the per-copy cost will be much lower than that of an inkjet. While laser printers are more expensive than inkjets, they are very economical for high-volume output. Although toner cartridges cost more than ink, the number of copies generated by one toner cartridge makes the per-copy cost much lower.

The real question to ask before deciding between inkjet and laser printers is, how much printing are you going to do and at what quality level? Many people need to print only the occasional document or make a copy. If this is the case, then an inkjet will certainly suffice while offering quality output.

Recently, I encountered an individual who, after moving, had not bothered to hook up his printer again. Although he used his computer every day, he almost never printed anything. When he did want to print something, he found that the ink had dried up from sitting around. It was too expensive to buy more ink, but he didn't want a new printer that he would rarely use. The solution he came up with was a local retail outfit with a printer that accepted thumb drives. He would prefer to pay 20 cents a copy to get prints when he needed them, rather than to maintain a home printer with ink.

Although this is anecdotal evidence, the need for the average computer user to print may be dropping at a rapid rate. The most important reason to own a printer could be for the scanner that comes with it.

The Scanner

For me, the scanner in the all-in-one inkjet printers (or "multifunction" in laser printers) is more important than the printer itself. If it weren't for the occasional piece of paper that needed to be copied or printed, then the scanner could do most of what I need. The printer continues to be important, but I don't find that I print nearly as much as I did in the past.

Adding the scanner to the printer has turned it into a copier as well as a document manager. Now, most homes with computers have the capability to make a color copy (a favorite recipe for a friend) on a moment's notice. If a document needs signing, it can be printed, signed, and then scanned and sent back via e-mail. The process creates a digital trail of the papers.

With the right software, which usually comes with the printer, documents can be scanned and filed on your computer. It is as simple as putting the paper in the scanner, selecting the target computer, and hitting the scan button. These documents can easily be e-mailed or faxed to the appropriate people.

Unless you have a compelling reason to buy a printer without a scanner, such as an ultra-portable printer that fits into your pocket, I recommend that you always get a printer/scanner combination—even if you don't think you will ever use the scanner. Printers with scanners are no more expensive than printers without scanners. Eventually, you will find a reason to use the scanner—whether it is merely to copy an article out of a magazine or to scan old photographs for safekeeping.

Make It a Network Printer

If you don't have a network at home, then you will probably have no reason to network your printer. However, all you need is one more computer coming into your home (possibly a relative's laptop), and you'll find that they want to use your printer/scanner. You can share a printer attached to your computer over a network, but it's much more convenient to share a network printer. As mentioned in network article "Cool Things to Do With Your Home Network," you may suddenly find that you have a home network.

On a network, the printer can be used by any member of the network without a printer-host computer being powered up. The network printer can be placed anywhere in the house that's convenient to the network. If you attach a printer to a computer with the USB port, your printer location will be limited by the USB cable length.

For these reasons, I look for a printer with network capabilities. Many printers come only with the USB port for hooking up directly to your computer. It's true that if you hook up the printer directly to your computer you can share it over a network, but there may be a time in the future when an Ethernet (wired) or Wi-Fi (wireless) networked printer will come in handy. While printers with either the hardwired Ethernet connection and/or the 802.11 b/g Wi-Fi (wireless) may cost a little more, for me, the options are worth it.

People use their printers for a long time. The technology of scanning and printing does not change so rapidly that frequent replacement of printers is required. Spending a little more now to get either the Ethernet or Wi-Fi network capabilities (I would get both) could save you a couple of years down the road. Be sure to check the specifications on the printer. Many printers come only with a USB port for

connecting to a computer. You should see the proper terminology for networking in the specification: Ethernet for cable connection and 802.11 b/g Wi-Fi for wireless.

If you decide to save a little money and get a USB-only printer, you can always add a print server (Ethernet or Wi-Fi) when you want to network the printer. A print server is a device that will make the printer network-capable.

Fax Capabilities

The last great holdover from the age of the telephone landline is the fax machine. (This is a controversial topic because there are so many businesses that continue to be heavily dependent upon the machines.) There is nothing that a fax machine can do that can't be done with a scanner and a printer. The argument for keeping fax machines around is that a faxed document is more secure than e-mail. However, with properly configured PDFs and file encryption, these issues may soon be moot.

Another reason for faxing is that it is incredibly easy to do—if you have a fax machine and a phone. Put the document in the feeder, key in the phone number, and hit the Start button. The only problem is that you need a fax machine on both ends and a telephone connection. Many people are now using their computers to send and receive faxes via the Web and e-mail. (See "Free Faxing From Your Computer" in this issue.) While the computer fax may not be quite as simple as a fax machine, the software and procedures are improving.

Many printers/scanners are also fax machines. Should you buy one that has direct-fax sending and receiving capabilities? If you either need to send faxes to a number of people who are continuing to use fax machines or have many clients and associates who use fax machines to fax you, then you should buy a printer that can double as a fax machine—it won't cost that much more.

A printer/scanner/fax will have a connection for a telephone line along with any other USB, Ethernet or Wi-Fi connections—depending upon the model of the printer. If it does not have the phone connection, then it is not actually a fax machine.

When looking at printers, there are three major decisions and one option. Whether you pick an inkjet or laser printer depends on how much you will print and what quality output you need—inkjet for quality and laser for quantity. Getting a printer with a scanner is almost not a decision anymore, since most printers come with scanners—and they should. Even if you don't need it now, I recommend that you get a printer that you can put on a network. A built-in fax machine is needed only if you interact with other fax machines on a daily basis. Otherwise, there are easier ways to send a fax without a fax machine.

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. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com

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Free Faxing From Your Computer

“Send and receive faxes without a fax machine.” by Jack Dunning

Though faxing may be on its way out, you may still have clients, vendors and other people who rely on their fax. The Internet has come to the rescue with services that make it easy to be a faxer without faxing equipment.

Occasionally, someone will ask me if I have access to a fax machine, either to send or receive a document. It's always a little awkward because I almost never need to fax anymore. I usually scan and e-mail documents. However, at those times when I need faxing, there are ways to send and receive faxes without a fax machine.

The problem with the fax machine is that it depends upon a phone line. Faxing was great back when we did all of our communicating over the telephone landlines. It was relatively easy to put a fax machine into the system. While few homes had fax machines, it was almost mandatory for a business to fax—and still is for numerous enterprises. Yet, the use of the fax is giving way to Internet communications, primarily e-mail. Associates can merely scan a document, attach the file to an e-mail—usually in the form of a PDF—and shoot it off. This is not quite as easy as the traditional faxing—insert paper, enter phone number, press Start—but slowly people are turning to the Internet to send their documents.

There are quite a few who would dispute my contention that faxing is on its way out, being replaced by e-mail and other forms of Internet communication. Faxing is not going to disappear tomorrow—perhaps within 10 years. In the meantime, we need a way to communicate with people who still depend upon their fax capability. Prudent business dictates that we remain compatible with these fax machines. The Internet has come to the rescue with services that make it easy to be a faxer without faxing equipment. However, you will still need your scanner/printer.

Sending Faxes From Your Computer

The first problem is how to reach a remote fax machine from your computer. Normally a phone line and fax machine would be required, but if none is available, then it must be sent from your computer.

There are many software programs for faxing from a computer. Windows Vista Business has the Windows Fax and Scan program built in. The problem with these programs is that they require a modem (or fax server) and a phone line. Essentially, your computer becomes a fax machine. You may as well get a printer with fax capabilities.

To deal with the problem of integrating the fax with Internet technology, Web-faxing service companies have popped up all over. There are so many that it's difficult to know where to start. Fortunately, some Web sites have taken the time to help sort it all out. One such site is David Berger's Internet Fax Guide (www.a2.com/telecom/freefax.html). David offers a ton of information on sending and receiving faxes with your computer.

The Internet fax companies offer services that simulate a fax machine with your e-mail. The services either charge a monthly fee, charge by the fax, or both. Some are very inexpensive, while others appear to be quite steep.

After signing up, the client e-mail address is assigned a telephone number. This is required since telephone

numbers are the only input that can be taken by most fax machines for sending faxes. When a fax is sent to that number, the service converts it to an e-mail with a PDF attached, then relays it to the client. You also use that phone number for sending faxes, which you do via e-mail. The phone number identifies your account. The assigned phone number and the e-mail make the client capable of sending and receiving faxes on a computer via e-mail from anywhere in the world.

If a client wants to send a fax, he or she will either log onto the service on the Web or use their e-mail program. (When using an e-mail program, the fax phone number is put in as part of the e-mail address in the "To:" field. With Web-based programs, the target fax number is entered along with any text messages.) The previously scanned document file to be faxed is attached, and then the fax is submitted. The service turns the text and attachments into a fax and sends it to the designated telephone number. While the fax service client has no fax machine (or even a dedicated phone line), it appears to the rest of the world like business as usual.

The plans recommended by David Berger range from \$2 up to \$98 a month. Most of these plans have a free trial, so there is no reason not to test various services. If you travel a good deal, and need to fax back and forth, these plans make more sense than getting a fax machine; although, if you have a high volume of inbound faxes, you may want a built-in fax in your printer anyway.

For the vast majority of us, faxing will come up only when someone asks, "Do you have a fax machine?" It doesn't seem prudent to sign up for an Internet fax plan for those rare occasions. I've often received faxes via e-mail from business people. It is not often that an individual would have a dedicated fax machine in their home. However, when someone wants me to fax them a document, it helps to know that I can do it from my computer—especially when it's free.

Faxing for Free

If you get only the occasional request to fax something, it's much better to send a fax for free from your computer. Many of the Internet fax services offer a no-cost service (other than their free trials—normally one month). These gratis services limit the number of faxes per day and the number of pages, but on those rare occasions when you need it, they are an excellent way to beam that paper to the other side. I tested a few of the free fax services.

By far the best free fax service I tested was the free version of MyFax (www.myfax.com/free/) (see Figure 1). This is the free portion of the fax service used by David Berger. MyFax was quick and easy to use. After I entered the phone number for my printer/fax and some text for the cover sheet, I attached my file (a one-megabyte-plus JPEG file), and clicked Send Fax. I was then sent a confirmation e-mail. Clicking the link in the e-mail launched the faxing. The phone rang within a minute, and the fax in the printer started receiving.

myfax[®]
faxing simplified. anytime. anywhere.

Send a fax for FREE!

- To**

Name

Company

Country United States (+1)

Fax Number* +1 () -
- From**

Name

Company

Email* ⓘ
Enter a valid email address, as you will be required to confirm your fax submission.
- Fax Message**

Select a file to fax (.doc, .pdf, etc.)

No file chosen ⓘ

Enter text message:
- Submit**

Tell your friends about FREE faxing.
Enter their email addresses below:

SEND FAX
By clicking you are agreeing to the [terms and conditions](#) of using this service.

Figure 1. MyFax free fax service.

The fax was decent quality—it looked like a fax without any distortion. With the free MyFax, you are allowed two free faxes per day (probably per e-mail address), up to nine pages (plus one cover page), with a 10MB limit. That's way more than I'll ever use. There is no requirement to fill in the e-mail address fields for friends—it's optional.

When I tried FaxZero (faxzero.com/) (two faxes per day, up to three pages), the faxed file was distorted (compressed) in the vertical plane. I also tried PopFax.com (www.freepopfax.com/), which wouldn't take the JPEG because of a 512KB limit. I used a 400KB PDF file and it came out completely distorted.

While sending is not free, eFax (www.efax.com/efax-free) has a free receive-only service. You are assigned a random phone number (could be anywhere in the country) that you can give to people who want to send you faxes. The faxes are then e-mailed to you.

** *

Eventually, the fax machine will go the way of the dot-matrix printer, although it could be a decade or so.

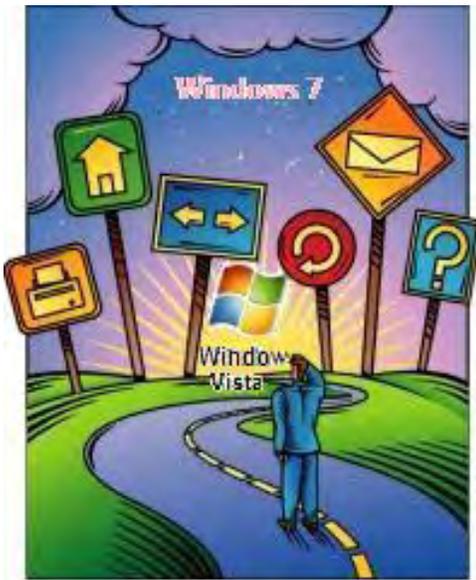
Every day, people are discovering some good alternatives to fax machines.

(Some people insist that a fax is more secure than other forms of communication because the hard copy cannot be easily changed for nefarious reasons—at least not without it being easily detected. Plus, they contend that it is safer for sending sensitive data. These arguments do not hold up, since any printed document can easily be scanned and doctored, and you don't know who is standing in front of the machine when a fax comes in. Secure PDFs and encryption techniques will ultimately solve e-mail security problems.)

Until the day of reckoning comes, for many people and businesses faxing continues to be an important part of daily activities. It's good to know about some alternative ways to do it.

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. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com

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Windows Vista Tips and Tricks

(and some Windows 7)

Windows Vista and Windows 7 Tips and Tricks

“More on Computer Management” by Jack Dunning

Computer Management is a collection of the tools that Vista users are most likely to want and/or need. Here's another look at this helpful grouping of features.

Last week, I introduced Computer Management, which is a collection of the tools that Vista users are most likely to want and/or need. (Computer Management may be opened by selecting Computer Management from the Administrative Tools menu in the Start menu. You may note that many of the tools in Computer Management are also individually listed in the same Administrative Tools menu.) This week, I will continue an exploration of Computer Management, looking for more helpful features of Vista.

The first item on the list under System Tools is the Task Scheduler. We previously discussed the Task Scheduler, using it in Windows Vista as a technique for bypassing User Account Control blocking. The Task Scheduler is a way to launch any program at a predetermined time. To view all of the scheduled tasks, many of them set up by the Windows system, click on the folder icons under the Task Scheduler. (This is the same window and layout you will see if you load Task Scheduler directly as a separate tool.) See Figure 1.

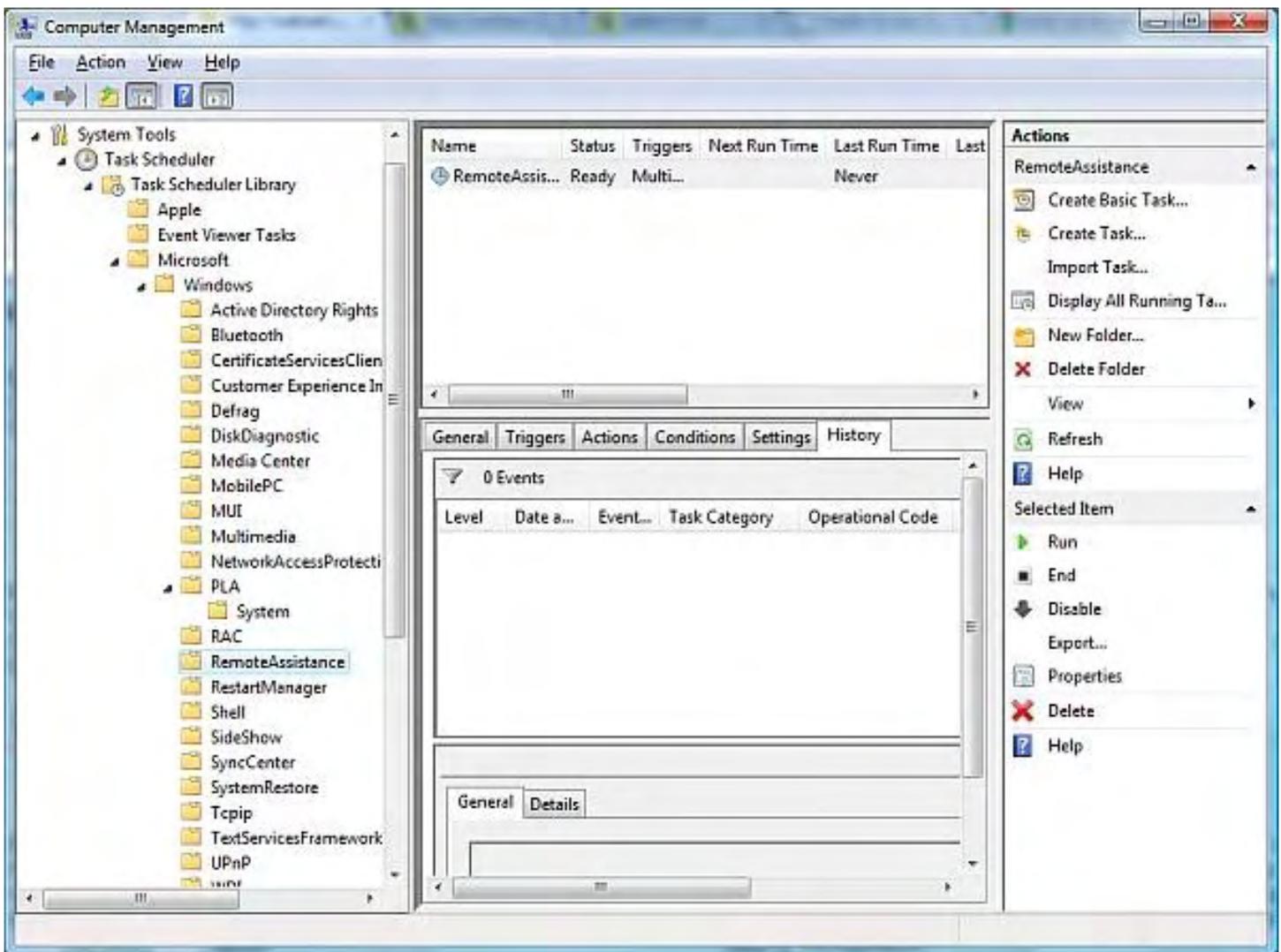


Figure 1. Windows Vista Task Scheduler in Computer Management.

You may note that many of the folders appear to be blank. If you check "Show Hidden Tasks" in the View menu, most of the hidden tasks will appear.

The list under Microsoft/Windows supplies us fertile ground for uncovering more Windows features and tools. One that immediately strikes our curiosity is Remote Assistance. (Remote Assistance is available in Windows XP, as well as in Windows 7.) Just as the name implies, Windows Remote Assistance is a program for you to either give help or receive help with your computer—only this help doesn't come from Microsoft, but your favorite nerd. This help is hands-on, in a system where whoever is assisting you can take control of your computer while you look on. It works over a network or over the Internet. It is remarkably easy to use and may save you time when trying to solve computer problems. For those not familiar with Windows Remote Assistance, it's worth a little time to discuss the feature.

The easiest way to find the program is to type "remote" into the Start Search field of the Windows Start Menu. Windows Remote Assistance will appear under the list of programs. (The program is also listed in the Start Menu under All Programs/Maintenance.) When you open the program, you will be asked if you want to ask someone to help you, or if you want to help someone else (i.e., offer assistance). We will assume that you are looking for help because the procedure is more straightforward from this angle. This is a good starting point because, regardless of what point of view you take, the person being helped will need to cooperate. Once you select "Invite someone you trust to help you," you will be given the option to send

an e-mail or save a file. Select "Use e-mail to send an invitation," and you will see the screen shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Select a password.

You assign a password because you will be sending an e-mail to the geek who'll be helping you with a special file attached. The password will protect you just in case the file falls into the wrong hands. Your e-mail program will open with an appropriate message. Enter your helper's e-mail address and send it off. Once the e-mail is sent, a waiting window will appear, as shown in Figure 3.

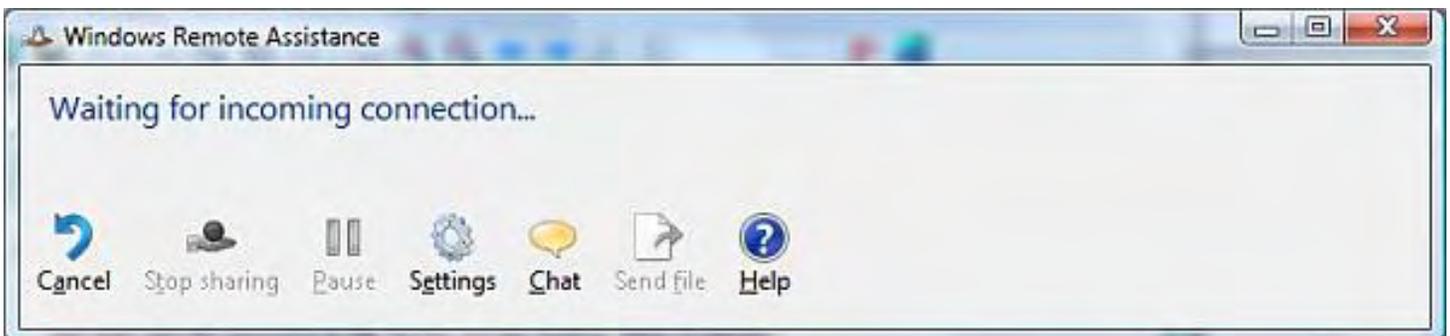


Figure 3. "Waiting for incoming connection" window.

While you're waiting for your friend to respond to the e-mail, there are some settings to review. If you click the Settings button, a window similar to Figure 4 will open. The primary setting that needs explanation is for optimizing bandwidth. If you are connecting over the Internet, you will want to limit how much data is being sent to the connecting computer in the form of graphics and pictures, whereas over a network you may not need to optimize the bandwidth. Pick the appropriate setting for your situation. If you have a problem dragging screens during the session, you can change this option at that time.

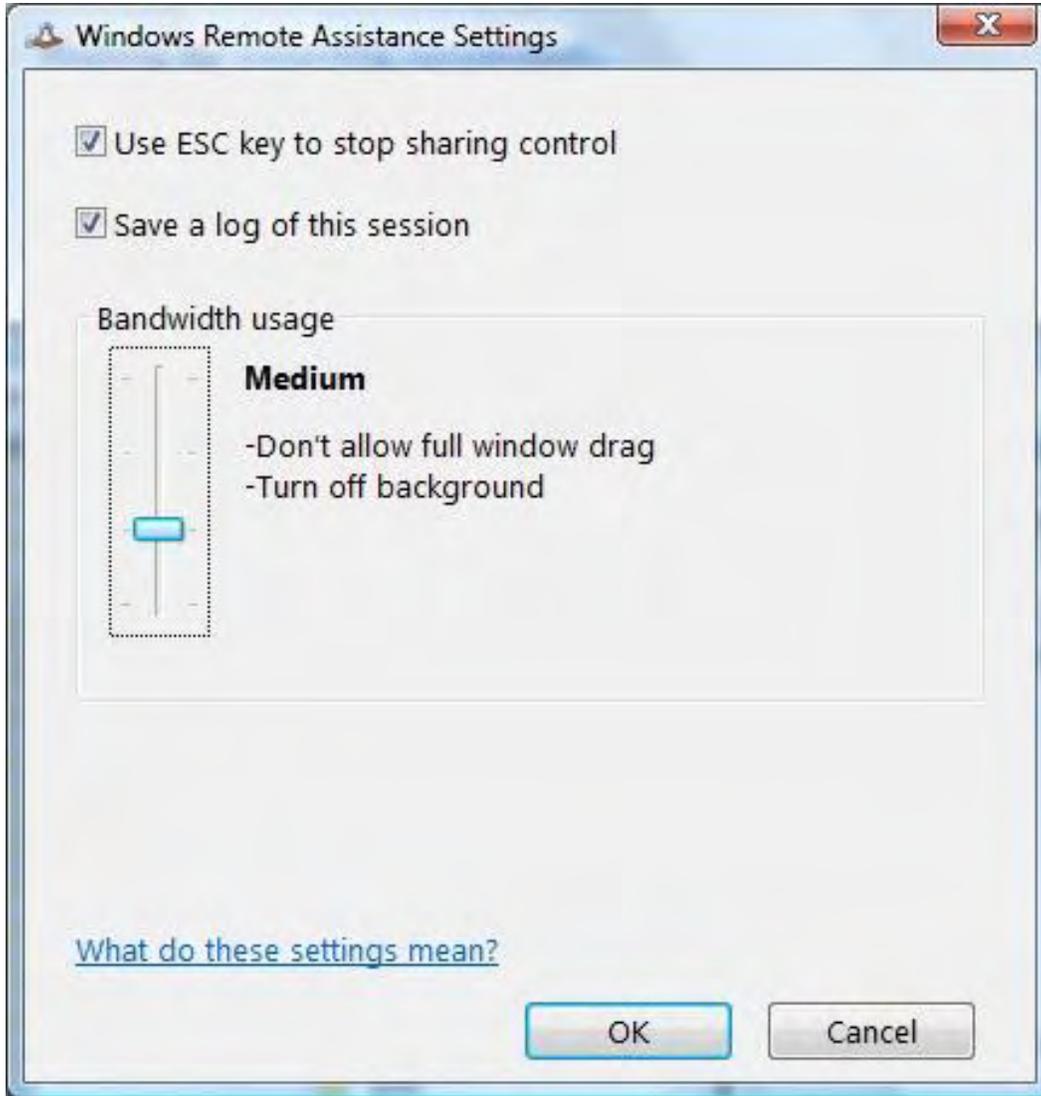


Figure 4. Bandwidth optimization settings.

On the other end, your computer guru will open the file attachment in your e-mail. The procedure will request the password (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Password required.

Now, going back to your computer, you will receive the request, "Would you like to allow [geek's computer name] to connect to your computer?" An encrypted tunnel has been created between the two machines, but there is no access until you accept the request.



Figure 6. Jack will be able to see whatever is on your computer.

Of course you accept, and your program window now says, ominously, "Your helper can now see your desktop" (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Helper is now viewing your desktop.

At this point, your desktop can be seen. It you are talking over a cell phone, then your helper can guide you through the steps you should take while looking on. However, your computer expert has no control unless it is requested and you give it. After a request from the assisting computer, you will see the window shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Allow Jack to share control?.

If permission is granted, then both you and your aide will have control of the cursor. At this point you can open a chat window or continue to talk on the cell phone. I would do the phone thing. Figure 9 shows your screen on the helper's screen. The chat window on the left side can be left open or closed.

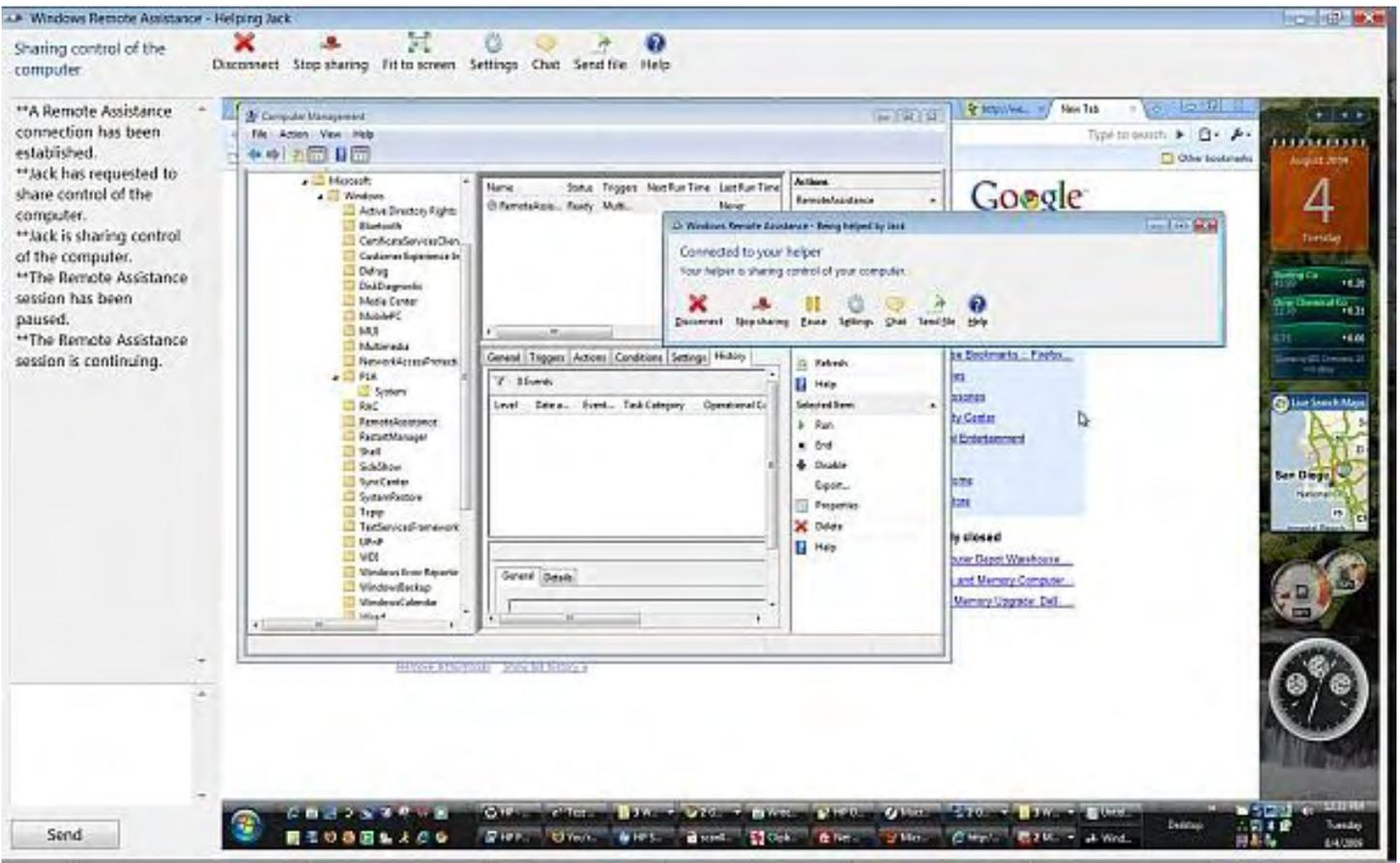


Figure 9. Windows Remote Assistance showing the help screen as it appears for the helper.

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. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Printing With Mac OS X” by Wally Wang

A look at some basic printing with your Mac, including the Print Preview feature. Also, Apple's MobileMe lets you remotely wipe out your iPhone in case it's stolen; Groovy Music teaches music through a video game interface; and a tip on highlighting and right-clicking on Web page text in Safari to let you search for that selected phrase on Google.

When you want to print anything from a program, you'll see the standard Mac OS X Print dialog, which lets you choose the printer to use. Just click the Print button and your document starts printing.

However, you can also expand or collapse the Print dialog just by clicking the Expand/Collapse button. When you expand the Print dialog, you can choose additional options, such as how many pages to print or whether to print in landscape or portrait mode.

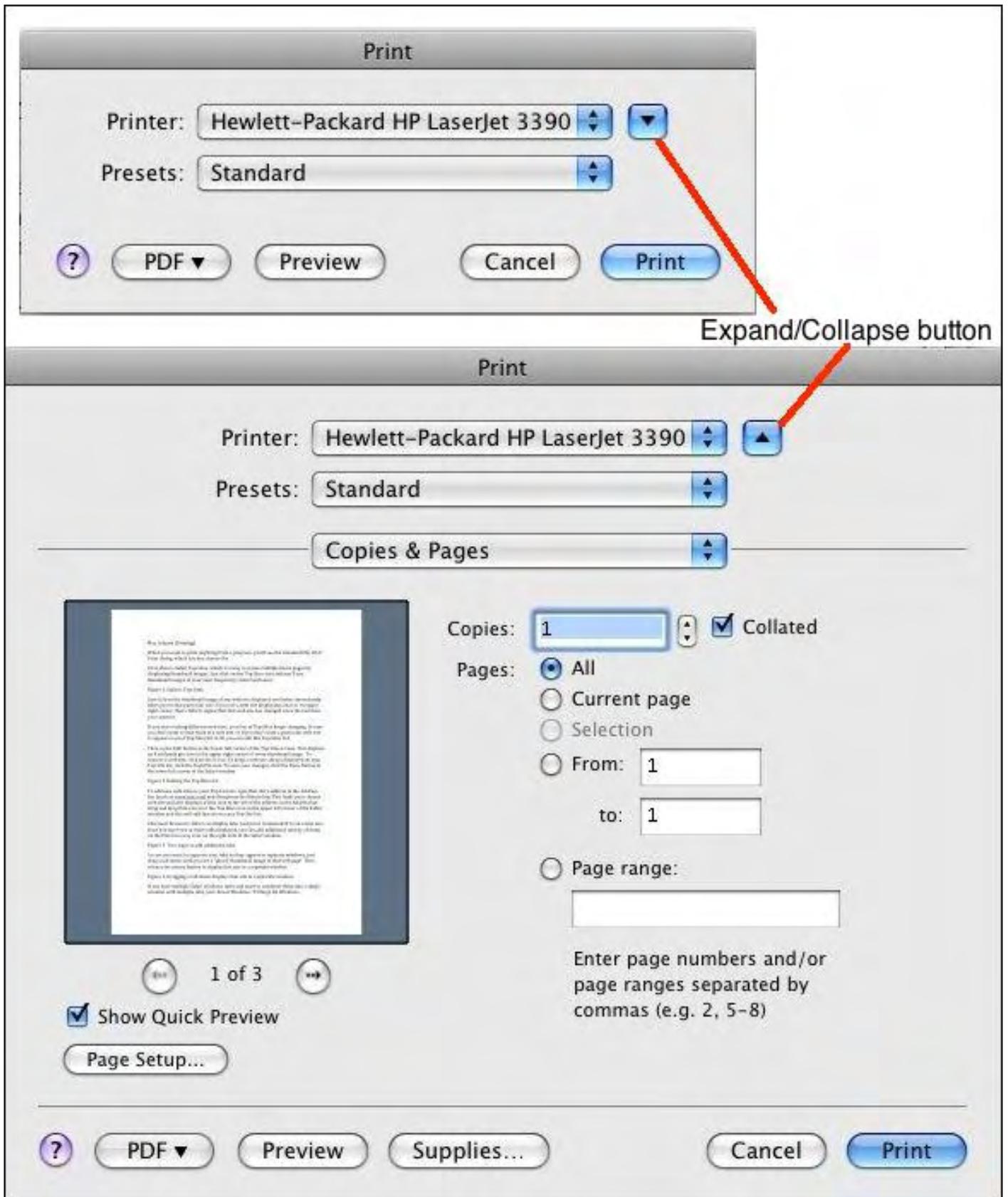


Figure 1. The Print dialog expanded and collapsed.

Two interesting options in the Print dialog are the PDF and Preview buttons. The PDF button lets you save any printable file as a PDF file without the need for purchasing Adobe Acrobat or any other third-party PDF file-creation program.

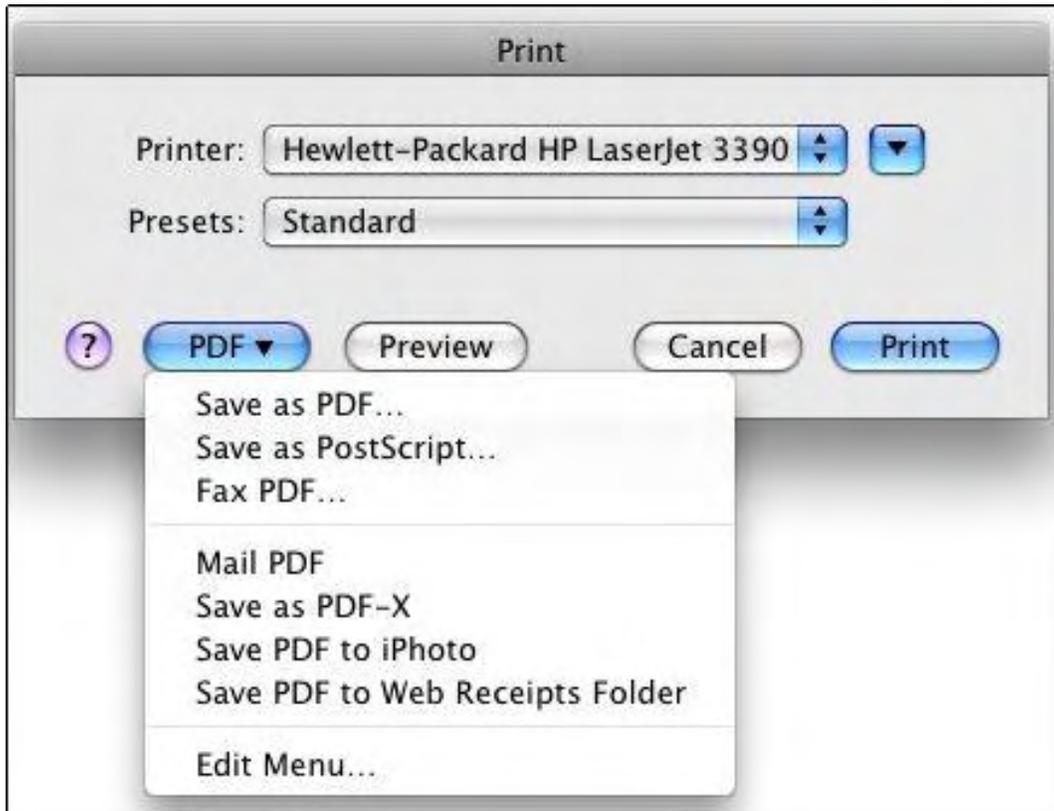


Figure 2. The PDF button lets you save a file as a PDF document.

Clicking the Preview button simply shows you what your document will look like before you actually print it. While many programs (such as Microsoft Word) already have a Print Preview feature built in, other programs do not, so the Preview button provides a universal print-preview feature with all your Mac programs.

Even for those programs that include their own Print Preview feature, the Preview feature in the Print dialog provides a clearer view of your document, so you can actually read the text rather than squint and examine the tiny print of your program's built-in print-preview feature.

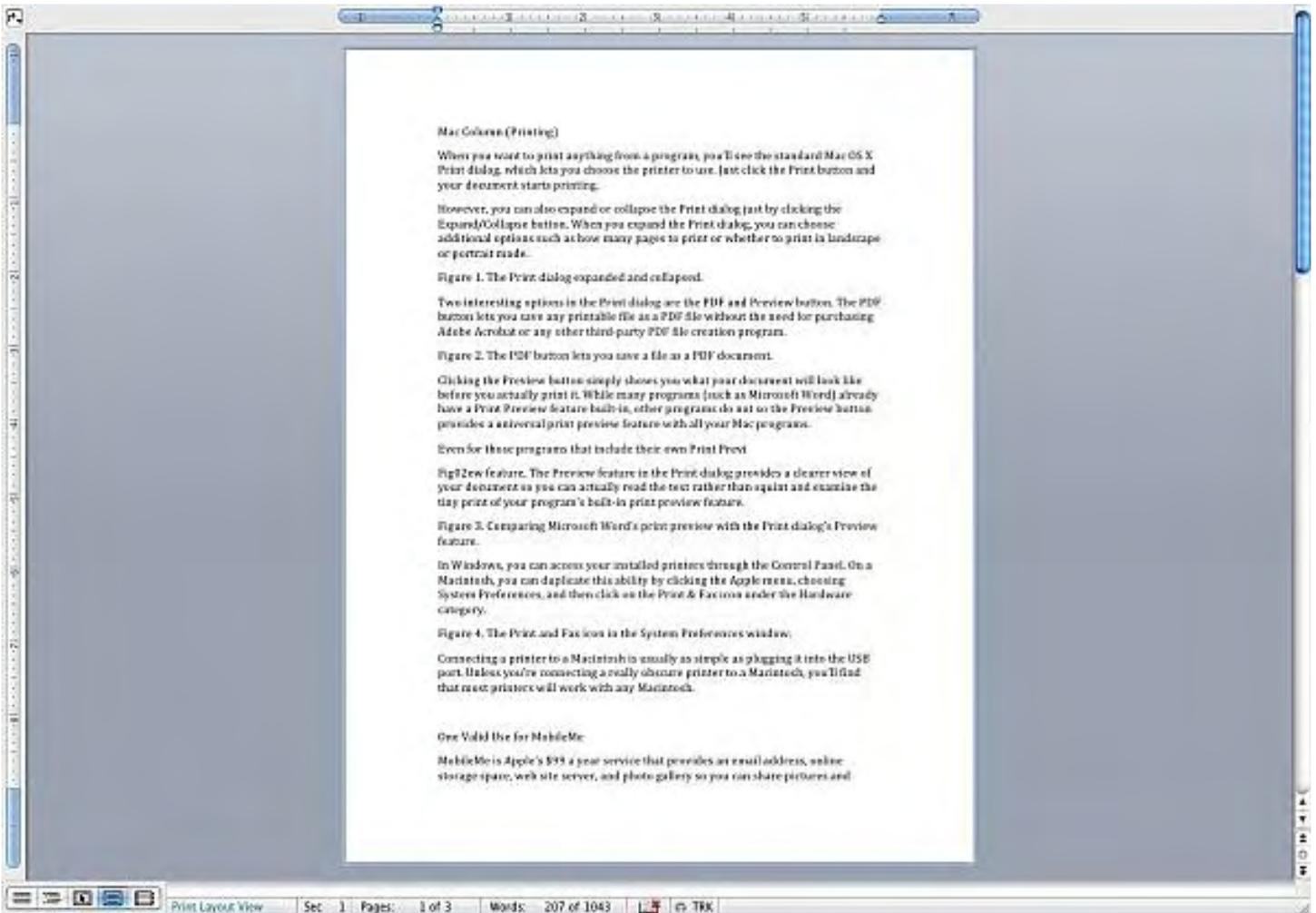


Figure 3a. Microsoft Word's Print Preview displays a single page with tiny text.

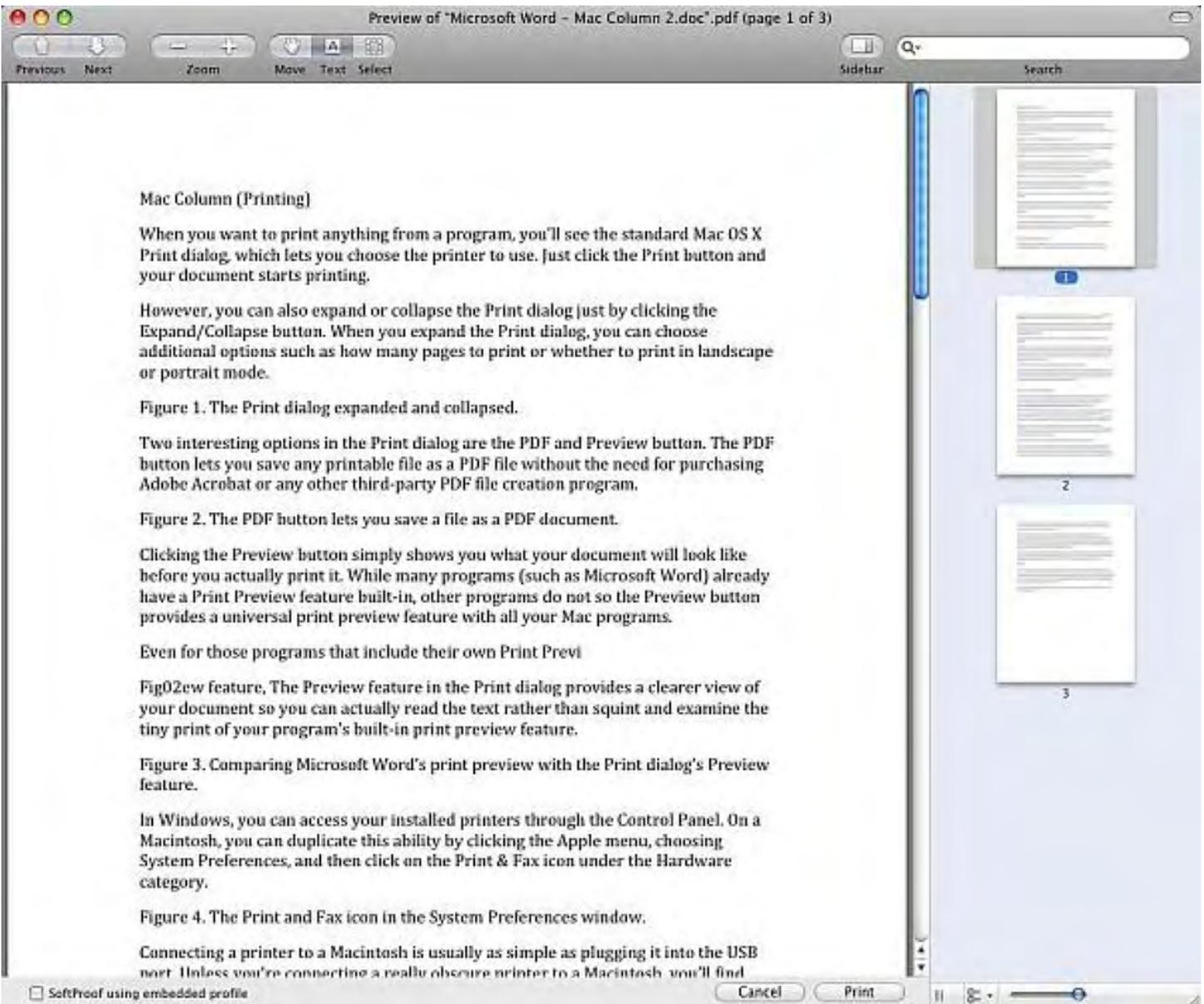


Figure 3b. The Preview program displays a full-size page with thumbnail images of additional pages in the right pane.

In Windows, you can access your installed printers through the Control Panel. On a Macintosh, you can duplicate this ability by clicking the Apple menu, choosing System Preferences, and then clicking on the Print & Fax icon under the Hardware category.



Figure 4. The Print and Fax icon in the System Preferences window.

Connecting a printer to a Macintosh is usually as simple as plugging it into the USB port. Unless you're connecting a really obscure printer to a Macintosh, you'll find that most printers will work with any Macintosh.

One Valid Use for MobileMe

MobileMe is Apple's \$99-a-year service that provides an e-mail address, online storage space, Web site server and photo gallery, so you can share pictures and videos with friends and family members. Despite these features, you can duplicate MobileMe through various free sites and avoid using Apple's weak offering.

However, one useful feature of MobileMe is the ability to remotely find and wipe out your iPhone. If you misplace your iPhone, you can make it display a message giving your contact information, such as a phone number, where somebody can call you if they find your iPhone.



Figure 5. Through MobileMe, you can create a message that will appear on your iPhone.

This feature works great if you lose your iPhone, but if someone steals your iPhone, they'll never get it back to you no matter how many messages you might display. For cases when you're sure you'll never get your iPhone back, you can use MobileMe to remotely wipe out your data so anyone with your iPhone won't be able to peek at your personal information.

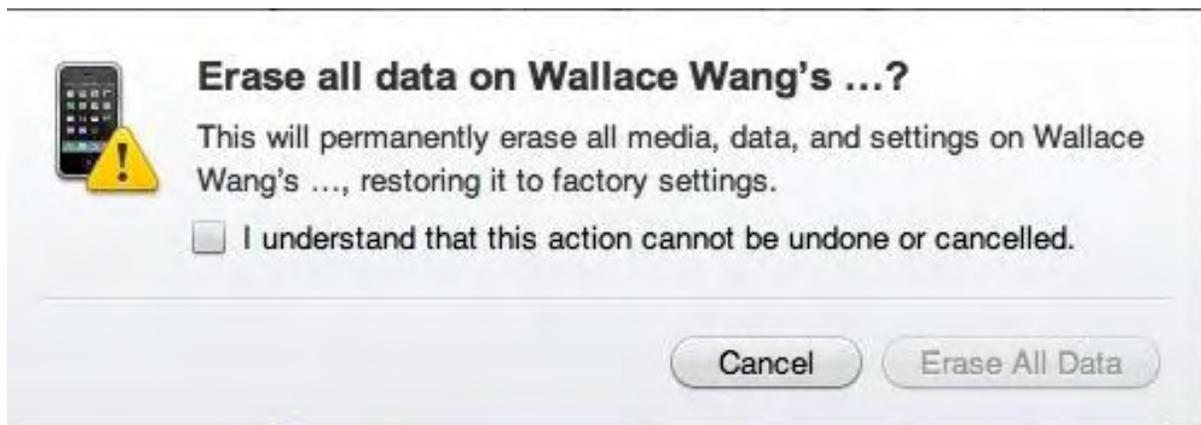


Figure 6. MobileMe lets you remotely wipe out your iPhone.

Of course, if you don't have an iPhone, this remote-access feature won't do you any good and you might not want to shell out \$99 for MobileMe. However, if you do have an iPhone and want to make sure you'll never lose it or your important data again, MobileMe might actually be worth the price after all.

Making Music on Your Macintosh

If you have children and want to introduce them to music, you could just rent a piano or buy a keyboard, and then sign them up for lessons. While this can be effective, it can also be boring. As an alternative, try the \$69 Groovy Music (www.sibelius.com/products/groovy/index.html) program.

Rather than teach music the traditional way, by showing instruments or notes on the screen, Groovy Music looks and acts more like a video game. Kids control an animated character and place shapes and objects

against an animated background. As the character walks past the shapes you've placed, it will play different sounds.

By mimicking a video game, the program subtly introduces kids to various instruments, such as string or percussion instruments, along with the idea of tempo. The animation encourages kids to experiment with sounds and watch their music come to life in front of their eyes.



Figure 7. Groovy Music teaches music through a video game interface.

While randomly sprinkling sounds on a screen might not make the most pleasing sounds, it does encourage play and experimentation. As kids get seduced into the different sounds, they'll be more likely to try other variations of sounds just to hear what they've created. As an option, you can even share your music creations on the Groovy Music Web site so that others can hear your music or so you can listen to what others have created with their computers. If you really get serious with your music, you can save it as a MIDI file.

Initially, you may find Groovy Music a bit confusing to use because its thin instruction pamphlet simply guides you into installing the program without any guidance on actually using the program. Experimenting with the different features will likely prove frustrating, but fortunately, there's a decent help system that plays short videos that demonstrate different features.

You (or your child) will probably rely heavily on these help files until you figure out the colorful but cryptic interface. After this initial learning curve, you'll find Groovy Music an interesting way to play and learn about music with your Macintosh.

* * *

If you're viewing a Web page and see an interesting term that you'd like to learn more about, you could retype that word or phrase into a search engine, or you could do it the easy way in Safari by highlighting that term and right-clicking. This pops up a menu, and now you can choose Search in Google to search for that term on Google without having to type anything at all.

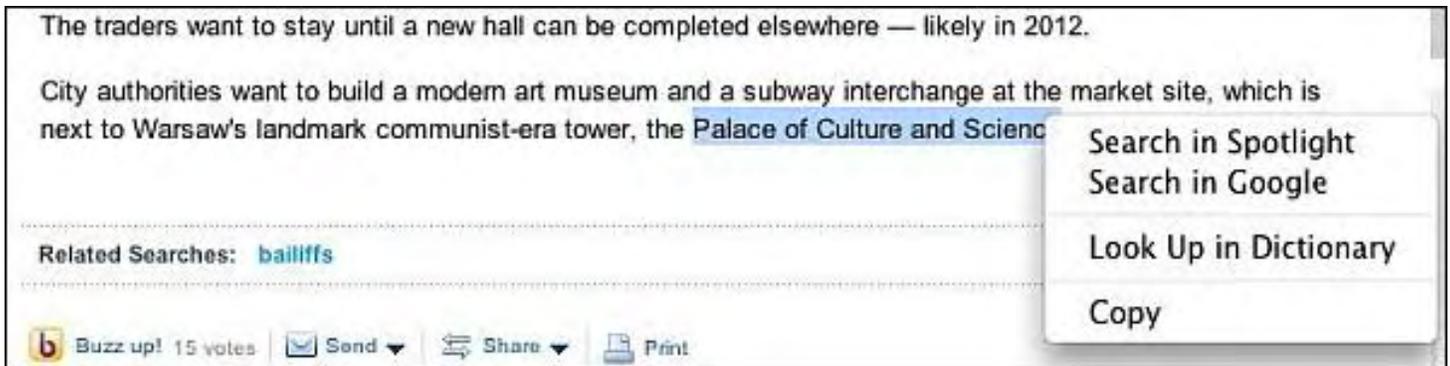


Figure 8. Highlighting and right-clicking on a Web page text lets you search for that selected phrase.

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 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)
- Beginning Programming for Dummies (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)
- 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)
- 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)
- 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)

- My New Mac (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-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)

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/), 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), using the techniques he learned from a professional Wall Street day trader.

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

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Rob, The Computer Tutor

Rob, The Computer Tutor Does VB.Net 2010

“A Look at VB.Net 2010” by Rob Spahitz

Last week, we located the upcoming version of Visual Basic, VB.Net 2010, on the Microsoft Web site and installed it. This week, we'll open it and see what it looks like.

Last week, we located the upcoming version of Visual Basic, VB.Net 2010, on the Microsoft Web site and installed it. This week, we'll open it and see what it looks like.

Meanwhile, I'll also continue to post challenges for the readers to help solve.

Challenge

This week's challenge is related to printing. How can you get Visual Basic to ask the user for a printer, and then send a document to that printer? You have until August 13, 2009 to e-mail me your responses, and I'll present some of the better answers in an upcoming column.

VB.Net Projects

After having installed the new VB.Net Beta, we got a new entry off the Start button's All Programs menu entitled "Microsoft Visual Studio 2010." Select that, and you'll see three entries. You want the one with the colorful infinity symbol, also entitled "Microsoft Visual Studio 2010." Click on that to launch Visual Studio.

You'll soon get a splash screen followed by a screen where you can select the default language you'd like to use for most of your projects, as seen in Figure 1. Note that if you installed only VB rather than the whole Visual Studio suite, you may not get this window or the selection may be different.

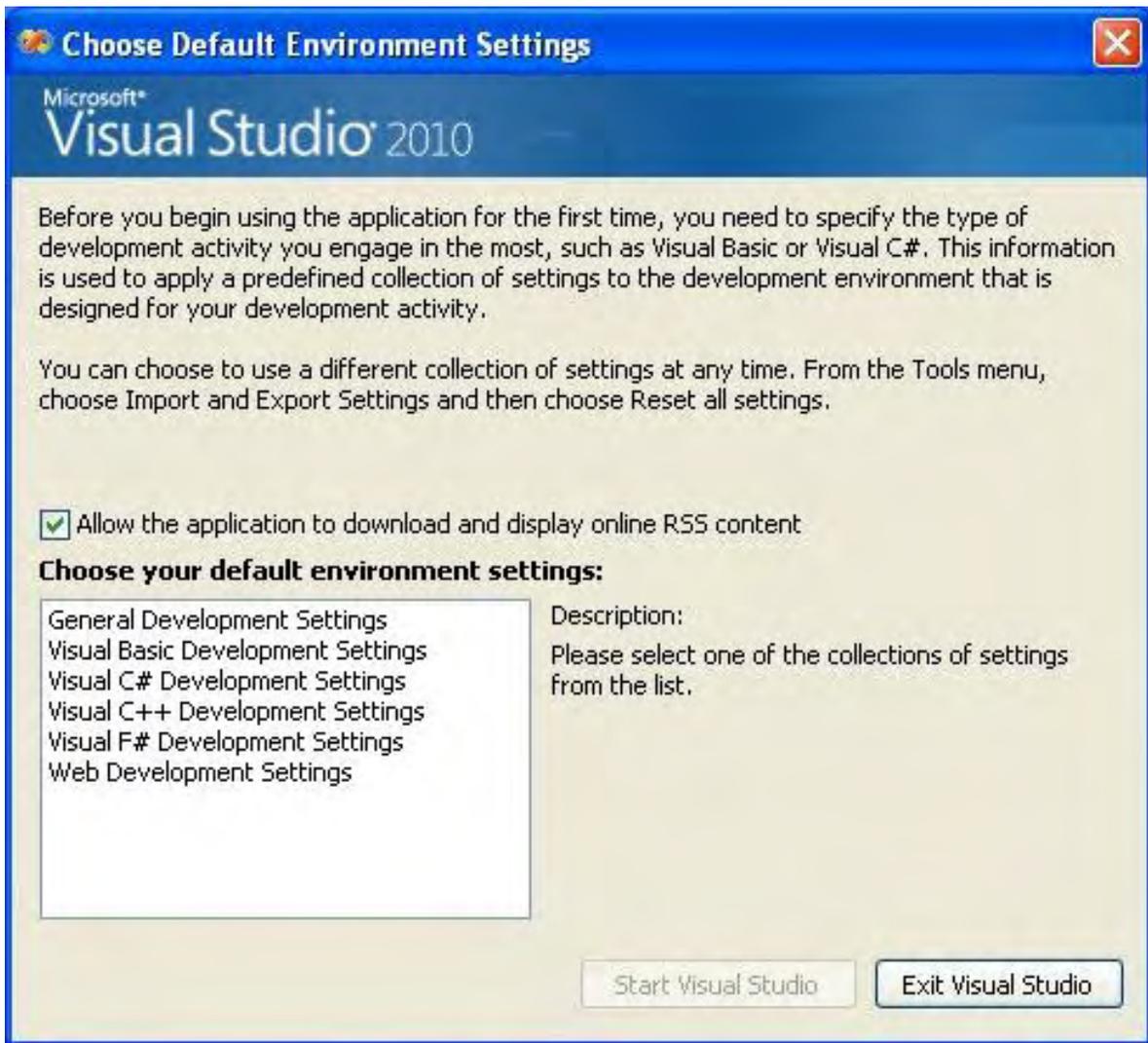


Figure 1. Default Tool Selector.

Of course, since this is a VB course, you should select Visual Basic Development and click on the Start Visual Studio button.

Since this is the initial installation, you will get a window indicating that it is configuring the environment. This takes a few minutes. After another delay, the VB environment finally appears, as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. VB Environment.

Since we want to work on a new project, select Projects along the left column. This shows a new set of pictures next to it, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. VB Projects selection.

We have three choices: Recent Projects, New Project, and Open Solution. Since we have no recent projects, that won't help much. We could probably open a solution from a 2008 project if we had one, but let's just select New Project. This eventually leads to a new window where we can select a template that defines an existing project type, as seen in Figure 4.

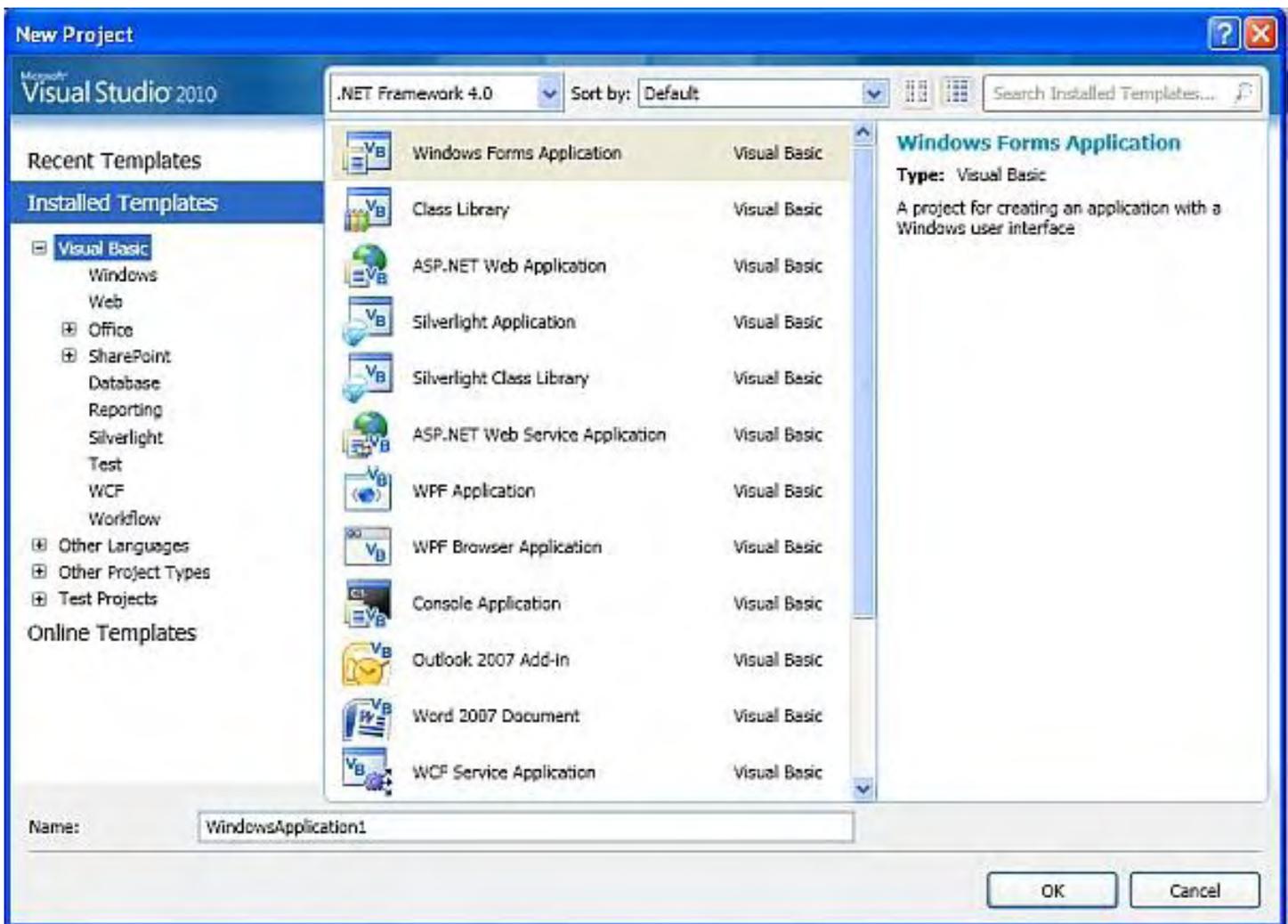


Figure 4. VB Solution Types.

By the way, although I've never seen VB 2010 before, I can see that a lot of the parts are similar to all previous VB.Net versions. Looking at the list in the middle column, the one where we will spend most of our time with this series, is the default Windows Forms Application. We'll learn about the other choices at a later time. In case it's not selected, pick that. Near the bottom left is a text box entitled Name. This will be the name of your Application. For now, replace the default WindowsApplication1 with "Calendar," then click on the OK button near the bottom right.

VB will now start preparing an application for you named Calendar. It will include a starting form so you are ready to get to work, as seen in Figure 5.

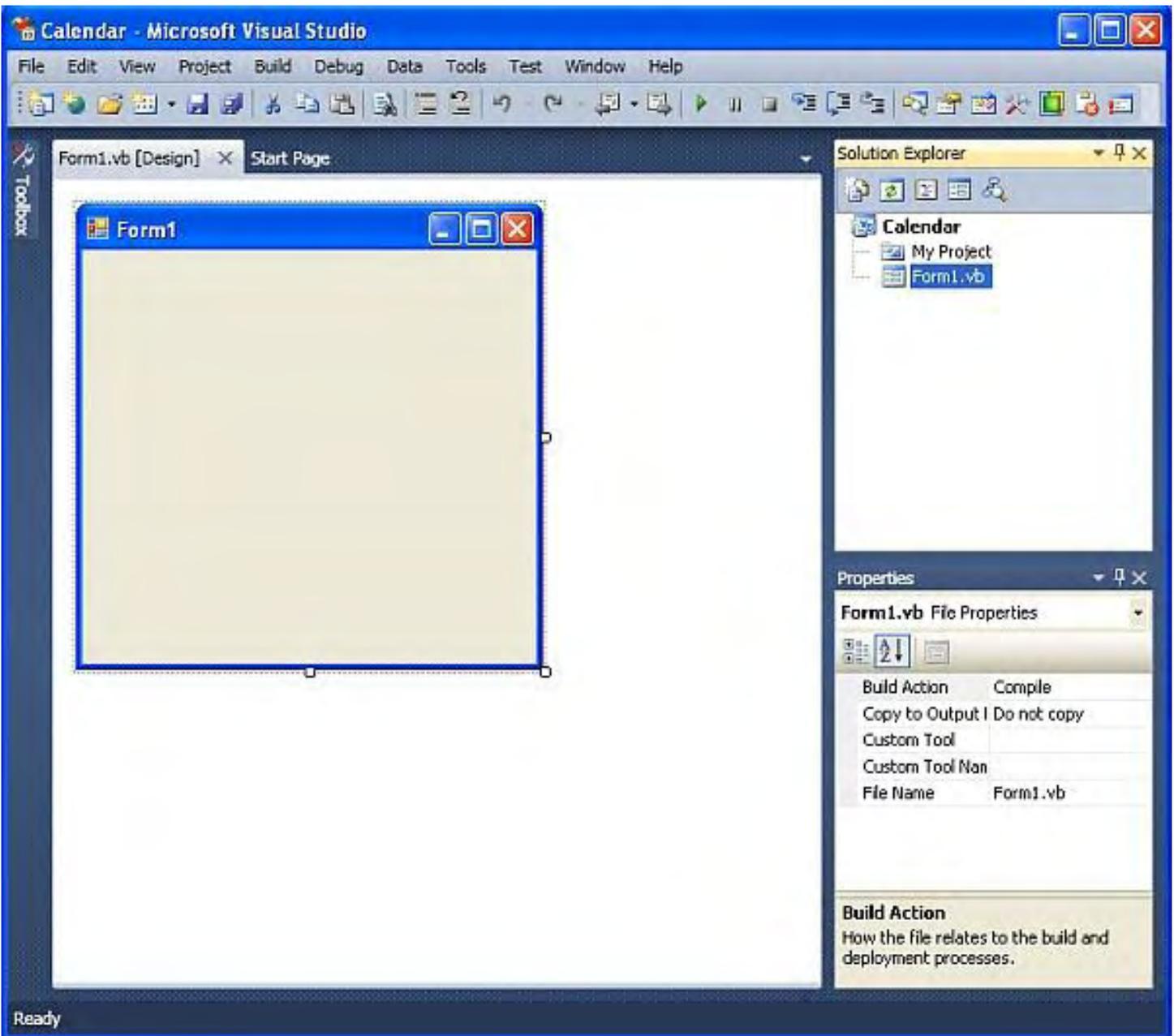


Figure 5. Calendar Form.

This will be our main graphical work area. It's basically broken down into five areas. Along the top are traditional menus and toolbars. Along the far left is an area we will find very useful called Toolbox. Just to the right of that is a blank form. And to the right of that we see a Solution Explorer window stacked over a Properties window, each attached to the VB tool.

Take your mouse and hover over the Toolbox. A window will soon slide open with a lot of categories. Click on the plus sign ("+") next to Common Controls, and you'll see things that you've probably seen in various Windows applications, as shown in Figure 6.

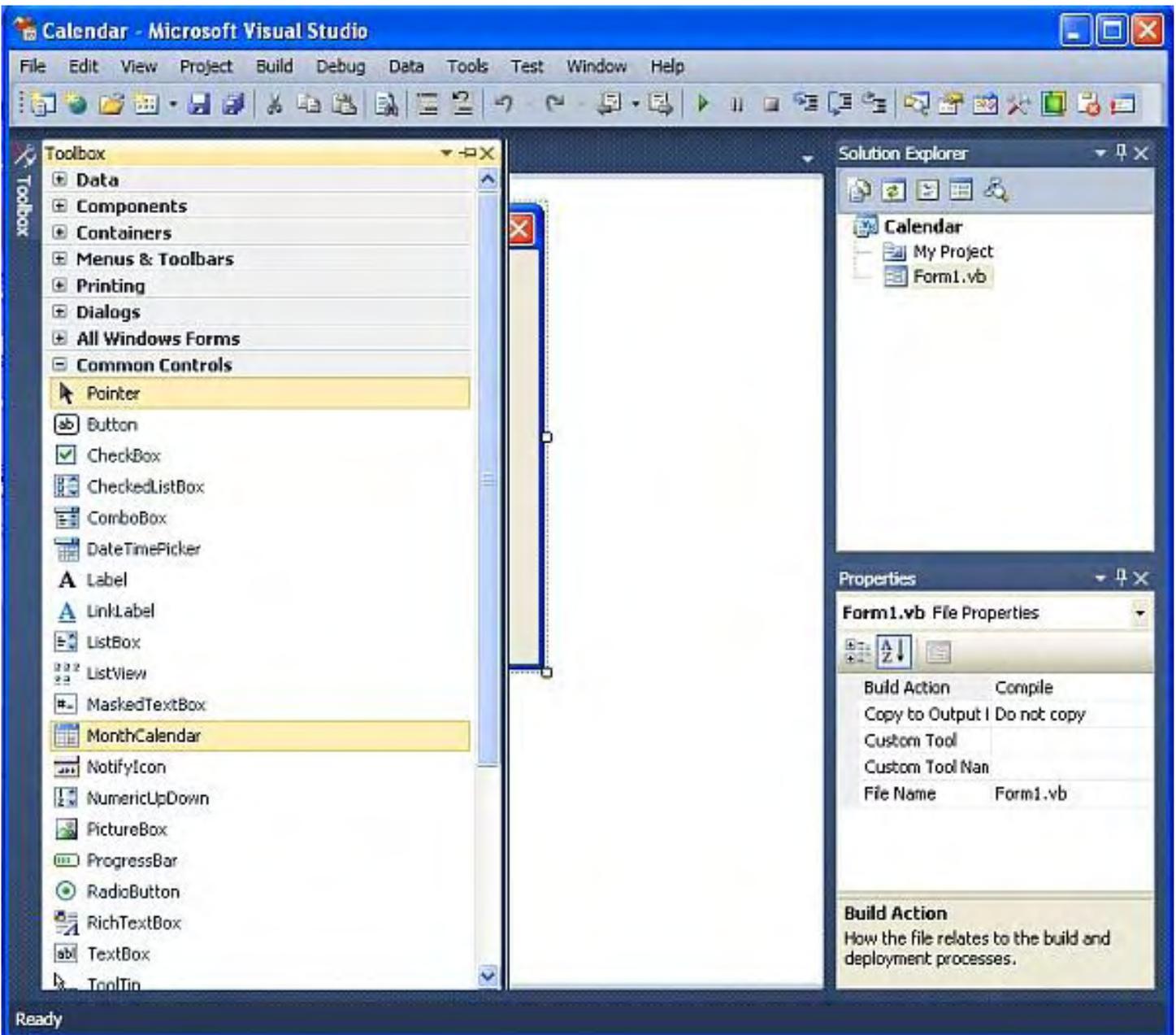


Figure 6. VB Tools.

Drag the item called MonthCalendar to the right and, when the toolbox goes and hides, drop it near the top-left corner of the form area. When you do that, you'll see a calendar appear.

Run the program, and see how easy it was to create a custom calendar application. To run, you can either press the F5 key, use menu item Debug/Start Debugging, or click on the green triangle in the toolbar. This will take a little bit of time while VB confirms that you programmed the application correctly.

This is the power of object-oriented programming (OOP). We will explore this more in upcoming articles. Meanwhile, click on the Windows "X" to close this custom application and return to VB. Close the VB environment and select Save. You will be presented with a window asking for the name of the project and the solution, as well as the location where it will be saved. By default, it will be located here: C:*bckslsh*Documents and Settings**bckslsh*Rob**bckslsh*my documents**bckslsh*visual studio 10**bckslsh*Projects, which is where we'll save all of our future projects.

Next week, we'll look at additional features of VB, including how to find the application we created. Also, make sure to submit your ideas on how to solve the challenge presented earlier.

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*.

Looking for a great boardgame? Grab a copy from DOGOPOLY.com (*dogopoly.com*) and have a dog-gone great time.



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ComputerQuick Reviews

*News and
Reviews from
Readers and Staff*

ComputerQuick Reviews

“Discovered at the Fair; a Mac Tip; Tell us About Laptops” by ComputerEdge Staff

The Web comes through when a too-good-to-be-true offer is made. Also, a Mac news Web site is recommended; and a call for thoughts, information and opinions on laptops.

Discovered at the OC Fair: Using the Net for Background Research

By Marie Loggia-Kee

"Your daughter is gorgeous, do you mind me asking how old she is?" On a sweltering summer Sunday, my family and I wove our way through the waves of crowds at the Orange County Fair. On the way to the chocolate-dipped fruit stand, a woman—gorgeous in her own right—stopped us to ask that question.

Her voice husky from what sounded like days of screaming at a concert, she explained that she was a former Miss USA. Not a former contestant, but a winner. While she currently lived in Denver, she was at the fair with some others and our daughter's beauty compelled her to stop. It was as if she rarely did this sort of thing, but soon enough she quickly pulled out a business card with her name, the title of "talent executive" and a phone number. She explained that the following day they were holding an audition for two well-known agencies that had placed children regularly.

"Your daughter would be perfect for Zack and Cody," she said reaching out as if to touch my daughter's chin. "Do you watch the Disney channel?" My daughter's eyes got bigger. Yes, of course she did. "She'd also be perfect for Old Navy ads. My boss used to work with the Mickey Mouse Club, and Justin Timberlake."

Skeptical, still, I took the card, smiling about the prospects of our girl being "discovered," and thoughts of college funds fueled by commercials danced in our heads. Since she was born, people have been drawn to Cassie. In stores, people want to talk to her and touch her. She'd be perfect.

When we arrived home, my husband and I hit the Net. He Googled the former Miss USA, only to find out that yes, she did hold that title, and guess what: She's on Facebook. (BTW—he says he didn't find any nude photos of her. He wanted to check her moral character, of course.)

As a professor, I teach journalism and English students how to find the information they want, in the quickest way possible. First, it's all about laying out the keywords—what you're looking for. I started to put in search terms such as "the agency name + scams" and "better business bureau" and "Consumer Reports." Also, I posted the info on my Facebook page, figuring that the almost 200 friends in journalism, entertainment and law fields would certainly offer some input.

Many offered advice such as agencies should "never ask for money." Some suggested that they may say we required a portfolio, and that they knew *just* the photographer to do the pictures.

One friend, Kelly, told me to call her. She had taken tons of acting classes and had worked professionally in the industry. She suggested that I check the SAG site for the proposed agencies; however, her main point of contention was the location of the open call: Century City. She remembered the agency being located elsewhere. The SAG site contained a list of agencies to start one's career search, but nothing definite on this call.

Kelly's comment about the address echoed. I looked at the business card again. It didn't identify either of those agencies. In fact, all it contained was the former Miss America's name, title and phone number and she had written in the two agencies and our call time. Then it hit me: Reverse lookup.

Once again, I turned to Google and entered in the phone number. Doing so will usually give the user the address associated with the phone number. Up popped "suspect numbers" and one woman listed an eerily familiar story. Last October she was approached by this very same woman at the Los Angeles County Fair. She drove her two daughters to the casting call—where they spent several hours in a short interview and then being put on film. The next day, they received a call: Her daughters had been "chosen."

The catch? They only needed about \$3,000 worth of acting classes.

Seems as if all children are "chosen" and identified as special ones.

The moral: Be wary of strangers at fairs and public places, and do your research. Again, the Web came through for us. Sure, maybe after countless acting classes and an expensive portfolio, Cassie may have become the new Nickelodeon darling. Of course, we think she's got plenty of talent and beauty, but if it's meant to be . . . well, we're just going to do it right. This is one proud parent *not* biting the hook of this modeling scam.

In addition to writing and being a mom, Marie teaches at Cal State Fullerton, the University of Phoenix and National University. A former chapter leader for Webgrrls Orange County and Los Angeles, Marie continues to keep her technical edge. She can be reached at info@marieloggiakee.com.

News for Mac lovers by Mac lovers

For Mac users, I find the following Web site very interesting: News for Mac lovers by Mac lovers (mac.alltop.com/).

It has a lot of redundancy, but you can see a quick review by mousing over any article on any site.

Enjoy,

Bob D.

What Is the Best Laptop for the Price?

Next week we are doing an issue about laptop computers. If you have any observations or experiences you would like to contribute, please e-mail ComputerEdge at Laptop Issue (ceeditor@computoredge.com). Last week, Julian submitted the following question:

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.

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) 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).

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).

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*.

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EdgeWord: The Linux Column and Searching ComputerEdge

“Updates about the ComputerEdge Web site.” by Jack Dunning



More input is needed from the Linux community to produce the Linux Lessons column on a regular basis. Also, the new ComputerEdge site-search feature is ready.

Where Is the Linux Column?

You may have noticed that there has been no Linux column for the past couple of weeks. That's because we have had either no Linux questions or no tips submitted to Linux Lessons (*ceeditor@computoredge.com*). We will happily produce the column every week as long as there are people who want it. In the past, some of our readers have submitted excellent ideas and lessons. When I asked for thoughts about where Linux is going for an article, I received a plethora of ideas. They were included in "Linux: The Good, the Bad, and the Confusing", dated June 12.

There are a number of people who read the column each week, but it's difficult to produce a column without input from *ComputerEdge* readers. Probably most of the Linux people are on a hiatus this summer. *ComputerEdge* acts as a portal for our readers to exchange ideas and tips on computers and the Internet. When we have something to publish, we will run the column. Occasionally, I may throw in a short tip just so the Linux Lessons column won't be forgotten, but I'm not really a Linux expert.

The *ComputerEdge* philosophy is that a little bit of information can go a long way. Our goal is to help you a little bit each week. Rather than try to feed the helpful hints with a firehose, we prefer to do it a tablespoon at a time. We like to offer content that will build on the past work, as well as stand on its own. For example, the tip in this issue on how to send a free fax from your computer was an eyeopener for me. The next time someone says, "Can you fax me a copy?" I'll know what to do. It's not earth-shattering information, but it will come in handy.

Searching for Old Articles

The *ComputerEdge* articles and columns are front and center for only one week. On the next Friday, the last week gets relegated to the past. We are always looking for ways to make it easier for you to dig into the past editorial. I've been told that some people keep an archive of *ComputerEdge* subscriptions in their e-mail program. Naturally, these are readers who are receiving the free e-mail subscriptions.

The best way to save an archive of particular e-mails is to create a folder for the category, in this case *ComputerEdge* subscriptions. Then set up a filter or message rule that will redirect any e-mail from "onlinesubscriptions@computoredge.com" into that folder. Then you will have an archive in chronological order of each issue. The *ComputerEdge* e-mail does not send the entire issue, but rather a summary of the contents with links to each article/column. Many people have found this the most convenient way to read the magazine. There is no need to add *ComputerEdge* to your Favorites or remember to visit on Friday when the new issue comes out. If you would like to receive the e-mail, it's as simple as visiting our Online Subscription page (*webservice.computoredge.com/subscribe/subscribeList.mvc*)

and entering your e-mail address. (Please do not sign up other people without their knowledge. We don't want to become one of *those* sites.) We protect your e-mail address and will never give it out to anyone, or allow it to be used for spam.

If you want another way to review past issues of *ComputerEdge*, then most browsers now support RSS feeds (coming soon to Google Chrome—or so I'm told). To subscribe to the ComputerEdge RSS feed, click on the little brown logo with the curved radiating lines. Once you've clicked, the you should see a method for subscribing. There are also numerous RSS readers that will notify you when there is new content without opening a browser.

ComputerEdge Article Search

If you're looking for more information on RSS Feeds, or any other topic that we may have covered in the past, then the new search feature has now been implemented on the Site Map page (*webserver.computoredge.com/sitemap.mvc*). (The Site Map may also help you find a particular article or column.) It is a pretty basic search mechanism, but it should do the job for you. (I may add a little more sophistication to it when I have more programming time.)

Put in the word or words that you want to locate. You can either do a title/summary search, or search the text of the articles (takes a little longer). It runs at a reasonable speed, although adding quotes doesn't help because it will search for the quotes as well. I've used it to locate old articles and am generally satisfied with the results. Don't use words like "Windows" on their own—they appear everywhere. The more specific and unique the word(s) (defrag, partition, etc.), the more satisfying the results. Partial words are OK, but may yield more irrelevant results. The Title Search will go back farther historically than the Text Search. Many of the pre-2004 articles are not in the database.

If there is more that you would like to see on the site, please drop me a line. I'll put it on the list.

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*. He can be reached at *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

"Access vs. FoxPro," "System Configuration Confusion," "Google or Bing It!," "Wireless Home Network," "Tips for Avoiding the Flakes on Craigslist"

Access vs. FoxPro

[This letter is in regard to Rob Spahitz's June 19 ComputerTutor column, "Access Report Groups."]

MS Access and MS FoxPro are different applications.

BTW, *Visual FoxPro (VFP)* is up to Version 9, (it has been a *Windows* development environment since Version 3 [1995]); with VFP, you can create fully object-oriented, n-Tier applications that can employ either a VFP database or a heterogeneous (non-VFP) database (e.g., SQL Server, MySQL, Oracle, etc.) on the back-end.

Enjoy!

-Art Bergquist, San Marcos, CA

System Configuration Confusion

In your July 10 [Digital Dave column], Dave responded to my question about maximizing the Sys Config window. He stated that, "Not only can you resize the window in the Services program but, if you right-click a service and select Properties, you will get many more options for both startup and running." Neither of these suggestions works. I can resize the columns, but not the window, and right-clicking a service doesn't do anything. I am using Vista Home Premium SP2.

-David

Hi, David,

Sorry for the confusion. In the first line of the answer I said, "As far as I can determine, there is no way to maximize the System Configuration window in Windows Vista." That is the answer to your question.

When I referred to the Services program, I should have added that Services is a separate program that you can access by typing "Services" in the search field of the Start menu and selecting Services. It is not part of the System Configuration window, which cannot be resized.

-Digital Dave

Google or Bing It!

[Regarding Jack Dunning's June 12 EdgeWord on Microsoft Bing]: I'm already Binging. I don't know if

I'll stop Googling altogether, but I like Microsoft's ads. Too much non-relevant information can be as bad as too little.

-Forrest McClure, Aurora, CO

Wireless Home Network

[Regarding Jack Dunning's July 24 column, "Setting Up Your Home Network"]: I think wireless home networking will be combined with wired home networking in the future. The MOXI DVR (best DVR on the planet!) will stream video to multiple HDTVs, but only over Ethernet.

-Craig, San Diego

Tips for Avoiding the Flakes on Craigslist

[Regarding the February 22 ComputerQuick Reviews column, which offered tips on avoiding Craigslist scams]:

Step 3: Leave your phone number but *not* your address.

If you are giving your landline phone number, a Google search will give your address to the flakes.

-Chuck Farmer, Broomfield, CO

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.

Send mail to ceeditor@computoredge.com with questions about editorial content.

Send mail to cwebmaster@computoredge.com with questions or comments about this Web site.

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