

# ComputerEdge™ Online — 09/03/10



## This issue: Securing Data Files: Storage, Archiving and Compression

The way we store and access our data is changing due to cloud services and file compression. Here's the latest on storing our files.

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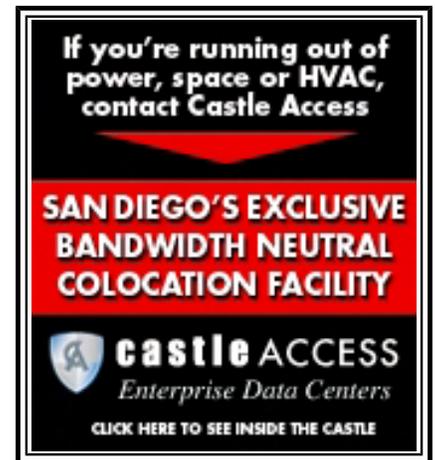
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## [Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#) by Wally Wang

### File Compression

For most Mac users, the built-in ZIP compression/uncompression feature will be more than adequate, but StuffIt Expander deals with more file formats. Also, the iPad keeps developing new uses; GearZap's Bluetooth keyboard adds to the iPad's appeal; will Microsoft's Windows Phone marketing blitz pan out?; complacency abounds in the Windows world; and a tip on using Pages to export to ePub files.

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### Rob Spahitz

Other Productivity Programs: OpenOffice.org  
Last week we looked at using VBA/macros with Microsoft Word. This week we'll start exploring some alternative productivity applications available, specifically OpenOffice.org.

## DEPARTMENTS:

## [EdgeWord: Amazon To Take on Netflix](#) by Jack

### Dunning

Netflix is the one to beat in the video-streaming arena. More companies are entering the video streaming fray, some with an eye on directly challenging Netflix. Amazon is the latest company with plans for a subscription service similar to Netflix.

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

### ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Reply for Julie," "Downloading Video," "Key Combos," "YouTube Freeze," "Netflix Label," "Reply to Ron Cerrato"

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## Digital Dave

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

A reader wonders what the IEEE 802.3 standard is all about; a reader's computer doesn't seem to be taking advantage of the installed memory capacity; a reader recommends Glary Utilities for speeding up your PC.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I am a big fan of yours. Please explain in simple English what the IEEE 802.3 standard is. Should a home user care about such standards when shopping for a new laptop?*

*Edward  
San Diego*

Dear Edward,

It's interesting how some of the numbers for the standards take on meaning in the commercial market, while others tend to remain a mystery. The IEEE 802.3 standard refers to the specification for hardwired Ethernet connections, which is what is used in home and business networks. These are the cable connections that are made between network cards and routers. For the average person (which means almost everyone), the number IEEE 802.3 (with associated versions) has never become a common way of evaluating the wired network product inside a box. More commonly the term 10BASE, 100BASE, 1000BASE, and now 10GBASE are used in referring to network bandwidths (speeds) of 10 megabits, 100 megabits, 1,000 megabits (one gigabit), and 10 gigabits respectively. These numbers will tell you what you need to know without deciphering the IEEE specification number and version.

However, if you're looking at the Wi-Fi specification, IEEE 802.11, for wireless Ethernet, then the version letters (a, b, g, n) displayed on a product box have become relevant to the average consumer. Most of the new wireless routers and network cards offer the 802.11n version, which is the faster wireless speed with greatest range. However, you will still see 802.11g models sitting on the shelf that will not take advantage of the speed and range of many of the other "n" products that you may be using.

If you are buying a wireless router with wired connections available, you will be concerned with both the BASE number for wired bandwidth and the 802.11 version for the wireless. Which is most important to you will depend upon what you are doing with your network.

Digital Dave

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I just added a Kingston two-gig compatible memory module to my Toshiba Satellite L455-S5975 laptop. This brings me to capacity, but I noticed I have four gigs installed, but only 2.84 gigs usable. Why?*

*During installation I may have touched the pins. Is there a way to clean these pins?*

*Richard  
Palm Desert, Calif.*

Dear Richard,

My guess is that you are running the 32-bit version of Windows on your computer, because if you were running the 64-bit version, your computer would take better advantage of the installed memory. In 32-bit Windows, the maximum amount of addressable memory that you can use is indeed four gigs. The problem is that other devices, such as video cards, also need to use memory addresses. These addresses are co-opted from the main memory, leaving some of your installed memory unusable—since it can no longer be addressed.

The more memory you have installed on your video card, the less of your main memory will be available. This is not a happy situation, but it is one of the limitations of 32-bit Windows.

A 64-bit version of Windows can address a massive amount of memory. The motherboards and CPUs for desktop and laptops are not built to take as much memory as is theoretically possible. If you put four gigs in a 64-bit system, virtually all of it should be usable. Video memory will use addresses beyond the four gigs.

Any increase in usable memory will help your performance overall since there will be less need for swapping memory data to the hard drive. This is why you have a better experience, even though the increase in usable memory may seem minimal.

As for touching the pins during installation, while it is something to be avoided, it is highly unlikely that it would cause you any kind of a problem. The oils on your hands can cause contact problems over the long run, but more likely you will have a new computer (or even more, or faster, memory) before anything would go bad. If you're concerned, wipe the pins with a clean, dry, static-free rag.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*You mention CCleaner a lot, but never mention Glary Utilities ([download.cnet.com/Glary-Utilities/3000-2094\\_4-10508531.html](http://download.cnet.com/Glary-Utilities/3000-2094_4-10508531.html)), which I have been using for some time, and I feel it does a better job than CCleaner. Is there a reason for this?*

*Steve  
Escondido*

Dear Steve,

One of the reasons that CCleaner gets so much attention is that many people (other than me) recommend it. I haven't used Glary Utilities, but based upon what you say (and others at CNET), I would not hesitate to give it a try. I'm sure that there are a number of other similar programs that are also very effective. If readers would leave a comment telling about their favorite Windows speed-up utility, we would have an informal (non-scientific) poll. Then, in the future, I could mention all of the most popular products on the list—or just one or two, depending upon my mood.

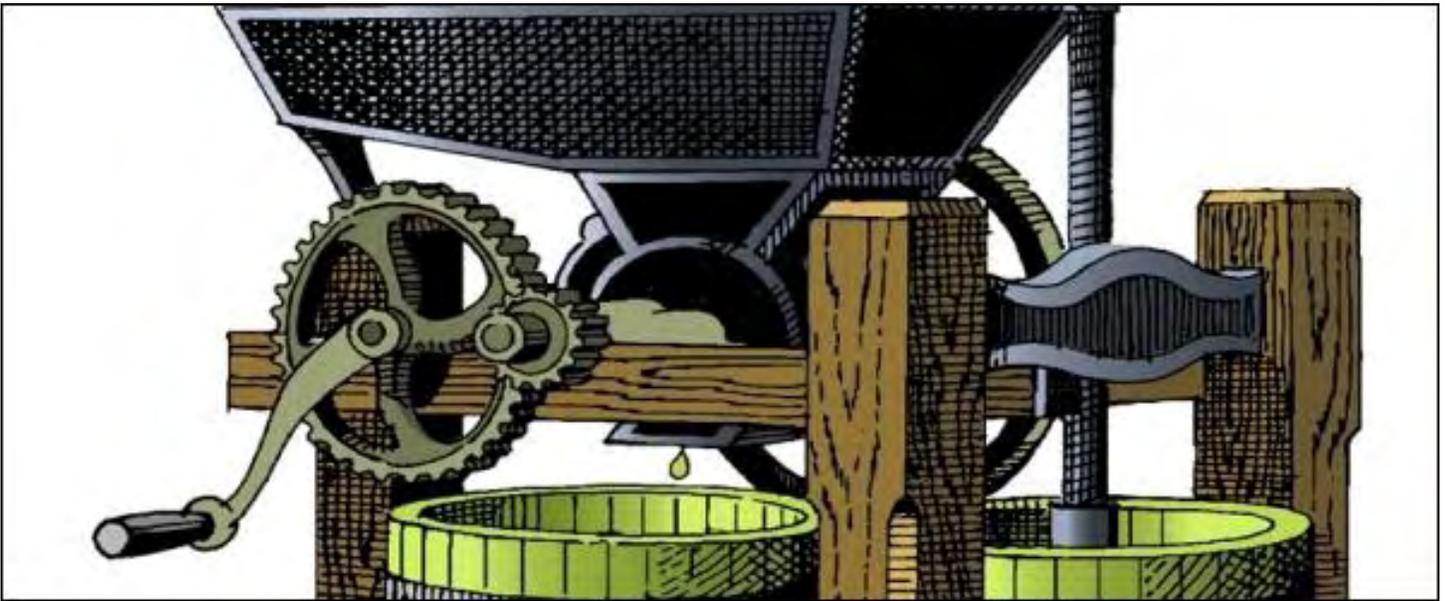
Digital Dave

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## File-Compression Programs

**“Boost your PC's performance and speed.”** by Michael J. Ross

Despite the seemingly endless capacity of today's hard drives, file-compression programs can give your computer better performance and speed, and you don't have to spend a lot of money.

Ever since personal computers became commonly used in businesses and homes, most of the components inside the desktop PC have changed little in their physical size. While motherboards have gradually become smaller, the same cannot be said for media components, such as hard drives and optical drives. This has been the case primarily because years ago, the major manufacturers of computer hardware developed media size standards that generally have worked quite well, and those firms and their distributors eventually found themselves locked into the inertia of selling replacement parts of a certain size—as well as complete systems whose parts might need to be replaced or supplemented later. Perhaps the only instance of a distinct and radical change in component size was achieved by Apple, when it replaced 5.25-inch floppies with 3.5-inch diskettes—possible only because of the company's monopoly on the manufacture of Mac hardware.



As for hard drives within desktop computers, the 3.5-inch form factor became a worldwide standard in little time, and shows no sign of relinquishing that position. (In laptops, 2.5-inch drives are the norm, because of the limited space within each unit.) So when people refer to the size of a hard drive, they are not referring to its physical dimensions, but instead to its capacity, i.e., how much data can be stored inside the drive. Nowadays, many hard drives can store more than one terabyte of data, which is a remarkable one trillion bytes of information. This is a thousand times



more than what the early hard drives could offer, and has allowed people to locally store much more complex and visually rich operating systems and applications, as well as music, movies and other forms of multimedia.

Given these massive hard drive capacities, you might think there would no longer be a need for people to save space on their hard drives by compressing files (also sometimes referred to as "archiving files," since oftentimes the individual's intent is to set aside files that she probably won't need in the near term, but may want to reference at a much later date). But data compression is being utilized more than ever before, for several reasons. Firstly, in the case of file compression (more on that in a moment), it is the most efficient way to group together and e-mail multiple files. Secondly, people are storing ever larger quantities of media files on their computers, and some of these are huge (e.g., movies). Thirdly, even though the average bandwidth of Internet connections has increased substantially, file sizes are growing just as fast, if not more so, and thus compression speeds up Web page performance and reduces bandwidth costs for companies hosting large files.

Data compression can be roughly divided into two types: drive compression (in which all of the files on a particular drive/partition are automatically compressed when written, and uncompressed when read) and file compression (which deals with individual files on an uncompressed drive). File compression has become such a ubiquitous and accepted capability that the major operating systems now include it as a built-in feature. For instance, Microsoft introduced native file compression with version XP of its flagship operating system—specifically, for partitions that have been formatted using the NTFS file system. Apple's Mac OS X boasts similar functionality. But if the typical user already has file compression built into his operating system, is there any further need for standalone file-compression programs? Apparently there is, given the unflagging popularity of such applications. This is largely because these programs tend to produce smaller compressed files, support more archival formats, and offer encryption, among other valuable options.

As with just about every other software category, there are both commercial and free compression programs available. The most popular products from the former category include PowerArchiver ([www.powerarchiver.com/](http://www.powerarchiver.com/)), WinRAR ([www.win-rar.com/](http://www.win-rar.com/)), and WinZip ([www.winzip.com/](http://www.winzip.com/)). While these are all well-respected products, you may wonder how they can survive commercially given the availability of equally capable free alternatives—a couple of which will be discussed below (for the Windows platform).

## **7-Zip**

Even though all of the free programs should be more than adequate for everyday file compression, my personal favorite is 7-Zip ([www.7-zip.org/](http://www.7-zip.org/)), for a number of reasons. It is free, open source, and supports a wide variety of data-compression formats—specifically, it is able to create and of course also read 7z, ZIP, GZIP, BZIP2 and TAR archive files, and it is able to read (but not create) ARJ, CAB, CHM, CPIO, DEB, DMG, HFS, ISO, LZH, LZMA, MSI, NSIS, RAR, RPM, UDF, WIM, XAR and Z files. It naturally offers full support for 7z, a native compression format that receives high marks.



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## Welcome to the 7-Zip Home!

7-Zip is a file archiver with a high compression ratio.

Download 7-Zip 4.65 (2009-02-03) for Windows:

Link	Type	Windows	Size
<a href="#">Download</a>	.exe	32-bit	1 MB
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### License

7-Zip is **open source** software. Most of the source code is under the **GNU LGPL** license. The unRAR code is under a **modified license**: GNU LGPL + unRAR restrictions. Check license information here: [7-Zip license](#).

You can use 7-Zip on any computer, including a computer in a commercial organization. You don't need to register or pay for 7-Zip.

### The main features of 7-Zip

- High compression ratio in new **7z format** with **LZMA** compression
- Supported formats:
  - Packing / unpacking: 7z, ZIP, GZIP, BZIP2 and TAR
  - Unpacking only: ARJ, CAB, CHM, CPIO, DEB, DMG, HFS, ISO, LZH, LZMA, MSI, NSIS, RAR, RPM, UDF, WIM, XAR and Z.
- For ZIP and GZIP formats, **7-Zip** provides a compression ratio that is 2-10 % better than the ratio provided by PKZip and WinZip
- Strong AES-256 encryption in 7z and ZIP formats
- Self-extracting capability for 7z format
- Integration with Windows Shell
- Powerful File Manager
- Powerful command line version
- Plugin for FAR Manager
- Localizations for 74 languages



7-Zip works in Windows 7 / Vista / XP / 2008 / 2003 / 2000 / NT / ME / 98. There is a port of the command line version to Linux/Unix.

On [7-Zip's SourceForge Page](#) you can find a forum, bug reports, and feature request systems.

### Compression ratio

We compared 7-Zip with some of the leading archivers.

FILE SETS: [Mozilla Firefox](#) 1.0.7 for Windows and [Google Earth](#) 3.0.0616 for Windows after full installation.

Archiver	Mozilla Firefox		Google Earth	
	161 files 15,084,168 bytes		115 files 23,530,652 bytes	
	Compressed size	Ratio	Compressed size	Ratio
<b>7-Zip 4.23 (7z format)</b>	<b>4621135</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6109103</b>	<b>100%</b>
WinRAR 3.50	5021556	109%	6024892	112%
CABARC 5.1	5131393	111%	7434325	122%
WinZip 10.0 beta (maximum-PPMd)	5277118	114%	8200708	134%
<b>7-Zip 4.23 (zip format)</b>	<b>6222627</b>	<b>135%</b>	<b>8909446</b>	<b>146%</b>
WinZip 10.0 beta (maximum-portable)	6448666	140%	9153890	150%

Compression ratio results are very dependent upon the data used for the tests. Usually, 7-Zip compresses to 7z format 30-70% better than to zip format. And 7-Zip compresses to zip format 2-10% better than most of other zip compatible programs.

Figure 1. 7-Zip home page.

Even though the 7-Zip interface is just as Spartan as the product's Web site, countless users prefer its clean and straightforward approach over those of the commercial applications, some of which have so many icons and menu options that they can be rather intimidating and time consuming to figure out how to use, especially for anyone unfamiliar with file compression or the new user.

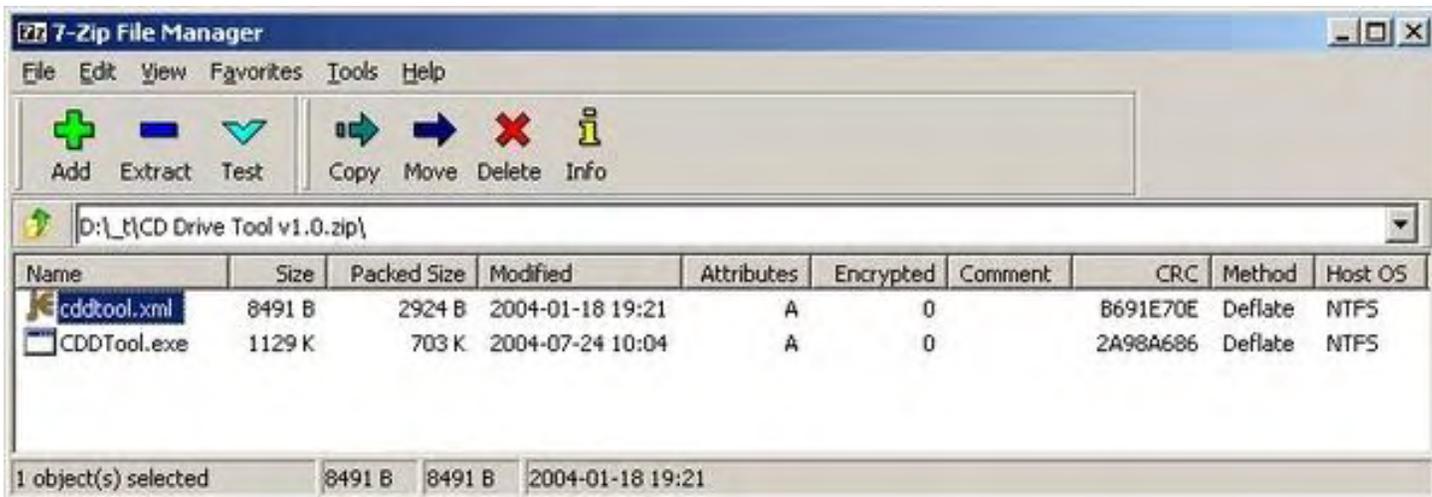


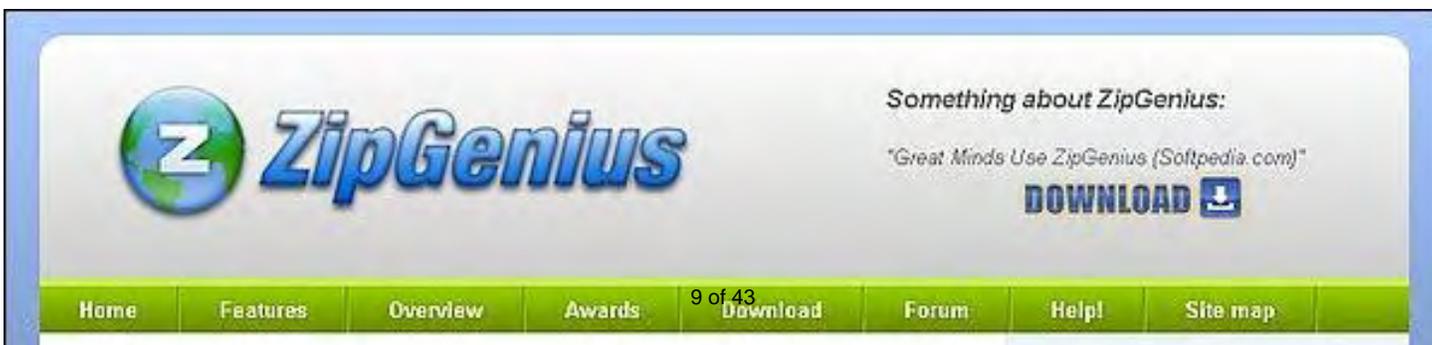
Figure 2. 7-Zip File Manager.

Viewing the contents of a sample ZIP file, the 7-Zip File Manager displays all of the needed information about the files contained within the archive: its name, size (unpacked and packed), last-modified datetime, file attributes, whether it is encrypted, any comment, its cyclic redundancy check (CRC) value, compression method, and file system. In addition to its own file manager, 7-Zip integrates with the Windows shell, which means that when you right-click on one or more files in Windows Explorer, you have immediate access to 7-Zip's commands, listed in the context menu that pops up.

7-Zip is fast and lightweight. You can use it on a Windows command line, making it ideal for use by Windows shell scripts or Perl scripts. It supports optional encryption using the strong AES-256 algorithm, when creating 7z and ZIP archive files. 7-Zip is truly international, with its support for 74 languages ("localizations"). It also offers an outstanding compression performance that is better than that of some of the paid products. According to its Web site, "for ZIP and GZIP formats, 7-Zip provides a compression ratio that is 2-10% better than the ratio provided by PKZip and WinZip."

### ZipGenius

Italy may be known much more for its achievements in art than in software development, but that has not prevented some resourceful programmers (in Reggio Calabria, a city in southern Italy) from creating ZipGenius ([www.zipgenius.com/](http://www.zipgenius.com/)).



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## Features

### Free!

This software is totally and absolutely free, so you don't have to spend a dime to download and use it; moreover, there are no usage limitations for it: you can use at home, at school, at work or everywhere you want, because ZipGenius is a software designed to be useful for everybody, from novice computer user up to the greatest expert/geek..

### No personal data will be gathered!

We have no interest about how you use ZipGenius, when and where: your privacy is **sacred!**

### No advertisement visible or invisible!

ZipGenius doesn't advertise nothing and nobody except itself. This project is free and lives only because it has the passionate WinInizio Software team behind. However economic support is always appreciated and if you want to support ZipGenius development, you could click the **PayPal** button in the column on the right.

### Hundreds of features!

The high number of features packed into this software make ZipGenius one of the richest software available for free and they make it capable to adapt to almost every task.

Be a **HAPPY USER**: [download ZipGenius](#) and you will know the happiness of ZipGenius' users.

More details at the following pages:

- [System requirements](#)
- [Supported formats](#)
- [Safe Archives with CryptoZip](#)
- [Organize your pictures](#)
- [Translate ZipGenius](#)

### News from WinInizio.it (in italian only)

[Building Zipgenius 6.3.1...](#)  
[Un Gioco Al Giorno: Alchemy Mahjong](#)  
[Un Software Al Giorno: Tour around the streets and enjoy a landscape](#)  
[Easeus Partition Master Home Edition 5.0.1](#)  
[Partition Logic 0.69](#)  
[Un Software Al Giorno: Try iCare Data Recovery to take your lost file](#)

### Weather in Reggio Calabria



Updated: ure: 46.9°F / 8.3°C | Humidity: 65% | Pressure: 29.71 in / 1006.0hPa (Steady) | Conditions: Scattered Clouds | Wind Direction: SSE | Wind Speed: 4.9mph / 7.9km/h  
 Temperature: 46.9°F / 8.3°C  
 Wind: SSE @  
 Pressure: 29.71 in / 1006.0hPa (Steady)  
 Humidity: 65%

Figure 3. ZipGenius home page.

ZipGenius is free of any purchase price, licensing fee, advertisements, or spyware. It supports more archive formats than possibly any other free compression program (including some formats specific to multimedia players): ZIP, CZIP, EXE (ZIP SFX), JAR, EAR, WAR, DSFZ, BSZ, MSKIN, CBZ, PCV, XPI, SXW, SXI, SXC, SXD, STW, STD, STC, STI, SXG, SXM, OD\*, (OpenOffice.org 2.x documents), TAR, TAR.GZ, TAR.BZ2, TAZ, TGZ, ACE, RAR, R00, R01, EXE (RAR SFX), CBR, 7Z, ARJ, CAB, LZH, LHA, SQX, YZ1, RPM, ISO, NRG, CMI, WAL, and WMZ.

ZipGenius is available in two different editions—Standard and Suite—although the Web site does not appear to explain the differences between them. Nonetheless, combined they have apparently been downloaded more than three million times, so there must be some qualities of this program that make it so popular. Immediately you will notice its attractive icons and interface (to be expected in a product from Italy).



Figure 4. ZipGenius interface empty.

If you decide to take this application for a test drive, you should find the installation process to be fast and easy. However, if you have an outbound firewall in place, it probably will detect that ZipGenius

periodically tries to connect to the server "version.zipgenius.it." This connection does not seem to be required, so you can choose to have your firewall block it in the future.

The site's overview page ([www.zipgenius.com/index.php?id=67](http://www.zipgenius.com/index.php?id=67)) displays almost a dozen screenshots, but for a fair comparison with 7-Zip, see the figure below to compare the ZipGenius interface with that of 7-Zip when opening the same archival file.

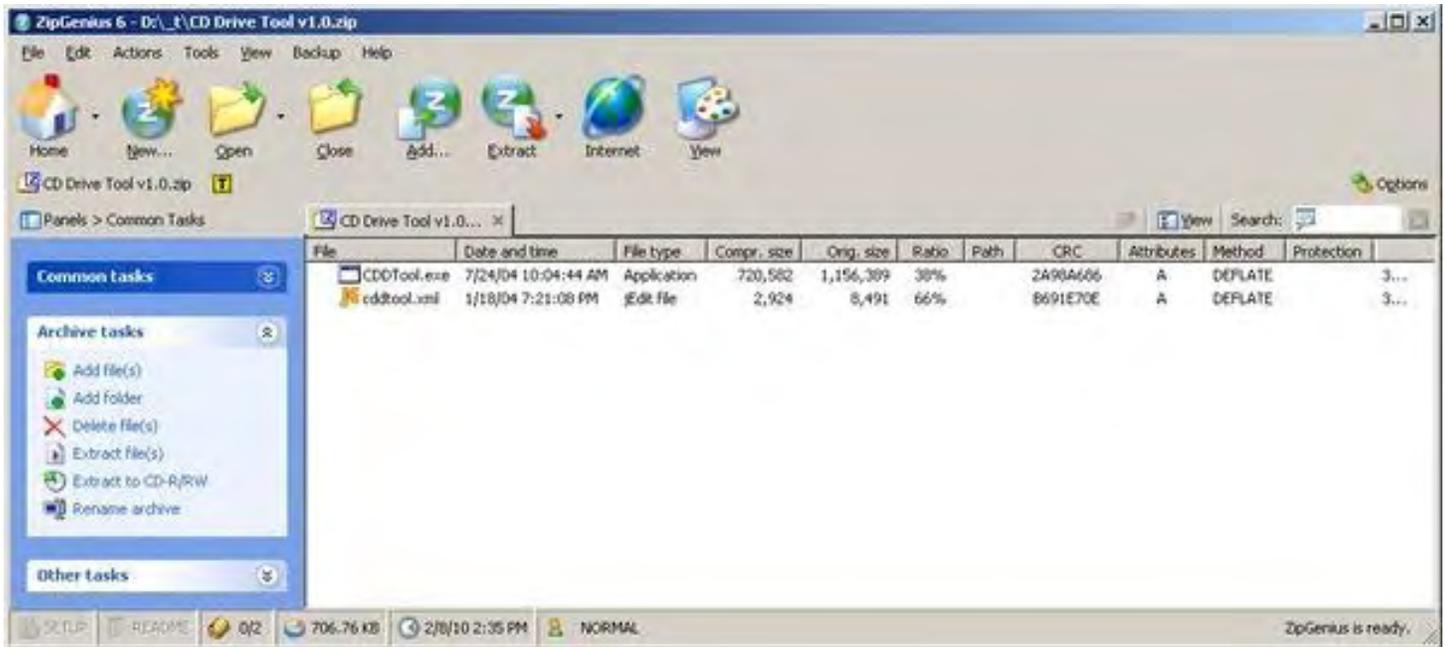


Figure 5. ZipGenius interface with file.

For each file in the archive, ZipGenius reports most of the same details as does 7-Zip, except it is lacking any comment or file system indicator—although it does add file type, compression ratio, path, and a peculiar string of characters ("3...") at the end.

ZipGenius has garnered more than three dozen awards ([www.zipgenius.com/index.php?id=83](http://www.zipgenius.com/index.php?id=83)), and has attracted an active community of users, who gather in an online forum ([forum.wininizio.it/index.php?showforum=395](http://forum.wininizio.it/index.php?showforum=395)).

Regardless of which of these two programs you may decide to use for your file-compression needs, either one of them should give you better performance and speed than the native Windows functionality.

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Michael J. Ross is a Web developer ([www.ross.ws](http://www.ross.ws)), writer, and freelance editor. He creates Web sites that help entrepreneurs turn their ideas into profitable online businesses.

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## Windows Skydrive for Data Storage

**“For easy document sharing and synchronization.”** by Pete Choppin

Mobile technology, cloud computing, and social networking are changing the way we use and access our data. Enter Windows Office Live Workspace with Skydrive to solve document sharing and storage headaches.

Have you ever arrived at work only to realize you left your thumb drive with your revised presentation at home? Or have you ever wondered if the document you received through an e-mail attachment is the most current? Have there been changes? Wouldn't it be nice to have access to your documents from any computer in the world? As well as sharing files with friends and workmates, in a way that everyone has the most recent version?

I attended a technical training some months ago and the instructor made one very valid point. We cherish and protect mounds of data, but how much of it is useful on a daily basis? Sure, we don't want to lose all those gigabytes (now terabytes) of digital photos. The inexpensive and easy solution is burn them to DVD—done! But when it comes down to it, if we lost all our old files, would we truly be in as much anguish as we believe? My conclusion is no. The majority of my archived data sits on CDs and DVDs collecting dust. If my hard drive crashed today, I would survive. A few important files would be lost, but life goes on.

Let's be pragmatic. If you were to consider the average life of a document or e-mail is about a week to 10 days, wouldn't it be smarter to store these in a system that is readily accessible, up-to-date, and can be shared with family, friends, or co-workers?

### **Solution—Internet Storage**

The solution goes well beyond simply archiving data. In the real world, we must have access to our data from virtually anywhere. It does me no good to check my e-mail at home and then go off to work without any access to it. That's how the old POP3 e-mail clients worked. You downloaded your e-mail to a computer and there it sat. Step away from that computer and you have no access to that message until you return to that machine. It is the same with document storage. For decades we've been storing away documents in difficult-to-access archives, costing money and making the files antiquated and forgotten.

If I can store a document on the Internet, however, it is available from work, home, on my phone, and at my friends' houses. I can now use it, modify it, and then delete it when the lifespan of that document comes to an end. Internet storage is becoming more and more the standard for document sharing, storing, and access.

Mobile technology, cloud computing, and social networking are changing the way we use and access our data. The old methods simply no longer apply, and the Internet is now mature enough to handle a new way of storing our documents and messages.

### **Microsoft Live Office**

Microsoft's recent contribution to the cloud world is Office Live Workspace with Skydrive. The idea is to be able to access and share your documents with others from anywhere. It can solve many of the headaches mentioned above. For starters it's free and setup is painless. Once you have your Windows Live ID, you are ready to get started.



Figure 1. Office Live Workspace Sign-in Page.

After you sign in to Skydrive, your browser opens into the Office Live main area. Here you can access your Skydrive and much more. All of the Windows Live services are now integrated into Office Live.



Figure 2. Office Live Workspace Main Area.

You can even create new Office Live documents online right in the browser.



Figure 3. Creating Office Live Documents.

### To Share or Not To Share

You will want to decide if you plan to share documents with others or if you simply want to store documents for yourself. The left area of the Live Office Skydrive screen above shows three sections— Personal, Shared, and Shared with me. Shared are documents to which you will provide access for others, and "Shared with me" are those documents others have shared with you.

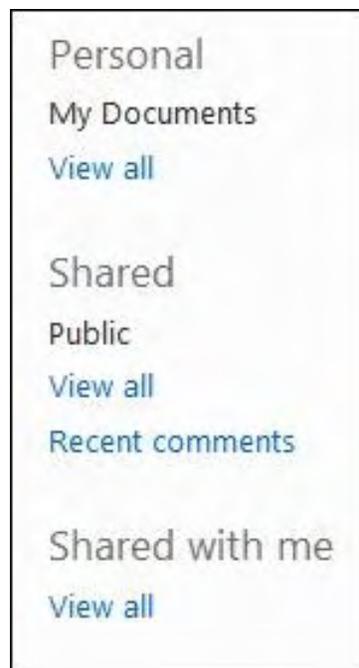


Figure 4. Office Live Skydrive Sharing.

### Managing Documents in Skydrive

To add files to your folders in Skydrive you need to click the Skydrive link. For some reason the link sits right in the middle in your Recent Documents area. Microsoft really needs to rethink its design.



Figure 5. Office Live Skydrive Link.

However, this will bring you to the main Skydrive area.



Figure 6. Office Live Skydrive.

From here you can add files, create new documents and folders, and view all your synchronized folders. You can also see how much of your 25GB you have used on Skydrive. Once you go into your folders and find your files, you can perform other options, such as opening and editing your files online, saving them as zip files, sharing them with others, and many more. Additionally, because Skydrive, Live Office, and Windows Live are now all integrated into the same place, all your e-mail, calendars, Live Messenger and many other Windows Live services are readily available from any location in the Skydrive Web site.

Windows Skydrive not only provides a convenient storage area for files you are currently working on, it also provides all the services you need to share, collaborate, synchronize, and keep all your files current and relevant. It is far more efficient than sending old, out-of-date files by e-mail or trying to keep files updated in multiple locations.

Our Internet capabilities as well as how we use the Internet are worlds apart today, as compared to just five or 10 years ago. Mobile and cloud computing are becoming as common as the PC, which makes document sharing and synchronization much more of a necessity. Services such as Windows Skydrive make this easy.

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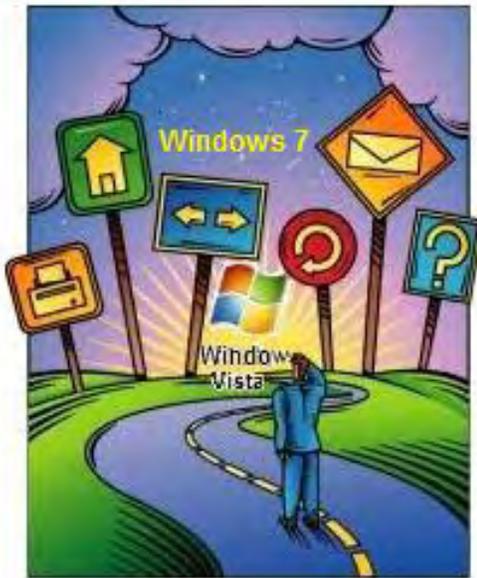
Pete Choppin has been an IT Professional for over 15 years. He currently works as a network and systems administrator for a company called Albion based in Clearfield, Utah. He has experience in all types of hardware, software, and networking technologies. He is proficient in many operating systems including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

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

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# Windows Tips and Tricks

## Windows Tips and Tricks: Windows 7 Display Color Adjustment

**“Optimize the color for your computer monitor.”** by Jack Dunning

While it is very difficult to do true color matching, Windows 7 has a new feature that helps to optimize the color for your computer monitor: the Windows 7 Display Color Calibration program.

One of the problems with computer systems is that every video monitor is slightly different. In most applications it will never be noticed, but when viewing and printing there may be a great deal of variance from computer to computer and from computer to paper. While it is very difficult to do true color matching, Windows 7 has a new feature that helps to optimize the color for your computer monitor. Through a set of adjustments, you can match the color output of images (and text) with your particular display. This is done through the Windows 7 Display Color Calibration program.

Note: Professionals who need the truest possible color replication on their computer displays use special software and sensors to calibrate their systems. I've never done this, but I would welcome comments from anyone who has knowledge of the process and tools used. The Windows 7 Display Color Calibration program will optimize color output for your system, but it only uses your visual adjustments and doesn't get positive measured feedback for the results.

Windows 7 Display Color Calibration (dccw.exe) can be accessed through the Display window under the Appearance and Personalization link in the Control Panel by clicking "Calibrate color" in the left-hand menu. (You can go directly to the Display windows by typing "display" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Windows Start Menu and selecting Display from the Control Panel pop-up list.) Also, you can directly load the Display Color Calibration program by typing "dccw" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Windows Start Menu and selecting it from the Programs pop-up list. When the program opens, you will be told to move the open window to the display you wish to calibrate, or if you only have one monitor, click Next to start the process. You will get instructions on how to set your monitor to factory default color settings. See Figure 1.

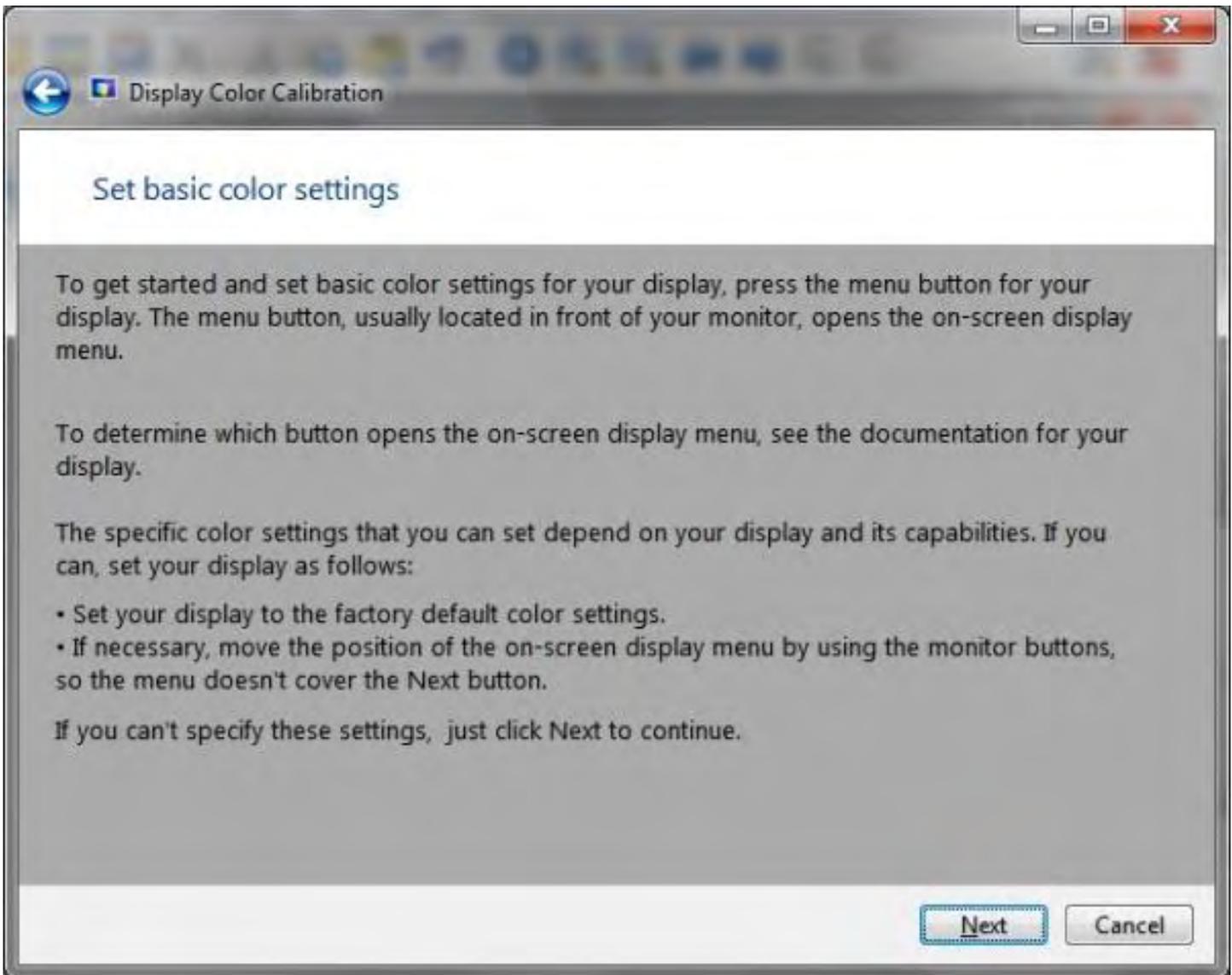


Figure 1. Set your monitor to factory default color settings.

Most stand-alone monitors do have manual menu and adjustment buttons built into them. If you have these buttons (usually on the front of the monitor), reset them to their original factory default settings. The calibration program should make the future changes to these manual adjustments unnecessary. If you have a computer such as a laptop with no special adjustment controls (hardware or software), skip this step.

The first adjustment, called gamma, may be the most important of the color adjustments. Gamma is a mathematical formula that defines the relationship between the color values. Although the monitor manufacturers attempt to account for most variation in the factory defaults, other factors, such as the video card, can affect performance. The Display Color Calibration program gives you a chance to optimize the gamma setting for all the components in your system. The goal is to match the center image in Figure 2.

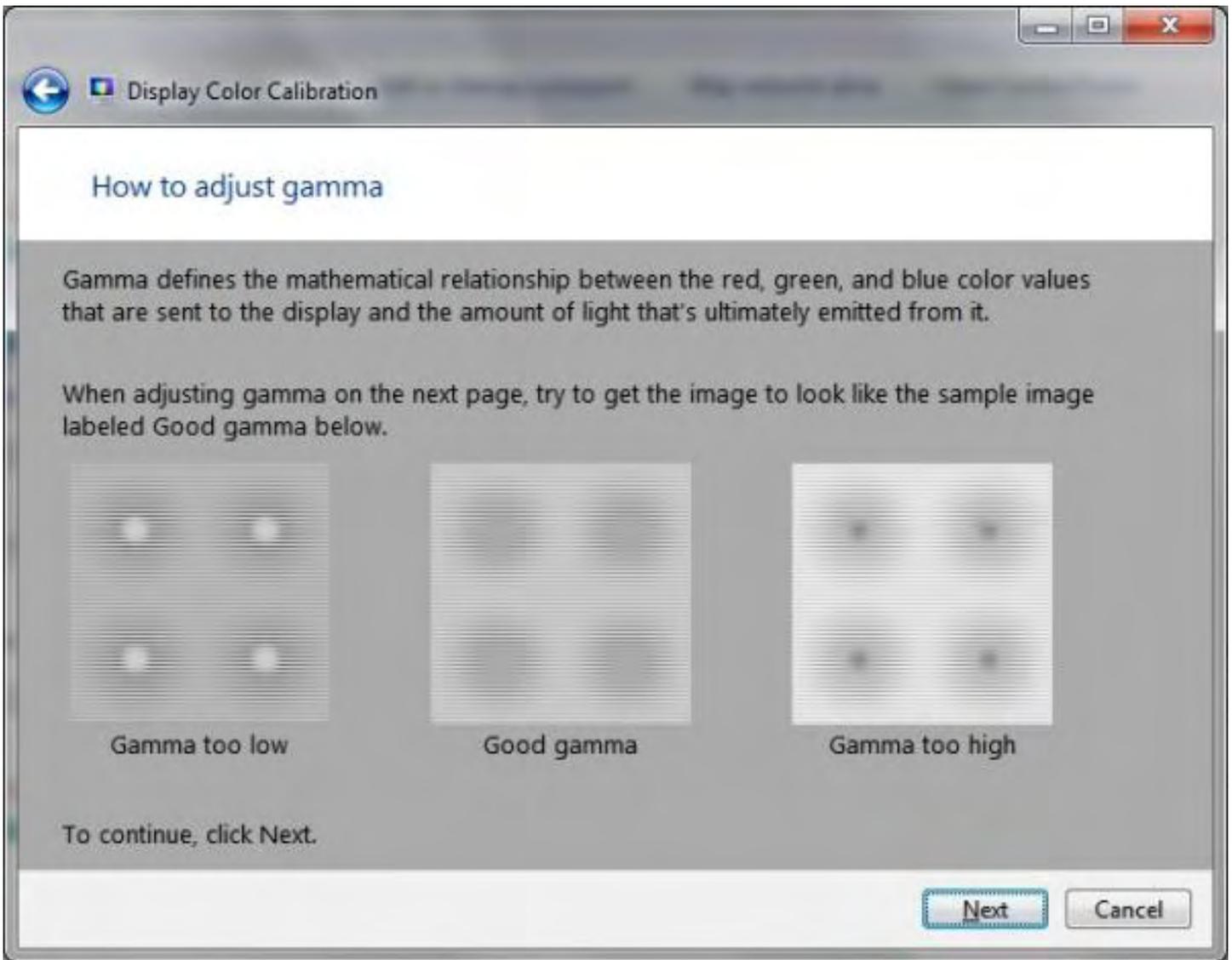


Figure 2. Optimizing gamma for your computer system.

Notice that the center image does not appear to have the small light or dark dot in the center. When I adjusted my system, I found it difficult to eliminate the small dot, but the image in Figure 3 appeared to be the optimum between the two.

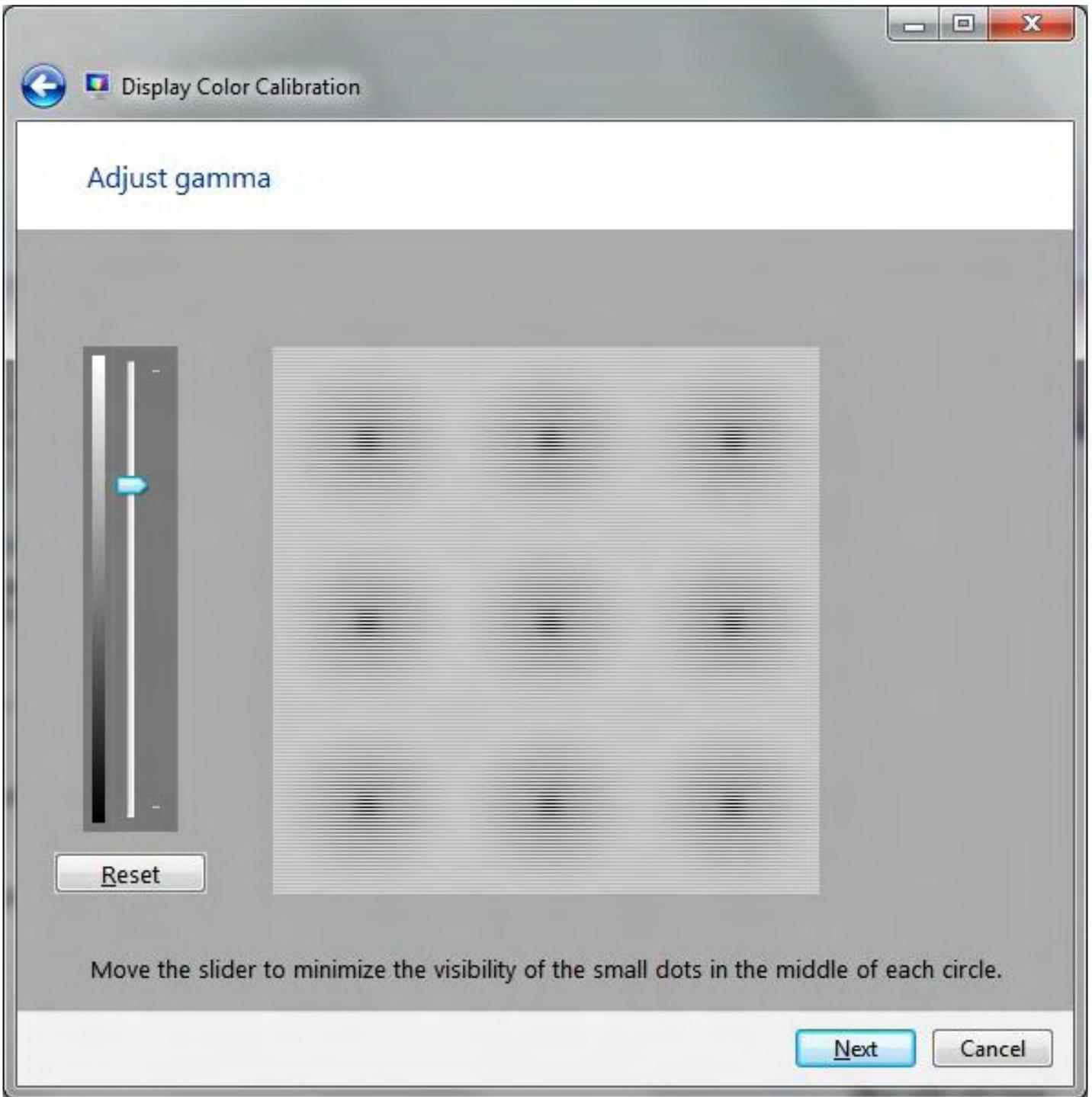


Figure 2. The slide was moved up to optimize the gamma setting.

The next two adjustments were for brightness and contrast. In the same manner as with the gamma adjustment, three images are given for comparison. See Figure 4 and Figure 5. However, these two adjustments are to be made with the buttons on your monitor. When you move to the adjustment window, the text below the image will give instructions on specifically how the image is to look.



Figure 4. Adjusting the brightness setting. (The "X" appears faintly in the black area in the left side of the image.)

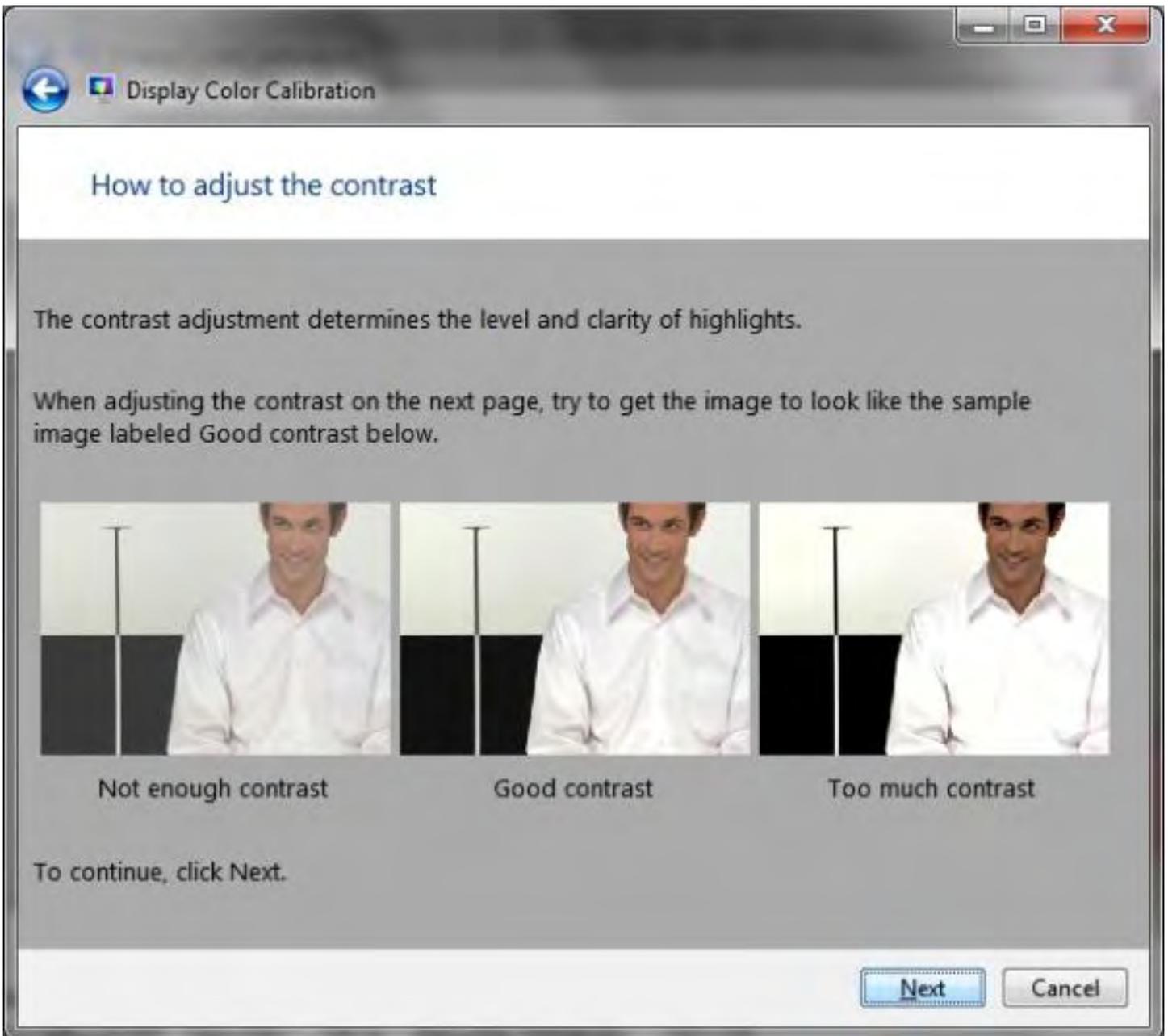


Figure 5. Adjusting the contrast setting. (Focus on the wrinkles in the shirt.)

The next setting is for adjusting the balance of the colors. As before you will see some sample images in the first window. The adjustment window will offer the test image and three color slides. See Figure 6. The object is to remove all of the color from the image and make it entirely shades of gray.

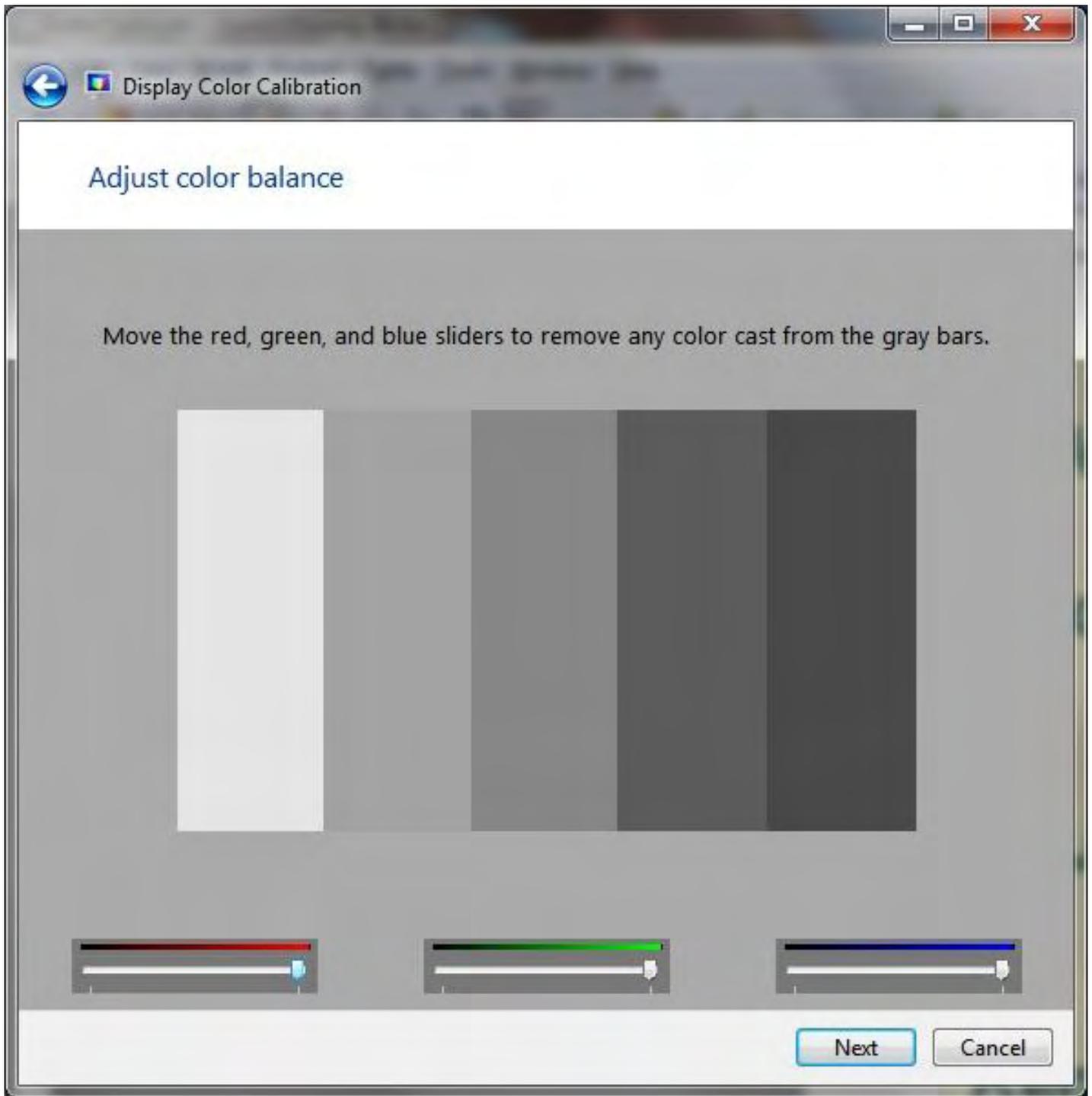


Figure 6. Adjusting the color balance.

After making all of these adjustments, you will be given the opportunity to view the effect of the changes before you complete the process. Bring up a photo in a viewer window sized and positioned in a way that you can see the changes while you click the "Previous calibration" and "Current calibration" buttons. The image will show the difference. If you're not happy with the result, click Cancel. But remember, the problem may be with the original photo and not the new calibration.

Once the color calibration is completed, you are given the opportunity to adjust the ClearType for reading text. It is a process of simply selecting the boxes that appear to look the best in four different windows. See Figure 7.

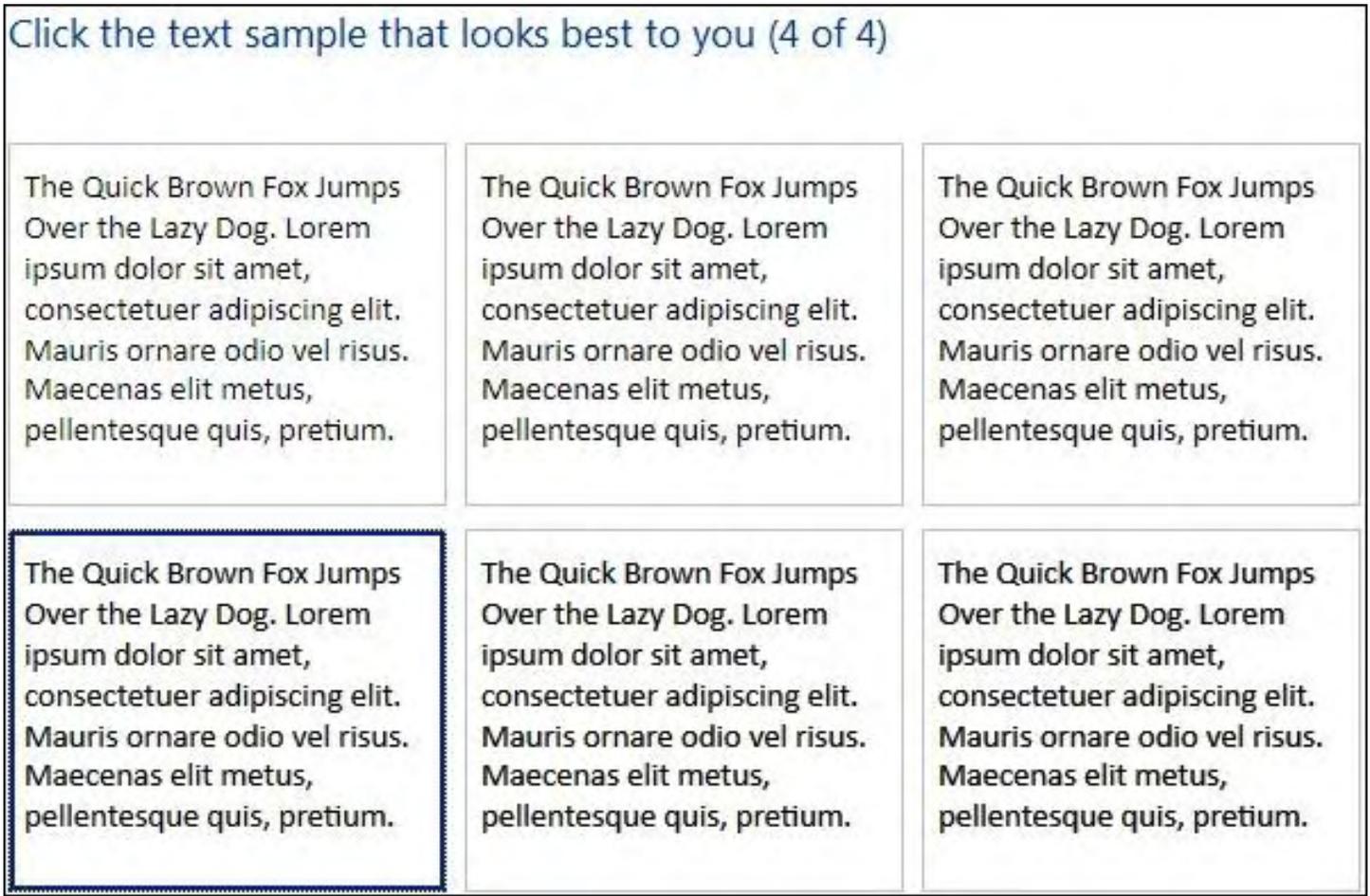


Figure 7. Adjusting ClearType for reading text.

If you have a Windows 7 machine and you haven't calibrated the color, do it now. It may make your photos look slightly better—or worse, depending upon how good the original image was.

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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](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

### “File Compression” by Wally Wang

For most Mac users, the built-in ZIP compression/uncompression feature will be more than adequate, but StuffIt Expander deals with more file formats. Also, the iPad keeps developing new uses; GearZap's Bluetooth keyboard adds to the iPad's appeal; will Microsoft's Windows Phone marketing blitz pan out?; complacency abounds in the Windows world; and a tip on using Pages to export to ePub files.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The most common file-compression standard is the ZIP standard. First introduced on MS-DOS, The ZIP compression file format has even taken over the Macintosh world. On any Macintosh you can select files from within the Finder window (hold down the Command key to select multiple files while clicking the mouse), and then right-click to display a pop-up menu.

From this pop-up menu, choose the Compress command and your selected files get smashed into a compressed file called Archive.zip. Now you can rename and send this file to any Windows or Macintosh computer.

Uncompressing a ZIP file in the Macintosh is easy. From within the Finder window, just double-click on a ZIP file and your Macintosh "unzips" the file contents into a new folder.

Although the ZIP file format is a standard, rival standards keep popping up all the time. In the Windows world, many people compress files using the RAR file format, while on the Macintosh, many older Macintosh files used a file format called SIT or StuffIt. To handle non-ZIP files, download a free copy of StuffIt Expander ([www.stuffit.com/mac-expander.html](http://www.stuffit.com/mac-expander.html)).



Figure 1. StuffIt Expander lets you uncompress different file formats.

StuffIt Expander allows you to uncompress a variety of file formats including SIT, RAR, and ARC. If you want the ability to compress files in these different types of formats, you'll need to buy the commercial version of StuffIt for \$49.99.

For most people, the built-in ZIP compression/uncompression feature will be more than adequate. For those rare cases when you come across oddball file formats, download and use the free StuffIt Expander. File compression may not be high on most people's needs, but when you need to e-mail a bunch of files, compressing them first can bundle separate files together and require less storage space as well, making the compressed file much easier to send to others.

### **Odd Uses for the iPad**

When personal computers first came out, some people dismissed them as a fad like citizen band radios. Of course, personal computers never faded away because people found them so versatile in doing everything from playing games to word processing to predicting the winners of horse races.

Now the iPad is going through this same stage. After critics dismissed the iPad as a useless device that nobody needed, people have found all sorts of reasons to use an iPad in often surprising ways, just like the early days of personal computers.

In Japan, the Japanese Sumo Association has given sumo wrestlers an iPad to help them stay in contact by e-mail ([news.cnet.com/8301-17852\\_3-20014535-71.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-17852_3-20014535-71.html)). The reason is because the hands and fingers of sumo wrestlers are too big to use an ordinary mobile phone comfortably, but the much larger size of the iPad is perfect for the bigger fingertips of sumo wrestlers.

A company called Brabus ([www.brabus.com/](http://www.brabus.com/)) specializes in customizing the Mercedes-Benz ([www.electronista.com/articles/10/08/26/brabus.ibusiness.gives.mercedes.apple.office/](http://www.electronista.com/articles/10/08/26/brabus.ibusiness.gives.mercedes.apple.office/)) for its wealthy clients. Its latest custom package includes using a Mac mini and a wireless keyboard to keep backseat passengers amused, along with two iPads embedded in the seats to control the car's audio, navigation, and phone systems.



Figure 2. Passengers can use the built-in iPad to control the car's stereo.

Even surgeons are finding that the iPad can help them view enhanced images of the body parts ([www.imedicalapps.com/2010/04/surgeon-ipad-operating-room/](http://www.imedicalapps.com/2010/04/surgeon-ipad-operating-room/)) that they're operating on. By carefully wrapping the iPad in plastic to maintain a sterile environment, surgeons can control the iPad even while wearing gloves ([www.medgadget.com/archives/2010/06/ipad\\_used\\_in\\_japanese\\_operating\\_theater.html](http://www.medgadget.com/archives/2010/06/ipad_used_in_japanese_operating_theater.html)).

At the Hawaii Preparatory Academy, students are using different apps to turn the iPad into a teaching tool ([www.macworld.com/article/153672/2010/08/ipaded.html](http://www.macworld.com/article/153672/2010/08/ipaded.html)) such as Star Walk for astronomy; Molecules for biology; iTranslate for language classes; and SignalScope for physics.

With more people finding unusual and valid uses for the iPad every day, the iPad's versatility and flexibility has already insured that it will definitely not disappear one day as a fad. Instead, the iPad will likely find its way into your own life in one form or another, whether you know (or like) it or not.

### **The iPad Effect**

Intel recently warned of slowing microprocessor sales ([www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE67Q3CF20100827](http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE67Q3CF20100827)), blamed partly because more people are opting for an iPad rather than a netbook or laptop. Even Asustek Computer, the makers of the popular Eee PC, which started the netbook trend, recently announced that the iPad has slowed its netbook sales ([www.digitimes.com/news/a20100816PD202.html](http://www.digitimes.com/news/a20100816PD202.html)).

What might drive a stake through netbook sales could be this new iPad case from GearZap ([www.gearzap.com/ipad-folio-with-integrated-bluetooth-keyboard-black.html](http://www.gearzap.com/ipad-folio-with-integrated-bluetooth-keyboard-black.html)).



Figure 3. GearZap's iPad case includes a Bluetooth.

Unlike regular iPad cases that only protect the iPad, GearZap's case also includes a Bluetooth wireless keyboard that lets you type on a physical keyboard. If you don't need this keyboard, just tuck it behind the iPad.

This ability to have a real keyboard, or use the virtual keyboard, maintains the iPad's touchscreen advantage over netbooks while also eliminating the major netbook advantage of a physical keyboard. Given the iPad's long 10-hour battery life and GearZap's Bluetooth keyboard, the iPad may suddenly look a lot more attractive than a netbook.

### **Curious Smartphone News**

On August 18, Laptop Magazine posted an informal review of Flash running on a Droid 2 (*blog.laptopmag.com/mobile-flash-fail-weak-android-player-proves-jobs-right*). The author concluded that Flash ran fine on sites optimized for mobile devices, but failed when running Flash on non-optimized sites.

Over a week later, if you Google "Droid 2 Flash problems," all you'll find are articles that link to this original posting by Laptop Magazine. Hasn't anyone else bothered to test Flash running on a Droid 2 since then to verify or dispute these results? Has anyone bothered to test how well Flash runs on other Android phones, since that's one of the biggest selling points of Android over the iPhone ever since Adobe released Flash 10.1 (*www.enterprisemobiletoday.com/features/otherapps/article.php/3899021/Adobe-Releases-Flash-101-to-Android-Market.htm*) way back on August 17?

Google "Droid 2 antenna problems" and you'll find a handful of articles that mention how some Droid 2 users were experiencing signal problems and dropped calls around August 17. Yet, nobody seems to have mentioned these Droid 2 problems lately to verify if these problems were real and what Motorola is doing to fix them, or if these problems were minimal and nothing to worry about for the vast majority of Droid 2 users.

Once again, why did the iPhone's antenna problem hit the headlines of international news while the Droid 2's nearly identical antenna problems seem to be ignored by everyone? Another question to ask is if the iPhone's antenna problem was so bad, how come Apple can't keep them in stock (*www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2010/06/analyst-iphone-sales-to-surpass-100-million-by-2011/*) as more people keep buying iPhones?

One major claim against Apple is that people only buy Apple products because of Apple's clever marketing. While this completely ignores the technical capabilities and design of Apple products, Apple's rivals cling to this belief as if it were the only reason why someone would buy a Macintosh over a much cheaper PC.

Microsoft seems to have embraced this message in its latest attempt to dominate the smartphone market. Just as Microsoft poured billions of dollars to make the Xbox a major competitor in the game console market, now Microsoft plans to spend at least \$400 million just to market the new Windows Phone 7 phones (*www.pcworld.com/article/204306/windows\_phone\_7\_to\_get\_half\_a\_billion\_dollar\_marketing\_blitz.html*).

In the advertising world, the most effective form of marketing is word of mouth because it's free and it's broadcast by people others know and trust. To develop word-of-mouth marketing, you need a great product coupled with great service, which is the formula that Apple uses to create its fan base of rabid users.

Spending \$400 million on marketing (after dumping at least an equal amount marketing the Microsoft Kin phones), may not be a lot of money to a company like Microsoft, but the big question is why? Marketing alone can never sell an inferior product (think Microsoft Kin phones), and everyone knows the Microsoft name, so what will \$400 million get for Microsoft?

Apple spent \$500 million (*www.appleinsider.com/articles/10/08/26/microsoft\_to\_spend\_over\_500m\_to\_catch\_up\_to\_iphone\_android.html*) for its entire advertising budget in 2009. Yet, Microsoft plans to spend nearly that same amount to market a single product?

Microsoft already lost \$10 million dollars to Jerry Seinfeld for his bizarre TV commercials that never made

any sense and probably didn't help sell many Microsoft products. Rather than create a great product and let the product's capabilities create grassroots support from happy, enthusiastic users, Microsoft continues pouring money into projects that must struggle to break even after such a massive initial marketing expense (Xbox, Bing, Microsoft Kin, etc.). If marketing alone could sell products, Microsoft should be king.

Wait until this fall when Microsoft releases Windows Phone 7 phones and we'll all see for ourselves how much marketing can really sell a product. Perhaps the first marketing trick Microsoft can tackle is changing the name of its operating system to prevent the repetition of the word "phone" when talking about Windows Phone 7 phones. If Microsoft uses the Windows Phone 7 operating system for tablet devices, then we can further confuse people by talking about Windows Phone 7 tablets that aren't phones at all.

### **The Blindness of Complacency**

I know a surprisingly large number of computer book authors who make their living solely through computer books based on Windows products such as Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Office for Windows, Visual C#, etc. You might think that authors, whose income depends solely on the success of Windows, would be concerned what might happen if Windows computer books no longer sell in the mass quantities that they did in the past. Strangely enough, these authors not only don't seem concerned, they're actively dismissing the possibility at all.

When I ask them what they will do if their Windows books drop in sales by 25 percent or more, they stare at me like I'm speaking Swahili. When they finally muster a response, it's usually along the lines of, "PCs will never go away" or "Everyone will always use Windows."

Predicting that the future will simply be an extension of the present is obviously a dangerous assumption, especially in the fast-changing world of technology. Just ask anyone who expected that products like dBASE, Lotus 1-2-3, or WordPerfect would always remain the market leaders.

At the very least, computer book authors should be developing skills to help them survive the possibility of their Windows books dropping in sales even further (a trend that has already begun ([radar.oreilly.com/2009/07/state-of-the-computer-book-mar-25.html](http://radar.oreilly.com/2009/07/state-of-the-computer-book-mar-25.html))). Instead of just hoping that things won't change, these people should be actively sharpening their skills in alternate categories such as Linux or the Macintosh. Yet, few of them see a need to do this.

Perhaps Paul Gillin said it best in his book *Secrets of Social Media Marketing* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1884956858?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1884956858](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1884956858?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1884956858)). This book discusses the fast-moving world of marketing using social media tools like Twitter and Facebook. What's comforting is that Paul Gillin is considered an expert in social media marketing, and yet even he says that nobody knows it all or can know it all, and the only way to avoid getting lost is to keep learning as fast as possible. Paul Gillin concludes his book with this message:

"There are only two unpardonable sins in the current environment. One is fear. Fear not only stops progress in its tracks, but wastes time and resources in the pointless exercise of chasing the past or hoping that change will just go away. That leads to the other unpardonable sin, which is inaction. Tumultuous change creates great opportunity for experimentation. When no one knows the right course of action, there is very little downside to taking chances."

With the iPhone, iPad, Macintosh, and Android phones playing an ever-increasing role in today's world, sticking only to Microsoft products is unwise at best, and foolhardy at worse. In a few years, expect to find a lot of surprised people sitting around wondering what happened.

\* \* \*

If you've thought about self-publishing an electronic book through Apple's iBooks store, you must first create a file in the ePub file format, which is the open standard for electronic books. One way to do this is through Adobe's InDesign desktop publishing program. A second way is through Pages, the word processor in Apple's iWork suite.

By downloading the latest 4.04 update to Pages, you can now export your Pages documents to ePub format. Now you can create and market your electronic book to the world through iBooks.

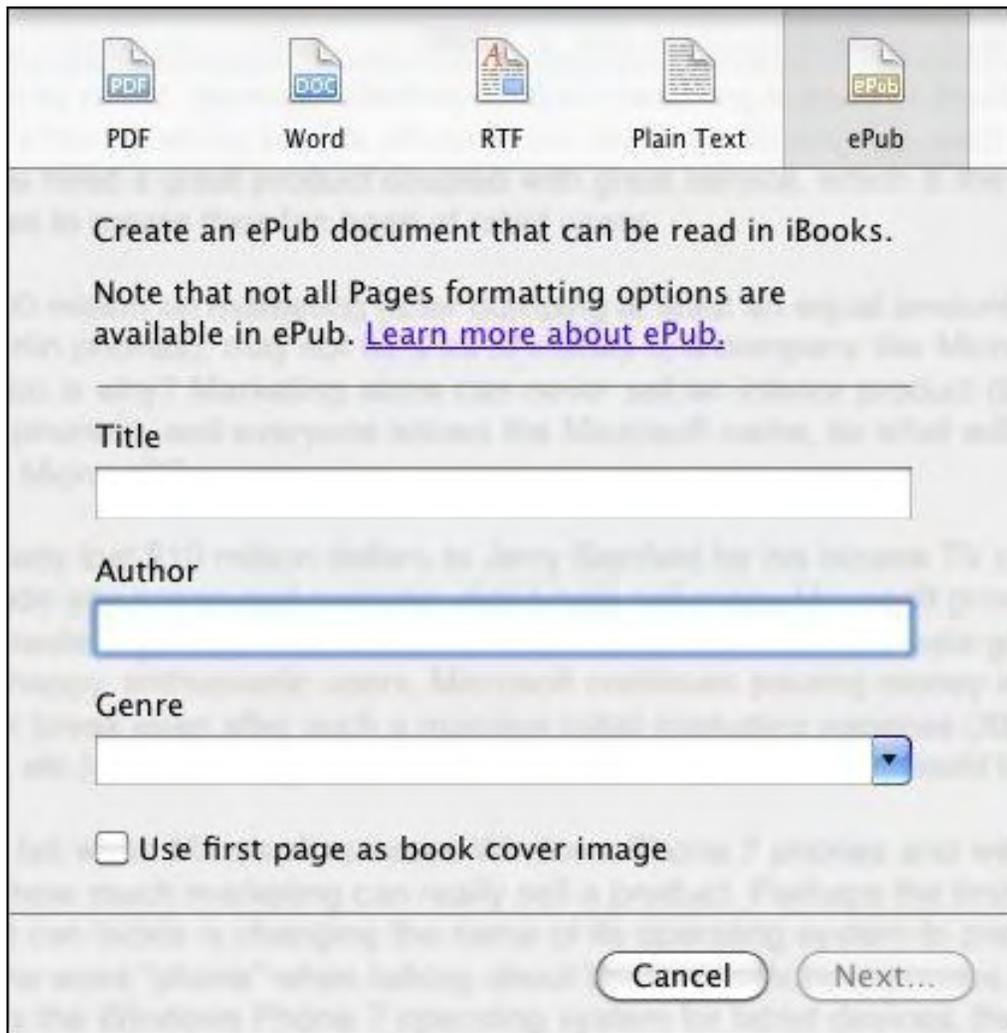


Figure 4. Pages can now export to ePub files.

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://www.15minutemoviemethod.com/)) Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com).

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## Rob, The Computer Tutor

### Rob, The ComputerTutor: Technology Solutions

**“Other Productivity Programs:  
OpenOffice.org”** by Rob Spahitz

Last week we looked at using VBA/macros with Microsoft Word. This week we'll start exploring some alternative productivity applications available, specifically OpenOffice.org.

Last week we looked at using VBA/macros with Microsoft Word. This week we'll start exploring some alternative productivity applications available, specifically OpenOffice.org.

Shortly after my last column, where I described how I felt that the new Microsoft Office 2010 suite was a bit expensive for the things I needed, I got an e-mail from Microsoft indicating that my Office 2010 beta download would be "ending soon." With this "exciting" news, and the fact that the price of the combination I wanted was too high, I decided to go in a different direction with my next set of articles.

So rather than continuing to focus on a product I won't likely be using, I'll start looking at its free competitor, OpenOffice.org, and compare it from the perspective of someone who's used MSOffice for quite a while. For those still interested in specific tasks on Word, Excel, Access and even PowerPoint or Outlook, send me your questions, comments and requests, and I may throw in a column or two about those items using whatever version you need.

So let's get started.

### **OpenOffice.org Productivity Package**

To begin, proceed with your favorite Web browser to *www.openoffice.org* (not ".com"! ) and you should see a collection of options including one to learn more about this product and one to download it, as seen in Figure 1.

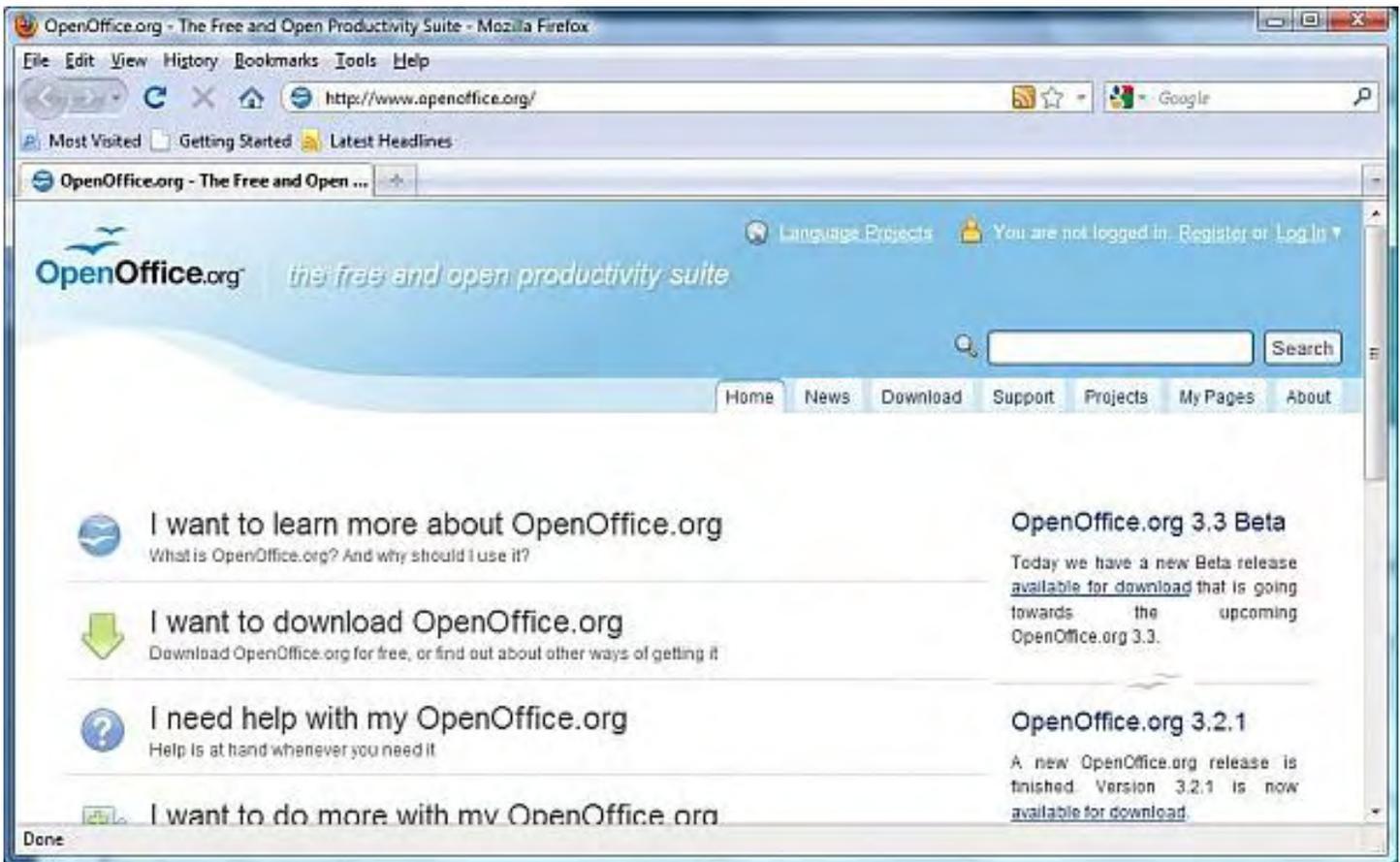


Figure 1. OpenOffice.org Main Page.

When you click on the Download option, it expands to show a big light green box where you can download the latest version (which is version 3.2.1 as of this writing). Also note that the download includes a Java Runtime Environment, JRE, which indicates that this tool was written in a computer language called Java, which is more flexible than languages such as Visual Basic because more systems (Macintosh, Linux and Windows) support it with a simple plug-in: the JRE. Conversely, Java is also a bit more complex for writing languages than Visual Basic and may not offer some features found in Windows if those features are not adapted to other systems. Either way, the choice of languages does not directly affect the product, but may cause certain features to run more slowly or appear differently from things you are used to in Windows.

Among the options, you see that you can download an ISO image or order a CD-ROM. If you want to order a CD, you'll be sent to a page that lets you find a distributor where you can buy it. I'll choose the ISO image. With that option, you get a new page that lets you select the operating system, such as Windows, where you will be installing the application, as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Download Page for OpenOffice.org.

After selecting Windows, depending on your browser and its settings, you'll get a dialog box asking where you want to save this file, and then it will download it and let you open it. At about 250MB, this may take a while to download (about 30 minutes for me). Also note that this ISO file is intended to be placed onto a CD, so for this to work, you will either need to burn it to a blank CD using software appropriate for this option, or you can find an application that can read ISO files so you can pull out the contents. Since I really don't need to burn a CD for this, I chose to open the file with an ISO reader. Unfortunately, Windows does not seem to have this option built in, so now comes the challenge of finding something to handle the job. I know that I previously accomplished this using a virtual machine (discussed in other *ComputerEdge* articles, not by me), so I will explore that option.

### Virtual Machines

A virtual machine is a software application that creates a window that looks like a computer. It boots very similar to a computer and shows you things in the window as though it were your regular computer booting up, except that it's a window inside another already-booted machine.

I decided to get the version from Microsoft by going to microsoft.com and searching for "Virtual PC 2004 SP1." The first link in the list took me here ([www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=6D58729D-DFA8-40BF-AFAF-20BCB7F01CD1&displaylang=en](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=6D58729D-DFA8-40BF-AFAF-20BCB7F01CD1&displaylang=en)).

Near the top is a button to download the application. This download will show up as a ZIP file, which can be extracted later.

Note that when you are trying to install a virtual machine, as with any new machine, you will also need to

install an operating system.

Since I don't have an OS available right now, don't want to go buy one, and don't want to install Linux onto it at this time, I chose to go in a different direction. After an Internet search, I found that Microsoft has an unsupported product (meaning they created it but never officially released it) to handle the task of ISO drives, found here ([download.microsoft.com/download/7/b/6/7b6abd84-7841-4978-96f5-bd58df02efa2/winxpvirtualcdcontrolpanel\\_21.exe](http://download.microsoft.com/download/7/b/6/7b6abd84-7841-4978-96f5-bd58df02efa2/winxpvirtualcdcontrolpanel_21.exe)), and only 60KB (yes, 60KB not 60MB).

Note a few things: (1) This link is from *microsoft.com*, so it is likely to be a virus-free product; (2) Since it is an executable file, it will attempt to run upon download; (3) it is a self-extracting file that will extract three files: *readme.txt*, *VCdControlTool.exe*, *VCdRom.sys*.

After running this, the above three files will be available for use. Follow the directions in the readme file to run the application. You will see a screen similar to Figure 3.

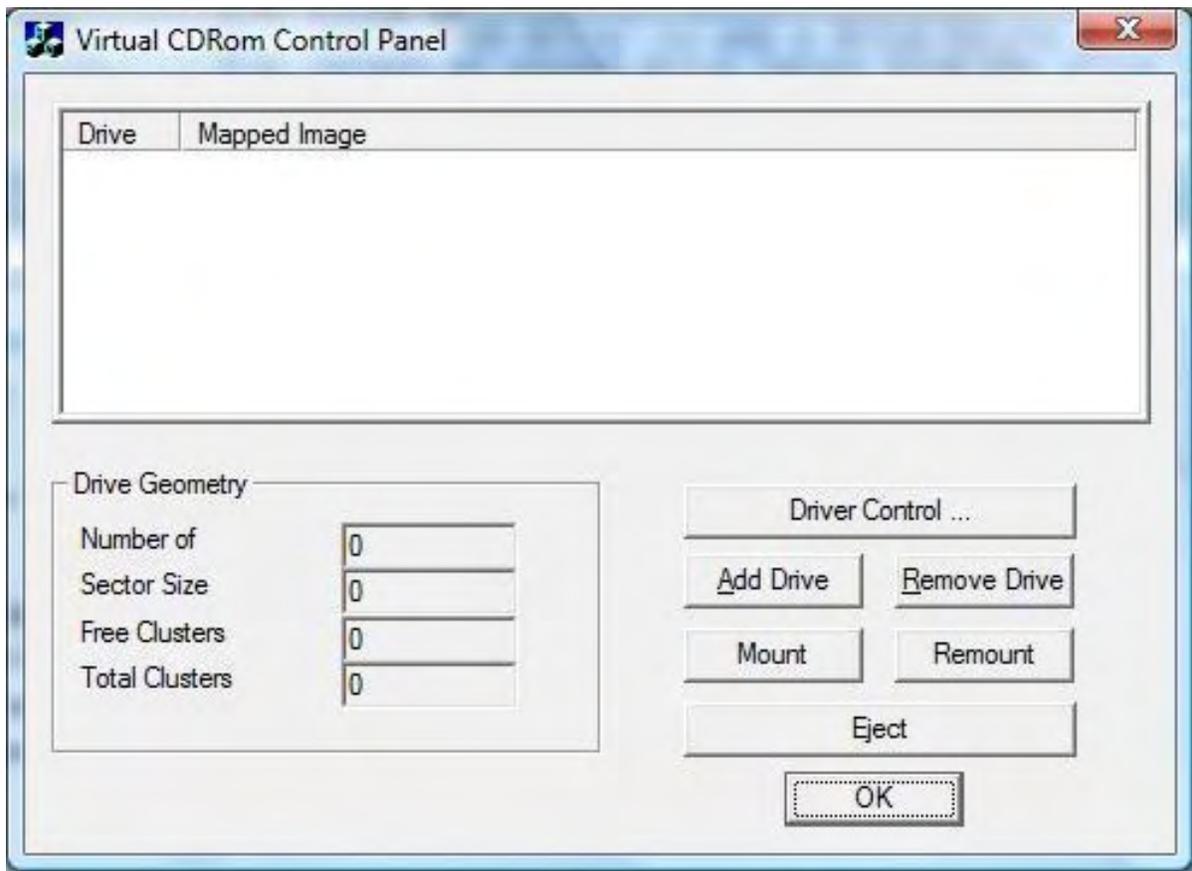


Figure 3. Virtual CDROM Control Panel.

Follow the rest of the directions, including picking a drive letter (default is Z) to use for the ISO file and selecting the ISO file. Open Windows Explorer and open the ISO drive you just connected. When you are done with the process below, make sure to disconnect the ISO file using the above application.

**OpenOffice.org Installation**

Now that you have access to a drive (CD or virtual CD) to install OpenOffice.org, run the autorun file if it did not already begin. More specifically, if it did not auto-start, open the autorun file and note that it points to the *setup.exe* file located in *Installation\_files*. Proceed there and run the setup. You'll see an application similar to Figure 4.



Figure 4. OpenOffice.org Setup.

Follow through the rest of the installation process, using default settings or, as I like, custom settings to see what is available. In this case, I see that this installation includes products named Writer, Calc, Draw, Impress, Base and Math. It also includes some optional components including a Graphics Filter, Windows Explorer Extension and a few others. Since they all look reasonable, I will install the default settings without changes and see what I get.

After clicking through a few Next buttons, and the install, it installed a few items on the side (like the JRE), and then installed OpenOffice.org. The entire installation took about seven minutes on the Vista machine where I installed it.

With all of this out of the way, next week we'll explore what OpenOffice.org offers us.

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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](mailto:RSpahitz@Dogopoly.com).

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## EdgeWord: Amazon To Take on Netflix

**“Netflix is the one to beat in the video-streaming arena.”** by Jack Dunning



More companies are entering the video streaming fray, some with an eye on directly challenging Netflix. Amazon is the latest company with plans for a subscription service similar to Netflix.

More companies are entering the video streaming fray, some with an eye on directly challenging Netflix. Amazon announced a plan to start a subscription service similar to Netflix. There is little information on Amazon's planned pricing on the service, although it is assumed that it must be competitive.

Currently, Amazon is in the business of Internet pay-per-view and sale of video releases. While this service may appear to give Amazon an edge over Netflix as far as the number of titles available, based on current contracts most of those titles would not be eligible for streaming in a subscription service. There seems little doubt that companies are recognizing that Internet streaming is a major market in home entertainment. To add a little irony to the Amazon announcement, Netflix currently uses Amazon servers for Internet streaming.

Roku, whose name has been synonymous with Netflix streaming, has dropped prices for its set-top boxes: \$59.99 for the Roku SD (previously \$79.99), \$69.99 for the Roku HD (previously \$99.99), and \$99.99 for the Roku HD-XR (previously \$129.99). This may be a response to the Apple TV (iTV) box, which is now priced at \$99 (no longer with a hard drive). The iTV is now essentially a Roku since it can no longer store downloads.

While Apple does offer pay-per-view streaming, it's clear that Apple is more interested in selling the hardware than Internet streaming content. (Jobs claims iTV is merely his hobby.) This is evident by the fact that Apple has just added Netflix to its latest offering. The Netflix subscription will help sell the iTV box while likely killing the iTV pay-per-view model—which is the approach used by the vast majority of cable and Internet streaming providers. On the upside for Apple, it now has the Netflix blessing and can put the logo on its packaging.

The word is that, although it is a relatively large company, Netflix is very quick on its feet. It closes more deals faster with hardware manufacturers and content providers than anyone else. It has a reputation for being easy to work with and getting the job done quickly. It seems to be leaving many companies in the dust while others are still trying to decide how to price their service.

\* \* \*

On another note, I visited a small niche software company this week that specializes in the glass industry. While feeling the effects of the economic uncertainty emanating from Washington, the company is holding its own and keeping its customers happy.

Interestingly, the company has been in business long enough to still have a few dozen clients who are running MS-DOS (for the youth in our readership, that's pre-Windows). I didn't know that DOS machines

could live that long. This company would like to help its clients move on, but the resistance is huge. They may be attending their client's funeral before that of the DOS computers. This is very telling for the 75 percent of business Windows users who are still on XP.

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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

"Reply for Julie," "Downloading Video," "Key Combos,"  
"YouTube Freeze," "Netflix Label," "Reply to Ron Cerrato"

### **Reply for Julie**

[Regarding the July 23 Rob, The ComputerTutor: Tech Solutions with Microsoft Word column:]

*Hi Julie.*

*Thanks for reading!*

*You may have seen that I recently indicated my dismay with the pricing of the Office 2010/Word 2010 product. Although the new features are nice, they do not necessarily justify an upgrade.*

*As for showing how to do things in version 2003 and earlier, I'll occasionally include that. If you would like to see something specific, let me know.*

*In another direction, during my summer vacation I plan to explore OpenOffice, a free competitor of MS Office, and will report my findings. Stay tuned!*

*-Rob Spahitz, San Diego, Calif.*

### **Downloading Video**

[Regarding the August 20 Digital Dave column:]

RealPlayer now has a very handy downloading function. It doesn't work on all Web sites or types of video, but it certainly works on YouTube. I believe that it's technically version 12, but it's now called RealPlayer SP. I have version 1.1.3.

-Daniel, Colorado Springs

### **Key Combos**

[Regarding the August 20 Digital Dave column:]

Dave wrote: [The way to] Task Manager in Windows is to hold down the CTRL, SHIFT and ESC keys.

There's also CTRL/ALT/DELETE, which I find easier to reach.

-Gary Weinstein, Groveland, CA

*[The former can be done with one hand and skips the login screen options.—Dave]*

I remember when I first learned of the Alt-F4 key combo. I was on a chat in IRQ on my dialup, and someone in the chat room typed in "hold down your Alt key and press F4 function key." I followed the instructions and immediately the window closed (I believe at the time I had Windows 95 installed). I felt so betrayed when this happened, especially since in those days to get back to that chat room was a long and drawn-out process. However, I did learn the new tool, and that became valuable later when pop-up windows became popular. So I guess it was a great lesson!

-Paul Anthony, San Diego, Calif.

## **YouTube Freeze**

[Regarding the August 20 Digital Dave column:]

I had a problem with video freezing anytime I tried to stream, from YouTube or elsewhere. I had an older machine with limited resources and a mediocre Internet connection. I was advised to pause the playback for a little bit, then play. That allowed the downloading to catch up to the playing.

-Diana, Vista, CA

## **Netflix Label**

[Regarding Jack Dunning's August 20 article, "The Netflix Label on the Box":]

This was just a great article brimming with lots of information and plainly written for ease of understanding —*well done!*

-Carl, Windsor, Ont.

I still don't understand media players like the Roku. Why should I spend \$69 for one when a VGA or HDMI cable that costs significantly less and connects directly from a computer to the TV does the same thing?

-Kay Katz, San Diego, Calif.

*Kay, that's an excellent question. The Roku box is great for people who don't want to leave their computer attached to the television. Often a computer hookup is awkward and the location may make the computer inaccessible. The Roku has its own remote control. It doesn't take up much space. Plus, for what it does, it's inexpensive.*

-i#Jack Dunning#ComputerEdge#

## **Reply to Ron Cerrato**

[Regarding Barry Fass-Holmes's November 27 article, "Marketing Mythologies about Macs and PCs":]

Ron, what Windows program have you found that does not run on an Intel-based Mac that has Windows installed in Boot Camp and/or one of the virtual machine products?

-Barry Fass-Holmes, San Diego, Calif.

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*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](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com).

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