

ComputerEdge™ Online — 06/25/10



This issue: Home Theater PCs

If you build it, they will come . . . to your very own Home Theater Personal Computer, the latest trend in digital entertainment.

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Linux needs to be a player in the multimedia arena.

Whether it's playing music or movies, Linux has to be good and useful as an entertainment device—at least as good as Windows.

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More Resumes with Microsoft Word

This week, we continue working with resumes with Pages and Tables, building a resume with a table of skills that a potential employee could display. We'd also like to add a cover page to show the hiring person that we're not only qualified for the job, but also anxious to help them to grow their company.

[Spam of the Week: Amazon.com](#) by ComputerEdge Staff

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

Amazon.com lookalike spam redirects you to a South Korean Web site when you click a link. Delete!

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Nothing is sacred and nothing is safe in the home-entertainment market, where companies like Netflix are rewriting the rules of in-home digital entertainment.

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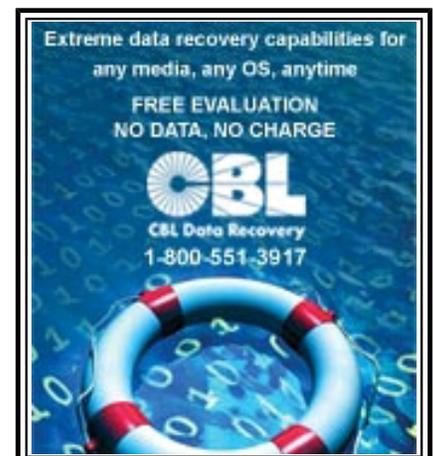
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Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.

"Spyware and How to Remove It," "Free PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft," "Non-Replaceable Batteries," "Amazon Customer Service," "Spybot Search & Destroy"

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Digital Dave

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

A reader wants a flaky DSL connection to automatically reconnect to the previous site when it returns. Could a fixed IP be the answer?; is it hazardous to shut down a computer when the hard drive may be actively doing something?; a reader's Windows 7 bootup process seems to stall.

Dear Digital Dave,

DSL quality near my home is significantly less than robust, and disconnects four or five times an hour. When my MacBook Pro is streaming Net radio it will not reconnect to that URL when the DSL returns. Is there a fix for that?

*Ken Schuster
Newbury, New Hampshire*

Dear Ken,

I've noticed that DSL in many areas will act a little flaky, often being interrupted for short periods of time. In most cases, this is not a problem since user activity usually initiates Internet activity. For example, when you browse to a Web site and leave it open, the Internet is not required until you click another link or refresh the Web page. Even in streaming scenarios such as you mention, as long as the IP address assigned to your connection does not change, then a break in service will probably cause only a short hesitation.

The problem I've noticed with many DSL connections is that after a break in the connection—no matter how short—you may be assigned a new IP. In that situation, the streaming source will have no way to find your computer until you reset the connection. This is a problem with your provider with no automatic solution.

The only way to ensure that your IP won't change is to obtain a fixed IP—usually at an extra charge—from your ISP. Fixed IPs are usually used when you are setting up a VPN, Web server, or e-mail server.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When I am done working and ready to turn off my PC, I can see the hard drive is still churning. It is not doing a virus scan. I understand that it may be downloading updates or processing an update in the background. Is it OK to turn off the PC at this time, or could that damage the update data that may be in the process of downloading? How can I tell when all update

downloads are finished?

Also, is there a way to see what the hard drive is doing at the time I am ready to turn off the PC?

Thank you for your helpful info.

*Chuck L.
San Diego CA*

Dear Chuck,

There are numerous reasons that your hard drive may be working away. One of the most common tasks is paging, which moves data between memory and the hard drive when memory is full. How much this is done depends upon how much memory you have installed and how many programs you have open at one time. However, this could be occurring at any time.

There are also many maintenance tasks that Windows will perform at various times. Most of these run in the background and will automatically stop or pause when you shut down the computer. If your computer is installing an update that needs to be completed before shutdown, the system will give you a warning and halt the shutdown until it has completed the task.

As long as you don't have other programs crunching data and have saved all your open files, you should be able to shut down at almost any time without doing any damage. (Be sure that you use the regular "Shut down" procedure in the Start Menu and *not* the power button.) If you want to see what is running in Windows, hold down CTRL+SHIFT+ESC simultaneously to open Windows Task Manager. There is an Applications tab for open programs and a Processes tab for everything that is running—most of which are cryptic programs needed by the Windows operating system.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a Windows 7 Pro. My problem occurs after I shut down the computer. After the computer is booted I see the Windows 7 logo, the screen goes black, and stays blank without loading the logon window. I can successfully recover, only by doing a restore. Help!

I've use the PC Tools spyware and antivirus program, but that does not help. I even reformatted the hard drive and also used a new drive installing Win 7 Pro to no avail.

*Ken Zenkus
Poway, CA*

Dear Ken,

I don't know whether you have a desktop or laptop computer, but in either case the problem is most likely related to your video setup, or more specifically the video card drivers. The fact that you can get your display back by doing a restore indicates that you are restoring to an earlier version of the video drivers that work fine.

Your system may be set up to automatically install updates—the default. Often the new updates will not be completed until you reboot or turn your computer on and off. That would explain why the screen goes blank the next time you turn your computer off and on.

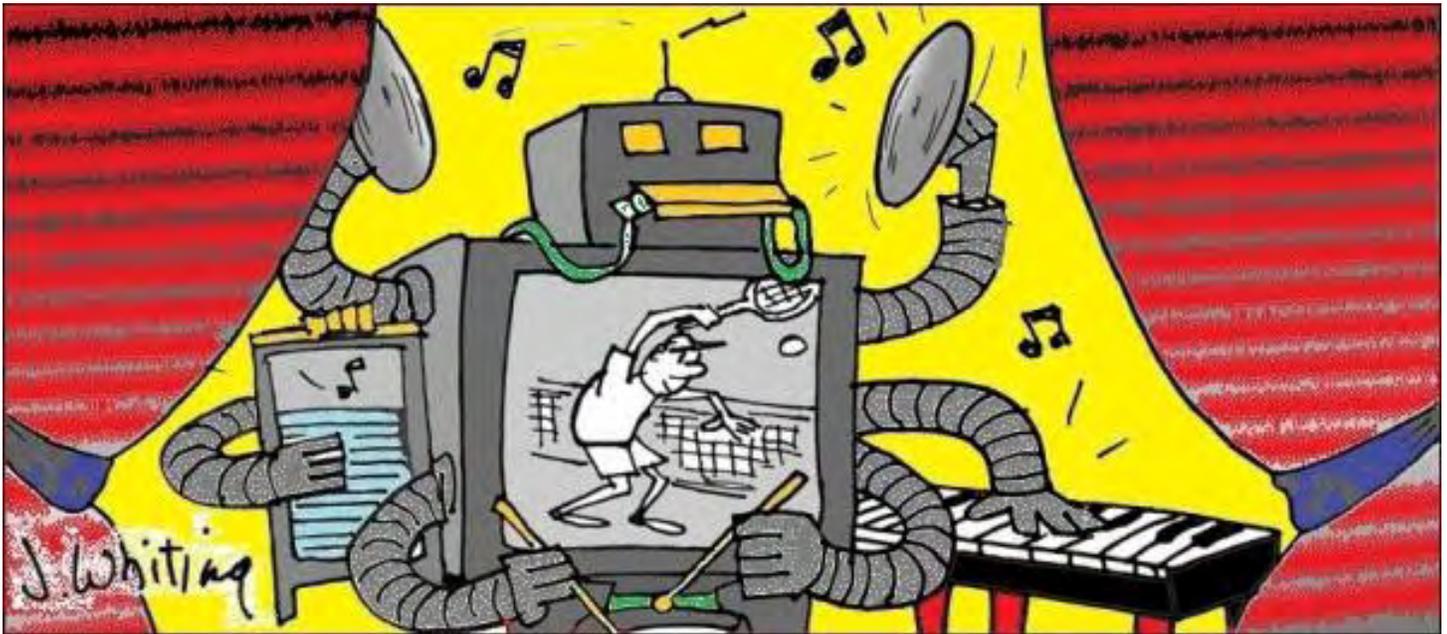
Go to Windows Update (type "update" in the Search field of the Start Menu) and change the settings (click "Change settings" on the left) to "let me choose whether to install them." This will stop the automatic update process. Then you can regularly go to Windows Update and pick which updates you want installed. Avoid any video/graphics updates until you know it won't cause a problem.

If you have a desktop computer, you might try installing a different brand video card. If you are using a laptop, you might check the external monitor setup since the video output could be getting redirected to the external monitor port.

These are a few things to try. Others who have experienced the problem may have other suggestions. The key is if your screen goes blank, it is most likely related to either the monitor, the video card or drivers. Reformatting and reinstalling Windows 7 or installing new hard drives is not likely to fix a video problem.

Digital Dave

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A Look at a Home Theater Personal Computer (HTPC)

“Your computer can be a true entertainment hub.” by Marc Bacon

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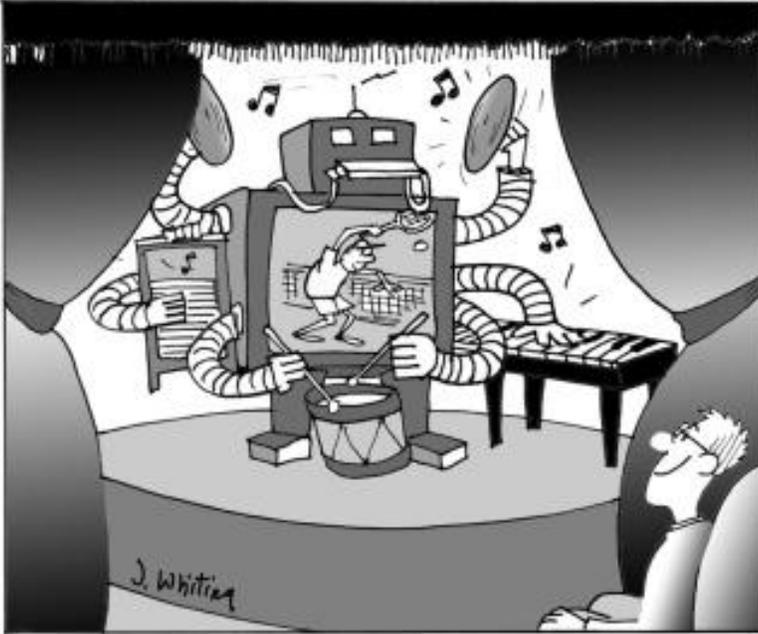
Two years ago I had no idea that HTPC stood for Home Theater Personal Computer. I am sure this was also true for many *ComputerEdge* readers prior to reading this issue. In this article, I want to share what I learned about HTPCs, the components needed to build one, and what to do with it once you have it. I built mine from the ground up in January of 2009 after considering some commercial PCs that were described as multimedia PC's, but did not provide everything I needed at a price to fit my budget.

First, a little history. Several years ago I purchased a laptop with Windows XP Media Center Edition. It came with a USB-connected standard-definition TV (SDTV) tuner box and a remote control that could be used to record and watch SDTV on the laptop. But there was a problem. Since this was a laptop, it was frequently away from home and shows did not get recorded. Then when stations started going HD, I bought an HDTV tuner stick, which raised a second issue. The hardware was inadequate because the CPU was not powerful enough to record and play back the HDTV programs, and the hard disk had limited space considering that an hour of HDTV programming consumes 7GB of disk space.

As a result, I decided to buy or build a computer specifically as a media center that would be able to record and play HDTV, play streaming video over the Internet and play BluRay discs. If you are only interested in a digital recorder, you should look at a stand-alone unit such as the Hauppauge HD PVR High Definition Personal Video Recorder 1212 (www.hauppauge.com/site/products/data_hdpvr.html) for about \$200. But building a PC from components is a lot of fun and is a lot more versatile.

As I started looking at the build/buy decision, it didn't take long to realize that I was going to need

to build the computer to get the machine I needed at a price I could afford. I wanted a machine that would function as an HTPC as well as be my machine for typical household PC tasks. Besides, I always wanted to build a computer from components. The minimum I figured I needed was a dual-core processor, 4GB of memory, a terabyte of disk space, a BluRay player, a graphics card that could support BluRay resolutions, an IR remote control and a wireless keyboard and mouse.



Alex is enjoying his new Home Theater Personal Computer

For the operating system, I decided to go with Vista Home Premium, which included Windows Media Center, with which I had experience. I needed a non-tower case for the hardware that would fit in the entertainment center under the TV. When I started looking and reading reviews for such a box, I started seeing the term HTPC. I did some research on the Web and quickly found out that I was building a Home Theater Personal Computer. I also wanted a graphics card that could support two monitors, one big-screen HDTV to watch and a smaller HDTV to use for surfing and e-mail, so that those types of activities did not interfere with my wife's viewing pleasure.

I am not going into a lot of detail about building a computer in this article since

there are several computer magazines that produce special issues covering build-your-own computers. The two I used as a starting point for my HTPC were *MaximumPC's* "Build the Perfect PC" (not to be confused with the men's magazine with a similar name) and *PCGamer's* "PC Builder's Bible." They both have 2010 editions on the magazine racks until July 13 and 20 respectively. None of the magazines describe the construction of an HTPC specifically, but describe high-end gaming rigs for about \$3,400, with the latest bleeding-edge hardware, as well as less powerful economy rigs for less than \$700.

Starting with the general information garnered from these magazines, I started my online research. If you are reasonably hardware literate, I would recommend going to some of the large Internet computer retailers and searching for components that interest you, and start reading reviews, both good and bad, to get an idea of what might work for you. Some items will have hundreds of reviews, but look for ones with overall very good to excellent ratings. Often in the negative reviews you will get a lead on better choices. If you do not want to spend hours doing research, you may want to pick the hardware used in the articles and add the tuner capabilities.

After getting my HTPC put together, it was time to start it up for the first time. Since this was the first computer I had ever built, I was excited but nervous. My budget was spent, and frying a \$250 CPU chip would not be good. Everything came up fine, but as I started installing the OS I began having problems, and I began to question the wisdom of the build. On about the third or fourth try, the install worked, but I noticed it was installed on the second hard drive. I then

checked the first drive and determined it was dead. I sent it back, received a credit, and then ordered a 1TB drive to replace it. The lesson to learn here is not to doubt yourself, but to check your hardware—and one bad component out of a dozen or so isn't that bad.

Windows Media Center is a fully functional digital video recorder similar to a set-top cable box or a satellite receiver, but it came as part of Windows Vista Home Premium. You are able to search for shows or movies and record every episode or just the new ones. You can also limit the channels included for recording. Now that I have *Big Bang Theory* set up to record all episodes, it doesn't matter that it is moving from Monday night to Thursday night, since my DVR knows when shows are scheduled based on the updated guide and will not miss an episode. The only catch is at least one show needs to be in the current guide (which usually has the next two weeks) or you cannot select it. You can select shows to record by searching on Title or Key Word, browse by category, or select from the guide (good for the next day or so, but cumbersome to go much beyond that).

In order to configure Windows Media Center Guide, you have to enter your ZIP code whether you are using an antenna or cable. If you select cable, you have to indicate your cable company. Based on this information, it goes out and downloads a guide. I have two sources, cable and an outside high-gain antenna with a low-noise amplifier (you can see my comments on "Digital Antennas" in a previous Editor's Letters here). The over-the-air signal is better than cable due to conversion and compression applied for cable. Also you can get all the sub-channels, not just the ones the cable company provides.

So I plugged the antenna into the HDTV stick, the cable into the QAM ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QAM_\(television\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QAM_(television))) ready tuner on the graphics card and started the configuration process. Windows Media Center can see both tuners and can record from both; however, it is unable to display the Guide for both at the same time. The big advantage of a DVR is its ability to record complete series of shows that are selected from the searchable program guide. I did some research earlier and knew I wanted to get SnapStream's BeyondTV (www.snapstream.com/products/beyondtv/), but it was not in the budget, so I recorded off the cable for the first several months. A little while later I bought BeyondTV4 and have been very pleased with it. It incorporates all sources of input into a single integrated guide. This makes it easy to record shows from both inputs at the same time. BeyondTV also provides conversion between the high-resolution formats to ones that can be recorded on a DVD. The process compresses the data with some loss of fidelity. The DVD burner software that comes with it is very slow. BeyondTV also identifies segments with advertising so you can watch an hour show in about 45 minutes by zipping through the ads.

I have been very pleased with the performance of my rig even though it is 18 months old. It has no problem recording two high-definition shows at the same time while watching a third recorded HD show. BeyondTV4 allows you to schedule the conversion and ad-detecting processes at times when you are not watching TV, such as midnight to 6 a.m. for me.

My next steps include both hardware and software upgrades. I plan to add an additional dual-tuner card so I can record four shows simultaneously. I will be adding more memory and possibly switching out the graphics card and upgrading the CPU. One big add-on I want is a high-powered theater surround-sound system to use the 7.1 audio output. Finally, I want to install Linux and see if I can use it for the OS of my HTPC. I understand MythTV (www.mythtv.org/) is

the most popular DVR software in the Linux world and Ubuntu is an easy-to-use distribution of Linux. Someone has put those two together to create a Mythbuntu (www.mythbuntu.org) distribution.

Marc Bacon is a Senior Oracle DBA who dabbles at being a SQLServer DBA for a contractor to the US Army at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Before that he spent 15 years as an independent Oracle consultant and traveled extensively in the East and Midwest. He has a BS in Chemistry from Florida State University and started using computers for automating chemical analysis before there were PC's. He has been working with computers and software ever since. His current technical interests outside of work are HTPC's, Linux and Oracle Application Express. His greatest interest is his one and only wife who he has been married to for 35 years who graciously nods as he starts talking computerese (she suggested he say that). She has actually picked up a lot and speaks pigeon computerese. He and his wife live in a very small town just outside of Dothan, AL and only 2 hours from Panama City Beach. He is the IT department for all his church friends and family.

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Building a Home Theater Personal Computer (HTPC)

“The nuts and bolts of your HTPC.” by Marc Bacon

Now that you know what an HTPC is and how you can use it, it's time to shop for components and build your own screaming media machine.

My companion article in this issue of *ComputerEdge* is an overview of what makes up a Home Theater Personal Computer (HTPC) and describes some of the software that is available. In this article I will get into the details of the HTPC I built last year and the logic I used to pick components. At the end of this feature is a list of the components I used—however, most are no longer available. I recommend special issues of two magazines that get into the nuts and bolts of building a computer. One is *Maximum PC's* "Build the Perfect PC," June/July 2010, and *PCGAMER's* "2010 PC Builders Bible." These magazines are on the rack at your favorite bookstore until July 13 and 20 respectively.

Do Your Homework

The three most important things in picking components are to read the reviews, read all the reviews, and read as many reviews as you can. It is important to understand that a small percentage of components will be dead on arrival and others will suffer infant mortality. When you see a very bad review, notice how many good reviews there are and what the overall rating is. Also, some builders have very little experience and make mistakes that other reviewers will identify. I think first-time builders who have not had any experience changing out hardware would benefit from a class on building a computer and might be able to find a community or technical college in their area that offers a continuing education course on the subject. Or maybe you have a friend or relative with hardware experience who would be willing to offer their assistance.

As I stated in my other piece, I investigated building or buying my HTPC. It did not take long to realize that my budget and the required technical specifications would require that I build the machine. To recap, I needed a machine that would function as an HTPC as well as be my machine for typical household PC tasks. The minimum I figured I needed was a dual-core processor, four gigabytes of memory, a terabyte of disk space, a Blu-ray player and a graphics card that could support Blu-ray resolutions. All of this needed to go into an HTPC case that would fit in the entertainment center. For the operating system I decided to go with Vista Home Premium, which included Windows Media Center, which I had used in an earlier laptop. Of course today I would go with Windows 7 Home Premium, which still includes Windows Media Center.

My machine is not a screaming gaming rig, but a very capable one I built for \$1,200. This did not include the main monitor since I already had an HDTV and the second USB tuner stick—which I already owned. My wife was intent on holding me to the \$1,200—including shipping charges—and she succeeded. During the year and a half it has been in operation, my HTPC has proven capable and reliable. I have frequently recorded two HD programs at the same time while watching a third HD recording. I have had a total of two failures: a hard drive that died during OS installation and a cooling fan that died after a year. Newegg refunded my money on the hard drive, and I replaced it with a one-terabyte drive. I replaced the fan with a spare from an older

computer.

If you decide to build your own, make sure you buy items that have a lot of reviews. Read as many as you can so you will have a good chance of choosing components that will both meet your requirements and be reliable. If you shop online, take advantage of the site's wish list feature. When you find components you think will work for you, save it to the wish list. Otherwise you will move on to something else and lose track of that perfect component and never find it again. In some cases you may want multiple wish lists.

If you start shopping online, you will see components that are labeled as either Retail or OEM, which stands for Original Equipment Manufacturer. The OEM items will be cheaper, but for a reason. For hardware, this means you will not get a pretty retail box like you would get if you bought it at an electronics store or superstore, but it is the identical item. You do not get any fancy manuals, cables or free software. For instance, I purchased OEM disk drives and they came as bare drives protected by a few layers of bubble wrap in the box with all the other small components. There was no partitioning software or cables. I knew that the motherboard I was getting had extra SATA cables, the power supply would have power cables and the OS install would format and partition the drive.

If you are new to computer components, you may want to spend the extra money and get the retail package, but check for prices online (and at local computer parts dealers) before you buy. If you are getting multiple items, get one in Retail packaging and the duplicates in OEM packaging. For the operating system you will qualify for the OEM price if you buy even one component for building a computer, such as a SATA cable. You may have a few extra steps to complete during installation, you will not get support from Microsoft and the license is not transferable.

HTPC Components

CPU: When I built my machine, the Intel i series had just come out and there were very few motherboards available for that chip. I went with a Core2 quad processor that was proven technology at the time. The number of programs that can take advantage of multiple cores is increasing, so I recommend a CPU with the maximum number of cores and the highest speed you can afford. Be sure to find reviews for CPUs from several manufacturers and do not assume that because one CPU has a higher speed that it is actually faster.

Motherboard: You can get a lot of motherboard for a good price; however, do not sacrifice future upgrades by being too cheap. If you choose your CPU first, it will narrow down the possible motherboards. Today I would make sure to get one with USB 3.0 and SATA 3.0 ports and DDR3 memory. You can still get motherboards that support the Intel Core2; however, I would consider the Intel i series.

CPU Cooler: Buy an aftermarket cooling fan for about \$30 to keep your CPU significantly cooler than the stock fan. Do not spend too much on a cooling fan or a water cooling system unless you expect to do a lot of overclocking, because my system is performing very well.

Operating System: Windows 7 Home Premium comes with Windows Media Center for recording TV. I would consider Linux with Myth TV as an alternative OS. I have reserved about 75 percent of my disk space for Linux and hope to build a Linux HTPC in the near future. If I do, I will write about my experience.

Digital Video Recorder Software: I found Microsoft Media Center to be an adequate DVR tool, but found SnapStream Beyond TV (www.snapstream.com/products/beyondtv/) to be a better product; however, it costs \$100. Beyond TV cannot run as a service with the All-In-Wonder graphics card I used, so it's necessary to always have a user logged into the PC for recording.

Graphics Card: The nice thing about my graphics card is that it has dual-monitor support via HDMI and DVI outputs and an onboard tuner card. The primary HDTV/monitor is used for watching video via the HDMI output, while the smaller secondary HDTV/monitor sits next to the couch and is connected via a 25-foot VGA cable. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get Beyond TV to play on the secondary monitor. The reason may be that VGA cables are not HDCP (High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection) compliant. You need to make sure all your components are HDCP compliant or you will not be able to watch copyrighted video without some illegal techniques. This applies to the graphics card, HDMI cable and HDTV. (HDCP is anti-piracy technology that inconveniences the honest user while doing nothing to stop piracy of copyrighted video and audio.)

I had some problems with sound dying when I turned the TV off and then back on. To solve the problem I did a search on "ATI" and "no sound" and found the answer. I had to disable the ATI External Event Utility Service. Sometimes you have to search for solutions to problems, but the answer is usually out there in the ether.

Memory: Get as much memory as you can afford now realizing that you can add more later. Most motherboards today use DDR3 memory and the older DDR2 is getting more expensive.

Power Supply—Make sure you get a big enough power supply for the components you are buying. Also, choose a modular one that allows you to plug in the minimum number of cables instead of having a huge bundle of every possible cable you may need permanently attached to the power supply. The case is going to be full enough without having to tuck away miles of wire that is not used.

Disk Drive: A one-terabyte disk can hold about 142 hours of HDTV, so get as much as you can afford. There are some fast two-terabyte drives available, but they will cost about three times more than a slower one-terabyte drive. These drives are almost as fast as a 10,000-RPM disk. The slower drives I use perform great; however, I do store recordings on a separate drive from the one with the OS and all the software.

Blu-ray Player: Unless you have a need to burn 20-plus gigabytes to a video disc, I would go with a combo Blu-ray Disc (BD) player and DVD and CD-ROM burner. This will allow you to watch movies on Blu-ray and burn DVDs and CD-ROMs. The prices are coming down for both BD burners (\$169) and writable discs (\$2.70 each), so you may opt for the BD burner.

HTPC Case: In most instances, you will want a case that can be placed in an entertainment cabinet and will have to be horizontal rather than a tower case. If you investigate cases that are described as HTPC cases you will find what you need. The reviews will help you get a case that will hold all the components you intend to install.

Input Devices—If you get a wireless keyboard and mouse, you will be able to sit on the couch and do things on your HTPC such as surfing the net to stream that TV program you missed the

other day.

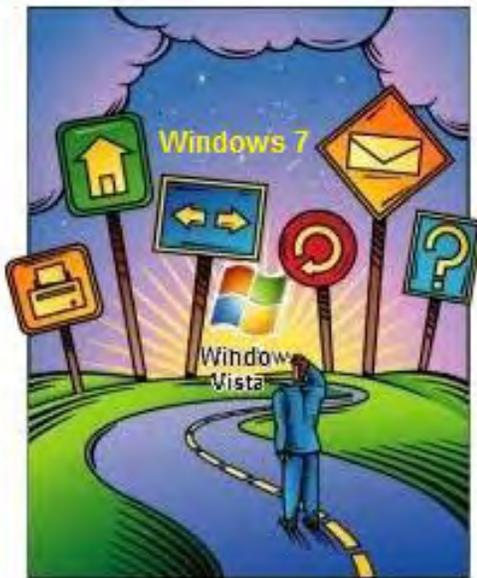
Monitors: I really like working with two monitors on my job; however, I find two indispensable when it comes to an HTPC. I use a 42-inch 1080 HDTV as my main monitor for watching movies, TV and other video feeds. I have a 22-inch 1080 HDTV I use as a monitor next to the couch. As a matter of fact, I am using my wireless keyboard and mouse and the 22-inch HDTV to write this article while watching TV on the big screen.

My HTPC Parts List

1. CPU—Intel Core 2 Quad Q6600 Kentsfield 2.4GHz LGA 775 Quad-Core Processor Model BX80562Q6600.
2. Mother Board—GIGABYTE GA-EP45-UD3P LGA 775 Intel P45 ATX Intel.
3. CPU Cooling Fan—ARCTIC COOLING ALPINE 7 92mm CPU Cooler.
4. OS—Microsoft Windows Vista Home Premium SP1 64-bit for System Builders.
5. Graphics/TV Tuner—All-In-Wonder - DIAMOND AIWHD3650PM Radeon HD 3650 512MB 128-bit GDDR2 PCI Express 2.0 x16 HDCP Ready All-in-Wonder Video Card (with wireless remote).
6. Memory—PNY XLR8 4GB (2 x 2GB) 240-Pin DDR2 SDRAM DDR2 800 (PC2 6400) Dual Channel Kit Desktop Memory Model MD4096KD2-800-X4.
7. Disk Storage (X2)—Western Digital Caviar Blue WD5000AAKS 500GB 7200 RPM SATA 3.0Gb/s 3.5" Internal Hard Drive-Bare Drive.
8. Blu-ray Player—LG Black Blu-ray/HD DVD-ROM & 16X DVD±R DVD Burner SATA Model GGC-H20L.
9. Second TV Tuner—Hauppauge WinTV-HVR-950Q TV Tuner Stick/Hybrid Video Recorder with Remote Control 1191 USB 2.0 Interface.
10. HTPC Case—Thermaltake Black Aluminum / Steel Bach Media Lab.
11. Power Supply—Thermaltake TR2 RX W0134RU 550W ATX12V Ver2.2 SLI Ready Modular Passive PFC PFC Power Supply.
12. Wireless Keyboard and Mouse—Rocketfish Bluetooth RF-BTKB2 keyboard and TF-8TMSE2 mouse.
13. Primary Monitor—42" 1080p HDTV.
14. Secondary Monitor—22" 1080i HDTV.
15. Replacement Hard Drive—Western Digital Caviar Green WD15EARS 1.5TB SATA 3.0Gb/s 3.5" Internal Hard Drive-Bare Drive.
16. Alternative DVR Software —SnapStream Beyond TV 4.

Marc Bacon is a Senior Oracle DBA who dabbles at being a SQLServer DBA for a contractor to the US Army at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Before that he spent 15 years as an independent Oracle consultant and traveled extensively in the East and Midwest. He has a BS in Chemistry from Florida State University and started using computers for automating chemical analysis before there were PC's. He has been working with computers and software ever since. His current technical interests outside of work are HTPC's, Linux and Oracle Application Express. His greatest interest is his one and only wife who he has been married to for 35 years who graciously nods as he starts talking computerese (she suggested he say that). She has actually picked up a lot and speaks pigeon computerese. He and his wife live in a very small town just outside of Dothan, AL and only 2 hours from Panama City Beach. He is the IT department for all his church friends and family.

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Windows Tips and Tricks

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A reminder that only shortcuts to programs and file locations should be added to the SendTo folder—not actual folders. Also, holding down the SHIFT key when you right-click on an icon will yield more options.

Last week I offered a tip for how to quickly add more items to the right-click Send To list by adding the SendTo folder to the same list. This tip will work, but it's important to remember that you will want to send only shortcuts via that new "Add to Send To list" entry.

Send To has two functions. The first is to pipe data files to specific programs via the shortcut. When a file is sent to a program, such as a word processor or e-mail client, the program will first be opened, then the file is loaded into the target program. If the file is sent to a folder or drive location, then Send To becomes a copy program, creating a new copy of the file (or folder) at the target location. Since the Send To list is itself in a folder location, any folders sent to the SendTo folder will merely replicate themselves in that folder. They will be added to the list, but they will not represent the original file location, but rather an entire new copy. Therefore, it's important to realize that only shortcuts to programs and file locations should be added to the SendTo folder—not actual folders.

Another quick tip is to hold down the SHIFT key when you right-click on an icon. Both the top level menu and the Send To list will show more options (see Figure 1). What those options may be will depend upon the type of icon (file or folder) that has been selected. In Figure 1, the "Open command window here" option appears, which will start the Command Prompt window located with the same path. The additional options will vary depending upon the type of file, program or shortcut right-clicked. There is more variation in Windows 7 and Vista than Windows XP. A little experimentation will show you your options.

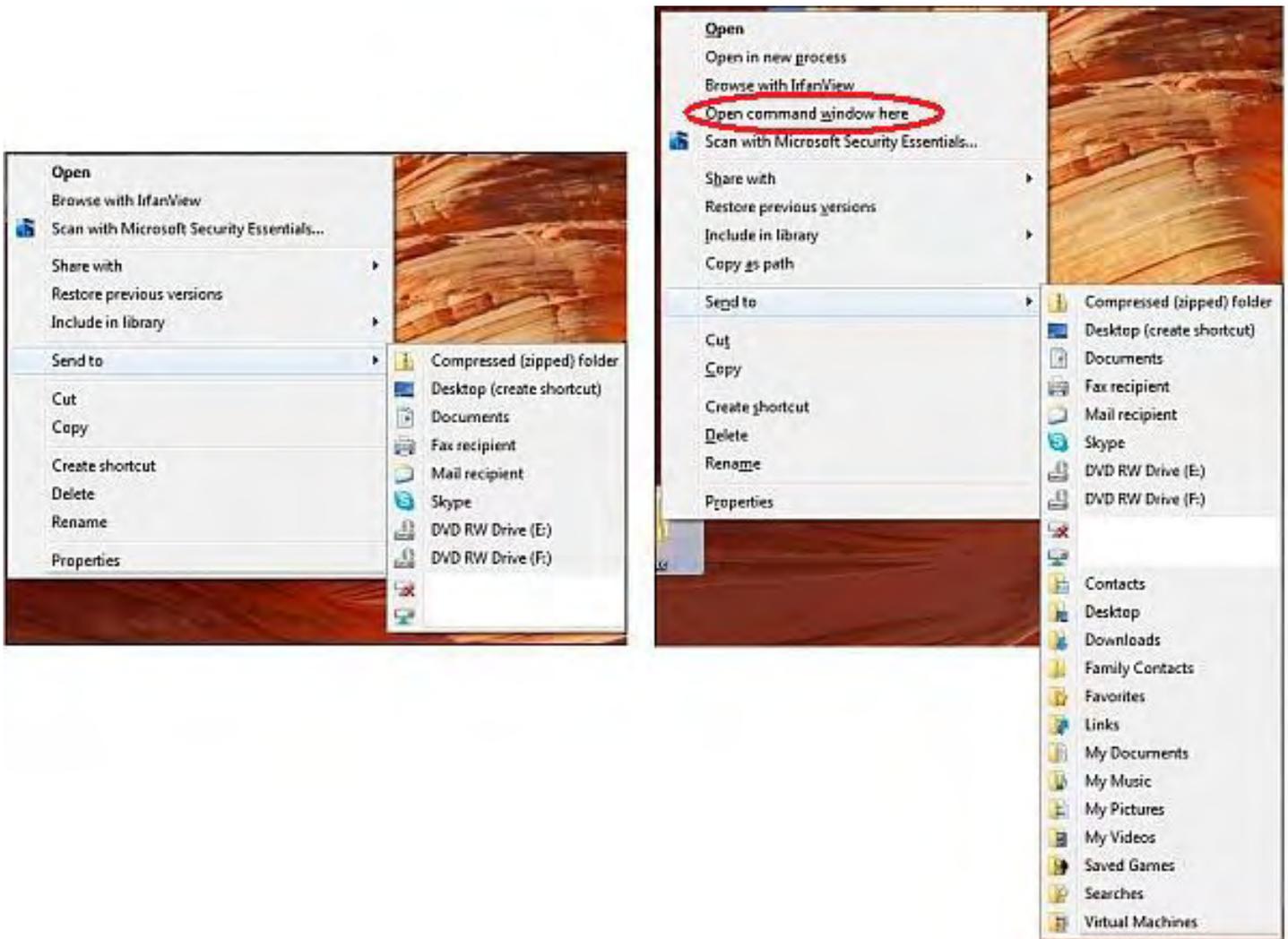


Figure 1. The normal right-click menu (left); the right-click menu while holding down the SHIFT key (right).

As can be seen, when holding down the SHIFT key during the right-click, there are a number of options added to the Send To menu. These are default locations that are commonly used to store files.

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

“Home Media Entertainment” by Wally Wang

The Apple TV device lets you buy or rent TV shows or movies through iTunes and watch them on your big-screen TV. Also, the Mac mini is a bargain in the low-cost computer category; download and synchronize TV shows or movies with your iPad; more mythical Flash sightings on a mobile device; the iPad helps kids; Xcode 4 is dramatically different from Xcode 3; and a tip on quickly closing programs in Safari.

If you like watching TV or movies, Apple offers a strange gadget dubbed Apple TV (www.apple.com/appletv). Just hook the Apple TV device to the Internet (through an Ethernet cable or a Wi-Fi connection) and connect it to your television set. Now you'll be able to buy or rent TV shows or movies through iTunes and watch them on your big-screen TV rather than your much smaller computer monitor.

Movie rentals through Apple TV cost \$3.99 (\$4.99 for high-definition) for the latest releases or \$2.99 (\$3.99 for high-definition) for older titles. While this may not be as cheap as Netflix, it's still much cheaper than renting movies from your local Blockbuster Video store. For avid movie watchers, Netflix is probably a better deal since you can stream an unlimited number of movies to your computer as part of your monthly subscription plan.

Rather than pay \$229 for Apple TV, spend \$699 and get the latest Mac mini, which now comes with an HDMI port (although it still lacks a Blu-ray drive). Besides squashing the size of the Mac mini, Apple also gave it a Secure Digital (SD) card reader all smashed inside an all-aluminum case.

What's most remarkable about the Mac mini is its small size and energy-efficiency. If you want a computer that's highly recyclable with a minimum of toxic parts inside, you'll be pleased to know that the Mac mini is rated EPEAT Gold (www.epeat.net), which is the highest rating for ecologically friendly electronics.

To minimize its consumption of electricity, the Mac mini can even reduce the amount of power it uses in between keystrokes (www.apple.com/macmini/environment.html). The Mac mini may not be the cheapest or most powerful computer in its class, but it's definitely the most energy-efficient and environmentally friendly computer around.

Unlike previous versions of the Mac mini, the latest version allows you to remove a bottom panel to access the RAM chips, making RAM upgrades easy enough for anyone to do.



Figure 1. The Mac mini offers a removable panel for accessing its RAM chips.

If you already have a PC, just plug your existing keyboard, mouse and monitor into the Mac mini. If you buy a Mac mini from the Apple Store and bring in your old PC, the Apple store will transfer all your files from the PC to your new Mac mini free of charge.

The Mac mini may not get as much attention as the iMac or MacBook models, but it's definitely another way to get a Macintosh without taking up a lot of space or dumping your existing equipment. The Mac mini may not be suitable for high-end video editing, but it's perfectly capable of nearly any other task you may need to accomplish. If you look beyond the usual laundry list of technical specifications and just focus on what you need to do, you'll find that the Mac mini is a bargain in the low-cost computer category, even according to PC Magazine (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2365157,00.asp).

Watching TV on the iPad

Apple TV may be fine for watching TV shows or movies at home, but when you're traveling, you can download and synchronize TV shows or movies with your iPad. For an even more convenient option, download the free ABC Player on your iPad and you'll be able to watch ABC's most popular shows like "Dancing with the Stars" or "Desperate Housewives."

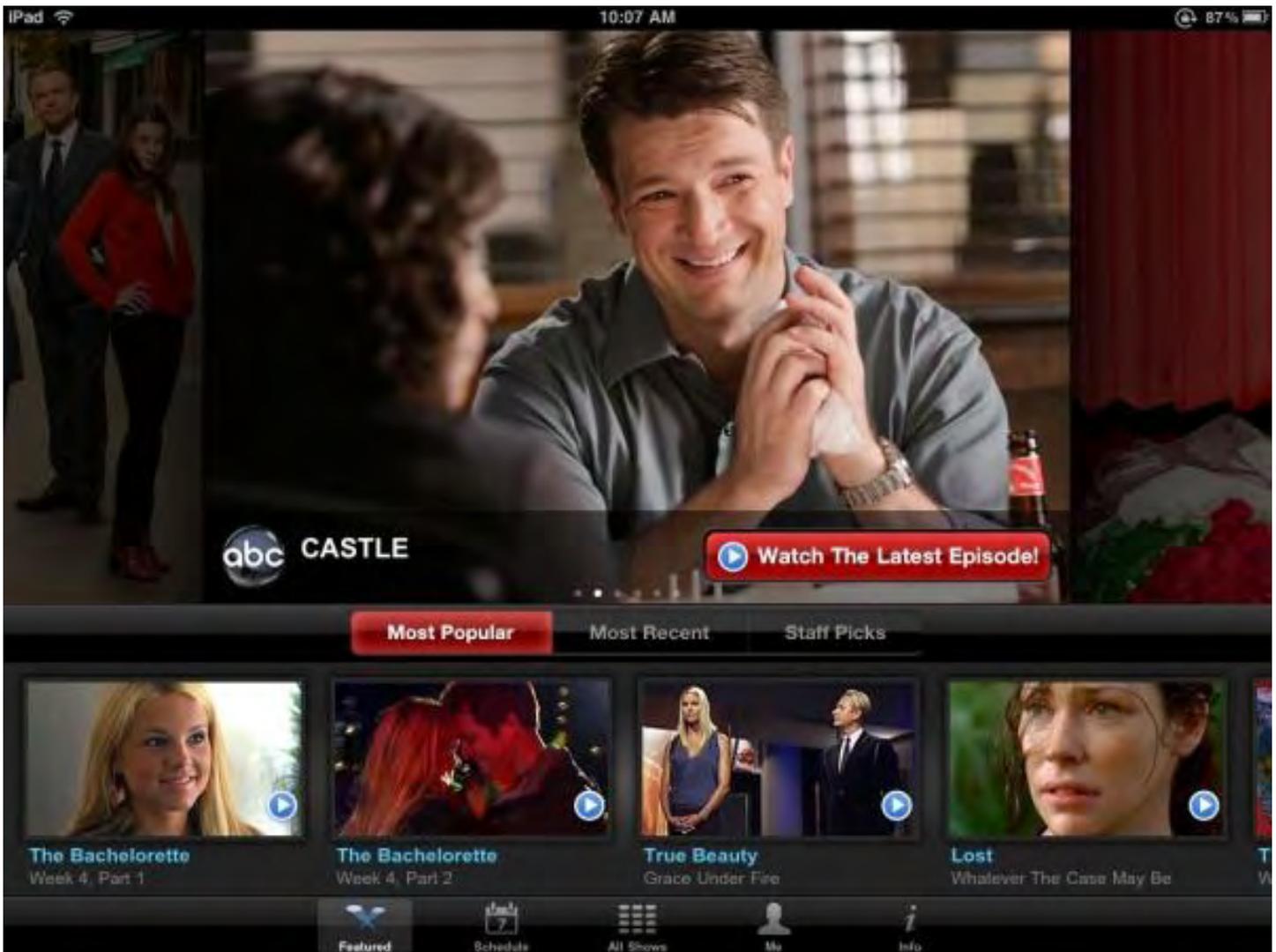


Figure 2. The ABC Player app lets you choose episodes from ABC's most popular shows.

To watch these shows, you'll need an Internet connection (Wi-Fi or 3G) and to wade through the obligatory commercials. Despite these minor annoyances, you'll be able to enjoy your favorite ABC shows wherever you take your iPad.

More Mythical Flash Sightings on a Mobile Device

This article (www.intomobile.com/2010/06/17/adobe-flash-10-1-on-sprint-htc-evo-4g-no-root-or-android-2-2-froyo-required.html) starts off promising enough by mentioning that Sprint's HTC EVO 4G mobile phone now offers Flash support. After acknowledging that Flash sucks the battery life out of the HTC EVO 4G, the author eventually reaches the conclusion that it doesn't really run Flash as expected. The final conclusion of the author is simply stated: "But for now, we're gonna call this a big fat fail."

The problem is that Adobe offers Flash Lite (www.adobe.com/products/flashlite), a stripped-down version of Flash for mobile phones. This gives mobile phones the ability to boast "Flash support," even if it doesn't offer complete Flash support. Does this sound misleading? Of course, and this is how they'll get you to buy a phone, thinking you'll get full Flash support, only to find out that you really won't.

On June 23, Adobe announced that Flash player 10.1 for mobile devices will run on Android phones. Will this actually work? Or will this just be another failed promise that provides a subset of Flash on a mobile phone while draining the battery life at the same time?

Before you get excited about Flash support on a mobile phone, check to see if you really get full Flash support or just partial Flash support. Also check how Flash affects the mobile phone's battery life. Adobe's latest Flash player on mobile phones may be what we've all been waiting for, or it may be just another smokescreen designed to trick people into buying mobile phones, thinking that it runs Flash as well as a regular computer. If you thought politicians and used car salesmen used deceptive and misleading advertising, just study the claims of Flash support for mobile phones.

The iPad Helps Children

A mother recently blogged about how her autistic child (www.blogger.com/ipad-nearmiracle-my-son-autism) has taken to the iPad to draw, play and watch videos. Naturally this same autistic child could have used an ordinary computer or laptop, but the iPad's touch-gesture interface reduces the barrier between wanting to do something and actually being able to do it.

Using a keyboard and a mouse (or a trackpad) to manipulate something on a screen isn't as intuitive as directly manipulating something on the screen with your fingers. Hewlett-Packard offers a touch-screen PC running Windows 7, but the idea of reaching out to touch the screen can get tiresome after an extended period of time. In comparison, touching the iPad screen is simple and easy because the screen is naturally in front of you so you only need to point down, not across a desk to reach the touch screen surface.

To keep children amused and distracted, St. Louis Children's Hospital provides iPads for kids to use (www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?odyssey=mod_sectionstories&storyid=124467&catid=3). Besides playing games on the iPad, kids can also view pictures of the hospital so they know what to expect when going into surgery. By using the iPad as both a toy and an educational tool, the hospital staff can help children cope with being sick and away from home.

Yet if you Google "Why the iPad will fail," you'll find links to plenty of articles explaining why so-called "experts" thought that the iPad would flop. In hindsight, these dire predictions of the iPad's impending failure are both amusing and instructive because they show how people focused on individual features and ignored the intuitive and practical possibilities for using the iPad.

Given a choice between a device burdened with multiple features that are hard to use or one that makes it easy to do something fun and exciting, which device do you think will fail? The answer is obvious. Even a child can figure that one out.

Xcode 4

In the old days, companies like Microsoft and Borland International sold compilers to help people write programs. Nowadays, some companies still sell compilers but others give them away for free. Microsoft gives away express editions of its popular Visual Basic and Visual C# compilers while Apple gives away a free compiler called Xcode.

If you want to write Macintosh programs, you can learn and use Xcode, or use any other compiler such as REAL Studio (www.realsoftware.com/realbasic). However, if you want to write iPhone or iPad apps, you have no choice but to use Xcode.

Before you rush out and buy a book to teach you how to use Xcode, wait. Apple recently released version 4 of Xcode and most books currently available only cover version 3. The differences between version 3 and 4 are dramatic as leaked by AppleInsider (www.appleinsider.com/articles/10/06/19/inside_apples_new_xcode_4_development_tool.html).

The big problem with Xcode 3 is that you need to use a separate program, called Interface Builder, to design your user interface. While writing an iPhone or iPad app, you'll first have to write code in the Xcode editor, switch to Interface Builder to create your user interface, then switch back to Xcode again. Such back-and-forth switching between two separate programs makes iPhone and iPad programming much harder than necessary.

Xcode 4 eliminates this constant back-and-forth switching between programs and provides all your programming tools in a single window. It's still possible to start teaching yourself how to use Xcode with the current version 3, but you may find version 4 far easier to use, so you might as well wait until that version comes out. That also means holding off any purchases of iPhone or iPad programming books until the authors update them to cover Xcode 4.

In the meantime, you can still teach yourself much of the basics behind iPhone and iPad programming through *Beginning Mac Programming* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1934356514?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1934356514) by Tim Isted.

Unlike other programming books that dig into the specifics of Xcode and iPhone/iPad programming, "Beginning Mac Programming" focuses on teaching you the basics of Objective-C. After you read this book, you'll have a much stronger foundation for tackling any other iPhone or iPad programming books.

By that time, Xcode 4 should also be available so you can start learning with the more intuitive Xcode 4 rather than the convoluted and confusing Xcode 3. For priding itself on creating computers that are easy to use, Apple has historically always made programming its products vastly more difficult than programming a similar Windows computer. At least with Xcode 4, Apple is finally integrating programming tools into a single window like Windows programming tools.

* * *

If you have multiple tabs open in the Safari browser, you can shut down each tab individually. However, a faster way is to move the mouse pointer over the Close button of the tab you want to keep open. Then hold down the Option key while you click on the Close button of the tab that you want to keep. This action closes all tabs except the one you Option-clicked on.

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.

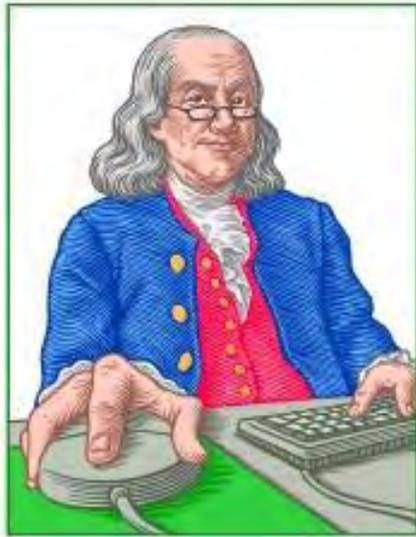
Wally is responsible for the following books:

- 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.

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LINUX LESSONS

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

**Linux Lessons:
Linux Multimedia**
"Linux needs to be a
player in the
multimedia arena." by
Pete Choppin

Whether it's playing music or movies, Linux has to be good and useful as an entertainment device—at least as good as Windows.

One of the most important things that Linux has to get right, if it wants to be considered a serious contender in the desktop scene, is the ability to be used as an entertainment device. Whether it's playing music or movies, Linux has to be good at it—at least as good at playing them as Windows.

Historically, a weakness of Linux has been multimedia playback. Linux never really was an entertainment system. But for Linux to truly break into the desktop market, it will need to seriously address multimedia.

The good news is that a few teams of developers have been developing many applications that, in some cases, are better than their Windows counterparts! Let's first address some basic technical hurdles that Linux must overcome to really be a player in the multimedia arena, and then we will take a look at a few very nice entertainment applications that are available.

Codecs

If you will indulge me, let's first define some technology that enables various multimedia applications to operate. A codec is a device or computer program capable of encoding and/or decoding a digital data stream or signal. The word *codec* is a morph of the terms "compressor-decompressor" or, more commonly, "coder-decoder." The programs that are developed to accomplish this are sometimes protected by copyrights. The codecs that are used for Windows Media Player and that handle the MP3 formats are owned and copyrighted by Microsoft, and, therefore, Linux operating systems cannot legally ship with these programs.

The codecs war still goes on and to date, Linux has not made much headway. There are many Open Source codecs (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source_codecs_and_containers), but the problem is the demand for using the proprietary Windows codecs is great enough that Linux cannot simply ignore the problem. Either Linux and Microsoft will have to come to some agreement on this technology or someone will need to develop an open-source codec that doesn't infringe on copyrights, and yet is compatible with Windows media.

Basic Media Players

There are many media players available for Linux; however, there are just a few that are packaged with the more popular Linux distributions. The advantage of using packaged apps, rather than manually installing others, is simply that it is less of a hassle. For the most part, these packaged apps are ready to run (although it may be necessary to add codecs for other formats that Linux cannot legally include in the distribution). Here are just a few.

MPlayer—MPlayer has been one of the best players for playing media in Linux, since it supports a large number of codecs and includes lots of features.

VLC Media Player—VLC is another cross-platform free and open-source media player. It is also a lot more powerful than MPlayer, allowing you to stream all sorts of media across the network.

Amarok—Amarok is one of those applications that is better than almost any other media player that's available in Windows. Until now, Amarok was not available in Windows, but with the advances in KDE4, we can check out Amarok in Windows itself. Amarok is just an audio player, but it supports a large variety of files and includes a lot of features

Audacious—Audacious is a lookalike of Winamp, a media player available in Windows. Audacious is a fork of Beep Media Player, which was a fork of XMMS, a Winamp clone. Audacious has a huge number of features, thanks to its extensible nature and large number of plugins. One of these plugins gives Audacious the ability to play MP3, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC and Monkey's Audio files out of the box. Audacious also supports old Winamp 2 skins.

Together, these four applications are capable of playing any media format you throw at them. Whether it's high-definition videos, lossless music, videogame sounds, or Internet radio, these applications will support them all. Now let's take a look at some very cool entertainment applications. These are better classified as media centers because their capabilities go well beyond basic media playback.

LinuxMCE (www.linuxmce.org/)



This feature-rich media center has excellent media controls, and management of all streams of multimedia, photos, music and video. But keep in mind that it is not a software package in the traditional sense that you can install it to your system. It is a complete Linux distribution based on Ubuntu.

XMBC (xbmc.org/)



Released in 2002 for the Microsoft Xbox, but also available on Linux platforms across the PC architecture, XMBC is another excellent media center for images, audio and video, in all common formats. It is simple and intuitive to use, and a top media player for theming and standalone use. XMBC is easy to install with Ubuntu. It does, however, require third-party tweaking to run on some of the other most common distros.

MythTV (www.mythtv.org/)

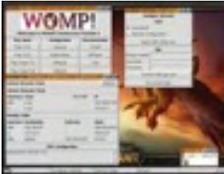


MythTV is a media center software that can be installed on your computer just like any other application. It has strong roots in the Linux arena and is



considered the "mother of all Linux media centers." With an easy install across multiple Linux platforms—Ubuntu, OpenSuse, Fedora, Mandriva and others—MythTV comes with digital video recording (DVR) capability, and some excellent plugins across the Myth portfolio, thus catering to a huge array of multimedia needs with MythArchive, MythMusic, MythVideo, MythWeb, Theming and Media Server capabilities.

WOMP! (womp.sourceforge.net/)



Lightweight and clean both in installation and usability, WOMP! is arguably the simplest of all Linux media centers to use. A no-nonsense application, it does not have the deep features or functionality of those mentioned, but for the average user it is an exceptional piece of open-source software. WOMP! can burn and play audio and video files, and has a small install footprint, thus leaving plenty of space for multimedia storage/navigation. It may have a dated look and feel, and would benefit from YouTube integration, but this is a very neat, no-frills, no-fuss media center for playing and burning media files in Linux.

Windows is regarded as a media master in usability, availability and versatility. Be that as it may, Linux has some very nice alternatives. As Linux becomes more and more usable for everyone, it will have to become a powerful media center in order to compete with Windows. We've looked at several great contenders in the Linux multimedia realm and hopefully made some sense of it. There are still some hurdles Linux must overcome, but it has already come a long way.

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

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Rob, The Computer Tutor

Rob, The ComputerTutor: Technology Solutions

“More Resumes with Microsoft Word”

by Rob Spahitz

This week, we continue working with resumes with Pages and Tables, building a resume with a table of skills that a potential employee could display. We'd also like to add a cover page to show the hiring person that we're not only qualified for the job, but also anxious to help them to grow their company.

This week, we continue working with résumés with Pages and Tables. Last week we started building a résumé. The résumé had a table of skills that a potential employee could have. We'd also like to add a cover page to show the hiring person that we're not only qualified for the job, but also anxious to help them to grow their company.

First a note: Since I had previously given directions about how to download the Office 2010 beta for free, I wanted to notify you that Microsoft sent a newsletter recently that its beta program is now complete. I'm not sure what that means for the beta-testers, but I suspect that the link I previously provided may be removed in the near future. I am apparently still able to run the beta version, but I'm not sure if it will stop at some future point or if there are any changes between the beta and the final released version. If you purchase the new Office 2010, let me know if you find any differences between it and my columns. Thanks!

Pages

Let's start with the cover page. In Word 2010, the Insert menu has a Pages box that includes three things: Cover Page, Blank Page and Page Break. Let's work in reverse order.

Page Break is simply that. If you select this, it interrupts the current page at the cursor position and forces the selection to start at the next page even if it's only in the middle of the current page. If you go back and add more text to that page, it will expand the page and not overflow into the next page. You've basically inserted a command at that point to tell Word to always start a new page at that point. This feature is often used for things like the end of a chapter in a book. Although you can certainly start the next chapter immediately after a chapter ends, normally you like it to start on a new page. Even if you add a few more paragraphs to the chapter that cause it to wrap to a new page, you still want the next chapter on its own page.

People often insert page breaks to make the page look nicer. For example, if the last line on a page is the start of a new paragraph and it looks strange to have that paragraph line all by itself, you could add a page break to force it to appear on the next page with the rest of its text. However, there are more effective ways to manage this since if you change the prior text, it could wrap to the next page, then have the page break cause most of the page to become blank. We'll explore solutions to this at a later time, with things like "Keep with next" in the Home tab's

Paragraph box.

Next, Blank Page is very similar to Page Break. It not only causes a Page Break, but it also inserts an extra page break between the two. If this worked to align pages for printing double-sided so that, for example, a chapter always starts on the right-hand page, it would be a nice feature. Since it just forces two page breaks, I don't see much value in it since you can simply click on the Page Break feature twice. Let me know if you can find a good use for this one.

Now on to the Cover Page. The basic idea behind a cover page is that you have a fancy introduction to your document. In the case of a book, it probably has the title, author and a nice picture. For our résumé, it will have an introduction to us. Since there are many types of cover pages, you can click on the little expander arrow next to the option to see additional choices, such as those seen in Figure 1.

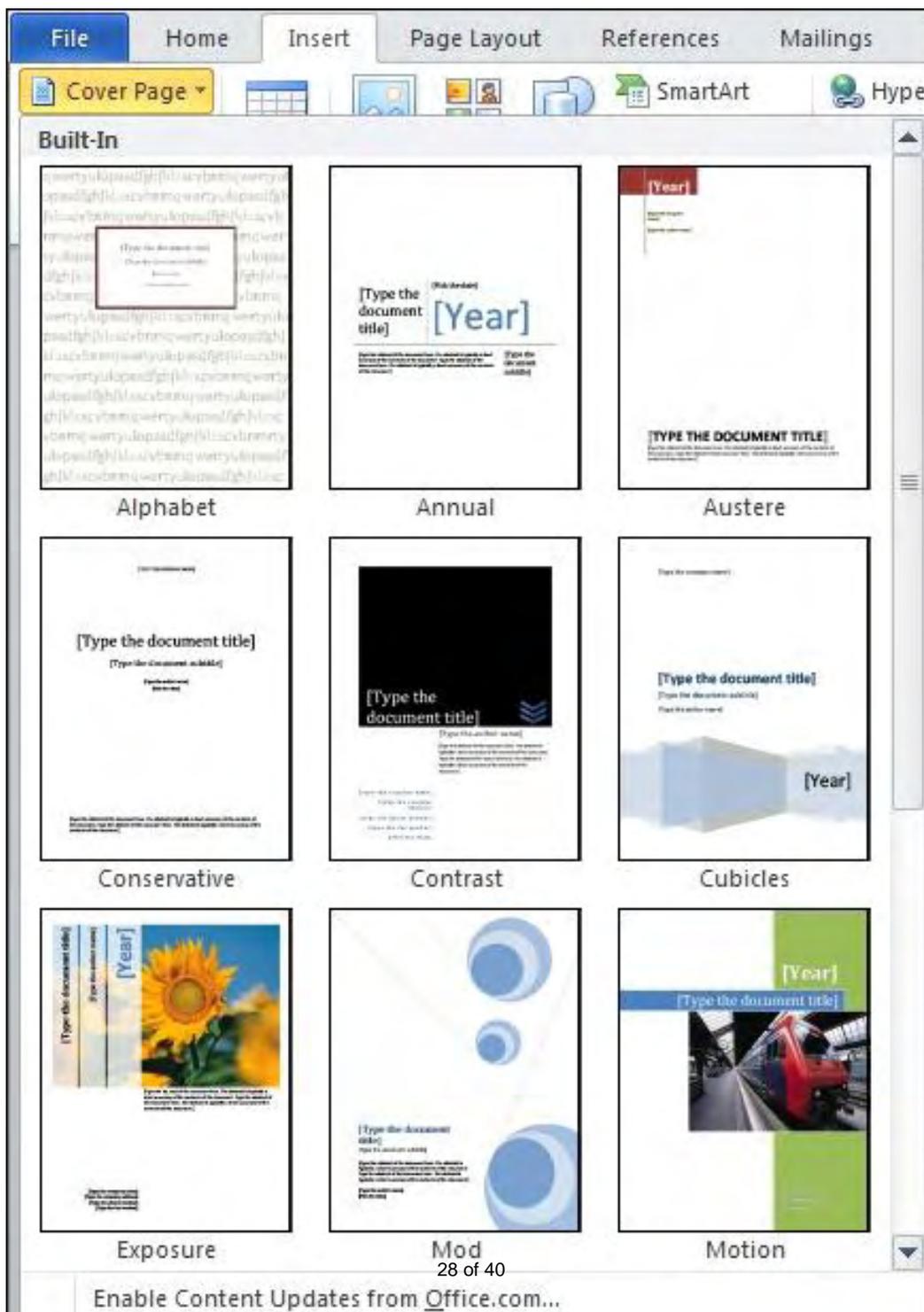




Figure 1. Cover Page Options.

When you look through the choices, you see that they are not really geared toward résumé cover pages. However, this could help make your résumé stand out, so we'll try one and clean up the parts afterward. Go ahead and pick something like "Alphabet" to get us started. It will add a new page to the top of your document, and then allow you to customize it, as seen in Figure 2. Note that I have the setting to "Show paragraph marks" enabled, so you can see how this has inserted a box and a Page Break.

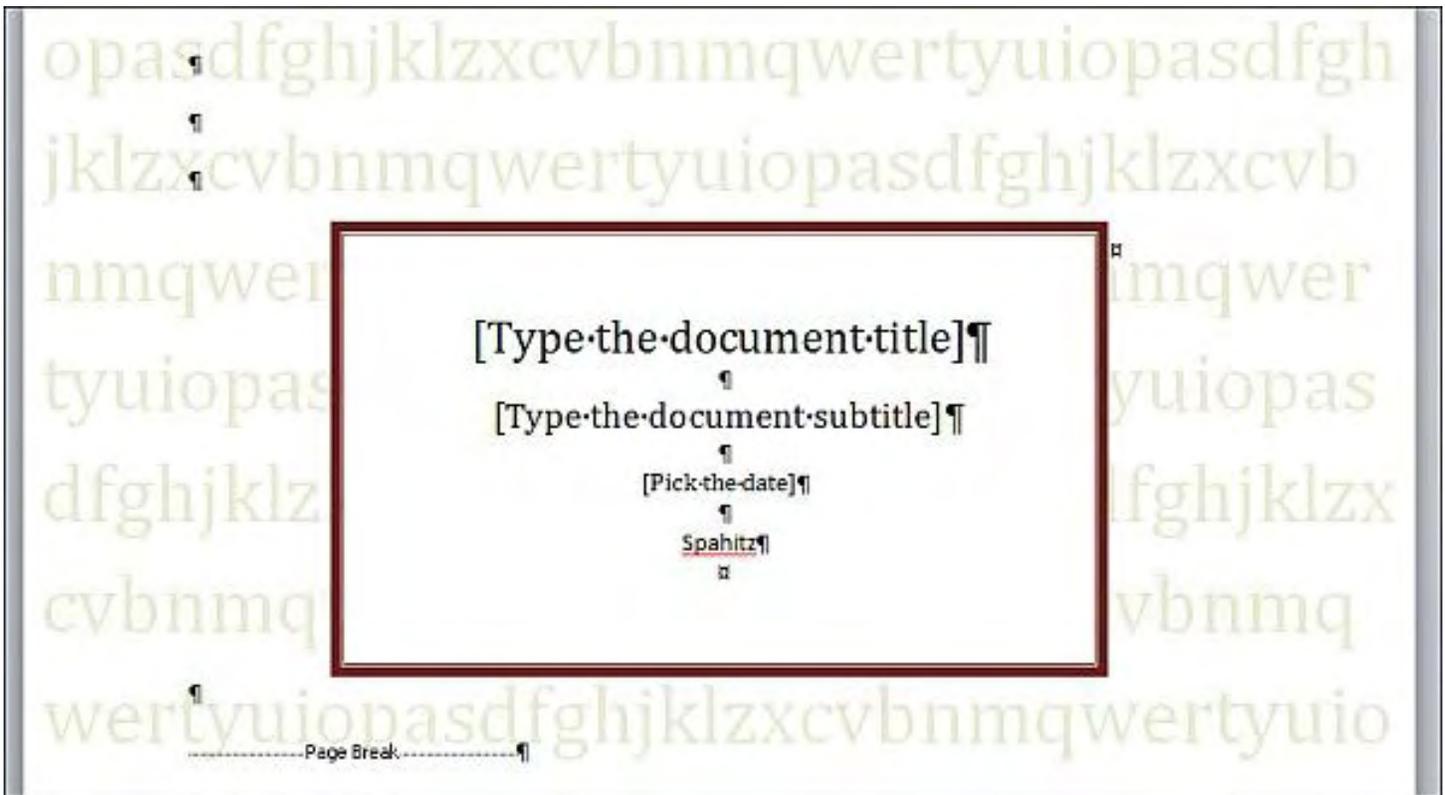


Figure 2. Cover Page.

Obviously, depending on which one you pick, you will be able to customize it in different ways. If you don't like the choice you picked, Undo (Ctrl+Z) will get rid of it and let you select another. If you decide you don't like any of the choices, simply go to the top of the document (Ctrl+Home) and click on Page Break, and then go up and create your own page. A typical cover letter will look something like this:

*NeedyCompany, Inc.
123 Desperate Drive
Helperson, LA*

Dear Hiring Person,

As a long-time expert in the tools you use, I would like for you to consider me for the Gadget position listed on your Web site. As seen in my attached résumé, I have worked with these tools for many years in a variety of companies. Along the way, I not only learned how to use the tool, but also learned how to optimize its performance in ways that can surely help save you money.

Please contact me so that we can further discuss my qualifications and your needs in this area.

*Sincerely,
Mia Naim
Gadget Expert*

With that cover page in place, we can continue on to the rest of the résumé. By the way, if you plan to use the résumé for many companies, it probably makes sense to save it without the cover page and make a separate page for each company you contact. The nice thing about this is that you will be able to use a document template rather than the limited cover page options.

Tables

As previously mentioned, tables in Word allow you to organize data in nice grids. Because of the complexity and extensiveness of tables, they really need to have additional features that the Word 2010 developers decided not to put directly into the Insert tab. Instead, you simply get the basic options related to creating the table, as seen in Figure 3. Once you create a table, then you will get a separate set of tabs once you select the table.

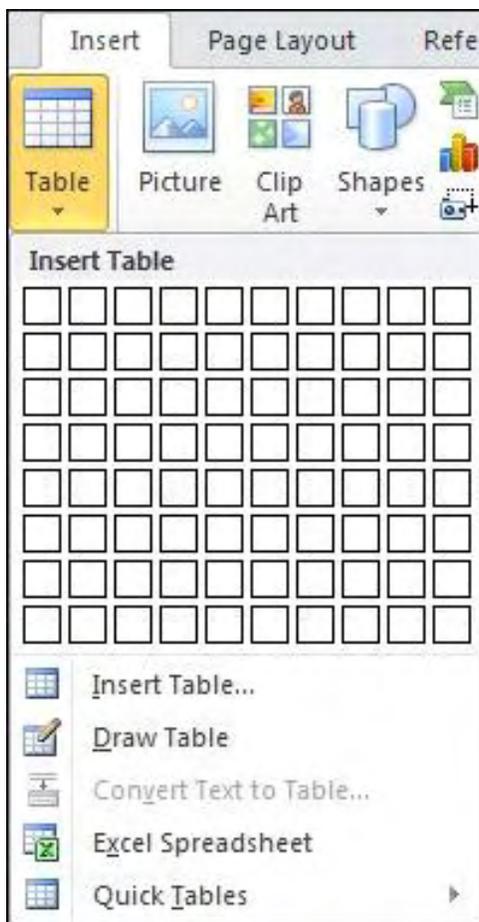


Figure 3. Table options.

If you'd like to create, for example, a table that has three columns and four rows, simply move your mouse around the collection of boxes to see a sample show up in the menus and the grid. Once you see the size you'd like, simply click to insert the table.

An alternate way, the old Word 2000 version, is to select "Insert Table..." from the entry below the grid. When you do this, you get a dialog box that allows you to enter the number of columns and rows.

If that's not enough, you can also "Draw Table." When you select this, your arrow turns into a pencil and you can drag the pencil around the page and draw a rectangle to make one cell of a table. You can continue to draw cells until you select the Draw Table option again. If you need cells of a certain size, this can be useful, but the previously mentioned choices are better for creating larger grids.

In addition to the above, you have two other options for tables. If you select "Excel Spreadsheet," then a box that contains an embedded Excel sheet will appear (if you have Excel installed). The last option, "Quick Tables," gives you a collection of starter tables, including several calendars, a grid of the Greek alphabet, another for mileage between cities, etc. The main benefit of these is the nice styles they offer rather than their content.

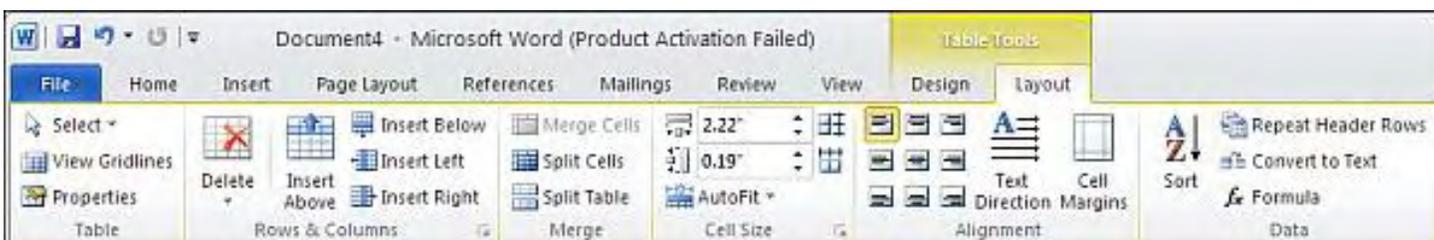
Table Settings

Suppose that you created a table that has three columns and four rows. Initially the grid will appear with lines to show all the edges. It will also fill the entire width of the margins. It's easy enough to start typing within the grid to get things similar to the résumé's skills set. It will support anything that the rest of the document supports, such as bullets, new paragraphs and inserted pictures.

In the table we looked at last week, the border lines were invisible. To change ours, start by clicking inside any cell. When you do this, Word 2010 will add a new group called Table Tools that contains a Design tab and a Layout Tab. These two are seen in Figures 4 and 5.



Figures 4. Table Design Tab.



Figures 5. Table Layout Tab.

As seen, the Design tab gives you options related to the appearance of the table. The first box contains Table Style Options, which help define the next box, Table Styles. When you pick an option, the Table Styles change accordingly. For example, if you uncheck the Header Row option, the Table Styles entries change to show that if you select them they will not have special appearances for headings in the table.

The next box, Table Styles, gives you a quick way to format your table with fancy predefined styles. I leave those to the reader to explore, but if you hover the mouse over one you get a small name for the style, and if you hover the mouse over that style for a few seconds, it will be temporarily applied to your table so you can see how it will look if you select it. Also notice the scroll buttons on the right of the styles and the "expand" button below the scroll buttons so you can see all of the styles more easily and view other options such as the ability to save your own style.

Finally in this box you see the option for Shading and Borders. Shading will apply to the selected cell and add that as the background color. Borders will give you the option to change any of the border lines in a variety of ways, as seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Table Border Line Settings.

Since we were trying to remove the borders, this is the place to manage that for the selected cell.

Since the option we want is listed, simply select "No Border." If you wanted something more fancy, like solid black top and bottom border but dotted left and right borders in blue, you'd want to select the "Borders and Shading..." option. Since we're short on space and I went over this feature when I discussed Borders in Excel, I'll leave this to the reader to explore.

Wrapping up the Design tab, we see the Draw Borders box. Here you can adjust the thickness and color of the lines, draw additional rows and/or columns (with Draw Table to split cells) or remove rows and/or columns (to merge cells).

Finally, going back to Figure 5, there is a collection of Layout features. The first box is Table, to select rows or columns, enable gridline visibility, and to view other properties such as how surrounding text should interact with the table by wrapping around it in a variety of ways. Next is the Rows & Columns box to insert or remove rows or columns. Then comes the Merge box for splitting cells or merging cells (if you have at least two selected). After these comes the Cell Size box, which can be used to fine-tune the height or width of a given row or column. Next is the Alignment box that allows you to adjust horizontal and vertical alignment of the text within the cell. And last is the Data box, used to perform basic calculations within the table. At a later time, we'll explore some of the formulas available to assist.

Back to our résumé, you may now have a table with the borders turned on. As mentioned last week, when a cell is selected, the top-left corner has a selection box to select the whole table. Click on that and select the Design tab, Borders drop-down, then pick No Border. Add your collection of skills into the cells, pick a great style, and impress your potential employer.

Good luck on your job-hunting. With an improved résumé, you should improve your odds of getting a great job. Next week we'll start exploring some new documents you may want to create.

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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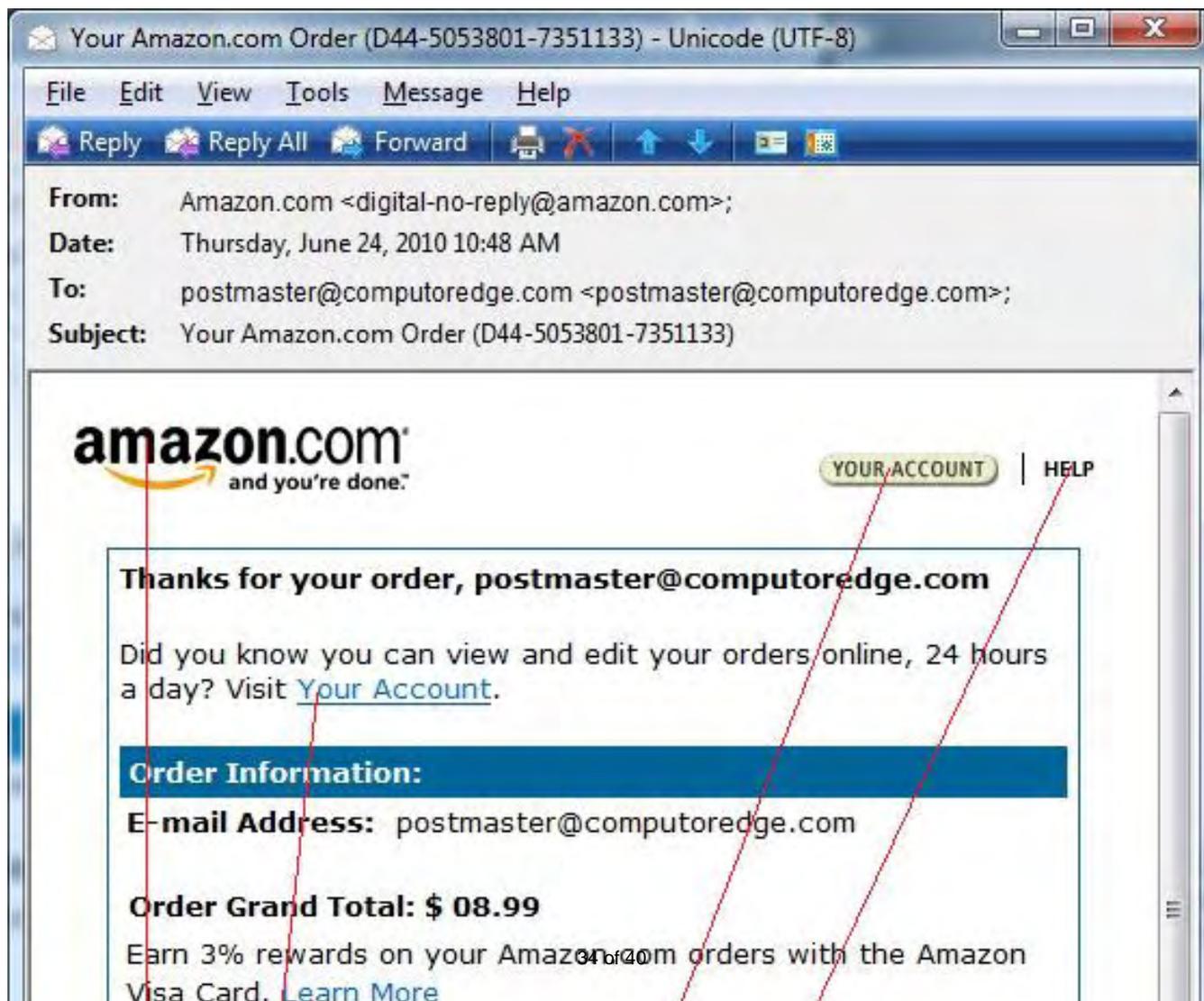
Spam of the Week

Spam of the Week: Amazon.com

“The latest in annoying and dangerous e-mail currently making the rounds.” by ComputerEdge Staff

Amazon.com lookalike spam redirects you to a South Korean Web site when you click a link. Delete!

If you use Amazon.com quite a bit—and many people do—be very careful about any e-mails you may receive. There is a huge number of the spam shown in Figure 1 going around. It looks authentic, but on closer inspection they are trying to redirect you to another Web site (the URL extension ".kr" is for South Korea).



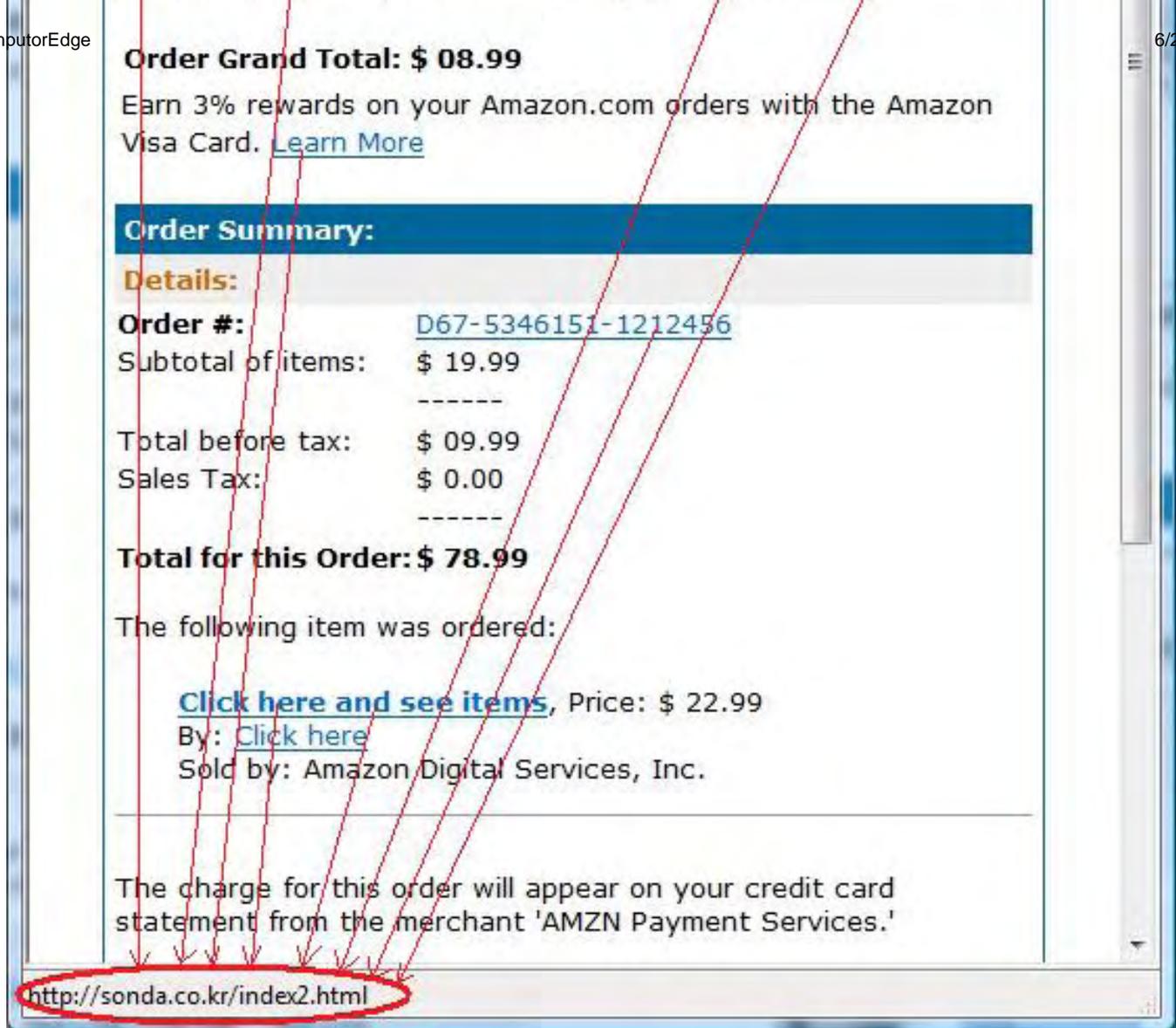


Figure 1. Amazon.com lookalike spam designed to redirect you to a South Korean Web site when you click a link.

There are other hints as to the nefarious nature of the spam, such as the numbers don't add up, but overall it has the stolen look and feel of Amazon.

It's unfortunate, but you should always go directly to a Web site such as Amazon using the actual URL (<http://www.amazon.com>), a link or bookmark in your Favorites, or even a Google search that IDs the correct URL. Avoid using a link in any e-mail unless you're absolutely sure of its source. Even then, be cautious.

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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: To Netflix or Not to Netflix

“Home Entertainment in Flux” by Jack Dunning



Nothing is sacred and nothing is safe in the home-entertainment market, where companies like Netflix are rewriting the rules of in-home digital entertainment.

Nothing is settled in the home entertainment market. If anything, deciding how you want to bring the latest movie and television content into your house is getting more confusing. In the coming years, there will be massive changes that will affect cable providers (including the premium channels such as HBO and Showtime), broadcasters, and DVD producers. In fact, the changes are already well underway, showing immediate effects such as the closing down of many video rental stores. Nothing is sacred and nothing is safe. Although more confusing, the changes are ultimately good for the consumer.

Netflix may be the most prescient company in the industry. It has embarked on a business strategy that will most likely severely cut into its core business, DVD rentals by mail. Where many companies will hesitate to cannibalize their primary business, Netflix realizes the change is necessary to ensure any type of survival. In fact, its approach to delivering entertainment is a threat not only to video rental stores, but the old movie channel giants such as HBO. The on-demand business of the cable television providers will either need to adapt with lower prices, or it will also fall into oblivion. In the meantime, things are not getting any better for the movie theaters.

Although not the only company doing it, Netflix now streams movies and television directly to your computer or television set via the Internet for a low monthly rate. This service is included with the one-disc-at-a-time DVD mail rental plan. In most areas of the country the Netflix unlimited streaming price is less than adding HBO to your cable package. That means you can get almost everything on HBO without having HBO. While the Netflix streaming does not include everything that you can get from its DVD rentals, it is massive enough to give you plenty of entertainment as the DVDs are moving in the mail.

Netflix is considered the current leader in Internet streaming entertainment, but there are plenty of others jumping into the market. Most have a fee structure similar to video rental stores, charging for each movie viewed. Sears/K-Mart has plans to enter the market by the end of the year, and Redbox, the successful \$1 movie rental kiosk company, is planning to start streaming new video release at the same \$1.

Blockbuster, the largest surviving brick-and-mortar video rental chain, has added both rental by mail and video streaming to its menu. They are using everything at their disposal to battle the lead accumulated by Netflix, but it may be too little too late. Blockbuster has signed deals with some of the major movie production companies for exclusive rental rights to newly released DVDs for the first 28 days.

If it wasn't for the production of original HBO shows and movies, HBO would probably be doomed by the current changes in the entertainment marketplace. The current movies it offers are usually old and redundant. It is almost as bad as waiting for a movie to show on network television. HBO has fortunately made a name for many of its quality programs. Of course, you

can also get these shows from Netflix once they are released on DVD.

Google is not going to be left out of the fray, although its approach is a little different. Google may actually be a bigger threat to the cable companies than Netflix. Google wants to do to television what it did to the Internet. With Google TV (www.google.com/tv/) you will be able to search for and bring programming to your television from anywhere in the world. It could replace the programming from your satellite or cable company, including the DVR. If you pay for anything, it will only be for what you select from the vast menu. It's getting just a little more complicated.

I don't yet have Netflix, but I was given a free subscription for Father's Day. I've been looking into what it will take to get it streaming to my ancient television—no, I don't have HDTV. Streaming to a computer is no problem, but I don't want to watch a computer for my entertainment. Next week, I'll talk about what is needed to stream movies from the Internet to your television.

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

"Spyware and How to Remove It," "Free PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft," "Non-Replaceable Batteries," "Amazon Customer Service," "Spybot Search & Destroy"

Spyware and How to Remove It

[Regarding Pete Choppin's June 4 article, "What Is Spyware and How to Remove It":]

Microsoft frequently updates their Security Essentials (SE) software, which includes a firewall and antivirus. Any added anti-spyware (or other security software) has to be compatible with the basic SE and its updates, and with any other free or purchased security software. Blindly adding new security software is asking for disaster. Therefore, any article on security software has to include some info on compatibility and warnings on incompatibility with other security software. Without compatibility info, installing new security software is a roll of the dice.

-Len Sinfield, San Diego CA

One other category of spyware scanners users should consider are those that are completely online, such as Trend Micro's Housecall and Microsoft's Windows Live OneCare Safety Scan. These scanners do not permanently install, and they provide a useful second opinion versus your installed scanner. Unlike an installed scanner, these are unlikely to be modified or corrupted by malware. I use one of these once or twice a month just to be sure something has not slipped past my installed spyware scanner.

-Bill Calderwood, San Diego, CA

Free PowerPoint Viewer from Microsoft

[Regarding the June 11 Digital Dave column:]

With regard to the "PowerPoint presentation" question: One could download the free "Microsoft PowerPoint Viewer" (www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?displaylang=en&FamilyID=cb9bf144-1076-4615-9951-294eeb832823)

-Dennis, Delaware

I have found it necessary to download and use the PowerPoint Viewer in both Windows Mail and Windows Live Mail. I save the attachment to the desktop and open it from there.

-Frank, San Diego, CA

Non-Replaceable Batteries

[Regarding the June 4 Digital Dave column:]

Your suggestion about prolonging battery life brings to mind a new purpose for the refrigerator's Apple storage bin.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

Amazon Customer Service

[Regarding the June 4 EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher column:]

Unlike the Editor's experience, my experiences with Amazon customer service have been poor. When they advertised a product's features incorrectly, they refused to cover return shipping costs to get my money back. When I called within five minutes of one of my children placing an order without my permission, they refused to cancel that order.

The only things I now purchase online via Amazon are books and music.

-Stewart A. Levin, Centennial

Spybot Search & Destroy

[Regarding Michael J. Ross' June 4 article, "Spybot Search & Destroy":]

I've been a longtime user of Spybot Search & Destroy. I had not updated mine for about four days, so when I read your article, I updated and it's now up to 1.6.2.46.

Thanks for telling your world about a program I've been recommending to my friends for years.

-Larry McLaughlin, Aurora, CO

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