ComputorEdge™ Online — 02/19/10

This issue: What's Up with Apple? Also, Programming the iPhone

What is the latest to come out of Macworld—in spite of the fact that Apple was absent? Plus, what's needed to build an iPhone app.

Table of Contents:

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

Making Yourself Marketable with a Mac

Think of a job search as a marketing campaign, only you need to convince potential employers about the value of your job skills. One way to do that is with your Macintosh. Also, the value of vertical integration; Apple's marketing tactics appeal to emotion; Microsoft's Surface Touch PC is a pricey option; and a tip on using the GCD function in the Numbers spreadsheet to determine the right tile size for your room.

[Linux Lessons: Shell Scripting—A Short Form of Programming](#) by Pete Choppin

Did someone say programming?!

This article will introduce a very useful and powerful form of Linux programming called shell scripting, which can be helpful even if you think you're not a programmer.

[Rob, The ComputorTutor: Still More Web Pages](#) by Rob Spahitz

More on Making Your Own Web Page

The last two weeks we've been exploring some of the basics of HTML, the language used for creating Web pages. This time we'll continue to explore some of the features that make Web pages more interesting.

[Spam of the Week](#) by ComputorEdge Staff

The latest in annoying and dangerous e-mail currently making the rounds.

This week, the "Tax Commissar" is out to get those whose income increased last year, and beware a fake Microsoft e-mail warning of another Conficker attack.

DEPARTMENTS:

[EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher](#) by Jack Dunning

No Respect for the Venerable Mac?

Apple doesn't seem to need its devoted Macintosh User Groups anymore, or even events like Macworld. The focus is on iPhones, iPods and iPads—where the company can dominate the market.
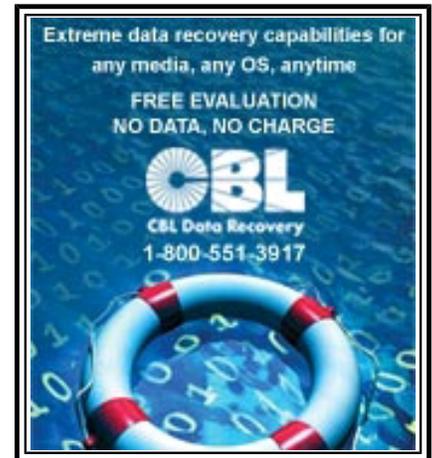
[Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers](#) by ComputorEdge Staff

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

"Tax Software that Offers Bang for the Buck," "PDFs and Business," "Careers on the Web," "The Eye-Candy Factor," "Computer Careers," "ETF Regulation"
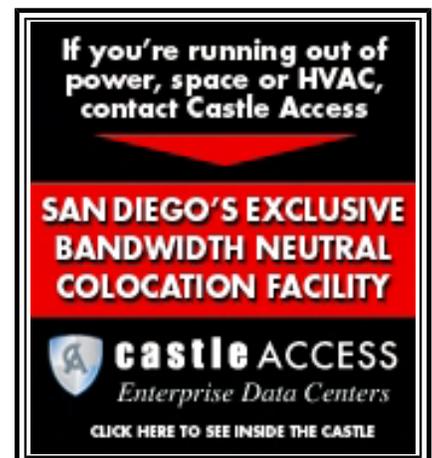
Digital Dave

"Digital Dave answers your tech questions." by *Digital Dave*

Will upgrading to IE8 slow down a reader's PC?; a reader wants to use an old hard drive as a secondary drive to access old programs; a reader wonders about POP and SMTP servers.

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a dial-up connection and I'm using Internet Explorer 6 at the present time. Will going to IE8 slow down my PC? I was told it may. I'm PC challenged, so haven't a clue. Any help would be appreciated.

Sandie
Manchester, New Hampshire

Dear Sandie,

It is possible that you will see further slowdowns with Internet Explorer 8, but you should definitely upgrade. Internet Explorer 6 is not at all secure or stable. IE8 is much better than 6, though it still largely ignores current Web standards and is known to be a little bloated.

In addition, I would recommend that you try some other free browser such as Mozilla Firefox (*www.mozilla.com/firefox/*) or Google's Chrome (*www.google.com/chrome/*). Both of them have good reputations and run well. Opera (*www.opera.com*) has also received good reviews. They are all free, so download all of them and settle on the one that runs the best for you.

However, in your case, you may not notice much difference since the slowest part of your Internet browsing will likely be you dial-up connection. If you are a frequent Internet user, it may be worth the additional cost of a cable or DSL Internet connection. The experience is so much better that you may wonder why you didn't do it sooner.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I recently bought a new computer running Win 7. I would like to know if I can use the drive from my old computer (XP system) as a secondary drive on my new computer so I can access the programs on that drive. My thought is I can't, because the Registry will be different between the two systems, and I will have to format the drive on the new system first to be able to utilize the old drive. Your thoughts will be greatly appreciated.

Ray Miller
Denver, CO

Dear Ray,

You should certainly be able to install your old drive into your new computer and, at a minimum, be able to access the data on the drive without reformatting the drive—so long as you can plug it in. Both Window XP and Win 7 use the same file structure (NTFS) and are compatible. (Even if your drive was formatted with the standard FAT32, you would still be able to read and write data.)

The main problem with installing a second drive is having the correct cable. Older hard drives used IDE connections, while the newer drives are mostly SATA. They each use a different connector for the motherboard, although most of today's motherboards will support both. If your old drive has the wide flat cable, then it is IDE. The narrow flat cable with a small connector is SATA. (It is possible that your drive will support both types. For a period of time, hard drives were being built for both options. Today, most new computers will come with SATA.)

Once you have installed the old drive, connecting both power and the appropriate data cable, the computer should recognize the drive on boot-up, probably as drive D. If not, check Disk Management in the Computer Management program in Windows 7. Sometimes you may need to set a drive assignment. Older drives used to be set to master and slave, but this shouldn't make any difference in your situation.

However, even if you do install the older drive, I would recommend copying everything you need to the new drive. The old one is probably at the end of its life cycle and cannot be trusted.

As to whether your old programs will run from the second drive depends upon whether they require Registry entries. Not all programs do. You can try loading each directly as a test. If a program won't run, you may need to re-install it to create the appropriate paths and Registry entries.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When setting up my e-mail account, my Internet provider gives me two different server names— one with POP and the other with SMPT. Why does an e-mail need two?

Fred Smith
San Diego, CA

Dear Fred,

It's useful to know what the parts of an e-mail account do. Then it is easier to determine how to resolve any issue.

When you sign up for an e-mail account, you establish a user name (the part before the @ sign in the e-mail address). This name must be unique for the e-mail server that you are using. This is why you may need to try various names before your new e-mail will accept it.

The part after the @ sign is actually the name of the e-mail server that you are using—similar to @cox.net. You also see that there is a POP (sometimes POP3) before the server name in one instance and SMTP in the other when you are imputing the server into your e-mail account. The POP server is for picking up your mail and the SMTP server is for sending your mail. When you create an account in your e-mail program, it is necessary to put in these server names individually for both picking up and sending e-mail. This tells your e-mail program where to look for sending and picking up e-mail when working with the account.

You can access multiple e-mail accounts from different e-mail services in the same e-mail program. All you need to do is create an account for each with the proper POP and SMTP server names. (Whether you can both send and receive e-mail with an account will depend on whether your ISP blocks the sending port for third-party services.)

Digital Dave

Macworld Expo 2010
"It's all about the software now." by Wally Wang

> Although Apple will no longer use Macworld Expo to introduce new products, the conference allows the software industry to thrive and showcase its latest creations supporting Apple products.

With Apple's absence looming over the first Macworld Expo without an Apple booth or keynote, the emphasis is mostly on software. In the past, Apple would announce a major product at every Macworld Expo. Although this year wasn't any different, the only new product Apple introduced this year was Aperture 3.

Basically, Apple just gave Aperture 3 the ability to recognize faces and identify where a picture was taken, two features that iPhoto has already dubbed Faces and Places. If you're a casual photographer, you should find that iPhoto meets your needs, but if you're a professional photographer who needs to catalog, organize and modify photographs regularly, you may find yourself outgrowing the capabilities of iPhoto. In that case, you'll want a more professional photo organizer such as Aperture 3 or Adobe's Lightroom.

For people who use their Macintosh for business, they may be stuck using Microsoft Office 2008, which isn't nearly as compatible with Microsoft Office for Windows as the name implies. Fortunately, Microsoft announced a new version of Microsoft Office for the Mac 2011, which should be out just in time for the 2010 holiday season. This latest version of Microsoft Office for the Mac includes the Ribbon interface found on Office 2007/2010 for Windows.
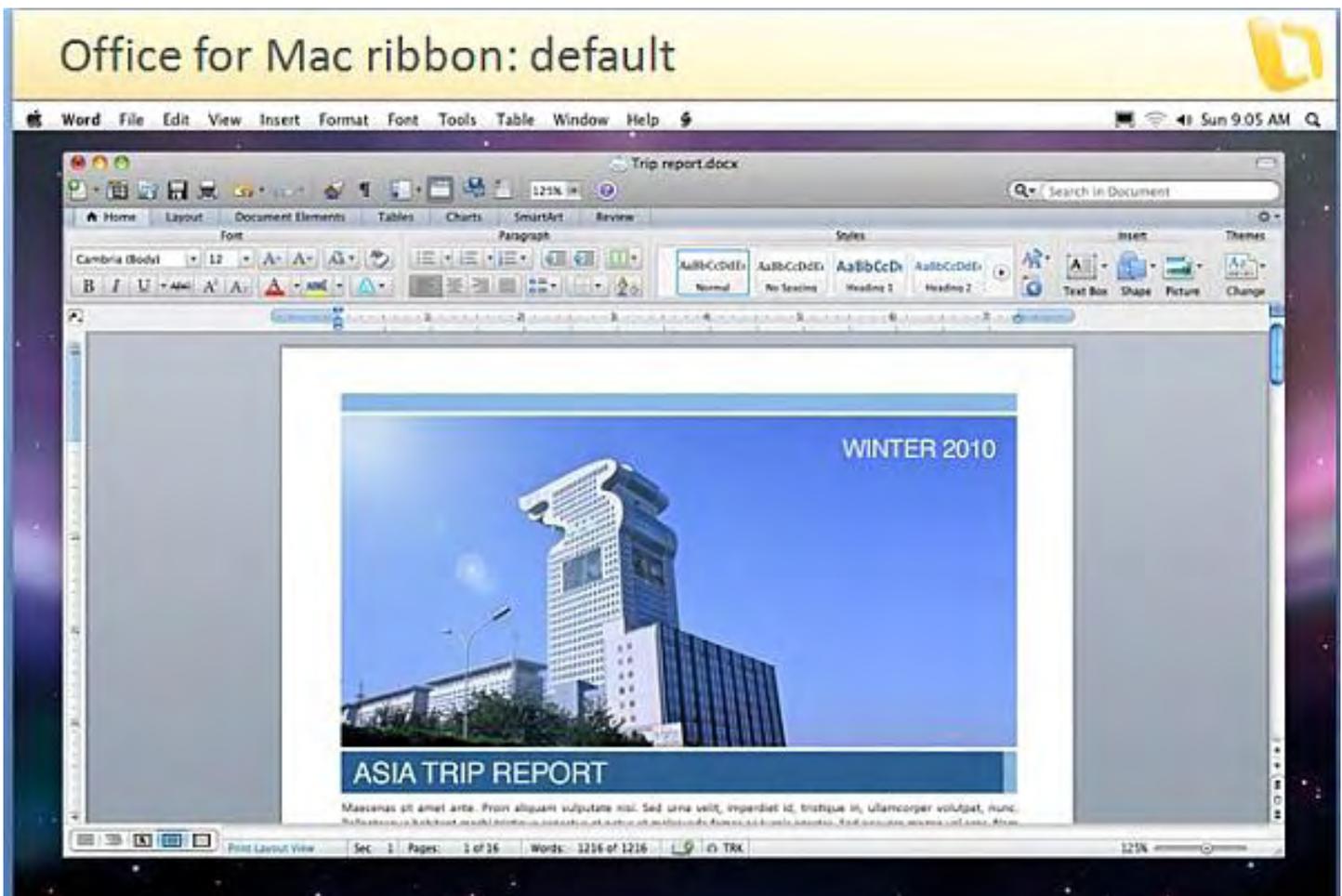
Figure 1. Microsoft Office for the Mac 2011 will bring the Ribbon interface to the Macintosh.

If you hated the Ribbon interface on Windows, you had no choice but to learn it. Unlike the Windows version of Office, the Mac version will let you hide the Ribbon interface while still providing the familiar pull-down menus for accessing commands. Now you'll be able to adapt to the Ribbon interface at your convenience and gradually wean yourself away from pull-down menus if you want, or just use both the menus and the Ribbon interface to get your work done.

Since the Ribbon interface has alienated so many people on Windows, this might be another reason for Office users to switch to the Macintosh and get a version of Office that doesn't force them into the Ribbon interface against their will.

Besides adding the Ribbon interface, Office for the Mac also adds Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) support, which will let you run macros originally created on Office for Windows. In addition, Office for the Mac will now include Outlook for the Mac. If you depend on Outlook for Windows to organize your calendar, tasks and e-mail, you'll now be able to do the same thing on your Macintosh, essentially eliminating one more obstacle that keeps people tied to Windows.

Programming Tools

Any programmers familiar with the older versions of Visual Basic (version 6 and earlier) may be happy to know that REAL Studio (*www.realsoftware.com*) (formerly known as REALbasic) has released a new version of its cross-platform compiler that lets you create Windows, Mac OS X and Linux programs using the REALbasic language, which is 90 percent compatible with older

versions of Visual Basic.

Besides letting you convert your old Visual Basic programs into Windows, Mac OS X and Linux programs, REAL Studio now includes greater support for ActiveX controls (on Windows only). Since many older Visual Basic programs relied on third-party ActiveX controls, this added support makes REAL Studio a more compelling upgrade path from Visual Basic than to Microsoft's own Visual Basic 2008 language that relies on its .NET framework.

While REAL Studio mimics Visual Basic for creating programs quickly with the easy-to-learn BASIC programming language, REAL Studio is still mum on supporting mobile platforms such as the iPhone and iPad. If you like the idea of creating iPhone/iPad apps without learning Objective-C, you may want to look at Runtime Revolution's (*www.runrev.com*) upcoming revMobile compiler.

The goal of revMobile is to let you use the revTalk programming language (based on HyperCard's old HyperTalk programming language) for creating iPhone/iPad apps on either a Macintosh or Windows computer. Unfortunately, revMobile won't be out until November of 2010, but you can buy a beta version now and receive the final shipping version when it's released.

Essentially, you'll be able to write a program once, compile it for the iPhone/iPad, and then modify it slightly and recompile it for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux.

The Virtualization Wars

If you absolutely must run Windows programs, but still prefer to use a Macintosh, your two best choices for running Windows on Mac OS X boil down to Parallels 5 and VMware's Fusion 3. According to MacTech magazine (*www.mactech.com/articles/mactech/Vol.25/25.04/ VMBenchmarks/index.html*), the faster program is Parallels 5.

Both programs cost the same and offer nearly identical features, such as the ability to clone a physical Windows PC to turn it into a virtual machine on your Macintosh. However, Parallels seems to have forged ahead in making Windows programs run faster than Fusion.

In my own informal testing, I've found Parallels faster for running the latest version of Windows (Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7), but slightly slower than Fusion at running older versions of Windows (Windows 2000) and non-Windows operating systems such as Ubuntu Linux.

If you need to run the latest version of Windows on your Macintosh, Parallels is the clear choice (for now). If you need to run older versions of Windows or non-Windows operating systems, Fusion will probably be your better bet.

Whichever program you use, you'll find that both make it easy to launch Windows programs directly within Mac OS X, thereby shielding you from ever looking at the Windows desktop, Start button, or Start menu hierarchy.

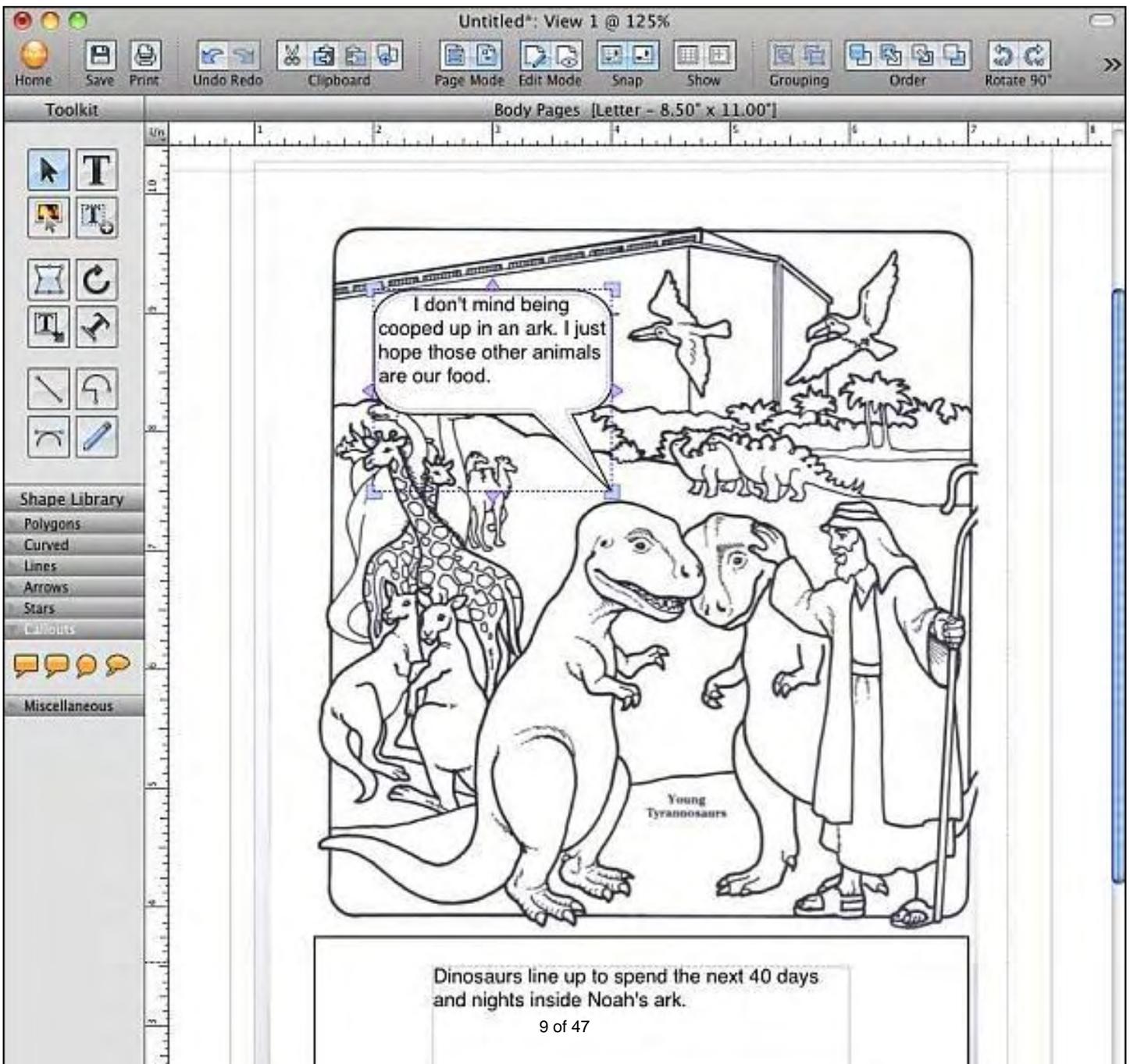## Affordable Desktop Publishing

One irony about the Macintosh is that it helped define the desktop publishing industry, yet the software choices for the Mac have been relatively bare. If you have $699, you could buy Adobe InDesign or spend $799 for QuarkXPress. Both programs are used by book and magazine

publishers (who may soon be a dying industry with the advent of e-books and digital media, but that's another story), but they're likely way too complicated and expensive for the average person.

A far less expensive desktop publishing option is The Print Shop (*www.mackiev.com/print_shop. html*) for $69.95. The main advantage of The Print Shop is that it provides a huge library of templates that you can modify.

Unfortunately, if you want to do anything more than modify existing templates, you may find The Print Shop a bit too limited. For those who want the flexibility of InDesign with the lower cost and learning curve of The Print Shop, consider the $49.95 iStudio Publisher (*www.istudiopublisher. com*).

You can think of iStudio Publisher as the Macintosh version of Microsoft Publisher for Windows. Rather than bombard you with templates that you can modify like The Print Shop, iStudio Publisher simply provides a blank document. Now it's up to you to place text boxes on the page along with pictures to create newsletters, signs, flyers, or reports.

Dinosaurs line up to spend the next 40 days and nights inside Noah's ark.

Dinosaurs line up to spend the next 40 days
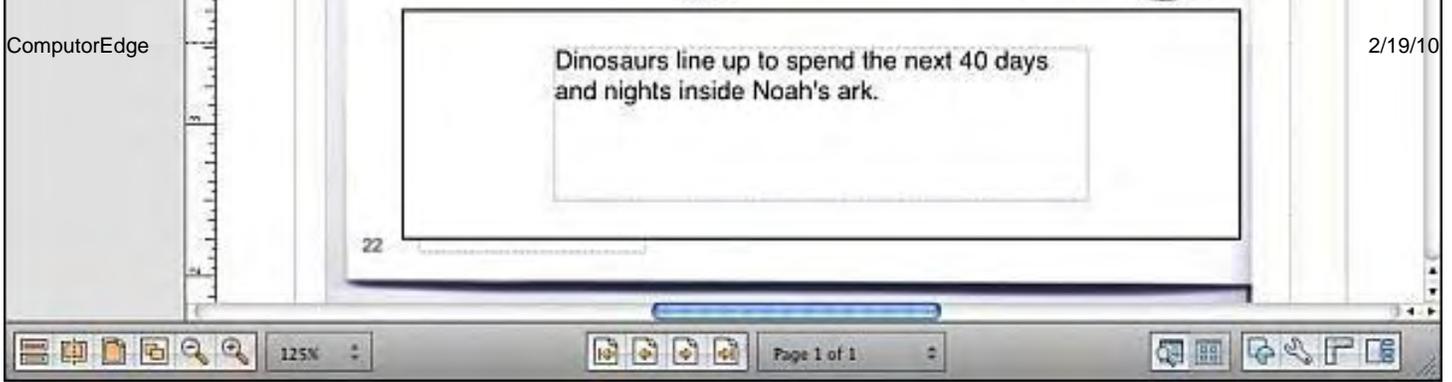and nights inside Noah's ark.

22

125%

Page 1 of 1

Figure 2. iStudio Publisher lets you add pictures and text.

Anyone familiar with desktop publishing programs will find iStudio Publisher easy to learn.
Anyone unfamiliar with desktop publishing may find iStudio Publisher initially intimidating if they
don't understand the basic concepts of desktop publishing.

With Apple announcing that its iPad will support the epub file format for e-books, expect the epub
format to gain in popularity. Currently you'll need a high-end program like Adobe's InDesign to
create documents in the epub format, but iStudio Publisher can also save text (but not graphics)
in this epub format as well.

Unique iPhone Apps

In the early days of computers, much of the excitement centered around software. The iPhone is
no exception as it provides a lucrative platform for individual developers to thrive, much more so
than developing for Windows or Mac OS X.

One company, called Juicy Development (*www.juicydevelopment.com*), has created an iPhone
app for optimizing your time spent waiting in line at Disneyland. Called FastTrac, this app uses
an algorithm that calculates historically the best days and hours for spending the least amount of
time waiting in line for each ride.

Figure 3. FastTrac calculates the best times to visit rides at Disneyland.

Just choose the rides you want and the FastTrac app calculates the optimum time and order you should visit each ride. Now you'll be able to spend more time enjoying yourself and less time waiting in line.

Such single-use, portable apps could never be practical on Windows or Mac OS X. As a result, iPhone apps such as FastTrac demonstrate the rich potential that the iPhone offers. Just porting an ordinary desktop program into an iPhone won't work. Instead, programmers need to rethink their designs to take advantage of the iPhone's features, such as its portability.

The Importance of Macworld Expo

Although Apple will no longer use Macworld Expo to introduce new products, the conference allows the software industry to thrive and showcase its latest creations supporting Apple products. The more unique and interesting software available, the more likely people will want to buy the hardware needed to run it. That means more people will likely pick up the iPhone, iPad and the Macintosh as well.

Without software, hardware can't do anything. If you want to know what hardware you should buy, find out where the developers are. At Macworld Expo, you'll see that developers are continuing to support the future of Apple products to dominate the rest of the industry.

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*).

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.

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method." (*www.15minutemoviemethod.com/*) Wally can be reached at *wally@computoredge.com.*

iPhone and iPad Programming 101

"If you want to know what the next hot product might be, follow the developers." by Wally Wang

> With the iPad excitement, the number of developers flocking to iPhone and iPad programming has grown tremendously. If the idea of creating the next $10,000 a day app appeals to you, grab a copy of the free Xcode compiler and start teaching yourself iPhone/iPad programming.

If you want to know what the next hot product might be, follow the developers. When the iPhone first allowed people to write and sell their own iPhone apps, one enterprising programmer created the iFart app, which lets you play different flatulent sounds. While this may not sound like an interesting app, it did earn the programmer around $10,000 a day when it first came out.

Naturally, not all iPhone apps earn fantastic amounts of cash, but there's enough money involved that thousands of developers have turned their attention to creating and selling iPhone apps.

With the impending introduction of the iPad, the number of developers flocking to iPhone and iPad programming has grown tremendously. According to a mobile analytics firm called Flurry, the number of iPhone/iPad programmers has increased at the same time that interest in Android programming has dropped.
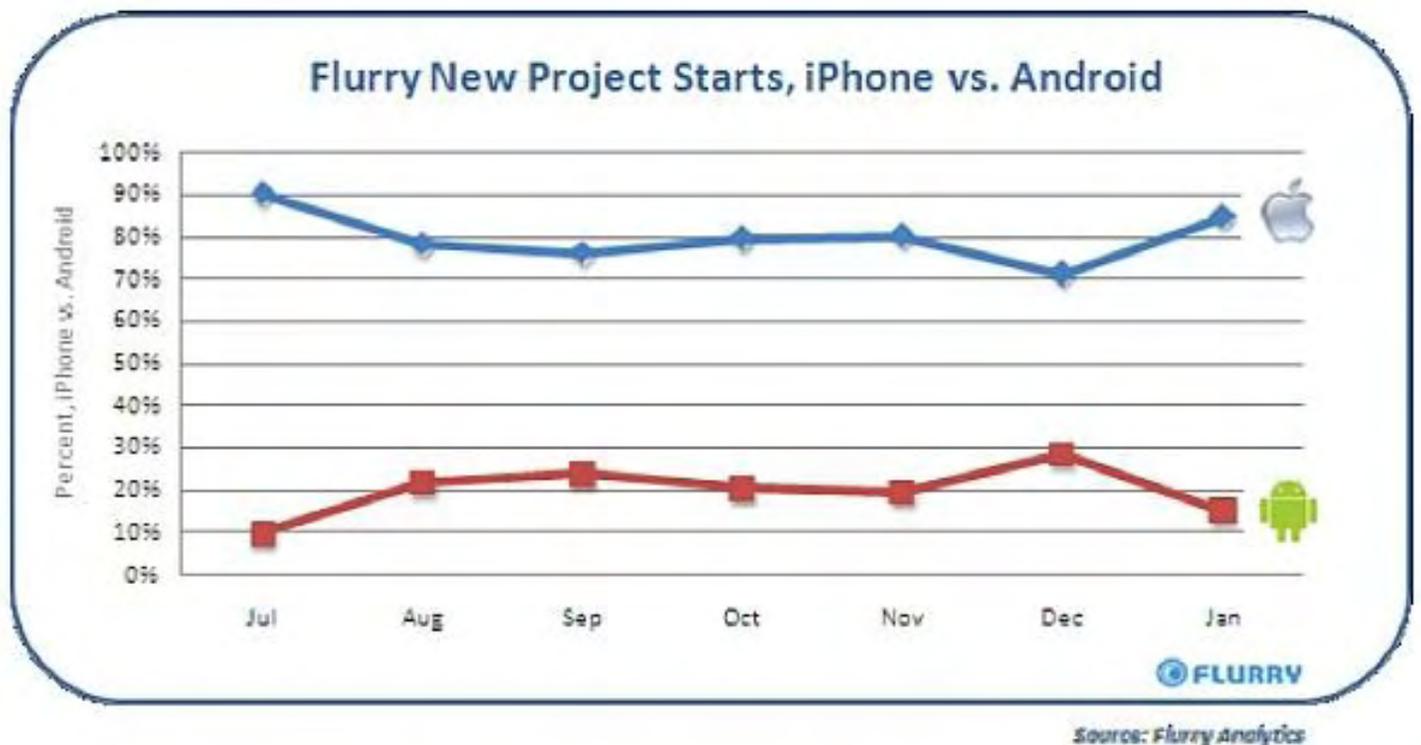

Figure 1. Flurry tracks the popularity of iPhone/iPad programming vs. Android programming.

If you don't want to miss out on this potentially lucrative market, you may want to create your own iPhone/iPad apps. To get started, you need an Intel-based Macintosh. (If you have an older Macintosh with a PowerPC processor, you won't be able to use it to write iPhone/iPad apps.)

The Xcode Compiler

In addition to a Macintosh, you'll also need a free copy of the Xcode compiler, which primarily uses the Objective-C language, although you can actually use C or C++ as well. To start using Xcode, you must first download and install it for free from Apple's Developer Connection Web site (*developer.apple.com*). After you have downloaded and installed Xcode, you'll be ready to start writing your first iPhone/iPad app.

The Xcode download actually contains three programs: the Xcode editor and compiler, Interface Builder and iPhone Simulator.

Xcode is the program you use to write Objective-C code. Interface Builder is the program you use to design the user interface of your app. The iPhone Simulator is a program that lets you run and test your app within a simulated iPhone/iPad.
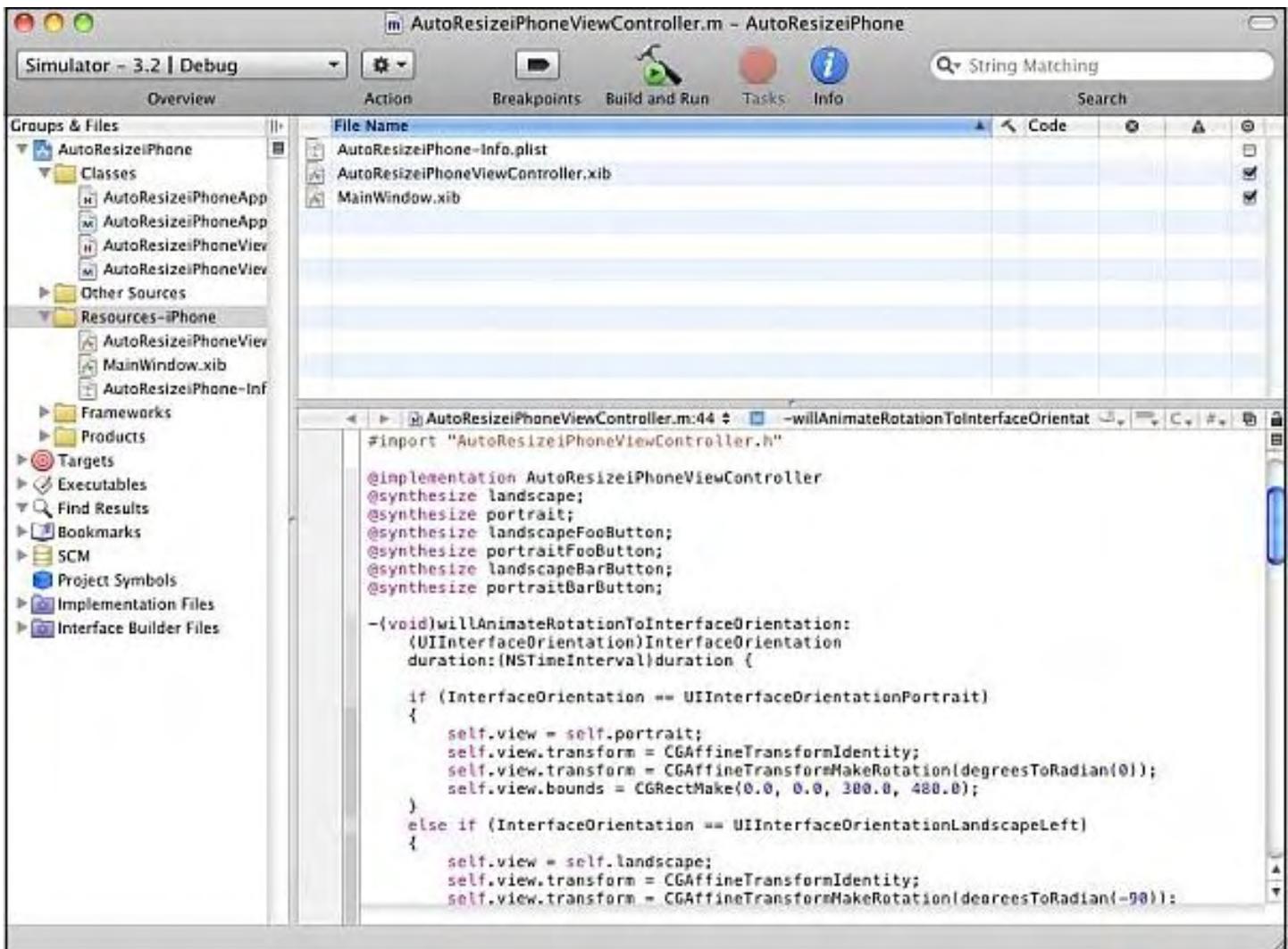

Figure 2. Xcode contains an editor where you can write Objective-C commands.

Interface Builder lets you drag objects onto a simulated iPhone/iPad screen to design your user interface, such as placing labels or buttons. Each time you use Interface Builder to create part of your user interface, you'll need to write Objective-C commands to make your user interface

objects (buttons, sliders, switches, etc.) actually work.

Figure 3. Interface Builder lets you visually design the appearance of your user interface.

Using the predefined objects that Apple provides for you, such as buttons, text fields and switches, you can create a standard iPhone/iPad app interface. Now you can write Objective-C code to make your app do something with the data that it receives from the user.

When you're ready to test your app, you can compile and run it in the iPhone Simulator. This simulator lets you view your app and test it without having to physically connect an iPhone or iPad to your Macintosh.

Figure 4. The iPhone Simulator can simulate the screen of an iPhone or iPad.

Creating a New App

To create a new iPhone/iPad app, you'll need to create a new Xcode project. A project is just a fancy programming term that means one or more files needed to create a single program. For a real simple program, a project might have only one file. For most iPhone/iPad apps, a project will consist of several files that all work together.

No two iPhone/iPad apps may work the same, but they all work in similar ways. That's because every iPhone/iPad app is based on a template that Apple has already created for you. Some of

the common types of templates for iPhone apps are called Navigation-based, Open GL ES, Tab Bar, Utility, View-based and Window-based. When you create a new Xcode project to define a new app, you need to choose the template that most closely matches the type of app you want to develop.
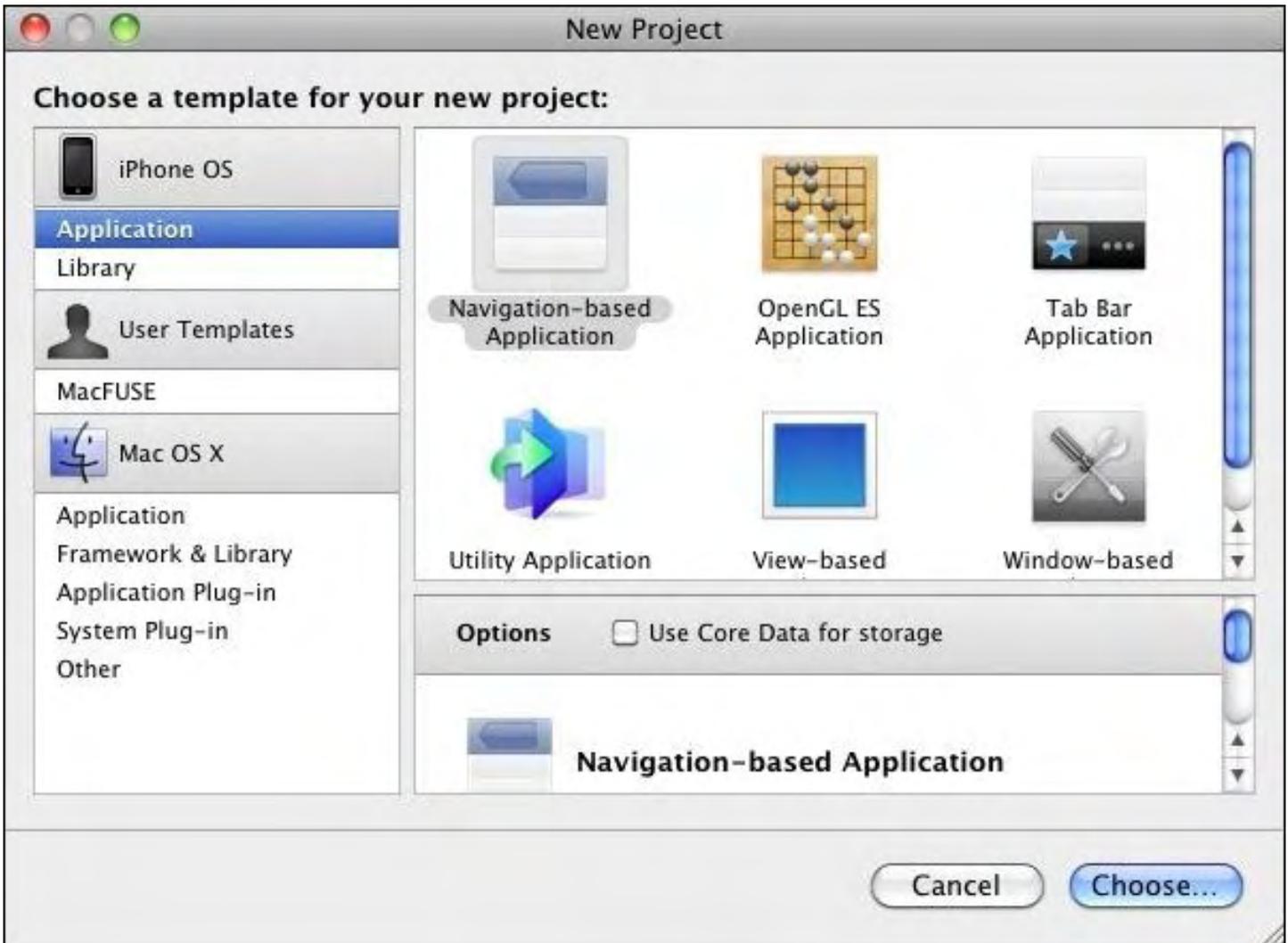

Figure 5. Xcode provides several templates for creating an iPhone/iPad app.

A Navigation-based app displays a list of options where selecting an option displays a new screen, such as the Mail app.

An OpenGL ES app provides a screen for displaying graphics along with a timer for animating items on the screen. Most games are an example of an OpenGLS ES app.

A Tab Bar app displays icons at the bottom of the screen for changing the information that appears on the screen. The Camera app is an example of a Tab Bar app.

A Utility app displays a screen with an Information button that the user can tap to "flip" the screen around and display other options. The Stocks app is an example of a Utility app.

A View-based app is the simplest type of app since it displays a single screen. The Calculator app is an example of a View-based app.

A Window-based app is a barebones iPhone app that you must modify to give it a user interface. This option is best when you need to create a specialized app that doesn't easily fall into one of the previous categories, such as a Utility or Tab Bar apps.

Most iPhone apps don't fit neatly into one category or another, but may mix different types of user interfaces depending on what the user does. For example, a game may use the OpenGL ESS interface, but then provide a Navigation-based interface for customizing the game.

The basic steps to using Xcode involve:

• Choosing a template to start with (such as a Utility or Navigation-based app)
• Writing commands using the Objective-C language
• Defining the appearance of your app's user interface
• Testing your app on the iPhone simulator

Creating apps for the iPhone and iPad are nearly identical. However, there are slight differences. With the iPad, users might flip the device in one of four orientations. With the iPhone, users typically don't flip their iPhone completely upside-down.

If the idea of creating the next $10,000 a day app appeals to you, grab a copy of the free Xcode compiler and start teaching yourself iPhone/iPad programming. Apple provides plenty of documentation, or you can learn through Stanford University's free online course (*www.stanford.edu/class/cs193p/cgi-bin/drupal/*), available through iTunes.

No matter what happens to the iPad, the iPhone has already established itself as a major mobile phone platform, so developing iPhone apps will always be a potentially lucrative field. You may not write the next iFart app and earn $10,000 a day, but you could. You just have to take that first step, get a Macintosh, and start writing programs for the iPhone/iPad.

With a little bit of creativity and luck, you could become the next iPhone/iPad success story. As Apple continues selling iPhones, iPod Touches (which are like iPhones without the phone) and iPads, there won't be a shortage of opportunities for anyone familiar with iPhone/iPad programming.

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-*
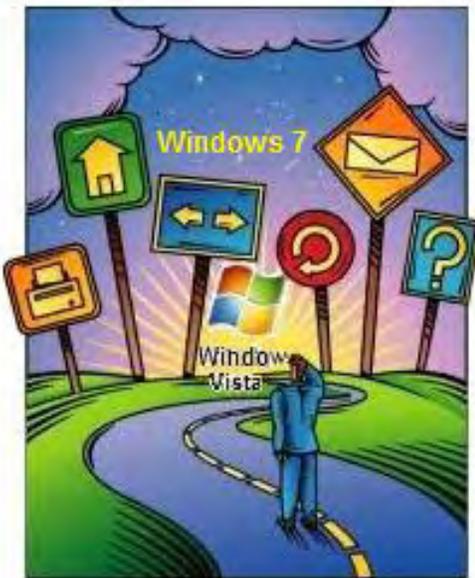
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468), Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541? ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-*
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541),
• Steal This Computer Book 4.0 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050? 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).

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.

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method." (*www.15minutemoviemethod.com/*) Wally can be reached at *wally@computoredge.com*.

Windows Tips and Tricks: Snip This!

"A Closer Look at the Snipping Tool" by Jack Dunning

Another look at Windows' Snipping Tool, which provides a method for copying menus without capturing the entire screen.

Sometimes it's worthwhile to review Windows features even though they were previously discussed—more than a year and a half ago. One such feature that was new to Windows Vista and is included in Windows 7 is the Snipping Tool. See "Windows Tips and Tricks" dated June 13, 2008.

The primary purpose of the Snipping Tool is to capture screen shots. (To load the Snipping Tool, type "snip" into the Search field of the Start menu accessed via the Microsoft logo in the lower left-hand corner of the computer screen.) The tool may seem a bit redundant in Windows since you can capture screen shots to the clipboard with both CRTL + PRT SC (hold down the Control key while hitting the Print Screen key) for the entire screen or ALT + PRT SC (hold down the Alt key while hitting the Print Screen key) for copying the current window. (Note: If using a laptop computer, you may also need to hold down the FN, function, key to access the PRT SC key.)

However, if you want to copy a menu for an option or a program, you may have problems—particularly with the window copy, since the ALT key will close temporary menus before you can copy them. The Snipping Tool provides a method for copying menus without capturing the entire screen.

First you load the Snipping Tool and select New. Then you hit the ESC key (escape). Open the menus that you want to copy, then use CTRL + PRN SC. You will see a cross bar (or scissors for a free-form clip, Figure 1) that you can use to select the desired portion of the screen, including the open menu.

Figure 1. A free-form clip of the Start menu Administrative Tools menu with the Snipping Tool available in Windows Vista and Windows 7.

You can also write on the graphic and highlight portions of it with the Snipping Tool.

Maybe you will never want to copy a portion of your computer screen, but it's worth reminding ourselves about what's available in Windows—just in case we find a need for it. Play with the Snipping Tool. It may be more useful than you think.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputorEdge* 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*

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"Making Yourself Marketable with a Mac" by Wally Wang

Think of a job search as a marketing campaign, only you need to convince potential employers about the value of your job skills. One way to do that is with your Macintosh. Also, the value of vertical integration; Apple's marketing tactics appeal to emotion; Microsoft's Surface Touch PC is a pricey option; and a tip on using the GCD function in the Numbers spreadsheet to determine the right tile size for your room.

With so many people out of work around the country, there's a mob of applicants turning up every time a new job opening appears. If you just fill in a job application with generic information, chances are good your application won't stand out in any way. To make yourself stand out, you need to make yourself special.

Just as soft drink manufacturers have to convince you of the merits of their sugary, carbonated drinks, so you also need to convince potential employers about the value of your job skills. One way to do that is with your Macintosh.

Visit MacTalent.com (*www.mactalent.com*), and for $9.95 a year you can post your resume so companies looking for Macintosh users—from programmers and Web page designers to data entry and word processing specialists—can find you. If the idea of spending $9.95 just to post a resume and hope that a company contacts you seems a little bit risky, focus on looking for Macintosh-friendly companies on your own.

Every time you apply for a job, find out whether they use Macintosh computers. If they do, then make sure you emphasize your Macintosh knowledge. With more people familiar with Windows than the Macintosh, identifying yourself as a Macintosh user can separate you from all those Windows users applying for that same job.

Any company that relies exclusively on Macintosh computers will have likely made the conscious choice to use the Macintosh over Windows PCs, so given a choice between hiring a Macintosh user or a Windows user, guess who they'll likely pick?

While this seemingly trivial difference might not seem important, such minor differences determine major decisions all the time. When director Penny Marshall was considering young actors to play the young Tom Hanks in the movie *Big*, she narrowed down the search to two boys of equal talent and ability. Either boy would have worked out, but since Penny Marshall grew up in the Bronx, she gave the acting job to the boy who also came from the Bronx.

Likewise, given two equal skill sets, any company that uses the Macintosh will likely pick the Macintosh job applicant over a Windows PC job applicant. If a company relies on Windows PCs, then just emphasize your computer skills and omit any reference to the Macintosh, unless you know the company is specifically searching for someone knowledgeable about the Macintosh.

Apple users tend to appreciate meeting others who share their enthusiasm for Apple products, so turn this to your advantage. If you truly enjoy using your Macintosh, you'll probably be much happier working for a company that uses Macintosh computers anyway, so it will be a perfect fit for both you and your future employer.

The Value of Vertical Integration

At one time, Microsoft's strategy of selling the operating system and letting other people build the computers made sense, which allowed companies such as Dell and Gateway to thrive. This approach provides more choices, but at the risk of stifling innovation. If every computer needs to behave similarly, there's not much difference between a Dell computer and a Sony or Hewlett-Packard computer.

That was the way the auto industry behaved as well. By buying parts from other companies, auto companies lowered their manufacturing costs, which reduced expenses and increased profit margins. Of course, if every car used the same parts, why did anyone have a reason to buy one brand over another?

To avoid this trap, General Motors has discovered the value of vertical integration. Rather than buy off-the-shelf parts to build an electric car, General Motors plans to design and manufacture their own electric motors and batteries (*autos.aol.com/article/gm-electric-strategy*).

The idea is simple. By creating their own proprietary technology, General Motors hopes to differentiate their products from their competitors. Instead of relying on marketing to differentiate cars built from identical parts, General Motors (and other car companies) can focus on truly innovating technology in ways that their rivals will be forced to match or exceed. The end result should be fiercer competition and real differentiation between competing cars with technological advances providing each car company with their own unique edge in the market.

Vertical integration is how Apple maintains its edge over its PC rivals, and will possibly help the ailing auto industry as well. If your business just relies on selling the same items that people can get anywhere else, look into creating a proprietary product or service that will separate your business from your competitors. If your job hunting involves nothing more than listing skills that a thousand other people possess as well, you need to figure out what makes you unique and valuable to a potential employer. It just might mean the difference between success and failure.

Emotion vs. Logic

When salespeople try to sell a product or service, they may use one of two tactics. One, they may rely on logic and state a product or service's features. The idea is that by bombarding you with facts, a salesperson can convince you to buy.

The second sales tactic relies on emotion. Rather than bother with trivial facts, a salesperson might appeal to your emotions and point out how a product or service can help achieve an

emotionally satisfying goal.

For example, using logic to sell a hearing aid might focus on the hearing aid's lightweight, ergonomic design, and long-lasting batteries. Does this list of facts alone make you want to buy this particular hearing aid? Probably not, which is why using logic as a selling tactic isn't the fastest route to a customer's wallet.

Logic is how the PC world tries to market their products, by bombarding you with lists of features like "2.16GHz processor" or "4GB of DDR2 RAM." These appeals to logic depend on you understanding how each feature could be useful.

Appeals to emotion ignore technical specifications altogether. Nobody really buys anything because of a product's size, weight, or materials. People really buy based on emotions. Appeal to a person's emotions and you can make a lot more sales while charging a higher price at the same time.

Visit any high-end shopping mall where there's an Apple Store and you won't see any women's clothing stores advertising dresses with features like "Colored using red dye number 1048A" or "Manufactured using synthetic fibers woven by the Acme B12-49J2."

Instead, women's clothing stores target the emotional appeal of their products with implied promises like, "Put on this dress and you'll look sexy. Put on this other outfit and you'll look knowledgeable and professional in a corporate setting."

Using emotion to sell a hearing aid might ignore the technical specifications and focus on the potential buyer's fears and desires. "Wouldn't you like to be able to hear what your grandchildren have to say when you're reading them a bedtime story?" "Think of listening to the full range of sounds the next time you attend an orchestra."

Appeals to emotion is how Apple markets its products, which drives PC users crazy because they're used to buying based on laundry lists of facts. Of course a Windows 7 PC running a 2.6GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor with 4GB of DDR2 RAM is better than a similarly priced Mac mini that doesn't even come with a keyboard or monitor. Unless, of course, your definition of "better" doesn't consider the emotional appeal of a Windows PC.

A Windows PC may be cheaper than a Macintosh, but it's usually chunkier and uglier too. The plastic case of a Windows PC laptop just feels cheap compared to the all-aluminum enclosure of a MacBook Pro. Even though you can find software that lets you edit, store, and view digital photographs on a Windows PC, it may not feel as elegant as using iPhoto on a Macintosh.

This appeal to the emotions is how Apple reaches its customers and maintains a growing following where Macintosh sales continue increasing every quarter (*www.apple.com/pr/ library/2010/01/25results.html*), despite the ongoing recession. Although Apple relies on appealing to the emotions, this technique is nothing new.

Sydney Biddle Barrows, known as the "Mayflower Madam," writes about this emotional sales experience in her book "Uncensored Sales Strategies" (*www.amazon.com/gp/ product/1599181932?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme- 20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1599181932*).

Sydney ran an exclusive call girl service in New York that charged the highest prices, yet continued raking in huge profits over her competitors, who were essentially selling the same thing. Sydney discovered that the difference between her call girl service and her rivals was that her rivals were just selling sex, but she was selling an experience.

Customers calling a rival call girl service just got a woman they could sleep with. Customers calling Sydney's call girl service received an elegantly dressed lady who could converse intelligently on unique subjects and pretend that she was genuinely interested in each man's line of work and accomplishments.

By the end of the night, each customer wound up getting sex, but Sydney's service provided customers with a high-class experience. Since they couldn't get that experience anywhere else, they continued frequenting Sydney's service.

Regular customers even received a complimentary bottle of chilled champagne to enjoy on their birthday with their special lady of the evening. Such a gift often pleased the man so much that he paid a generous tip, which more than made up for the cost of the chilled bottle of champagne.

When you sell based on solving an emotional need, and stand behind your promise to solve a customer's emotional problems, you separate yourself from the run-of-the-mill pack that treats customer service as an unavoidable nuisance. Walk into an Apple Store and you can have your computer fixed by a real person at the Genius Bar. Call technical support for your Dell computer and you're liable to reach some poor guy in India who simply reads from a script to help you solve a specific problem.

Dell may have saved a few dollars per call to outsource its call center to India, but it has upset untold numbers of customers who felt that Dell never really cared about them or put forth much effort to help them in any way. Even worse, they succeed only by turning ordinary people into computer technicians through instructions over the phone, increasing customer frustration and dissatisfaction at the same time.

When the screen on my MacBook Air started acting flaky, I took it into an Apple Store on Wednesday, explained the problem to someone at the Genius Bar, and they verified the problem and shipped the computer to their repair center in Houston. By Friday morning, Federal Express delivered the repaired computer to my house. At no time did I have to wait on the telephone or try to repair the problem myself through the verbal guidance of a technician. Nor did I have to experience the hassle of returning to the Apple Store to pick up my computer again or shipping the computer to a repair center myself.

The lesson is clear. Apple is successful for a reason, and you can apply those same techniques to help your own life. If you're looking for a job, you could create a laundry list of skills and present dull, mind-numbing facts where the goal is to have more lists of facts and skills than the next job applicant.

Or you could create a resume that appeals to a potential employer's emotional needs. For a job applicant, that means taking time to research what a potential employer needs and how you could solve their most pressing problems, using your skills and experience as proof of your credibility.

Walk into a job interview and sell yourself to a potential employer based on the company's emotional needs, and your chances of landing a job will likely increase over just handing in the same job application that looks like everyone else's and hoping your skills will match what a potential employer might need. If you mimic Apple's marketing tactics, you may get ahead faster and farther than you might have thought possible.

Microsoft Starts Selling Surface Touch PCs

For those of you who want a computer that you can control solely through touch gestures, but think Apple's iPad is too expensive or too limited, you should be pleased to hear that Microsoft has started selling its Surface Touch PCs (*www.computerworld.com.au/article/335603/ microsoft_launches_surface_touch_pcs/?fp=16&fpid=1*) in Australia.

The Microsoft Surface Touch PC (*www.microsoft.com/surface*), designed for commercial settings such as hotel lobbies, comes with a 2.13GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor, 2GB of RAM, and a 250GB SATA hard disk. The built-in 30-inch screen offers a maximum resolution of 1,024x768, all enclosed in a 198-pound cabinet that measures 42.5 inches by 27.2 inches by 22.3 inches. Best of all, it runs Windows Vista Business SP1.

The price? Only $21,000 Australian dollars ($12,500 U.S. dollars). If you want to develop software for this Surface Touch PC, you'll need to spend an additional $3,500 Australian dollars ($2,500 U.S. dollars) for the software development kit.

For a far less expensive tablet, you might consider the $550 Archos 9 tablet (*www.archos.com*), which was reviewed by the Associated Press (*finance.yahoo.com/news/Review-550-tablet-doesnt-make-apf-2290108744.html?x=0&.v=1*). Despite any drawbacks, the Archos 9 does come with a USB port and a replaceable battery, so those two features alone should obviously outweigh any of the product's disadvantages.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Peek inside the functions buried in any spreadsheet, such as Excel or Numbers, and you can find something called GCD, which stands for the Greatest Common Divisor. This function takes two numbers and finds the largest number that can divide both numbers.
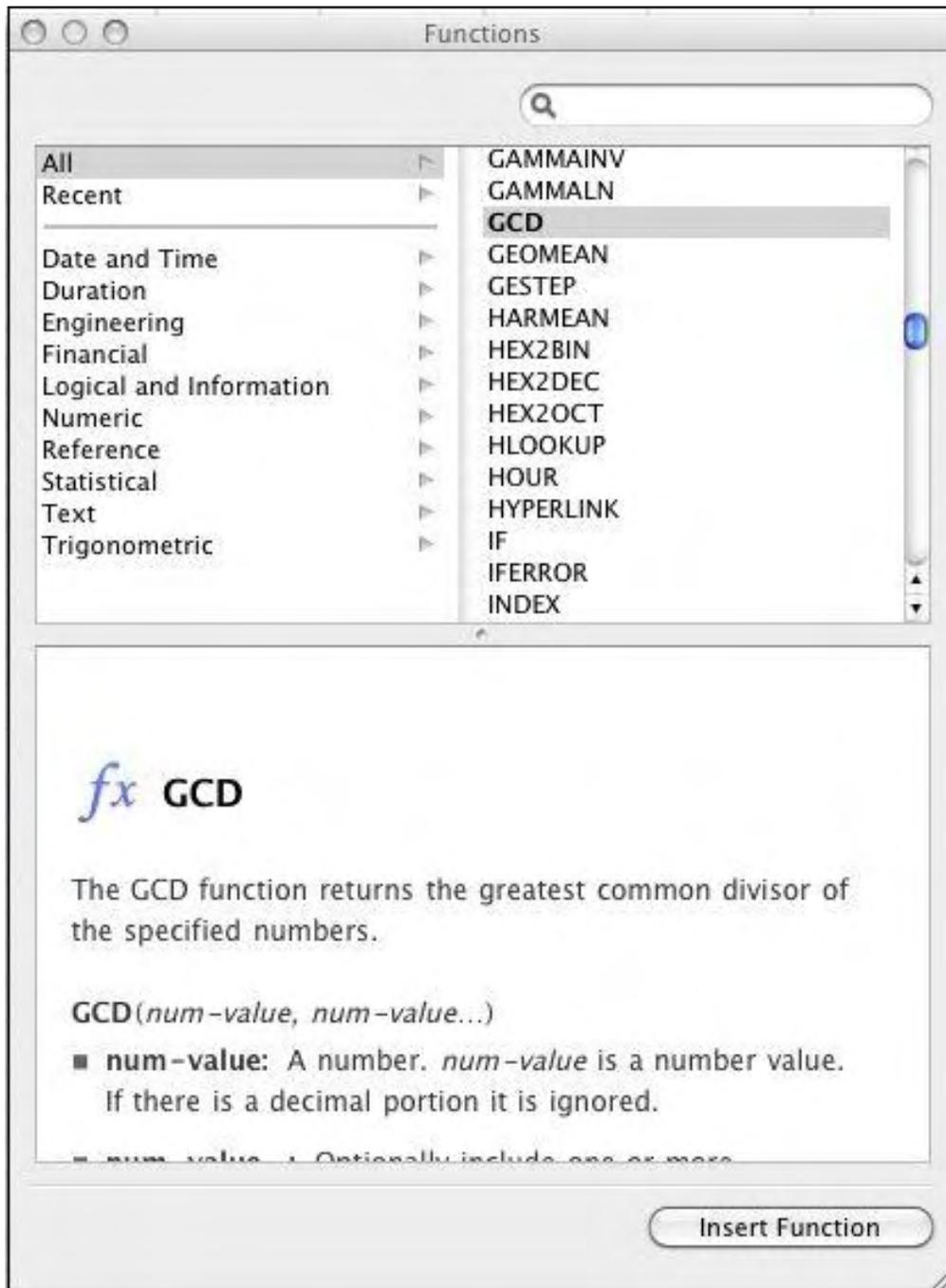
Figure 1. The GCD function in the Numbers spreadsheet that comes as part of iWork.

For example, consider the numbers 18 and 48. Plug these two numbers into the GCD function, such as GCD(18,48), and you'll find that the greatest common divisor of these numbers is 6.

This might seem rather useless, but a contractor friend of mine uses it to determine the size of tiles to place in a room. If a room is 18 feet by 48 feet, the GCD function tells him that if he uses tiles that are 6 feet in size, he can place tiles in that room without the need for cutting any of them. If the owner doesn't like massive 6 foot square tiles, he can choose any multiple of 6 such as 3, 2, or 1.5 square-foot tiles.

In commercial buildings, the rooms are large so you need bigger tiles. For home use, most rooms are much smaller and require smaller tiles. Tiles designed for homes are usually 2 feet square or less, so convert a room's dimensions into inches to determine the best tile size in

inches with the GCD function.

Obviously this isn't an exact measurement since each tile requires space between its neighboring tiles, but you can still determine the best tile size to fit in any room just by using a rather obscure function buried inside any spreadsheet.

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.
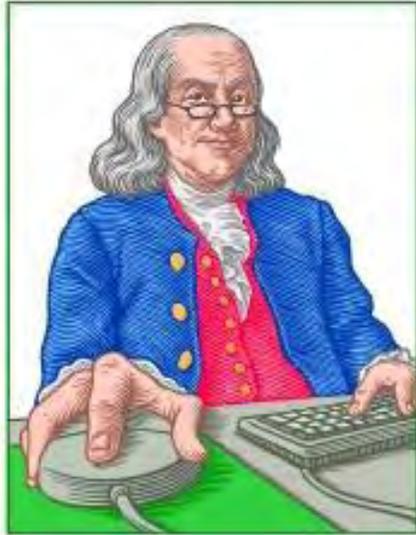
Wally is responsible for the following books:

• 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*).

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.

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method." (*www.15minutemoviemethod.com/*) Wally can be reached at *wally@computoredge.com*.

Linux Lessons: Shell Scripting-- A Short Form of Programming

"Did someone say programming?!" by Pete Choppin

This article will introduce a very useful and powerful form of Linux programming called shell scripting, which can be helpful even if you think you're not a programmer.

Did someone say programming? Well, yes. I did. Actually, this article will introduce a very useful and powerful form of Linux programming called shell scripting.

Even if you think you're not a programmer, Linux has some features to make your life a bit easier. Any time you have a repetitive task that involves entering Linux commands or changing the contents of a file, you should think about automating it with a program. This form of programming is called scripting because it is generally done with small "script-like" instructions. It is also usually just a group of commands combined together to perform one single operation, which is normally for making repetitive or routine everyday tasks easier or to be executed automatically.

Bash Shell Scripting

Without going into all the history of shell scripting, we will primarily be discussing the Bash shell mainly because this is the environment that is installed by default on most Linux distributions.

Linux has a variety of different shells, but certainly the most popular is "bash," so it is this one that will be described here (even though many of these instructions apply to all shells).

A "shell" is a program that interprets commands, either typed in directly by the user, or contained in a file called a "shell script," which is a simple interpreted program.
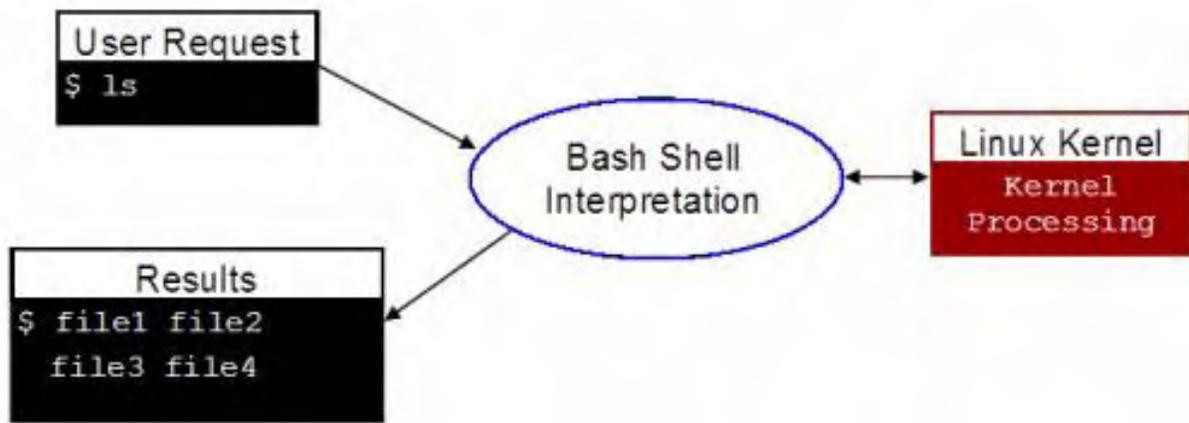
Figure 1. User enters a command (ls) that requests a file list; the command is interpreted by the shell and then passed to the kernel. The kernel processes the command, and then passes the result back to the shell, which then gives the output to the user.

Creating a Shell Script

A shell script is simply a series of commands. We need to place the commands in a file that can be read by the shell. A familiar tool to use for this is a simple text editor such as gedit (this would be the equivalent of NotePad in Windows). However, many Linux users who have worked with the command line or have experience with shell scripting will likely be familiar with a command-line text editor called vi. Whether you use vi or want to use a GUI-based editor like gedit, you will create the same thing: an ASCII file that will contain all of your commands in the script.

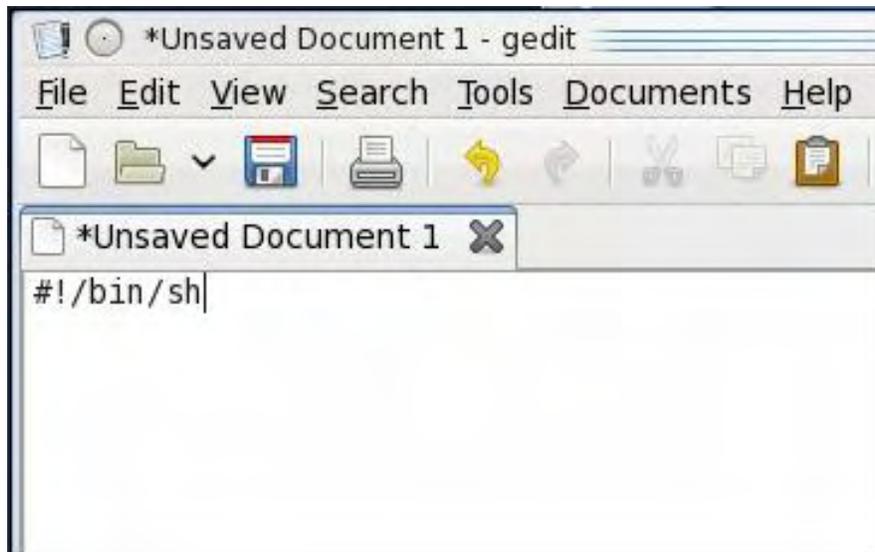To use gedit, open a terminal and enter gedit at the prompt.

A text editor should launch that looks like this:
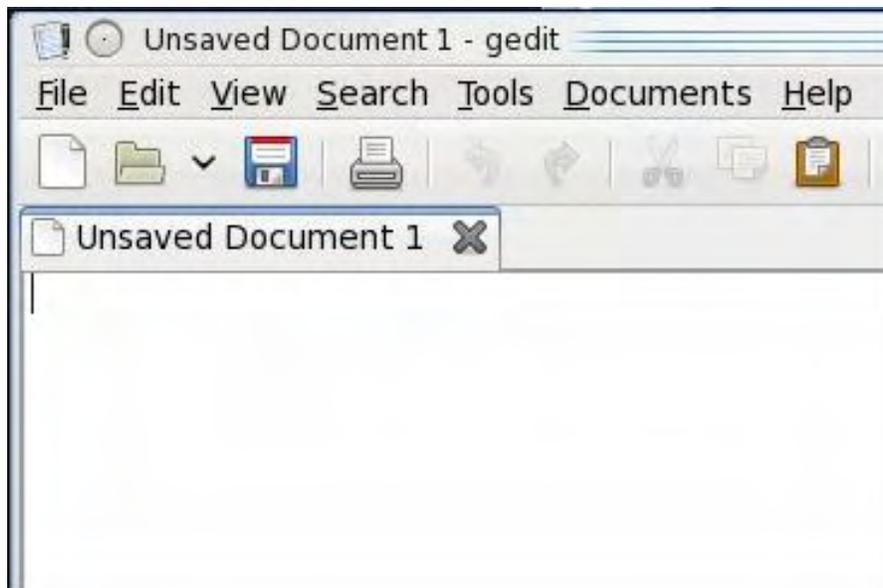
Shebang

The first line of all scripts is a special area that lets you identify your script environment. For

simplicity, let's just place the following line at the beginning like this:

This line is often referred to as "shebang" because of the #! On the line. The explanation mark is sometimes called "bang" among Linux users, and so the term "shebang" came about.
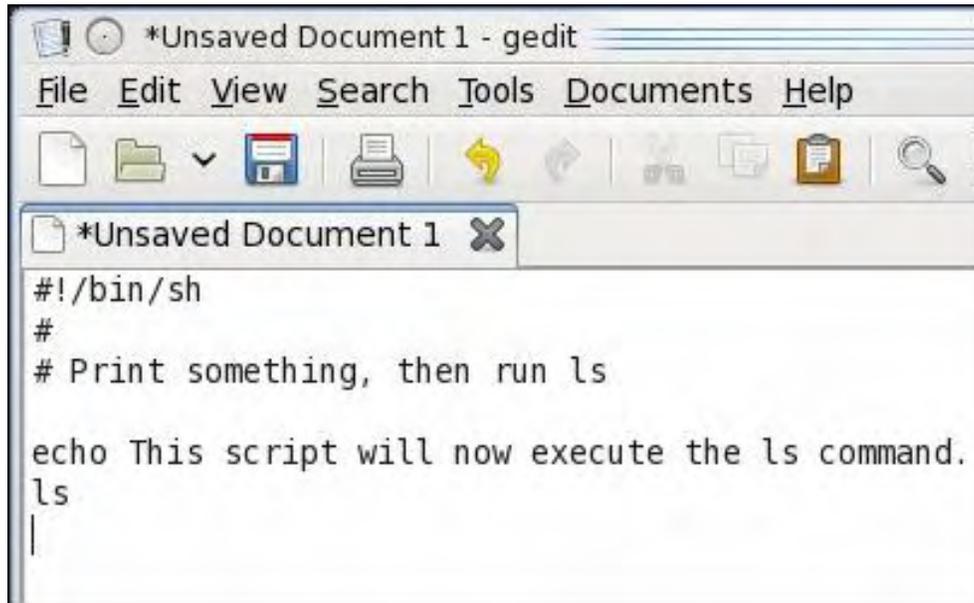
Comments

Now we will add a couple of comment lines. Comments in a script are ignored by the shell, and therefore you can put anything you want on comment lines. These are typically used for documenting the script.
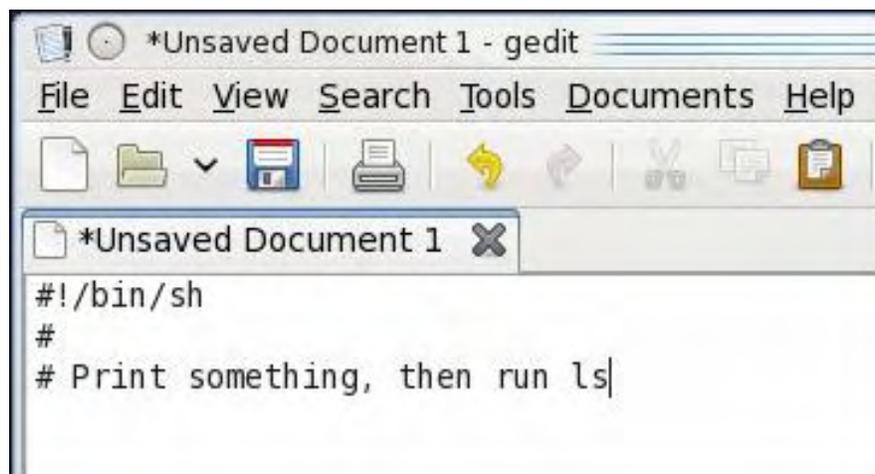
Comments can be used to describe the script, provide the author's name, provide the date the script was created, provide version numbers, or anything else that might be useful for future reference or for anyone else that may use the script. Note that each line is preceded by a # sign. This is what tells the shell to ignore the line (except the very first line that instructs the shell which environment to use).

Commands

Now we will add the actual commands that will be interpreted and executed.

2/19/10

```
*Unsaved Document 1 - gedit
File  Edit  View  Search  Tools  Documents  Help

*Unsaved Document 1

#!/bin/sh
#
# Print something, then run ls

echo This script will now execute the ls command.
ls
```

After the commands you want to execute are in the script, save the file. I recommend using a name that will be easy to remember and that also indicates the purpose of the script. For example, this script might be called ls_script.

Changing Permissions

The final step to creating a script is to make it executable. By themselves, plain text files are not executable by the shell until you provide the necessary permissions for this.

At the terminal type the following:

```
chmod +x ls_script
```

This command (chmod) changes the permission settings of the file we indicated (ls_script). The permission we are adding is execute (+x).

Running Scripts

The only thing left to do now is run the script. But this also requires a special trick. The shell needs to know exactly where to run this script from. Unfortunately, the shell is not very good at reading your mind, so you need to be very specific about this. Now, we could type the full command every time we run the script, which in my case is /home/pete/ls_script. However, there is an easy trick that will make it easy to run a script from wherever you are in the file system. This is done by typing

```
./sh_script
```

The ./ indicates that we want to run the file at our current location in the file system, otherwise the shell may not find the file and you will get an annoying error such as:

```
bash: ls_script: command not found
```

So don't forget to type ./ and then your file name.

As always, if you have any questions or comments please submit them.

Next week we will discuss some more useful types of shell scripts.

Pete Choppin has been an IT Professional for over 15 years. He currently works as a network and systems administrator for a company called Albion based in Clearfield, Utah. He has experience in all types of hardware, software, and networking technologies. He is proficient in many operating systems including Linux, Windows and Macintosh. His interests include cooking, sci-fi, computers and technology, and Web design—a semi-professional endeavor, having designed Web sites in the dental field, e-commerce businesses, and for the Boy Scouts of America.

Pete has been a devout reader of *ComputorEdge* since 1990 and contributes regularly to featured articles as well as the Linux Lessons section of *ComputorEdge*. He can be contacted at *pchoppin@comcast.net* but prefers to have comments on *ComputorEdge* articles submitted to the editor and posted for the benefit of all readers.

Rob, The ComputorTutor: Still More Web Pages

"More on Making Your Own Web Page" by Rob Spahitz

The last two weeks we've been exploring some of the basics of HTML, the language used for creating Web pages. This time we'll continue to explore some of the features that make Web pages more interesting.

The last two weeks we've been exploring some of the basics of HTML, the language used for creating Web pages. This time we'll continue to explore some of the features that make Web pages more interesting.

E-Mail

Meanwhile, this question from Bob W.:

"One question you didn't address in your ComputorEdge *article on creating a Web page is, how do you get search engines to find you?"*

That's a valid question for people trying to have their Web sites noticed. However, my intent was to teach how to create the pages that will be used for either Web sites or for general-purpose documents.

Tables and More

One common need on Web pages is the ability to align information. Originally HTML was set up as a generic word processing tool, with the ability to simply mark up text parts with bold or italics and to add colors. As with other word processors, this feature-set grew to include the ways to add tables, lists and columns. We'll start by exploring HTML tables.

As you look at what a word processing table offers, you see the problems that it presents. Basically, a table is a grid of information, consisting of a certain number of rows and columns. At the intersection, called a cell, you can have a single value or the equivalent of an entire document. You can also have the grid lines in various thicknesses or hide them.

To handle all of this, HTML tables are broken into several parts: the table itself, the rows and the columns. When we look at this in HTML, we see the <TABLE> table (starting and ending— remember that ending tags are simply the name of the starting tag prefixed with a slash like </ table>) that contains an optional header row and one or more data rows. Within each row you can have one or more columns. A typical table may look like this within the <body> section, with <tr> indicating the row, <th> indicating a header column, and <td> representing a detail column:

```
<table>
```

```
<tr>
<th>head1</th>
<th>head2</th>
<th>head3</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>val1</td>
<td>val2</td>
<td>val3</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

The result will look like Figure 1.

Figure 1. Basic Table.

Notice how the headings are automatically bolded. This is a feature that is common in tables, so it became the HTML standard. Note that there are also tags specifically designed to separate the header, body and footer, <thead>, <tbody>, and <tfoot> but, as with many other HTML grouping tags, most browsers will work correctly if these are omitted.

Also notice that the grid lines are not showing in the above figure. To change this, we'll need to add an attribute to the table called border, which accepts a number as its value. The number specifies the thickness, so a higher number gives a thicker line, typically appearing as beveled by many browsers, as seen in Figure 2 when I give it a value of 5 like this: <table border="5">

Figure 2. Table with Gridlines.

There are a few more things you may want to do with tables. You can combine cells together so that, for example, the heading spans across all of the columns. For this to take effect, you need to use the colspan attribute in the column that you want to cover more than one column, such as <th colspan="3">head1</th>, which will take up the entire heading in the above Figure (assuming you remove the other column tags.)

There are many other features of tables, but the above will get you started. I leave it to the reader to search the Internet for more information about this topic. One good technical source is *www. w3c.org*, the site that defines and maintains the standards for HTML. You can look here for tables (*www.w3.org/TR/html401/struct/tables.html#edef-TABLE*).

One more thing. Many "modern" Web page developers frown upon the use of tables unless they are specifically used to group data. All too many "amateur" developers use them to simply align information on a page rather than use the preferred stylesheets to handle that. I guess I'm still an amateur; tables are still easier to use than stylesheets.

Lists

Sometimes you want to show a list of items. HTML offers two main variations: numbered ("ordered") lists and unnumbered ("unordered") lists. For numbered lists, you can have numbers, upper or lower case letters, or roman numerals as your list identifiers. For unnumbered lists, there are a variety of "bullet" symbols you can use.

Similar to tables, lists contain groups of related tags. You use <ol> for ordered lists and <ul> for unordered lists. Within one of these tags and the corresponding end tag, you add a collection of list item tags: <li>. Within the tags, you can add attributes, such as type to change number or bullet styles, or value to change the sequence number to something other than the next number

in line.

A simple example of a list with a nested list is this:

```
<ul>
<li>head</li>
<li>body</li>
<ul>
<li>table</li>
<li>ol</li>
<li>ul</li>
</ul>
<li>foot</li>
</ul>
```
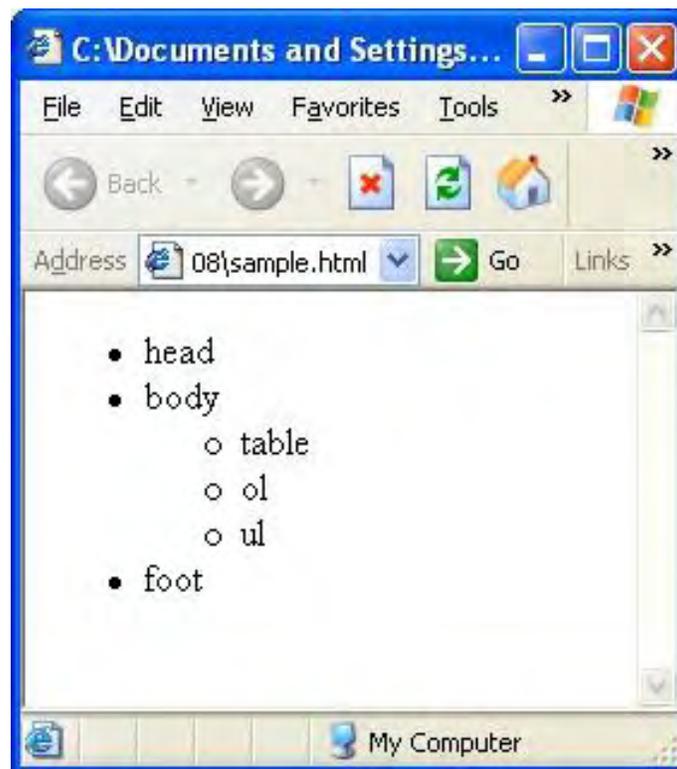
In an HTML document it will appear as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. List of Items.

Columns (Frames)

HTML does not really support columns like you'd see in a newspaper or word processor like Microsoft Word. You could use tables to create columns, but that has its problems. Instead, another way to handle this is through something called a frameset.

A frameset is, as its name implies, a set of frames. And a frame is really just a Web page. By grouping together frames, you can make your Web page look very much like a newspaper, with various columns and boxes. You can also include or hide the lines separating the frames.

Many developers and Web site users dislike frames because they cause printing problems. If you try to print a page with frames, the browser may only print the first page or it may get confused as it tries to print multiple frames on a single page, since one frame may contain only a table of contents while an adjacent frame may contain a large amount of text that spans for pages. However, on a Web site, the frames can make site development much easier since you can organize it so that one frame has headers and logos, another has footer disclaimers, another has a table of contents, and the rest can be the section that gets updated with news stories.

As with lists, framesets can be nested to create some complex designs. For example, to create something like what I describe above, you might set up a Web page with the following framesets (not in the body since it really defines a collection of pages):

```
<frameset rows="100,*,75">
<frame src="headerpage.htm" />
<frameset cols="200,*">
<frame src="contentspage.htm" />
<frame src="bodypage.htm" />
</frameset>
<frame src="footerpage.htm" />
</frameset>
```

This might show up as seen in Figure 4, depending on the contents of each page referenced in the frame tags.
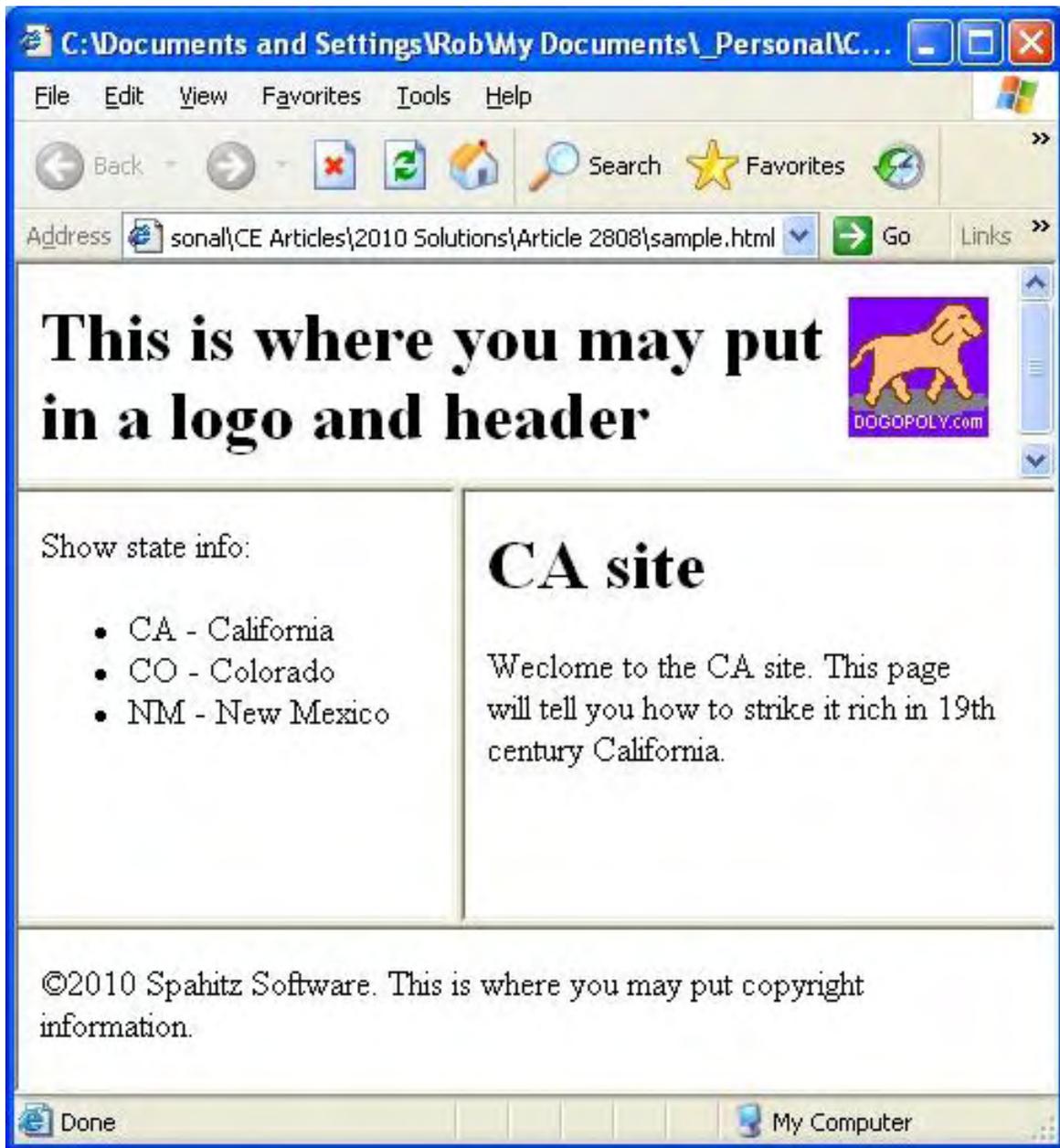
Figure 4. Frameset Group.

Notice that the framesets can include how many rows and/or columns appear in the group. In addition, you can specify the number of pixels wide the row or column will appear in the browser. You can also set the frames up as percent (%) of the page or remainder (*) if other parts are fixed. In the above example, the header and footer row frames are set up at 100 pixels and the body takes up the rest, even if the browser is resized.

Next week, we'll start exploring some JavaScript to help program our Web pages.

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 *ComputorEdge* 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.

Spam of the Week

"The latest in annoying and dangerous e-mail currently making the rounds." by ComputorEdge Staff

This week, the "Tax Commissar" is out to get those whose income increased last year, and beware a fake Microsoft e-mail warning of another Conficker attack.

We started this week with spam from the "Tax Commissar" (see Figure 1). We weren't too concerned, since the Tax Commissar is probably in Russia and we don't pay Russian income taxes. The other thing that makes this spam unbelievable is the suggestion that we are in a higher tax bracket because "your annual income for the last tax year has increased." Don't think so! However, it should be noted that everyone should resist the temptation to respond even if you did make more money last year.
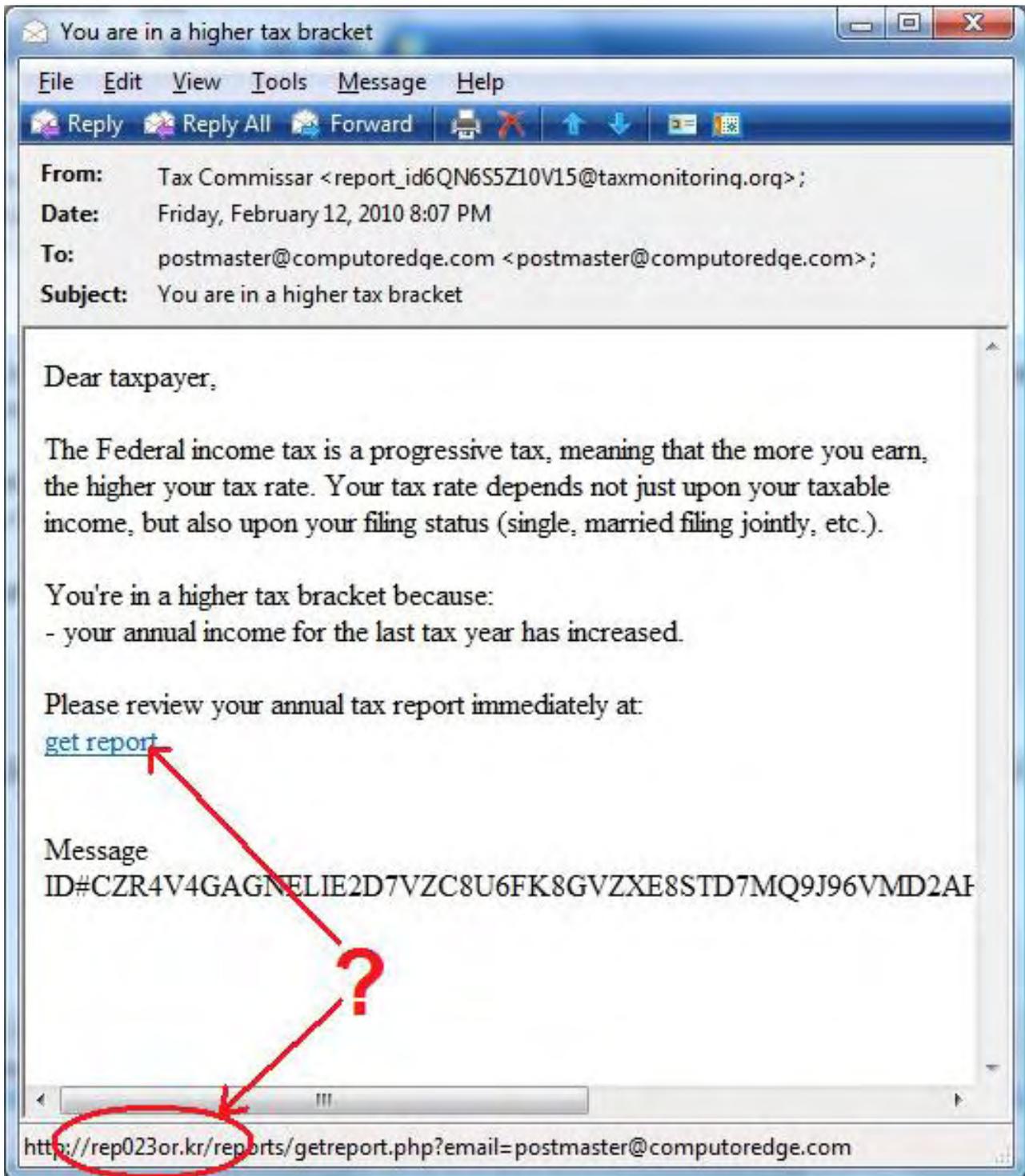
Figure 1. Who actually made money last year, and who is the Tax Commissar?

Another item worth noting is that the spam doesn't even attempt to hide the fact that it is not an IRS Web address.

Of more concern is the more recent influx of a fake Microsoft spam purporting to report a new Conficker attack (see Figure 2). Rest assured that Microsoft did not send this e-mail. Do not open the attachment. If you're concerned about a virus attacking your Microsoft computer, go directly to Microsoft (*support.microsoft.com/contactus/cu_sc_virsec_master?ws=support#tab0*).
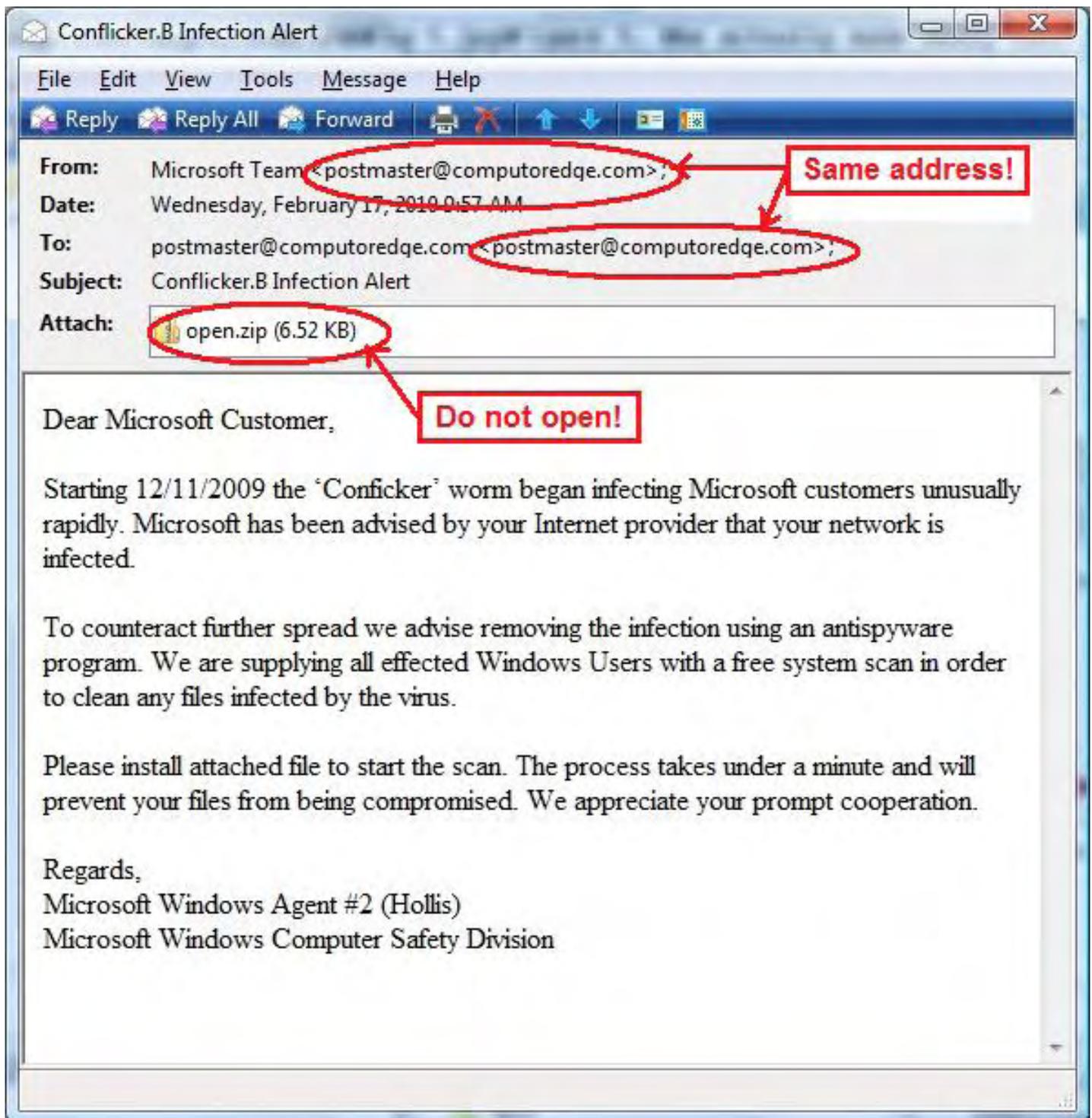
Figure 2. Microsoft did not send this spam.

As a rule, if you believe that something may be real, go directly to the company's or organization's Web site (without using a link in the e-mail) and check it out yourself.

ComputorEdge 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.
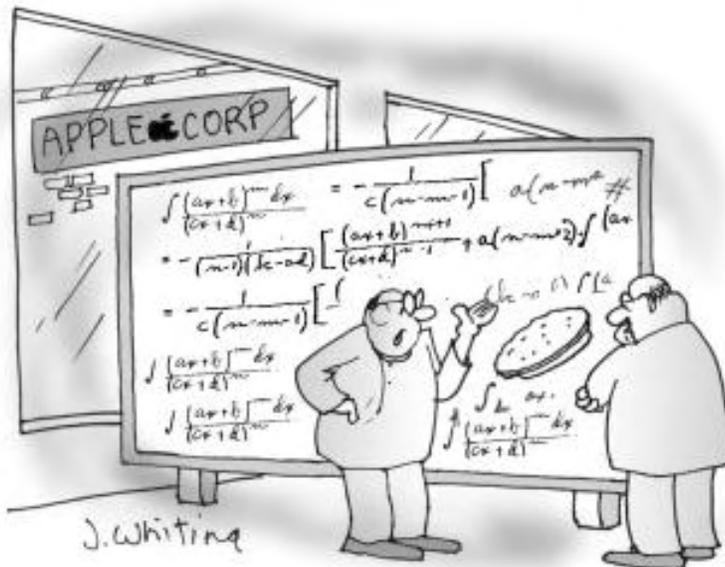
EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher
"No Respect for the Venerable Mac?" by Jack Dunning

Apple doesn't seem to need its devoted Macintosh User Groups anymore, or even events like Macworld. The focus is on iPhones, iPods and iPads—where the company can dominate the market.

It was probably a couple of decades ago when *ComputorEdge* was co-sponsoring the San Diego Computer Fair with the San Diego Computer Society. One of the key components was a room full of Apple Macintosh computers for hands-on demonstrations. We called Apple to see about getting computers and they readily agreed. Scott and I put on *ComputorEdge* T-shirts, rented a truck and drove to the Apple facility in the Los Angeles area. Once we met with our contact, we quickly loaded 20 Macs (at the time valued at well over $100,000) into the truck, signed a piece of paper, and drove away. Apparently, the only identification needed was our *ComputorEdge* T-shirts. We returned the Macs after the fair. I don't think that could happen anymore.

"No matter how we calculated it, the new round tablet computer will be called the Apple iPie."

In those days, Apple was all about the Mac. It was their only product. Macintosh User Groups (MUGs) were among the most active and enthusiastic of all computer user groups. Apple eagerly supported those groups and provided them anything they asked. MUGs were some of Apple's best marketing. There certainly seemed to be a love affair between the corporation and the non-profit groups. This romance has hit a rough spot ever since the introduction of the iPhone.

Apple doesn't seem to need the Macintosh User Groups anymore. In fact, Apple doesn't really need anyone else, as evidenced by the fact that this year Apple did not participate in Macworld, an event that is dedicated to the Mac and Mac products. Albeit, Macworld is run by IDG, a major computer publisher, who doesn't qualify as a user group, but this show has been the centerpiece for Apple products since the early days. Many Mac users feel jilted.

Apple says that it pulled out of Macworld because it didn't want to schedule its major announcements around a specific date. The introduction of the iPad a couple of weeks before Macworld was a much more opportune time to make the announcement. Right!

The truth is that the Mac, however good, is only one product for Apple where it still doesn't dominate the market. The iPod, iPhone and, possibly, though I'm still skeptical, the iPad either are dominating their market or are designed to dominate. There seems to be a resignation in Apple that the Mac is what it is—its cash cow. They will tweek the operating system, come out with new models displaying mostly cosmetic changes, and fervently protect the market, but the Mac is not its darling of the future.

In the meantime, the Macintosh User Groups are left out in the cold. Where they were once at the top of every Apple guest list, they are now relegated to second-class status. Mac owners did not necessarily cross over and buy iPhones or iPods. That's a different market. Owning a Mac is a completely different experience from spending your day swishing your fingers across a tiny handheld screen on an iPhone. Because of their loyalty and devotion to the Mac over the years, their owners actually feel more betrayed by Apple than any Windows user could ever feel with Microsoft—even if Microsoft did anything to inspire loyalty.

This change was inevitable. Successful companies do not remain single-product companies. They diversify in order to grow. The innovative Apple has been one of the best at creating new markets and exploiting them. Eventually, Mac users would lose the attention of the higher-ups at Apple. There are more exciting things to do at Apple. After all, the Mac has been around for decades.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputorEdge* 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*

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"Tax Software that Offers Bang for the Buck," "PDFs and Business," "Careers on the Web," "The Eye-Candy Factor," "Computer Careers," "ETF Regulation"

Tax Software that Offers Bang for the Buck

[Regarding Michael J. Ross' January 15 article, "Income Tax-Preparation Software":]

This article provided me with much appreciated information. I have remained interested for several years about changes in the tax software market and the quality of competing products. Yearly, I watch the big-box store Sunday newspaper ads, and do my best to catch the best taxware sale week. Years ago, I left another brand in order to give the H&R Block offering a try. After reviewing your article and local pricing, I concluded that there are no competitors at the present that will entice me to switch this year.

-Cicero, Colorado Springs, CO

PDFs and Business

[Regarding the January 29 EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher column:]

For years now, I've tried to explain to companies that I don't fax. I ask for an e-mail address to send documents to, but no, all they have is fax and all I want is e-mail. I don't want my printer receiving advertising faxes from everyone. Faxes are such poor quality, and if they're broken, often the business won't know that it hasn't received a document. This happens with [medical prescriptions] too often. They just refuse to get it. Faxes are outmoded and need to go away. They are poor and outdated technology.

-Kent, Round Rock, TX

Isn't the problem simply the fact that digital signatures are susceptible to hacking? You could simply say "I did not sign that. Someone stole my digital signature or used my computer." Just like anyone can pick up a pen and create their own unique signature, we need a standard fingerprint reader that plugs into any computer (or is built-in) and creates a registered print.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

Careers on the Web

[Regarding Michael J. Ross' January 22 article, "Careers on the Web":]

Good to hear a balanced view without all the hype. I became an engineer because I didn't want

to work for a living. The 80-hour work weeks were just me pursuing my hobby. But if it's not your personal passion you won't be happy doing it for a living.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego

The Eye-Candy Factor

[Regarding Wally Wang's January 15 article, "The End of an Era," which was written prior to Apple's iPad announcement, when the speculation was that the product would be known as the "iSlate."]

Great article, Wally!

But proceed with caution:

• Eye candy will have paramount importance for the success of the iSlate. The publishing industry is rushing to reinvent itself and create multimedia editions for all these new tablets (iSlate included) to save them all from collapse.

• People will be attracted by great demos and free newspapers/magazines editions, before (literally) buying into it (meaning paying for content) and before jumping into using application suites (adaptation for these will surely take some time).

• Starting price for the iSlate will be relevant enough in these (still) hard times, but the "cool" factor may overcome this (as there are many early adopters and Apple fanboys out there).

• Using flat keyboards *may* have a relevant usability problem in the long run. The effect of bumping fingertips on glass-like surfaces is still not well researched. (Years of tedious typing chores brought us repetitive stress injuries, remember?)

But if it succeeds (and Jobs has a great track record, the iSlate will shake the industry and bring exciting opportunities for content creation and consumption, and interactivity (augmented reality as a *huge* potential).

Well, now let's just hope that Apple delivers.

-Ricardo Nuno Silva, Almada, Portugal

Computer Careers

[Regarding the January 22 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column:]

"...the philosophical differences between the two companies and the products they create." Yes, I get the differences; I just don't get why you are constantly harping on it. Methinks thou dost protest too much.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego

ETF Regulation

[Regarding the January 29 Worldwide News & Product Reviews column:]

I don't think we need the government involved in controlling free enterprise (that is an oxymoron). In the free market economy it is "Buyer beware." Vote with your pocketbook and don't get suckered into that "free" phone because it isn't really free. Avoid contracts altogether if you don't want to face early termination fees. Let the free market be free.

-Marcus, Alabama

ComputorEdge 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 "ComputorQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at *ceeditor@computoredge.com*.