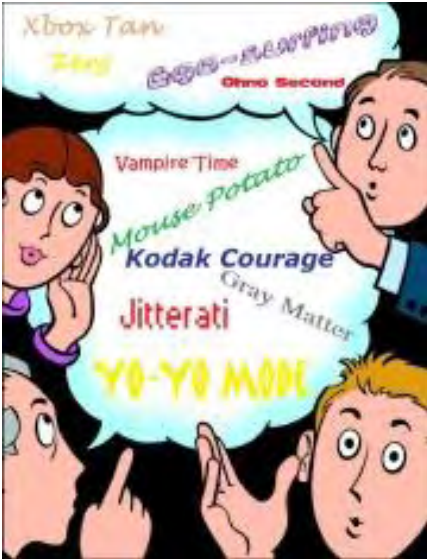


ComputerEdge™ Online — 09/04/09



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Digital Dave

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

A computer freezes whenever a USB device is attached. What could be the problem?; a reader wants to run Windows apps on a Mac; a reader wants to share a printer with computers on a home network.

Dear Digital Dave,

My brother—not me, but my brother—picked up a virus on his (old) computer, and it changed all his fonts to symbols except for a few letters. He finally reformatted his hard drive and reinstalled his original software.

Everything works fine, except that when he connects a printer or fax machine using a USB port, the computer freezes. His monitor and mouse work OK, but are connected without using a USB connection. What do you suggest?

*David Casey
Sacramento, CA*

Dear David,

The first thing I would check is the USB port. If it is working properly, then you should be able to plug in any other USB device, such as a flash drive, and access it. If you can't get the USB working with anything, it's possible that you may need to download and install the drivers from the manufacturer, or maybe the USB port is bad. (Many people don't realize that sometimes it *is* a hardware problem.) If the hardware is bad, it will need to be replaced with a USB card of some type. If the bad USB ports are built into the motherboard, you may need to disable them before you install a new USB card.

If you resolve that there is nothing wrong with your USB ports, then I would make sure that all the appropriate printer drivers are installed on the computer. (There should be a disk that came with the printer, or you should be able to download the printer drivers from the manufacturer.) Make sure that you have all the latest updates to the printer software as well as the operating system.

If the problem is not resolved by any of the above, then you are down to the printer and the USB cable. Swap the cable to ensure it's not the problem. Then, plug your brother's printer directly into your computer. If it still doesn't work, then you know you have a problem with the printer. Of course, you can always check out the printer first.

The most important part of troubleshooting any computer problem is to isolate and eliminate the possible source at each step in the chain. In this case, the USB port, the operating and printer software, the cable, and the printer itself.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Is it possible to run Windows applications (e.g., Word) on a Mac with a Leopard or Snow Leopard OS?

*Joe
SD*

Dear Joe,

Not only is it possible, it's done all the time. I've noticed that Wally Wang, our resident Mac fanatic, often discusses the topic.

If you're using a program such as Microsoft Word, then there is a Mac version of the program, although it is generally not rated as highly as the Windows version—plus you will need to buy another copy of Word for your Mac. If it's more than that you want to do, you will want to set up your Mac to run Windows software.

It seems that the preferred way to use Windows applications on a Mac is to run Windows in a virtual machine. Virtual machine software (available for both Macs and PCs) sets up a computer with an alternate operating system within the computer. In your case, you would be installing Windows into space on your Mac, then operating that space as a Windows computer. There are two programs that Wally often mentions, Parallels and Fusion.

To get more information, here is a *ComputerEdge* search (webserver.computoredge.com/sitemap.mvc?dosearch=parallels&typesearch=1) that unearths a couple of columns where Wally references the virtual machine software.

You can also use virtual machine software to run alternate operating systems, such as Linux. It's kind of like having an alien living inside your Macintosh.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Could you explain the steps on how to share a printer with the computers on my home network? I have a wireless MIMO plus Belkin router. I have a cable modem connection. The desktop is physically attached to the router with the Ethernet plug, and two laptops access the network through wireless network cards (internal cards). All of the computers are running Windows XP. The printer (HP 2110 PSC) is connected to the desktop. Is it possible to print to the HP 2110 PSC from the laptops?

Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated. Love your column; I've been reading it for at least 16 years. Thanks for all the pointers.

*Carolyn
Ramona, CA*

Dear Carolyn,

What you want to do is one of the more common uses for a network. Who wants to buy a printer for every computer in the house?

Sharing a printer on a network is basically a two-step process. The first is sharing the printer from the computer it's hooked up to. The second is installing the printer into the available printer windows on the remote computers. Rather than me repeating the steps, I found a page on the Microsoft site that shows you how to "Share Your Printer Over a

Home Network Using Windows XP." (www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/networking/expert/honeycutt_july2.msp)

The only downside to using a printer connected to another computer is that the connected computer will need to be powered up any time you want to print from any other computer. The other option is to make it a network printer.

To have a network printer (not attached to a computer), either your printer needs to be network capable and plug directly into the network (some printers come with Wi-Fi as well), or you will need a network printer server. A network print server is a box whose sole function is to allow you to bypass a computer and plug a printer directly into the network. Some routers (not yours) will allow you to plug a printer directly into the router, again bypassing any computer.

Next time you're thinking about a new printer or router, consider the network print options.

Digital Dave

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A Computerese Glossary

“Learn new words from Alpha Geek to Noob.” by Dawn Clement

From "hactivist" to "noob," here's a look at the latest techno-slang and acronyms to hit the mainstream.

Slang has been described as informal expressions not usually considered part of one's official language. Most of the time that's a fairly accurate description, but every so often slang will find its way into the dictionary. English dictionaries add new words every year (and get rid of others), most of which were originally slang.

Many new words are also technical in origin. In fact, The Global Language Monitor (a language-monitoring group) declared the word "Web 2.0" the one-millionth word in the English language. Check out the Oxford English Dictionary Web site (www.oed.com/) where you can improve your vocabulary by signing up for a "Word of the Day" RSS Web feed.

Here's a small sampling of the latest techno-slang to hit the mainstream.



Alpha Geek—The most knowledgeable, technically proficient person in an office or work group

Bio-Break—A trip to the bathroom

Cybersquatting—Using a domain name to profit from a trademark belonging to someone else

Dead-tree version—Printed document or publication



“Are you on vampire-time? The alpha-geek knows you have infonesia and tech-neck, so take a bio-break, then get him a dead-tree version of your work for adding to his shelfware.”

Ego-surfing—The practice of using a search engine to find one's own name

Face Time—Time spent interacting with another person in person

Gray Matter—Older people hired by young entrepreneurs in an attempt to appear more

established

Hactivist—Someone who uses hacking skills in order to attack Web sites as a form of political protest

Infonesia—An inability to remember where you saw or heard an item of information

Jitterati—What the Digerati (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digerati) become after drinking too much caffeine

Kodak Courage—An extra shot of courage when performing something dangerous while being filmed

Link Rot—The process by which links on a Web site become obsolete as the sites they point to disappear

Mouse Potato—The computer-age equivalent of a couch potato

Noob—A person who is new to something (usually an online game)

Ohno Second—The fraction of time it takes to realize you've made a mistake

Peeps—People

Rickroll—A prank link that says it goes one place but actually goes to a YouTube video of Rick Astley's song "I'm Never Gonna Give You Up."

Shelfware—Software that is so useless it resides on a shelf over your computer

Tech Neck—The soreness that results from sitting in front of a computer all day

Underling—A worker who reports to someone higher up on the career ladder

Vampire Time—A schedule where someone sleeps all day and haunts coffeehouses all night

Wall Clock Time—The time between when a computer process starts to run and when it is finished

Xbox Tan—The pasty complexion of someone who spends too much time indoors playing video games

Yo-Yo Mode—The state in which a computer alternates between being up and down

Zerg—To gang up on someone

Acronyms

If you work in a technical field, know someone who works in a technical field, or watch the news, you can't escape acronyms. They aren't really words; they're abbreviations that are formed using the initial components in a phrase or name. Acronyms are widely used to communicate via chat or text message, and definitely fall

into the "Nerd Words" category. Some examples of common acronyms are listed below, and if you're interested, you can find more comprehensive acronym lists online. Some Web sites to check out are MagicPublishing (www.magicpub.com/netprimer/acronyms.html) and Sharpened.net (www.sharpened.net/glossary/acronyms.php).

AFK—Away from keyboard
BFF—Best friend forever
CUL8R—See you later
DNA—Did not answer
F2F—Face to Face
<G>—Grin
HHOK—Ha, ha, only kidding
IRL—In real life
JK—Just kidding
KISS—Keep it simple, stupid
LOL—Laughing out loud
M\$—Microsoft
N1—Nice one
OIC—Oh, I see
PAW—People are watching
QT—Cutie
ROFL—Rolling on the floor laughing
SO—Significant Other
TTFN—Ta-ta for now
UBD—User brain damage
VEG—Very evil grin
W\$ING—Waiting
X&O—Kisses & Hugs
YMMV—Your mileage may vary
ZZZ—Sleeping, bored, or tired

Leetspeak

Leetspeak is actually an English alphabet used primarily on the Internet. Sometimes called Haxor or L33t, Leetspeak has been around for over 20 years. Despite what some people think, Leet doesn't have an evil origin. It's simply something that a few people thought was fun, and that grew larger over the years. Basically, letters in Leetspeak are replaced by numbers and ASCII text. There is no "official" alphabet for Leetspeak, and there are many different versions floating around out there.

Here are three examples of the same sentence translated into Leetspeak (in case you can't read it, it says "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog."):

T|-|3 qui(k br0w|*bckslsh*| f0x jump3d 0v3r 7|-|3 14zy d0g.

T|-|E Qu|[k br0|/*bckslsh*|*bckslsh*| Fox ju/*bckslsh*//*bckslsh*ped 0Ver The |_AZY do9.

7|-|3 QU1(|< br0*bckslsh*//*bckslsh*/|*bckslsh*| Ph0>< jU/*bckslsh*//*bckslsh*P3D 0*bckslsh*/3r 7|-|3 L4Z'/ d09.

There are lots of Web sites with wonderful lists of nerdy, geeky, technical words. My personal favorites are

Word Spy (www.wordspy.com/) and Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com/). With a little digging, I'm sure you can find your own favorite word site!

Dawn Clement is a freelance writer, domestic engineer, and mother of three with a Masters of Arts in Philosophy and over nine years experience in technical support.

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How To Appear Techno-Savvy at a Party

“Feel more comfortable talking to geeks.” by Jack Dunning

A helpful guide to some of the more used (or overused) terms and concepts currently making the rounds to help you feel more comfortable talking to almost any geek.

While I'm sure that most *ComputerEdge* readers are familiar with the language of the Web and computers, it's something worthwhile to review. Maybe you have friends who want to feel a little more comfortable with the jargon that is commonly being tossed around by people in the biz. There is nothing worse than listening in on a conversation between technical people (or people pretending to be technical) with nothing more to offer than a blank stare.

What follows is a helpful guide to some of the more used (or overused) terms and concepts currently making the rounds. Some of them are virtually meaningless, while others have not yet come into their own. In any case, an understanding of the words and how they are used will make you more comfortable talking to almost any geek. Or, if you want to appear pretentious (and particularly geeky), you can throw these terms around in front of your non-technical friends, although they are likely to stop inviting you over.

On a more positive note, understanding what these words actually mean will help to separate honest opinion from commercial blather. It's useful to be able to see through the nonsensical verbiage that extrudes from our television sets.

I invite anyone to add to this partial glossary of current terms. Merely insert your comment by clicking the comment link at the top or bottom of this article.

3G and 4G in Cell Phones

All of the cell phone companies tout their 3G service. One of the reasons 3G is such a powerful term is because the "G" is easily confused with gigabyte (or gigabit). Currently the best in everything in computers and the Internet comes in gigabytes (or gigabits). That includes computer memory, hard drive capacity, and the one-gigabit network speed. G is great—and the more G the better. Therefore, when we see 3G, we think power and speed.

However, the G in 3G stands for third generation. It is slightly better than the second generation (2G) (which I'm not sure ever existed), but not as good as 4G, which is coming—maybe. The obvious next steps will be 5G and 6G, but by that time, computers will be onto T for terabytes (or terabits).

Everyone has 3G. Only Sprint has 4G—I think in Baltimore. 4G will be a faster digital cellular network than 3G—once it gets here. However, it takes tremendous capital investments to build an acceptable 4G network. Therefore, when someone asks you why you don't have an iPhone, you can say, "I'm waiting for a comprehensive 4G network. I can't deal with the slow speeds on 3G."

Chrome Is Anything Google

Remember the old days when the chrome on your car wasn't made out of plastic? Me either. Now that no one else needs the term "chrome," Google has claimed it for itself. If the discussion turns to the Internet, the mere mention of Chrome will solicit knowing nods. Of course, it's helpful to know what Chrome is.

Chrome is two things, both of them from Google (and free). The first is its Chrome Web browser. Competing with Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari and Opera, at first it appears that Chrome is a redundant entry into an already crowded browser market. This is not the case.

Google doesn't need to compete with Internet Explorer because Microsoft is doing a pretty good job of killing IE off itself. Google gives a ton of money to Firefox, which doesn't make sense if it wants Chrome to be the new Web browser. Google isn't building a new browser, but actually building a Web operating system. The Chrome browser is designed to be the platform that will run Web applications. Once this is understood, it becomes obvious why Google also named its new Linux-based computer operating system Chrome. For Google, everything that will be running applications, whether on the Web or on a computer, is Chrome.

To show you're with it, when someone mentions Google's Chrome, you can knowingly ask, "The browser or operating system?"

Note: Google also has a free cell phone operating system called Android. If someone ask you if you're going to get an Android cell phone, you can say, "No, I'm waiting for a nationwide 4G network."

Also, look for Google Wave (coming soon to conversations everywhere) to vie for the latest position as a combination social network, instant messenger and e-mail program. "I'll send you a Wave!"

OLED—the Television of the Future

Forget plasma and LCD. Anyone talking about buying one of those is talking old technology (although they are pretty much the only thing you can buy right now). Forget the fact that the only OLED television you can buy today costs about \$2,000 and only has an 11-inch screen. If you're still watching a tube or rear-projection television and don't want to spring for a new high-definition model, then you can use the coming OLED technology as your excuse for not buying right now.

OLED stands for Organic Light Emitting Diode. OLED screens are brighter, use less energy, look good from any angle, and ultimately (three to five years) should be cheaper to produce than the current LCD and plasma displays. The downside includes the difficulties in making big displays and the relatively short screen lifetime. These problems will be worked out. (For more information on OLED, see the July 10 Edgeward.)

OLED screens are produced with a process similar to that of inkjet printing. They can be made extremely thin and draw very little power compared to other technologies. That makes the technology suitable for everything from cell phones to T-shirts.

The truth is that if you want a high-definition television screen today, you will be buying the current technology. It will be a few years before OLED will take over, but in the meantime, it makes for good conversation.

Web 1.0, Web 2.0, Web 3.0, and the Cloud

There is something terminally boring about naming generations of Internet development as if each is a new version of a computer application. Apparently, everything up until Facebook and MySpace was Web 1.0. (Who knew?) Web 2.0 was next—and, I guess, a financial disappointment. Web 3.0 is either on the way or already here. It doesn't really matter because nobody, except for the techno geeks who want to get their names in Wikipedia, can remember any of the definitions. If you hear anyone using one of these Web X.0 terms, quietly retreat while mumbling something about cloud computing, or the "cloud."

The "cloud" is the latest analogy for the Internet. It refers to using applications and storing your files at a remote location somewhere in the cloud—the Internet. If you want to sound informed, whenever you hear "cloud computing," mention Google Apps, Windows Live, or any form of remote backup. The cloud has had legs (good visualization) as a marketing term, because it is easier for us to understand clouds than Web 4.0. All we need to do is look up into the sky. Up next, fog computing and all of its implications.

Bing

Bing is easy to remember. It's short, to the point, and named after a type of cherry. Microsoft has put out plenty of commercials, so we know that Bing has something to do with making decisions. However, I should point out that Bing is actually just another Web search engine. I couldn't find any decision making. Maybe I didn't look hard enough. I can't decide.

If my mother-in-law, God rest her soul, ever heard anyone mention Bing, she usually said, "Ah, good ol' Bing." Then she would break out into song.

Watch for the Leopard

If you overhear people talking about Leopard (or lately Snow Leopard), they are talking about Macintosh computers that come from Apple. Leopard refers to the Apple operating system. To drop your two cents into an Apple conversation, memorize the statement, "The Mac OS is run by FreeBSD (pronounced free-bee-ess-dee), which is very similar to Linux, only different." Be sure to display a disapproving look if anyone mentions Microsoft—or Windows.

Windows XP Good, Windows Vista Bad, Windows 7 Good Again

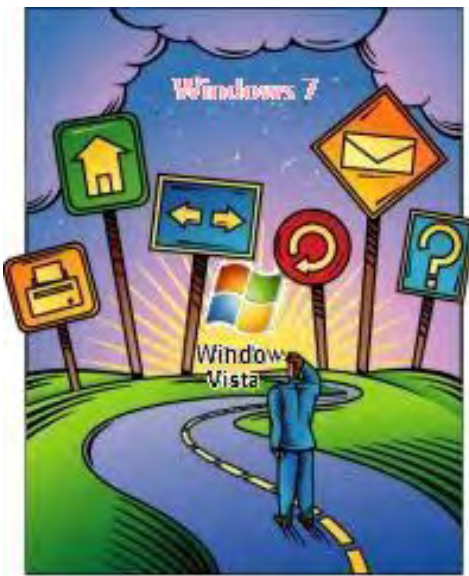
With different Windows versions, you need to maintain a proper approval level, rather than understand the differences. Soon Windows 7 will be released, which in a couple of years will relegate most of the other versions to oblivion, as is the case with Windows 98. If anyone mentions XP, nod approvingly. If Vista comes up, show sympathy. If it's Windows 7, give a thumbs up.

The problem with Windows 7 is the name. It's perfectly respectable to abbreviate it verbally, as in XP, Vista, or "seven." However, when writing, proper decorum requires us to use the full Windows 7 name, rather than just 7. The digit 7 by itself on the Web or a printed page just looks wrong.

If you master these concepts and the associated terminology, you will be comfortable mingling with the digerati anywhere. If you hear a term that's not familiar, there is no shame in saying, "Excuse me. I'm not familiar with that expression." They probably just made it up.

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 Tips and Tricks

“When Debugging Internet Connection Problems, “Ping” Is the Number One Tool” by Jack Dunning

Windows computers offer a variety of tools and utilities that can help you troubleshoot a faulty Internet connection and fix the problem, but an age-old program is a great starting place.

In any Windows computer there are tools for checking your network connections. Sometimes your Internet access may not be working, but you don't know whether the problem is with your modem, the router, or the network card in your computer. At times like these, it's worthwhile to have little programs that will test your connections.

In Windows Vista and Windows 7, you can go to the Network and Sharing Center and immediately see the problem (see Figure 1). (Open the Control Panel, or type "network" into the Start Search field of the Start Menu, then select the Network and Sharing Center.) The image at the top of the window that displays the computer, the networks and the Internet (image of a world globe) tells you if the connection reaches all the way to the Internet. If there is problem, the screen will show a red X breaking the connection.

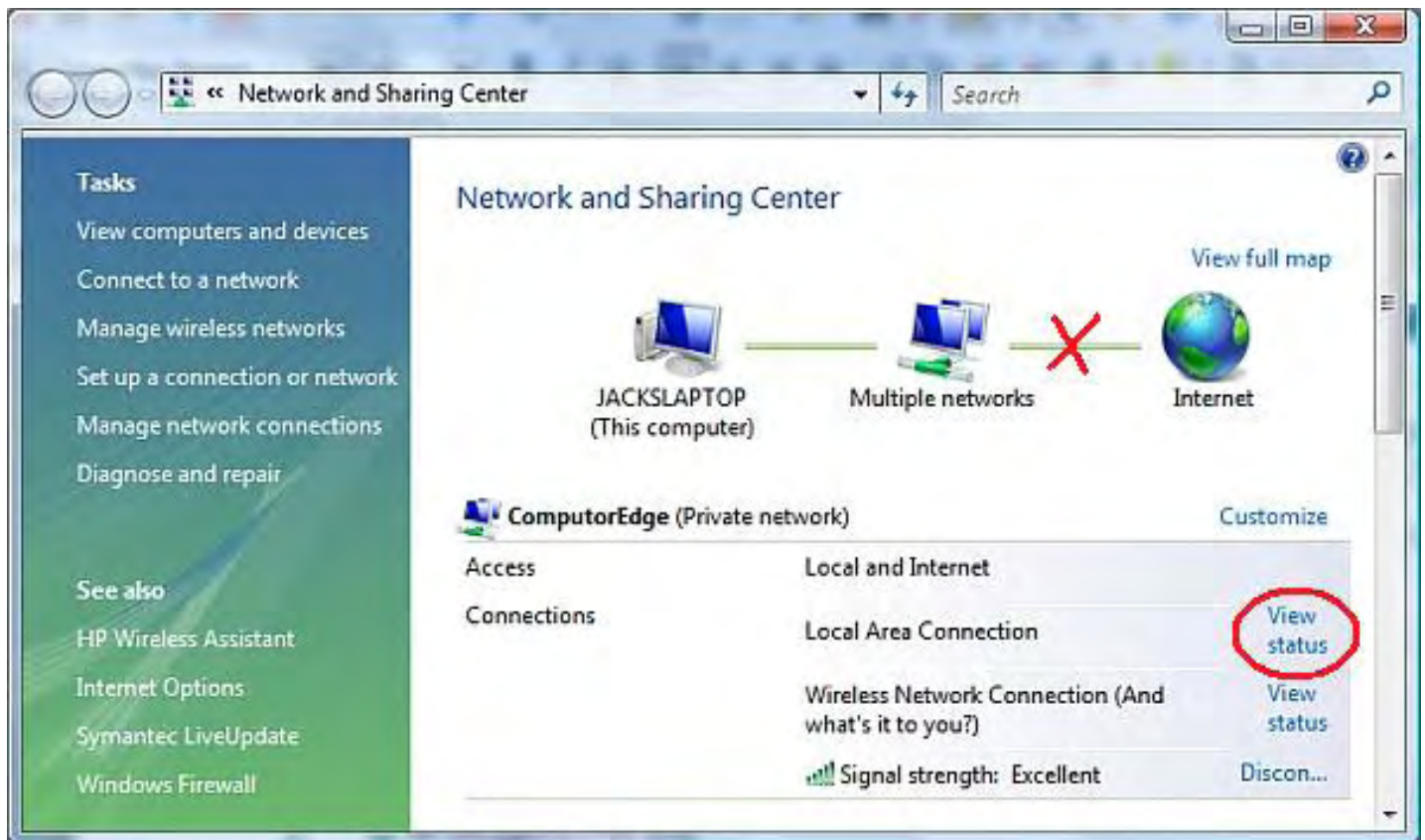


Figure 1. The Windows Network and Sharing Center.

(In the above example, there are two network connections, one wired and the other wireless. You can have both connected simultaneously and they won't interfere. They each have been assigned a different network address by the router.)

This screen is only a starting point for debugging a network. There are other command-line utilities that can be used as quick checks. But before opening the Command Prompt, we can gather a little more information from another window by clicking "View status" next to our network connection, then "Details..." in the new Window. This will display the Network Connections Details window (see Figure 2). This window will show you the addresses assigned by the router and the address of the router itself. (If you're having connection problems, you may not be able to open this window.) You should record these numbers when they are available, since you will be able to use them for testing.

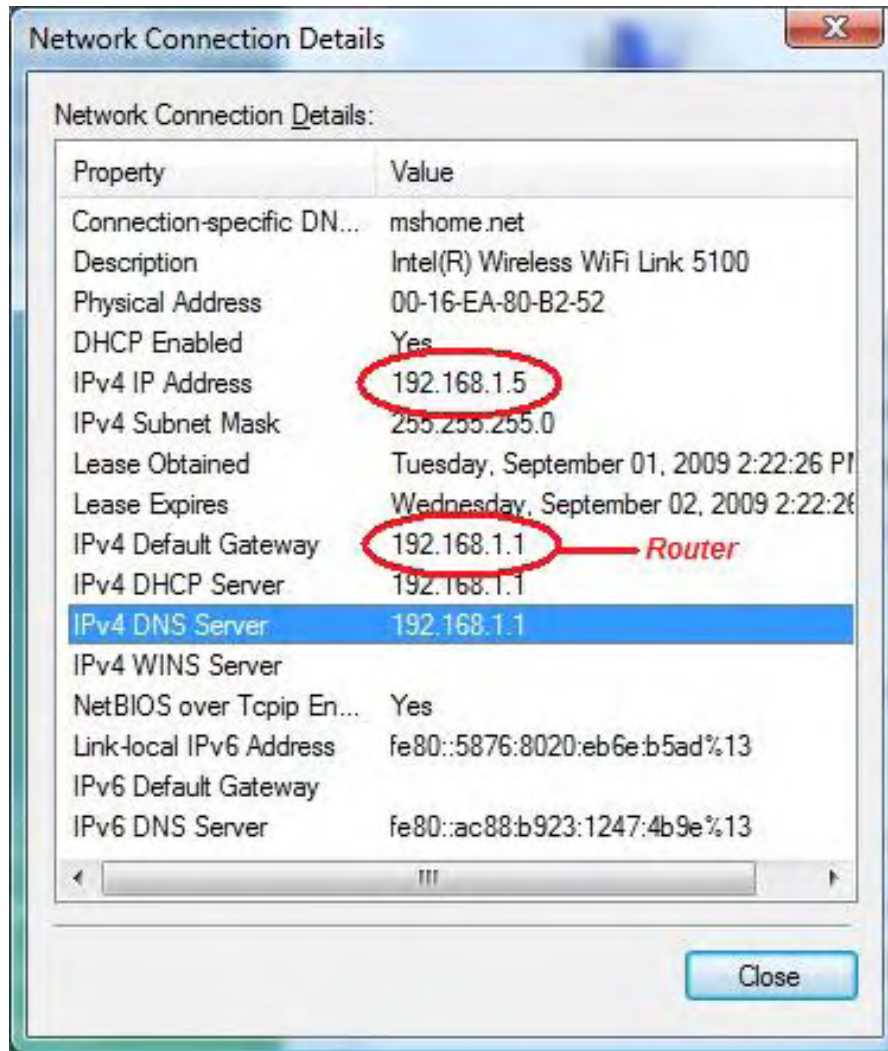


Figure 2. Network Connections Details window.

Internal network addresses have been standardized to use 192.168.xxx.xxx as the set of internal network addresses. Firewalls and security software are built to prevent any addresses starting with that combination from entering networks from the outside. The addresses that you will need for network test purposes will start with these numbers. The router will most often default to something like 192.168.1.1, although you may need to check the manual for your router to get the actual default address. In this case, the Internet address (IP) assigned to the computer is the top circled number. The router (gateway) address is the lower circled number. The object is to use the Command Prompt to check for a proper network connection.

The first step is to open the Command Prompt as shown in Figure 3. This can be done through Programs/Accessories or, in Vista and Windows 7, by typing "command" into the Start Search field of the Start Menu and selecting Command Prompt.

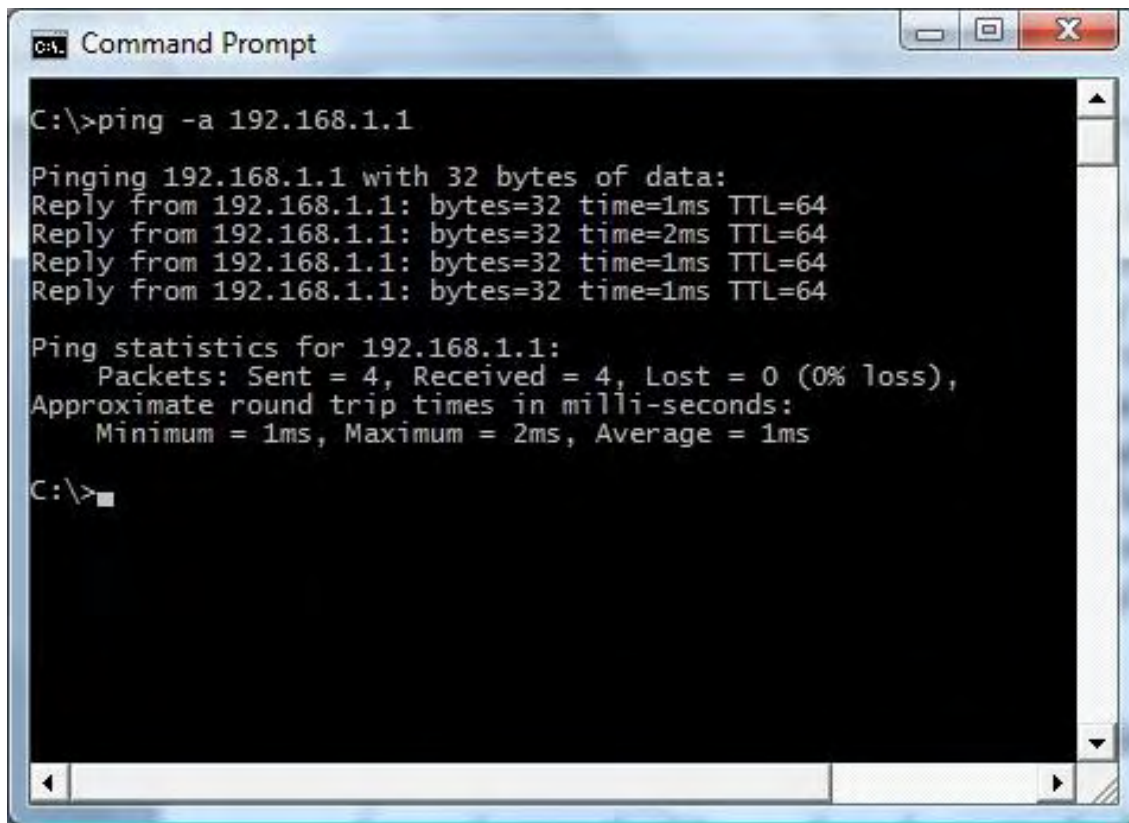


Figure 3. Using the ping command in the Command Prompt window.

Once the Command Prompt window is open, you can check all of your network (and Internet connections) with the ping command. (You can also get your IP information by entering the command ipconfig at the command prompt.) In the example above, the router is being successfully "pinged" and is showing a positive response. In this case, if there is a problem with your Internet connection, then it is either between the modem and the router or an issue with your service provider. Most often, resetting the modem with the router powered down will fix the problem. If not (after bringing the router back up), you probably have a service provider problem.

If you get the response "Request timed out." to your ping, then the IP is not connected to your computer (unless the system or router is set to a stealth mode which won't allow a response). Generally, you will get a response from any device on the network since internal addresses are not generally set to a stealth mode. Even network devices such as a printer will respond to a ping as long as they're assigned a separate IP. In the example seen in Figure 3, the "-a" parameter is used. The "-a" tells ping to return the name of the device or server, if found. In this case, the router does not have an assigned name and therefore does not return a name.

You can also ping your own network card by entering either the IP or the assigned computer name. If you don't get any response, then there may be a problem with your network card. Another check to perform is to ping the other computers on the network, either by name or IP. If you get a response, you know that your network is working. (If this doesn't work, then the first tests won't work either.)

A quick check of your Internet service is to ping a particular site. This can be done by either the URL (name) or IP address (see Figure 4). (Of course you can just try to load a Web page with your browser, but that takes longer—plus you can ping e-mail servers and other non-Web servers on the Internet to see if they are active.) Note that the IP address is returned with the name. You can also use that IP address as the input for ping with the same result.

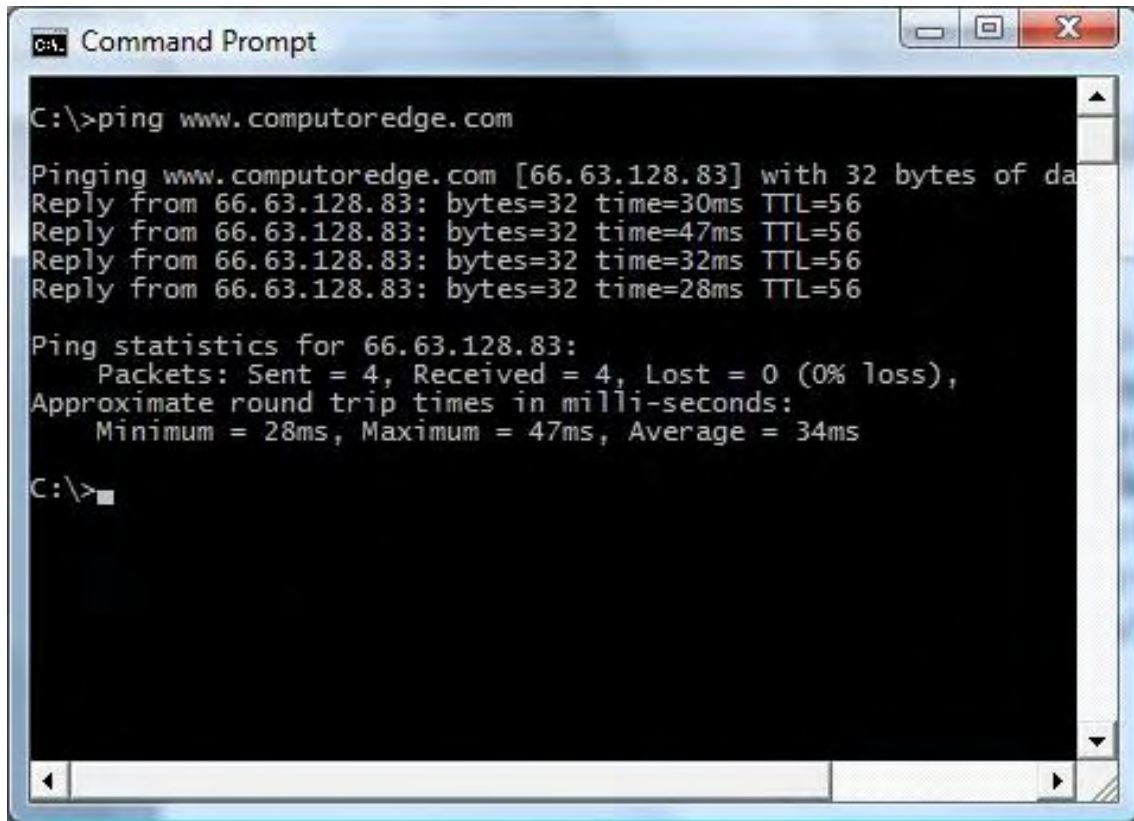


Figure 3. Using the ping command in the Command Prompt window to check a Web site.

Ping has been around for a long time (way before Windows came on the market). It's a quick, handy tool for checking your network connections. If you want to see the various ping parameters, "type ping /?"

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 “Snow Leopard” by Wally Wang

If you want a faster Macintosh, all you have to do is shell out \$29 to upgrade your operating system to Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard. Also, the Apple tablet is coming—it's just a matter of when; for those who need to record screen activity, Camtasia for the Mac is definitely worth a look; and a tip on using the Put Back command, which magically puts a file back in its original location before you moved it to the Trash.

The most remarkable feature of Mac OS X has always been its ability to speed up older Macs. The first time I ran Mac OS X 10.2 Jaguar, it seemed to run fine on my iBook. When I upgraded to Mac OS X 10.3 Panther, suddenly everything on my iBook ran noticeably faster.

This trend continued with each iteration of Mac OS X up until 10.5 Leopard, which introduced dozens of new features but seemed to be the first version of Mac OS X that didn't make older Macs run faster. Fortunately, with version 10.6 Snow Leopard, Mac OS X has once again made older Macs run faster.

The speed differences between Snow Leopard and Leopard aren't dramatic, but still noticeable. Safari running on Leopard with my Mac mini (loaded with 4GB of RAM) still seems to load slower than Safari running on my MacBook (with 2GB of RAM) on Snow Leopard even though both use identical 2GHz Intel 2 Core processors.

In other words, Snow Leopard makes an older computer (with less RAM) run faster than a newer computer using an older operating system (Leopard). If you want a faster PC, you have no choice but to buy a faster processor and more RAM. If you want a faster Macintosh, all you have to do is shell out \$29 to upgrade your operating system to Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard.

Another reason to upgrade to Snow Leopard is that Snow Leopard gobbles up several gigabytes less of hard disk space than Leopard did. The main reason is because Leopard contains both Intel and PowerPC code, while Snow Leopard strips out PowerPC code. As a result, Snow Leopard not only runs faster than Leopard, but it takes up less space as well. (Of course, if you own a PowerPC Mac, you won't be able to run Snow Leopard.)

Right now there are still a handful of programs that may not run under Snow Leopard. Before you upgrade, check this compatibility list (snowleopard.wikidot.com) to determine which programs will run flawlessly and which ones may have problems. If one of your favorite programs won't run under Snow Leopard, it won't matter how fast Snow Leopard runs because your Mac will essentially become useless without the programs that you need the most.

The Persistent Apple Tablet Rumor

Apple's secretive tablet device is rumored to be coming out later this year or early 2010. My guess is that Apple will release it by October for two reasons. First, it will sell like crazy for the Christmas season, and second, the introduction of a revolutionary product that runs Mac OS X will make any netbook running Windows 7 look as antiquated as an abacus. What better way to blunt Windows 7's impact than by making it look obsolete the moment it arrives?

The Apple tablet is coming; it's just a matter of when. Initially, the tablet was rumored to use a 10-inch screen, but the latest reports claim that Apple has been experimenting with sizes ranging as small as six inches and as large as 15 inches.

The tablet is also supposedly able to run both Mac OS X programs and iPhone apps. For Internet connectivity, you'll need to subscribe to a data plan, currently rumored to be offered through Verizon.

The price is rumored to range between \$600-\$900. No CD/DVD drive will be included, and you'll probably need to rely on its virtual keyboard for typing, although using Bluetooth, you should be able to connect a physical keyboard if you want.

The Apple tablet is getting nearly as much media attention as the iPhone did before its debut. Of course, the first version of the iPhone was dazzling, but expensive. It wasn't until the iPhone 3G came out that more people started buying it, and now the latest iPhone 3GS has cemented the iPhone's reputation as the smartphone to beat.

Will Apple's tablet follow the same circuitous route toward success? Stay tuned. You may see people starting to line up to buy one soon at your nearest Apple Store.

Camtasia for the Mac

For years, one of the best PC screen-capturing programs was Camtasia, which let you capture all activity on a PC and save it as a video clip. Now the company responsible for Camtasia has released Camtasia for the Mac (www.techsmith.com/camtasiamac).

In case you're wondering why you would want to capture movies of your screen, here are some possible reasons. Many software companies capture movies of their programs in action so people can see exactly what each screen looks like and what to click. Watching a video tutorial is much simpler than reading text and staring at static images.

You might also want to capture movies of your screen as a troubleshooting tool. Rather than explain to someone exactly what (and where) to click, just send them a video that shows exactly what they should do to fix any problems they might be having.

Besides letting you capture screen activity, Camtasia also lets you record audio. Now you can narrate activity on your screen using the built-in microphone on your Macintosh. Once you're done capturing a video, Camtasia lets you edit your video by trimming it or adding additional audio.

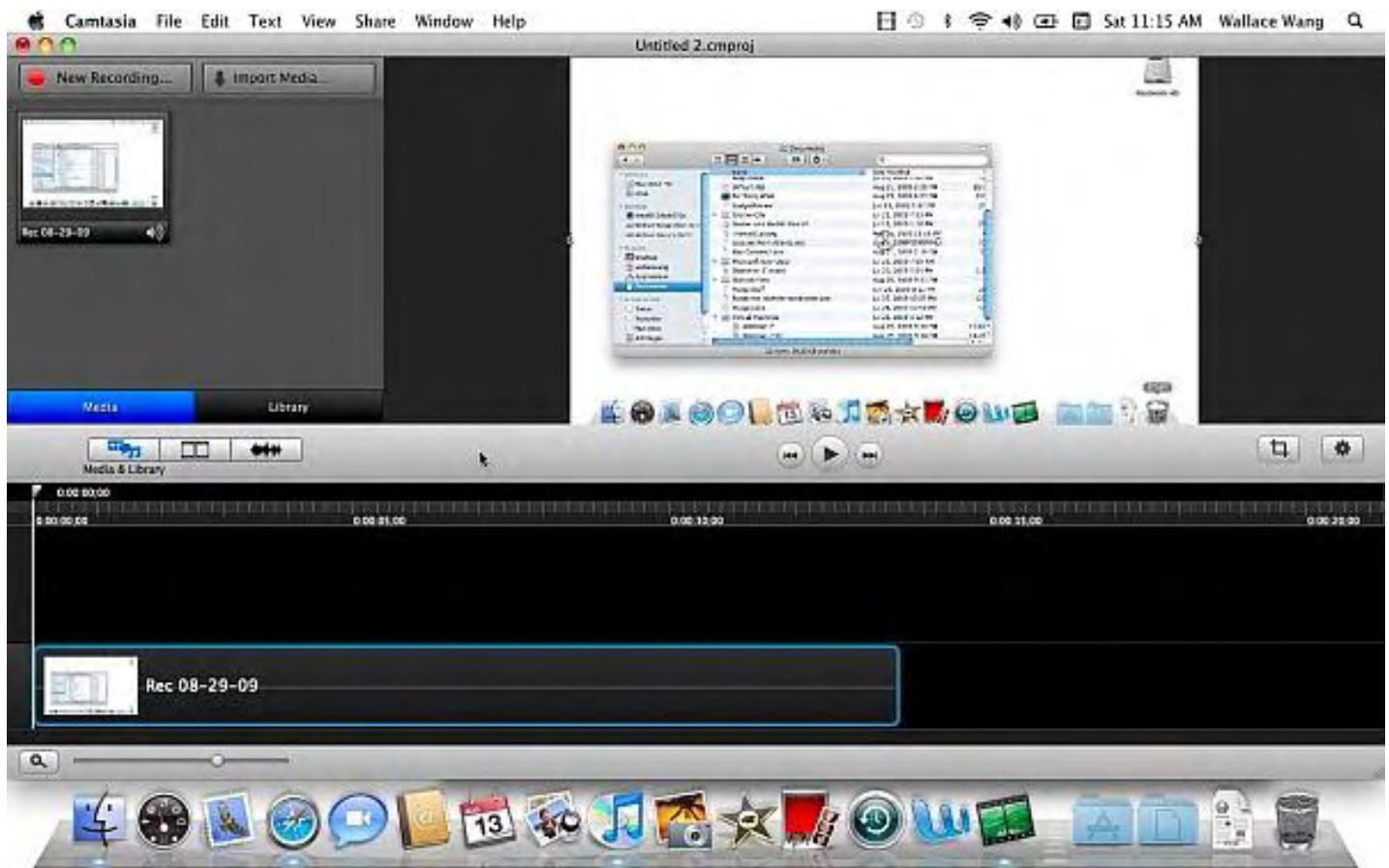


Figure 1. Camtasia for the Mac provides a timeline so you can edit your captured video.

This ability to add audio can be especially useful since it's not always easy to speak while trying to do something on the screen at the same time. By letting you add audio after you've captured your video, you can focus just on narrating important parts of your video or just add background music or sound effects.

Another way to spice up your videos is to add visual or audio effects, such as having your video open by fading in or having it end with the screen rotating and spinning out of the way. Audio effects allow you to raise or lower the volume at certain points of your video for emphasis or to eliminate background noise.

When you're done making your video, Camtasia lets you export it directly to YouTube, Screencast.com (Camtasia's own video-sharing service), or iTunes. You can also export a video to a file such as a QuickTime, MPEG-4, or AVI file, which you can share with others.

Camtasia for the Mac is obviously not a tool that everyone needs, but for those who do need to record screen activity, Camtasia for the Mac is definitely worth a look. The program is simple enough to help you record a video right away, but still offers enough features that can help you modify your captured video to make it presentable. If you export your video to another file format, you could then edit it in your favorite video-editing program (such as iMovie or Final Cut Express) to create even fancier effects.

For a limited time, you can buy Camtasia for the Mac for \$99. Afterward, the price jumps up to \$149. Since the company offers a free trial, you can experiment with the program and see if it's something that you might need.

(To see a quick example of a video captured with Camtasia for the Mac, download the *Put Back video.mp4* (www.computoredge.com/images/2736/Put_Back_video.mp4) video file, which shows Snow Leopard's Put

Back feature for retrieving files from the Trash. This simple file took less than 15 minutes to put together, which shows you how simple Camtasia for the Mac can be to use.)

* * *

One feature that Windows has offered for years is the ability to take items out of the Recycle Bin and put them back in the folder that they came from. With Leopard, you could retrieve items from the Trash, but you had to manually place the retrieved files in a folder. If you didn't remember where the deleted file came from, Leopard would give you no clue, so you just had to guess.

Fortunately, Snow Leopard corrects this problem and offers a simple Put Back command. Just right-click on the Trash icon and when a pop-up menu appears, click Open. This lets you see all the files stored in the Trash. Right-click on the file you want to retrieve, and when another pop-up menu appears, click Put Back. This command magically puts the file back in its original location before you moved it to the Trash.

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)

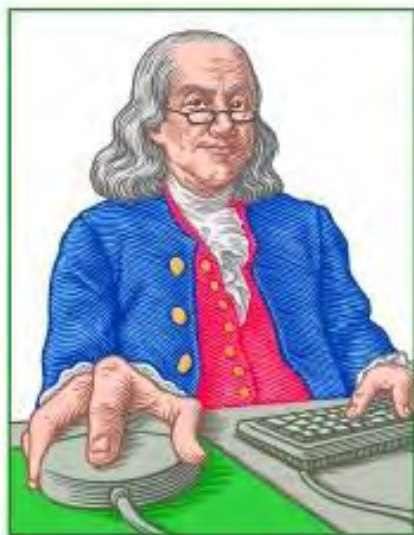
Every Saturday morning from 9:00 am - 10:00 am in San Diego, you can hear Wally with fellow co-hosts Dane Henderson and Candace Lee, on the radio show CyberSports Today (cybersportstoday.com/), which

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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LINUX LESSONS

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

Linux Lessons:
Tips and Tricks
from Users

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

The future of the Linux
column has been decided,
and it's here to stay.

The More Linux, the Better

The more you can publish on Linux, the better. I like what I have read so far, and want more. I am not a "geek," and only qualify as a consumer who is anxious to continue with the daily use of Ubuntu, as well as MS Windows.

Cicero

Bear Creek Regional Park, Colorado

The Future of Linux

The future of Linux—or at least this Linux column—is decided and it's here to stay. It can act as an edited forum, or a place to pass on useful Linux information. As long as there is input from readers, no matter how small, the column will appear each Friday. At those times when we have no input, it will not be forgotten. I've added a link to the navigation menu on the left under the category "Reader Submissions" for sending us an e-mail with your musings and lessons.

The "Submit Linux Tips and Tricks!" link on the left will serve as a reminder that *ComputerEdge* is in the business of passing on Linux information—without prejudice—just as we do with all the other silly operating systems, such as Windows. When we receive something, we will edit it and put it in line for the next issue. If not, the annoying link on the left will continue day-in and day-out, begging for more.

Jack Dunning

ComputerEdge

* * *

Give Us Your Linux Tips and/or Questions

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

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

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

Jack Dunning
ComputerEdge

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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Rob, The Computer Tutor

ComputerTutor Does VB.Net
2010
“VB.Net 2010 Applications” by Rob Spahitz

Last week, we looked at a how things in the toolbox work, including properties and events. Now let's make some apps.

Last week, we looked at a how things in the toolbox work, including properties and events. Now let's make some apps.

CHALLENGE (due 9/11/2009):

VB programmers are typically thought of as computer nerds. Are you one? Do you know any? What do you think of the tag applied to computer programmers? Are we all nerds if we program computers?

Designs

When creating an application, you need to understand your goal or you'll never get there. Let's start with something very simple and see what is required to make it useful. Let's build a simple text editor that will act as a "sticky note" on your desktop. The idea is very simple. Create an application that lets a user enter a note, drag it around the screen, and change the background color. It should also be resizable. Later we can add other features like making it borderless, allow different fonts, and maybe add pictures. But again, let's start simple so that we can complete the job as version 1.

As part of this, we will try to go from beginning to end. We'll add all necessary pieces and create a deployment for it.

Open VB.Net and create a Windows Application named Sticky as seen in Figure 1.

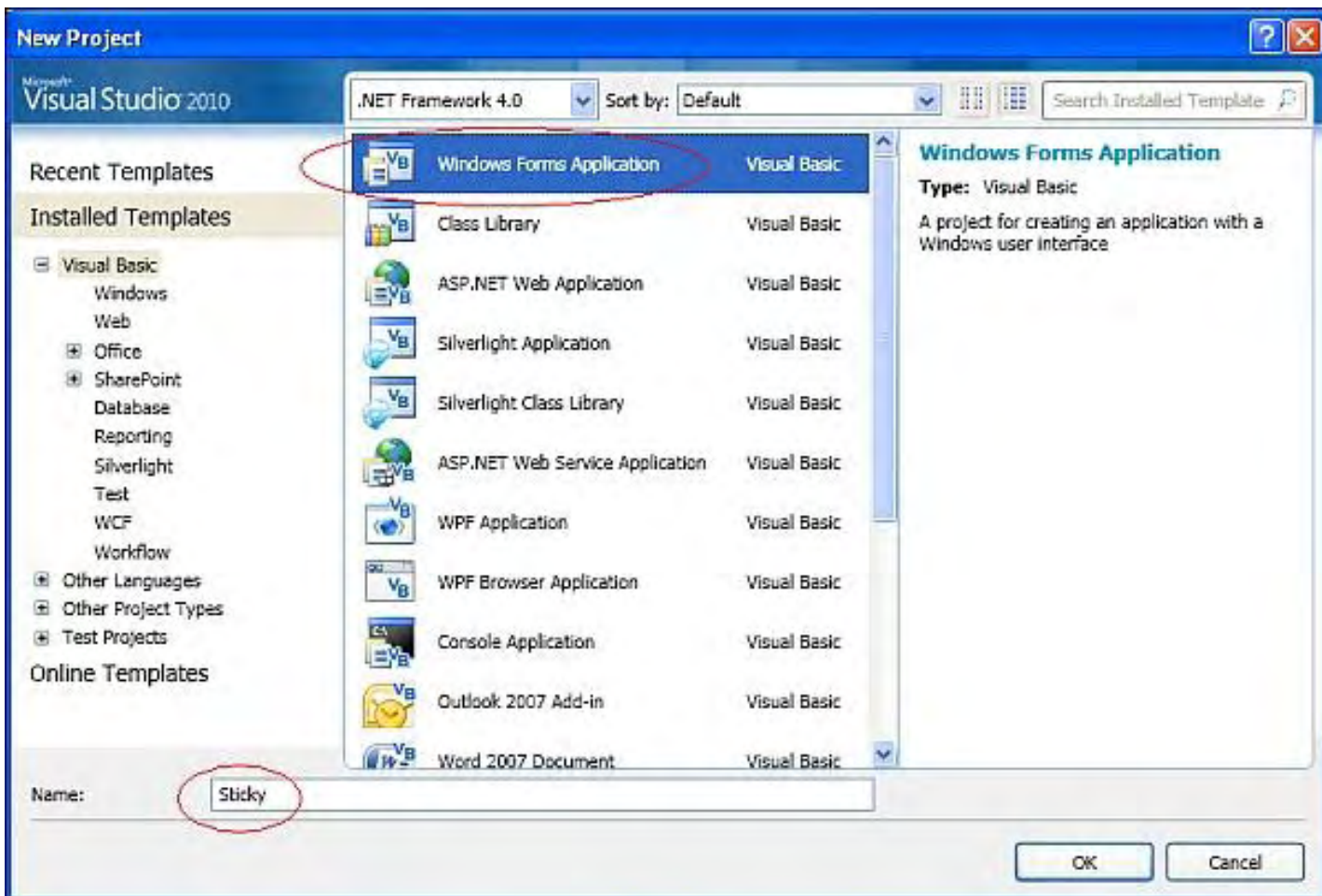


Figure 1. VB.Net 2010 Windows Application Named Sticky.

Since I want to show upcoming programmers how to do things right, rather than learn sloppy habits that most programmers seem to have, let's immediately take care of the form before we go on.

Form Settings

First and foremost, let's update the form's name. Since the form has two names, the VB name and the Windows name, let's update both and make them the same for our own convenience. First, select the form in Solution Explorer (usually in the top right corner of your development environment) and single click the item named Form1.vb, as seen in Figure 2.

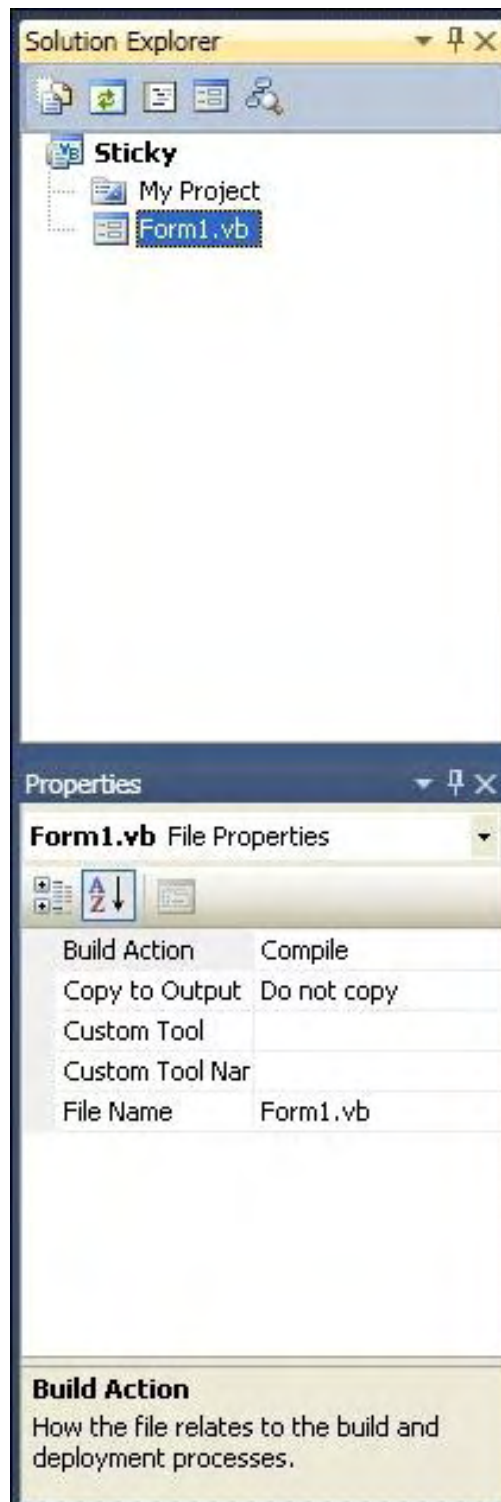


Figure 2. The form in Solution Explorer

This lets us change the Windows name. When selected, several properties for that form are shown. Change the File Name property to frmSticky.vb. Make sure that it contains the .vb extension on there since this is the Windows name that helps it know that this is a VB.Net file. You could also have done this directly in the Solution Explorer window by selecting the file, waiting a second, and selecting it again.

Now select the form. That's the thing that looks like a typical window, next to the Solution Explorer. When you do this, the Properties window gets updated to show properties for the form. You could also have selected this from the drop-down list at the top of the Properties window. In VB.Net 2010, the name of the

form is already updated and there is no property to change. In previous versions, locate the Name property (found near the top in parentheses) and change it to frmSticky if needed. Here you don't need the .vb extension, since this is not a Windows name. Further, if you added the dot, it would indicate that the control name is invalid.

Notice that the title of the form is still Form1. Scroll down to the Text property and change it to "Sticky," since that will be the name of our application. When you press the Enter key, the title is updated, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Sticky Form Design with Updated Title.

OK, we have a container—a form—for our application, along with various useful settings. There are other properties you could change, such as the Background color (which we'll address in a different way), FormBorderStyle (but it's already set to Sizable, which is what we want, although ScalableToolWindow might be a better choice), Icon (which we could add as an enhancement to add a picture to the top left corner), Opacity (which is an interesting feature so you can partially see through the sticky form), StartPosition (to start the form at a specific location when first launched), and TopMost (since Sticky notes should usually stay on top of other applications, but this was not available in older versions). These would all be nice, but let's keep it simple and add features later.

Next, we'd like the application to allow a user to enter text. Usually the best control for that job is a text box, so double-click on that in the toolbox to add it to the form. Since it will be used to hold notes, change the Name property to txtNote.

Now, where should we put it on the form? And how big should it be?

If you think about the real-world design, that will help find the answers. A typical note lets you write text on

the entire area. Text boxes typically let you enter text in one line. Also, if we want the form to be resizable, then the text box should also be resizable. Let's explore the text box properties to see if there's anything there to help us. If not, we'll have to find another solution.

One of the first properties we see in the alphabetic listings is Anchor. This one will attach the control (the text box) to the edges of a container (the form) at a specific distance. So let's set this up first. With the text box in the top-left corner (Location property 0, 0), stretch the text box to the full width of the form. You might think that you can just set the width property of the text box to the width of the form, but the form includes a border that typically takes several pixels (possibly 4). In my case, the default form was 300 pixels wide (found in the Size property), so I set the text box width to 292.

The height is a little trickier. First, the border at the bottom is the same as the side, but the border at the top includes the title bar. One trick you can use to resolve this is to set the form's border to none, adjust the text box, anchor it, then restore the form's border.

Note: Do *not* leave the border setting to None or you will have no proper way to close the application (since there will be no "X" in the top right corner). If you're stuck while running from the VB environment, click on the blue square near the green Run triangle or use menu Debug/Stop Debugging.

Hmm, we run into another problem. The text box does not allow you to change its height. Let's address this next. Meanwhile, change the Anchor property. By default, it shows Top,Left but we'd like to anchor it to all corners. When we click on the drop-down list next to it, we are presented with a graphical way to set the property, as seen in Figure 4.

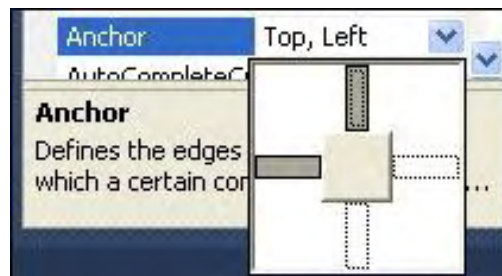


Figure 4. Anchor Property.

Although gray usually means disabled, here it means selected. Select all four rectangles to anchor the text box to all four edges of the form. When you press the Enter key, the property changes its settings to Top, Bottom,Left,Right. You could have entered that manually, but the graphical version is probably easier. Now if the form resizes, the text box resizes with it.

Now we'll solve the problem of the text box height. As you look further down the list of properties, you see things like BackColor (which we might use later), BorderStyle (since the notes typically appear flat, not 3D), Dock (which could also be used instead of Anchor since we don't need any gaps between the control and the form), Multiline—AHA! By changing this to True, you can now change the height of the text box. Go ahead and change it to fill the height of the form. That was 266 for me.

Now that you've got everything you need for a basic white note, try running (press the F5 key). After the application is compiled to check for accuracy, you get a very basic note application, as seen in Figure 5.

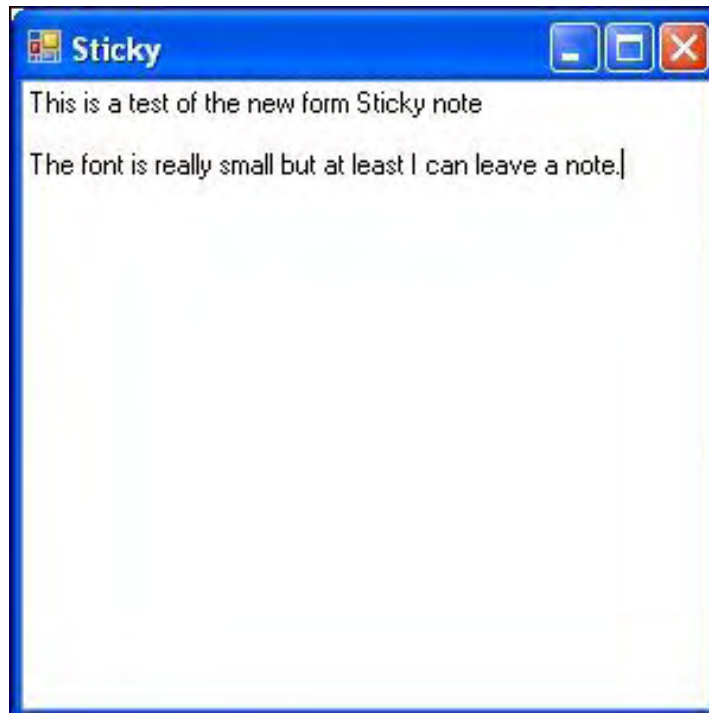


Figure 5. Sticky Note Application.

In the next few weeks, we'll explore some additional things to make this more useful, such as menus, the ability to launch another note from the application, and the ability to save the note, plus some options like colors and font information. Stay tuned and send your comments to my CHALLENGE. See ya next week.

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

“Computer Product
Opinions from
ComputerEdge
Readers and Staff” by
ComputerEdge Staff

A reader offers a
positive experience
with iChat and
Skype, but your
mileage may vary.

Webcam in Action

Last month when my son went to Europe, we were able to iChat back and forth with no problem. He even took his Mac Pro out in front to show us his brother-in-law's home. We also corresponded via Skype. For some reason, the picture was even better. Apparently, your mileage may vary. We were both pleased with the resulting pictures. The built-in webcams seem to be improving all the time.

Thanks for all the articles (and ads). Keep up the good work!

Bob D., Vista, CA

Next week, ComputerEdge will be talking about webcams. Tell us about your experiences and give hints about what works best. Your comments will appear right here in ComputerQuick reviews.

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 \(ceeditor@computoredge.com\)](mailto: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: A Note from the Publisher

“Cannibalization in the Tech Industry” by Jack Dunning



There has never been a market phenomenon in history that so rapidly destroys other businesses as now exists in computers and the Internet.

The key word for any technology business should be cannibalization. There has never been a market phenomenon in history that so rapidly destroys other businesses as now exists in computers and the Internet. Every new development targets an existing business with deadly aim. No business is safe. Ironically, even the companies that have caused the destruction of so many others may be devoured by the same environment of continual change.

One of the most notable examples is Craigslist. By giving away ads over the Internet, Craigslist effectively killed the mammoth classified business of the newspaper industry. However, with the seedy reputation that is overtaking Craigslist, will it be able to continue indefinitely?

The Internet has wiped out many traditional businesses. In the area of stock trading, the high commissions of the past have been slashed by online brokerages. Every year, online retailers such as Amazon are eating farther into the sales of brick-and-mortar operations. The traditional camera film business has been devastated by digital cameras. The only type of business that may be safe might be personal service practitioners such as barbers and hair stylists. It seems that it would be exceedingly difficult to teach a computer to cut hair.

There is more cannibalization to come. Microsoft, who is a major player in the changing technology market, may be threatened by how computers and the Internet are evolving. Thirty percent of Microsoft's revenues come from sales of its Office products, including Word. There is some evidence that Microsoft is starting to lose its grip on this market. Sales of Office are slipping. The attacks are coming from several directions.

First, people are starting to wonder why they should buy the Microsoft Office software when there is free software available in the form of packages such as OpenOffice.org. For most users, OpenOffice includes everything that they need in an office suite. Why pay hundreds of dollars to Microsoft when free software is available?

Second, there are now Web programs such as Google Apps that perform the major functions found in Microsoft's Office. These Internet applications are also free. Plus, they have the added benefit of program and file availability from any computer, as long as there is an Internet connection.

Third, in an effort to force upgrading (buying a new package), Microsoft dropped backward compatibility with some of its older programs. In particular, a file saved in Office 2007 format cannot be opened by Word 97. This causes people to look for workarounds. As it turns out, OpenOffice, and others, can read the 2007 files and rewrite them in the older formats. This Microsoft mistake has helped more people to realize that they have alternatives that are free.

One of the reasons that so many tech businesses come and go is because the rules of business are constantly changing. Seemingly a formula for success is found, and for a number of years, it works. Then a major change occurs in the market, such as the Internet growth in the '90s, or more recently, the concept of cloud computing (working over the Internet). Consumers change their behavior, and businesses need to adapt—if

possible.

No one appears to be immune from the effects of constant change. Even the mammoth companies, such as Google and Microsoft, can fall victim to the unforeseen. That's why both companies have so many projects in the works. They are throwing everything they can think of up against the wall. Maybe something will stick.

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

"Windows Movie Maker: Will It Work with PowerPoint?"

"Thanks, Dave, for the Info, and Some Ideas," "Windows Live Mail"

Windows Movie Maker—Will It Work with PowerPoint?

[The following letters are in regard to Jack Dunning's August 21 article, "Making Movies in Windows."]

Just read your article [about] making movies. You are a great teacher. I will print the info and try it. Thanks for the included Web sites—great resources.

Now, have you tried inserting a PowerPoint presentation? That is what lots of us are using.

-Laura

As far as I can tell, there is not a way to create a movie directly from PowerPoint. (There may be a third-party program.) However, it should be relatively easy to take the graphics from PowerPoint and put them in Windows Movie Maker. Then you will be able to add voice-over, music, animations, transitions and other features that will bring your presentation to life. I would certainly give it a shot. Make a movie; burn a DVD with Windows DVD Maker; then send copies to your prospects.

-Jack Dunning, ComputerEdge

What great software! Sad that it won't be included in the next Windows generation. It is very intuitive and really makes a memorable presentation that "wows" the whole family. Best free software Microsoft has issued.

-Jerry Hughes, San Diego

You will still be able to get it as a free download from Microsoft. (The link is in the article referenced above.)

-Jack Dunning, ComputerEdge

Thanks, Dave, for the Info—and Some Ideas

[The following letters are in regard to Digital Dave's August 21 column.]

Thanks for the info on how to change USB 1.0 ports to USB 2.0 ports. Now when I go to Fry's, at least I will know what to look for.

-Rod Smith, San Diego

Dave, your advice on relocating iTunes to an alternate disk or folder was definitely useful. (I have two kids who also fill up disks with tunes and videos from iTunes.) I tackled the switch in a laborious, but more

general way, which also worked for shifting Google Desktop databases to a secondary disk.

After copying the files and folders over manually as you prescribed, I replaced the old top-level directories by symbolic links (Windows shortcuts) having the same name and pointing to the new location of those directories. (This could also have been done by replacing Registry entries, which is what iTunes does under the covers, but that is trickier.)

-Stewart A. Levin, Centennial, CO

I get the same DNS-related network repair failure message as Russ. In my case it is due to using a Registry setting to disable DNS caching, something I found in some Internet network tuning guide. (Setting the cache size to zero or something very small.)

I find the message is innocuous and the connection does get repaired. I also use explicit system32*bckslsh*drivers*bckslsh*etc*bckslsh*hosts entries for most of my frequently accessed Web sites. This allows me to continue to operate smoothly even when a DNS server is down or flaky. The one drawback is that I have to occasionally use the *nwtools.com* site to look up the IP for sites that changed their server address.

-Stewart A. Levin, Centennial CO

Windows Live Mail

[This letter is in regard to Jack Dunning's May 22 Windows Tips and Tricks column about Windows Live Mail.]

Good article and *very* helpful! Thank you.

Frankly, that Quick View option was ticking me off. I've never been a fan of any Microsoft program within the Windows environment for various reasons, but I must confess I like Windows Live Mail.

I'm a staunch Mozilla fan and must point out that Thunderbird is blinding fast at getting my mail versus Live Mail. I don't know why (only three addresses), but the UI and workings of Live Mail are so nice I'm using it anyway.

I'm one who bought Vista when it came out (Ultimate) and was so disappointed that I refused to use it. Being a gamer and the builder of my own gaming rig, I just couldn't get it to run as efficiently as XP.

I've been using first the beta version and now the RC version of Windows 7 and absolutely *love* it. Pre-ordered it in fact. Thanks for the info!

-Jess H., Santa Ana, CA

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