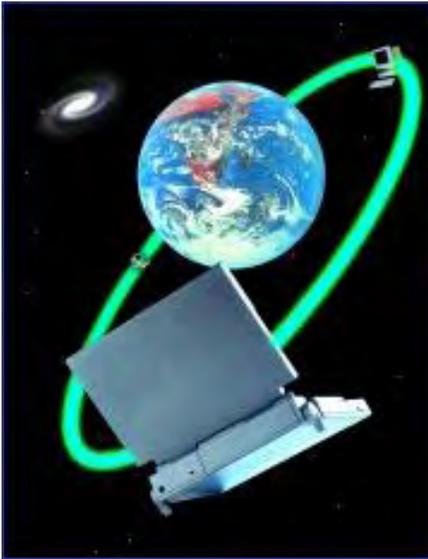


ComputerEdge™ Online — 12/03/10



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Peer-to-peer file-sharing programs leverage the power of the group. Here's how you can use them—legally.

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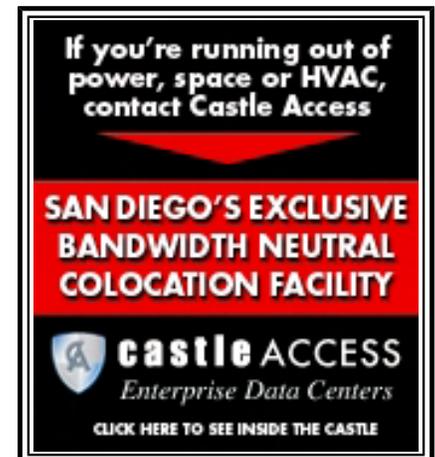
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ComputerEdge Staff

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

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Digital Dave

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

A reader wonders if his USB port is built in to his motherboard; a reader prefers Firefox over IE, but some Web sites require IE; a reader seeks secure money-management software.

Dear Digital Dave,

I have USB2 on my Windows 7 Ultimate quad core, but my startup is too fast for my old eyes to catch the motherboard info, so I don't know if my USB 2.0 is on the motherboard (heaven forbid) or is a slide-in gizmo that I can replace with a new USB3 gizmo. Where do I look inside?

*Burt Green
Denver/Aurora CO*

Dear Burt,

As in your situation, it can be useful to be able to decipher your motherboard capabilities by looking at it. This is done by opening the case (usually a few screws on the back and sliding the case or one panel off) while the computer is unplugged. The motherboard (see Figure 1) is the largest circuit board in the computer, usually parallel to one of the box sides. In many new computers, other than fans, power supplies and drives, the motherboard may be all there is to see. Everything is attached to the motherboard in some way.

While the manufacturer and model numbers are not always imprinted on the motherboard, you can usually see what is installed on it. Many of the capabilities will be labeled even if they are not implemented. Figure 1 shows a random motherboard. The red arrow points to USB ports attached to it.



Figure 1. A red arrow points to USB ports installed on the motherboard.

Most likely your USB 2.0 ports are directly attached to the motherboard as shown. This has been common for years. Most motherboards come with the basics without needing the addition of expansion cards—which would be placed in the slots shown on the right. If you decided to add USB 3.0 capabilities with a new card, make sure that you get one that will fit one of your motherboard slots. Today's motherboards may contain a number of types of slots for video and other types of upgrades—including PCI Express slots and at least one of the older PCI slots.

Often there are additional USB ports on the motherboard that you can plug cables into from the case. This usually would be for USB ports on the front of your case. This doesn't really matter for you unless they happen to be USB 3.0—which isn't likely. Built-in 3.0 has become widely available on motherboards only this year, although most computers are still being sold with 2.0. Adding a USB 3.0 device to a slot should be fine, and you will still have your USB 2.0 available.

In the unlikely circumstance where your USB 2.0 ports are attached to an expansion card, the card leading to the ports would be in one of the slots on the motherboard. Follow the USB connections back to its origin.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I need to connect to certain Web sites that can only accommodate IE7 or IE8 with "backward" settings (which slow everything down). In addition, because my Firefox seems more responsive, I'd like all my e-mail message links (and others) to default to Mozilla. Currently, I use two computers, but there must be a more graceful way to handle this. And, who better to ask than

you?

*Joe
San Diego*

Dear Joe,

It is not unusual to need to use more than one Web browser. Microsoft was so funky in the way it built Internet Explorer, that it is often the case that Web sites programmed for IE will not work properly in other browsers—even though Firefox, Google Chrome and others more closely follow the standards. (It's up to the Web site programmers to build their pages to be compatible with all the major browsers, but many people find it easier to merely specify that the user must employ Internet Explorer.)

However, the solution is relatively simple. Install all the browsers on the same computer and use the one that fits the job. In your case, install and set up Mozilla Firefox (your favorite) as your default browser. Then all links from your e-mail will open in Firefox. Install Internet Explorer on the same computer, but don't let it become the default browser. Then whenever you need to use it for one of those *special* sites, you can load it. The two browsers can work independently and simultaneously without interference. Sometimes I have as many as three browsers in use at one time.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Maybe you can help. I used to have Microsoft Money for my checking and other financial activities; it is now defunct. I am looking for a similar program that connects on the Internet with my banks for immediate updates. Mint.com comes up in my Google search. How do I know if it, or any other program of its type, is safe to use?

*Rosemarie Dion
San Diego, Ca*

Dear Rosemarie,

Excellent question! How do we know what is safe? There are two basic methods for evaluating the safety of software—neither of which is foolproof. The first is judging a package by the reputation of the company that owns the product. The second (and more important) is by reviews from other users.

In the case of Mint (quicken.intuit.com/basic-money-management/index.jsp), it is owned by Intuit, which also owns TurboTax, QuickBooks and Quicken (its paid version personal finance software). Mint is probably about as safe as they come, and it is free. Mint is also an online service, which means that you would access it over the Internet. (Many people wouldn't use this type of service because they prefer to keep all of their sensitive financial information on their local computer—although I'm sure there are guarantees from Intuit.) This service is basic, intended to eventually move you into the paid product, Quicken.

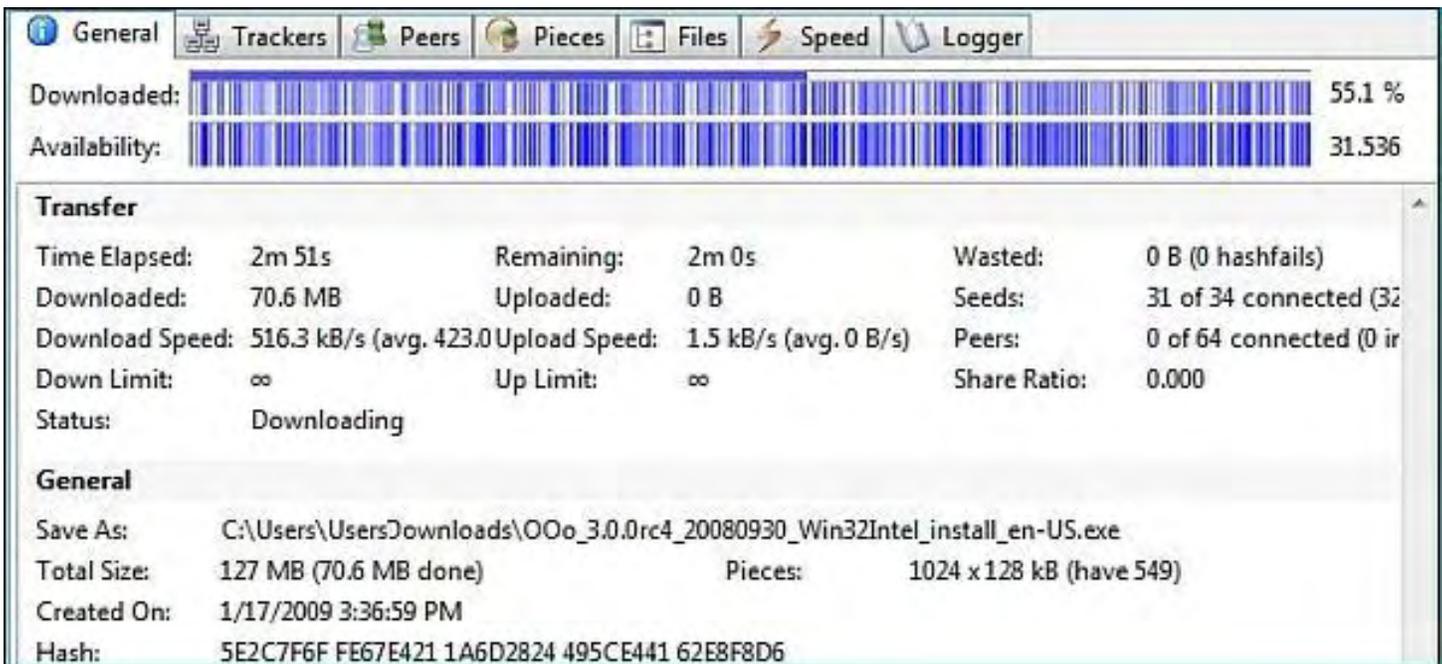
If you are looking for other free alternatives, then CNET (free personal finance) (download.cnet.com/1770-20_4-0.html?query=personal+finance&searchtype=downloads&rpp=10&filter=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows,Webware&filterName=licenseName=Free|platform=Windows,Webware&tag=contentNav;

navForm) is an excellent place to start. Not only does CNET do editor's reviews of software, but the user reviews and the number of downloads will go a long way toward telling you which programs are safe to use.

While there are many free programs listed at CNET that will probably do the job, it may be worthwhile to look at a paid program such as Quicken (*quicken.intuit.com*). (The success of Quicken is probably the primary reason you can no longer purchase Microsoft Money.) I'm sure that there are a couple of other programs (please comment) used by our readers that will do the job.

Digital Dave

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BitTorrent Essentials

“BitTorrent leverages the power of the group for file-sharing.” by Michael J. Ross

The BitTorrent network is the sole survivor of the peer-to-peer file-sharing era, but its popularity certainly does not ensure its longevity into the future. Try this remarkable resource while you still can.

You can think of the Internet as the ultimate global network, connecting a variety of systems—ranging from the large internal networks within major international organizations, down to the single PC of a user at home, who may not even understand that his computer is part of a network. Riding on top of this worldwide Web of computers, is, well, the World Wide Web (WWW), which consists of an ever-growing pool of resources—text, graphics, video, etc.—connected using hyperlinks within HTML documents.

At the heart of both the Internet and the Web is the concept of sharing data and other resources. This sharing implies data transfer, such as when your Web browser requests to load an image from a picture gallery Web site. There are a number of methods of data distribution over the Internet. The most common is Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which is how the text and graphics on a Web page are transmitted from one or more Web servers down to the individual's computer and viewed within her browser. File Transfer Protocol (FTP), just as the name suggests, is intended for the transfer of complete files from one server to another, instead of individual Web components that have been formatted for display in a browser.

These two protocols may be the ones that Internet users are most familiar with, but there are some others, for instance, peer-to-peer (P2P) networking. In simple terms, the majority of the P2P networks function in the following manner: Every participant who is logged into a particular P2P network is doing so via software that supports the given network and is running on that person's computer. The software makes it possible to see the files being shared by everyone else currently logged in to that same network. It also allows the individual to designate which files on his own computer—or multiple computers, if he has them networked—he is willing to share with everyone else. If and when someone else on the network searches within his P2P software for a file that he has offered to the world, then she can request that the file can be copied from his computer to hers, within the network.

Peer-to-peer networks have been around for many years, and you may have heard of some of the more famous ones, such as Napster, Direct Connect, eDonkey, FastTrack and Audiogalaxy. They have largely been swept into the dustbin of Internet history—at least in terms of unfettered sharing. But in their heyday, they were remarkably popular. In fact, for the more heavily used networks, multiple front-end applications were developed by programmers; for example, the Gnutella P2P network was accessible using such programs as BearShare, Grokster, iMesh, LimeWire and Shareaza.

A Stream of Data

As those older, more "closed" P2P networks die off, greater attention has been focused on what appears to be the sole survivor: the BitTorrent network. Quite unlike those other networks, BitTorrent uses a different method for sharing files among participants. It is based upon an ingenious approach known as "file-swarming," in which the source file is divided into smaller pieces—each referred to as a "torrent"—and then shared among all the people who have requested that file. Anyone who is offering copies of a file on the network is referred to as a "seeder," and anyone who is currently downloading the file but not yet uploading its pieces is referred to as a "leecher." This has led to people often advising others, "Seed this file!" The more seeders there are for any given file, the easier it is for others to download it, and the faster the process, because there is less burden upon the bandwidth of the seeders.

In effect, BitTorrent leverages the power of a group of individuals who are sharing pieces of a file with others, and by doing so significantly increases the odds that any participant will be able to download all of the pieces that compose a particular file. To put it another way, you are able to download the various pieces of a single file from multiple participants, which in turn makes the entire network more redundant, because as long as there are multiple seeders, the odds are practically 100 percent that at least someone has any given part of the file. Naturally, if there is only one seeder, then you would need to download all the pieces from that person. But then once that process has finished, you can now become a seeder yourself, helping others. Best of all, you don't need to worry about any of the technical details, because the BitTorrent network, working in conjunction with the client programs, handles all phases of the process.

Consequently, BitTorrent is considered a major improvement over the aforesaid peer-to-peer networks, each of which was reliant upon a user downloading an entire file from a single user within the network. This meant that if the person making the file available were to suddenly disconnect his computer from the Internet, before you had finished downloading the file, then you would end up with only part of it, making the file of little or no value to you. If the file consists of music, such as an MP3 file, then you might only obtain the first few minutes of the composition, and the rest would be chopped off. If the file is an executable program, then having just a portion of it is completely useless.

Because the typical download is not relying upon a single connection to another person's copy of the file, it usually takes less time for you to download a seeded file. That's the reason why BitTorrent file-sharing is considered faster than the earlier P2P networks. This is analogous to the parallel processing that can be performed by multiple microprocessors when they divide up some computational task among themselves. Similarly, a multithreaded computer application can divide processing steps among multiple threads within a single instance of the program, which oftentimes speeds up the overall process.

There is an additional speed advantage that is rarely if ever mentioned by the average industry commentator: People using BitTorrent are generally more technically savvy than those using the older networks, and the former group will usually have faster broadband connections to the Internet, thereby making it quicker for you to download any files that they are sharing.

Another disadvantage of the conventional networks is that the client programs that people used for interfacing with a network were oftentimes polluted with spyware and annoying pop-up advertisements. Fortunately for BitTorrent users, there are many client programs from which they can choose, and most of them are completely free of advertising and

malware. Some of the choices include BitLord (www.bitlord.com/), BitTyrant (bittyrant.cs.washington.edu/), µTorrent (www.utorrent.com/), Vuze (sourceforge.net/projects/azureus) and Xtorrent (www.xtorrentp2p.com/).

A Torrent of Controversy

As one might imagine, the original peer-to-peer networks came under heavy criticism from the music industry, because most of the traffic on those networks consisted of pre-recorded music from the world's favorite recording artists, and the music industry viewed this as cutting into sales revenue. As a result of the tremendous political and legal pressure exerted by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and later the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), most of the early (non-BitTorrent) networks were shut down, or forced to begin policing the files available on their networks to keep out the copyrighted material. This in turn greatly diminished the popularity of these networks.

Nonetheless, when those networks were still heavily used, and BitTorrents were gaining in usage, the RIAA and MPAA began taking legal action against people sharing files owned by their member recording companies. These industry organizations hire media security companies to locate songs being shared, identify the IP addresses of those files on the P2P networks, and then pressure the Internet service providers to turn over the names and addresses of their customers using those IP addresses. Once the RIAA, for instance, would learn the identity of anyone sharing music files, it would send him a cease-and-desist letter, along with a settlement offer, oftentimes in the tens of thousands of dollars. If the individual failed to agree and pay up, the RIAA would file a lawsuit to obtain damages in court.

Many of the early recipients of these settlement offers simply acquiesced, instead of trying to battle the music industry juggernaut. (One may wonder how these people came up with such large sums of money.) However, some folks have fought back, including someone who has now become well known in this ongoing war. Jammie Thomas, a Native American living in Minnesota, was accused by the RIAA of downloading and sharing 24 copyrighted songs in February 2005, on the Kazaa network. She was sent the usual cease-and-desist letter and settlement offer, but refused to pay, and was consequently sued by a number of record labels. After several years of legal battles and judgments against her, the statutory damages went from \$9,250 per song (a total of \$222,000) up to a shocking \$80,000 per song (\$1.92 million total).

This case, generally known as *Capitol v. Thomas*, may be the most well-publicized file-sharing lawsuit—and was the first tried before a jury. But it is only one of the many thousands of lawsuits filed against people using file-sharing networks, and the figures keep increasing. One may wonder if at some point the music and movie companies will relent, especially now that everyone is far more comfortable with the idea of purchasing and downloading individual songs from online vendors, such as Apple's iTunes and Amazon.com.

Neither side has completely capitulated, and thus the battle between file sharers and copyright enforcers is ongoing. Much of the details can be followed in the online media. People on the side of file sharers can view some of the latest reports at TorrentFreak (www.torrentfreak.com/), among other related sites. People who agree with the copyright enforcers can peruse the sites of the RIAA (www.riaa.com/) and MPAA (www.mpaa.org/). These trade groups are specific to American companies; similar organizations exist for other developed countries.

Regrettably, all of the legal controversy and bad press has besmirched BitTorrent, which can be utilized for fully legal purposes. As an illustration of this idea, consider the increasing number of companies now distributing their free digital products in the form of torrents. This not only demonstrates their support of BitTorrent as a concept, but allows those organizations to reduce their own bandwidth costs, which can be greatly distributed among people who have an interest in those products. Moreover, listing those files on BitTorrent seed sites can make the products known to people who otherwise would never learn of the company or what it has to offer. An example of this is the Linux

distributions that are commonly made available via BitTorrent.

Yet the popularity of BitTorrent certainly does not ensure its longevity into the future. If you would like to experience this remarkable resource before it is completely clobbered by trade organizations and government officials, try it now, while you still can.

Michael J. Ross is a Web developer (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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File-Sharing Security Programs

“Protect yourself against accusations of illegality.” by Michael J. Ross

Many people wonder how they can protect themselves against unfair accusations of illegal file-sharing of copyrighted materials, and yet still continue to enjoy the benefits of legal file-sharing. Programmers to the rescue!

If e-mail is considered the number one "killer app" of the Internet, then perhaps file sharing would be a contender for second place, because tens of millions of Internet users, at a bare minimum, are actively uploading and downloading files using a variety of file-sharing networks. According to research published in the Stanford Report of March 17, 2004, the number of participants worldwide was estimated at 70 million, and that was more than six years ago, during which time the total figure has probably increased, given the continued proliferation of Internet access throughout the world, as well as more people becoming familiar with file sharing, and opting to use it as a source of music, movies, electronic books and other resources.

The file-sharing networks are generally referred to as "peer-to-peer" (P2P). With the early P2P networks, when you downloaded a file, it is copied to your computer from the computer of another individual. Consequently, if he were to turn off his computer halfway through the process, you initially end up with only an incomplete file. (You may be able to complete that file if another source with the exact same file logs onto the network, makes that file available to you, and allows you to download the rest of it without interruption.) BitTorrent is a more recent innovation, with the primary distinction that you download a file in pieces, usually from multiple sources, which reduces the risk of an incomplete file at the end.

All of these networks have been and continue to be used for sharing files that are fully in the public domain—such as electronic versions of books no longer under copyright, independent music made by artists who encourage its worldwide dissemination, freeware and shareware software, and much more. However, the owners of copyrighted material—such as popular recorded music and movies—point out that the bulk of the files being made available on these networks are done so illegally, because those files are songs and movies, and the people uploading them to the networks have no right to distribute them in that manner, and the people downloading them are making copies of the protected material, and thus violating copyright laws. Industry groups in the United States, such as the RIAA (www.riaa.com/) and the MPAA (www.mpaa.org/), have for years been filing thousands of lawsuits against Internet users accused of sharing copyrighted music and movies (usually in the form of MP3 and AVI files, respectively). In most cases, these authorities are able to prove that the defendant was indeed making some files available on a P2P network, based upon the individual's IP address. But the process is not always foolproof, because some of the people receiving cease-and-desist letters, settlement offers, or lawsuits, don't even own computers!

For this and other reasons, many people wonder how they can protect themselves against unfair accusations, and yet still continue to enjoy the benefits of file sharing. In response to this need, programmers in both the commercial and academic worlds have developed a number of countermeasures.

Secret Addresses

One approach to avoiding trouble on P2P networks is to somehow set your computer to ignore connection requests from IP addresses that are known to be used by industry organizations, the research firms they hire, governments and law enforcement bodies. Perhaps the two best-known utilities that offer this capability are PeerBlock and PeerGuardian.

PeerBlock (www.peerblock.com/) is billed as a tool that can control who can connect to your computer on the

Internet—specifically, it keeps a list of IP address "ranges" that are known to be associated with anti-P2P monitoring companies, hacked computers ("zombies" that have been infected so as to spread malware), spyware servers and advertising companies. Because PeerBlock is able to block some sources of malicious software, it thereby can serve as an additional weapon in your arsenal against malware.



Figure 1. PeerBlock home page.

Installing PeerBlock on your own computer and trying it out is quite easy. Go to the PeerBlock downloads page, and choose either the current stable release (1.0 as of this writing) or the beta release, which has more up-to-date bug fixes, but may not be as reliable as the stable release. The former is recommended, and will be demonstrated here. Like most P2P security applications, PeerBlock runs on Windows 2000, XP, Vista, 7 and Windows Server—both the 32- and 64-bit versions, where applicable.

On that downloads page, look in the Portable Packages section for the download link appropriate for your version of Windows. All of them are Zip archive files and not installation executables, so download the file to your computer, unzip it into a destination directory (such as C:/Program Files/PeerBlock), and then run the file peerblock.exe, which starts the program. The first time that you run it, it will detect that it needs to be configured, using some dialog screens, which should be understandable. You will be prompted to specify what types of ranges you want blocked, including anti-P2P organizations, advertisers and data trackers, spyware and adware servers, and educational organizations. You can optionally import or create your own list of ranges to block. By default, your list will be updated every other day, but you can change that.

As soon as the configuration process is finished, the program begins running and tries to connect to the server update. peerblock.com, which you can allow using your firewall. The configuration does not make it possible for you to easily specify that you want the program to start every time you start Windows, but you can set that yourself by making a shortcut to the program (right-click on the file in Windows Explorer, and in the context menu that pops up, choose the menu item to create a shortcut), and copying the newly made shortcut into your Windows startup folder.

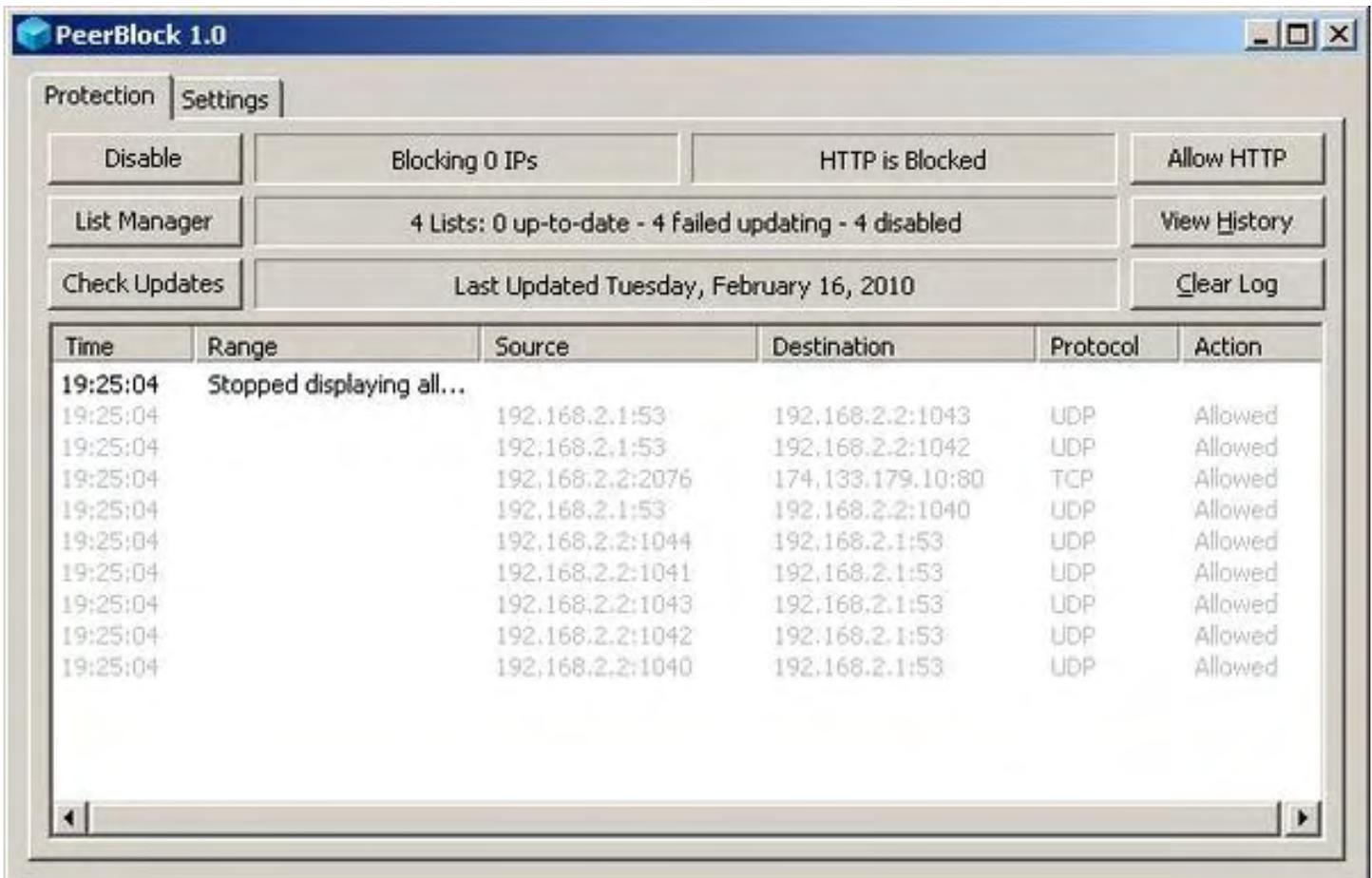


Figure 2. PeerBlock user interface.

The six buttons on the Protection tab and the Settings tab will not be discussed here, because at this point the program is running properly. At first you will not see much active blocking, but that can change if and when you log into a P2P network.

Similarly named, PeerGuardian was developed and made available by Phoenix Labs (phoenixlabs.org/pg2/).

PHOENIXLABS
Home of the original PeerGuardian2

PeerGuardian 2
PeerGuardian 2 is Phoenix Labs' premier IP blocker for Windows. PeerGuardian 2 integrates support for multiple lists, list editing, automatic updates, and blocking all of IPv4 (TCP, UDP, ICMP, etc), making it the safest and easiest way to protect your privacy on P2P.

Questions? Feature Requests?
If your question isn't answered in our [FAQ](#), we are always happy to help in our forums and [IRC](#).

Like PeerGuardian?
Consider donating or clicking on an interesting banner to help pay for our servers and further the development of PeerGuardian and other Phoenix Labs software.

Downloads

File	Description	Size
PG2.exe	PeerGuardian 2 for Vista/Windows 7	
PG2.exe	PeerGuardian 2 for XP/2003	
PG2-64 (x64)	PeerGuardian 2 for Windows XP/2003 x64 Edition	1.07MB
PG2-64 (x64)	PeerGuardian 2 for Windows 2000/XP/2003	0.84MB
PG2-64 (x64)	PeerGuardian 2 for Windows 95/98	0.82MB
PG2 (src)	PeerGuardian 2 source code (for programmers)	1.33MB

Want to know when our next release hits?
Sign up for the [peerguardian-announce](#) mailing list. Your email will never be given out and we don't allow public posting so you won't get anything beyond the occasional announcement from us.

Platform Support
PeerGuardian 2 supports Windows 98, ME, 2000, XP, and 2003, in 32-bit and 64-bit.

Legalities
Phoenix Labs and the PeerGuardian team do not condone copyright infringement. There are many legal uses of P2P and we are sick of being treated like criminals! We want to keep organizations and individuals from collecting data about us without our consent.

Open Source
PeerGuardian 2 is Open Source, meaning the program code is available online for anyone who wants it. Not only does this allow you to make modifications or even branch off into your own project, but it encourages peer review of the code making sure any bugs are eliminated swiftly. Because PeerGuardian 2 is Open Source, you can rest assured there are no backdoors or spyware included.

CVS Access
Want the latest (possibly unstable) source code? PeerGuardian 2 is available from CVS:

```
svn -4 -p:anonpub@cvr.sourceforge.net /cvsroot/peerguardian login
svn -4 -p:anonpub@cvr.sourceforge.net /cvsroot/peerguardian ^4 ^4 -R ppt
```

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phosty
legshel

Cool Stuff
I-Blocklist
QuakeWorld
Custom-TF

Meta
Log in

Free Speech Online
Blue Ribbon Campaign

Copyright © 2005 Phoenix Labs

Figure 3. Phoenix Labs home page.

The company describes it as the "premier IP blocker for Windows. PeerGuardian 2 integrates support for multiple lists, list editing, automatic updates and blocking all of IPv4 (TCP, UDP, ICMP, etc), making it the safest and easiest way to protect your privacy on P2P." PeerGuardian 2, the current version, supersedes the earlier one, which was one of the pioneers in this realm of software.

However, PeerGuardian 2 itself has, in a sense, been superseded by PeerBlock. Even though PeerGuardian served Internet users well for many years, it developed a reputation for crashing occasionally, for not being updated during the past few years, and often experiencing problems downloading the latest ranges from the SourceForge servers, which tend to be slow and unreliable. So PeerBlock switched over to using I-Blocklist (www.iblocklist.com/), which is a big improvement.

Anonymous Sharing

Preventing connections from suspected anti-P2P addresses is but one way of increasing the security of your file sharing. Several other methods have been devised and tested over the years, and no doubt many more will be developed in the future.

BTGuard (www.btguard.com/) is a BitTorrent client program that anonymizes your computer's IP address, by

directing all of the traffic through a proxy server—much like a middleman between you and all of the other participants in the sharing of a file. (Those participants are called "seeders" if you are obtaining the BitTorrent file from them, and "leechers" if they are obtaining the file from you.) Consequently, no one else who is connecting to your computer is able to identify your IP address. Instead, if a bad server is on the network and sharing a file with you, it sees only the IP address of the BTGuard server, and not yours.

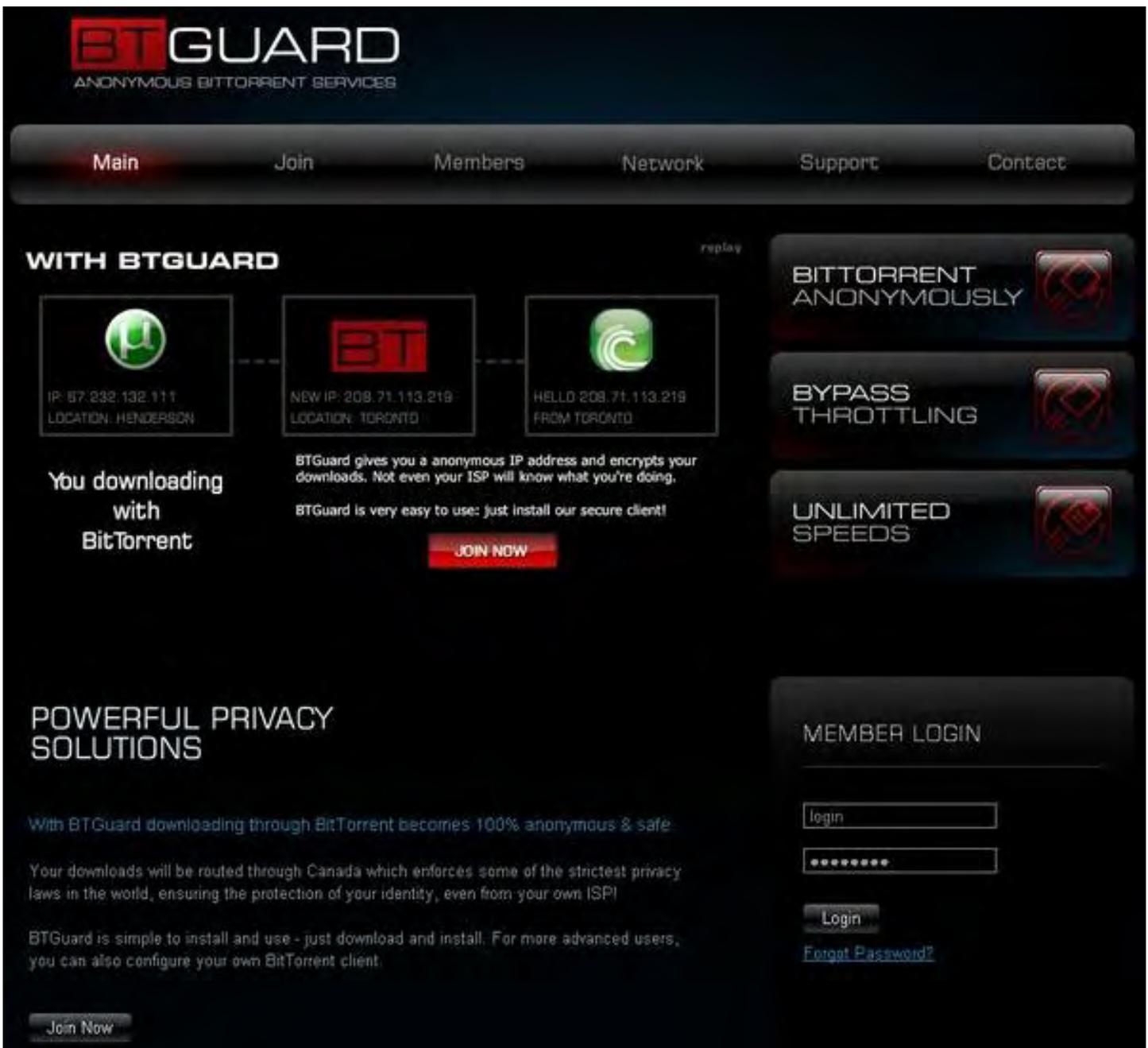


Figure 4. BTGuard home page.

However, unlike the IP-blocking programs mentioned earlier, BTGuard is a commercial service, and currently charges \$6.95 per month. Some people who insist upon obtaining all of their music and movies for free may balk at paying a monthly service fee. But compared to the settlement amounts currently being collected by the RIAA and MPAA, the BTGuard service charge is an absolute bargain should you get caught by the industry groups.

Rodi (*rodi.sourceforge.net*) is a free and lightweight P2P program that is supported on Windows and all major distributions of Linux.

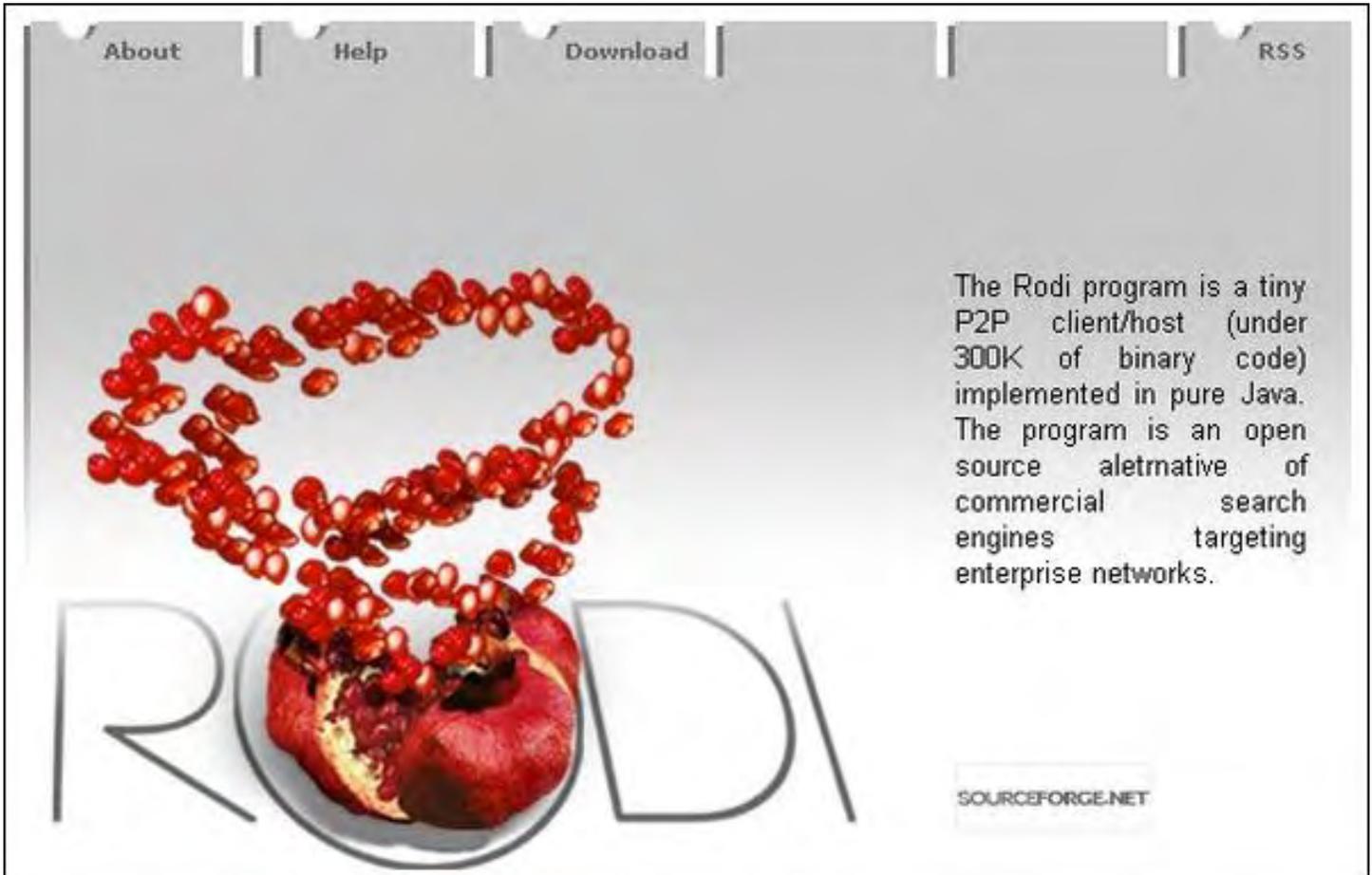


Figure 5. Rodi home page.

Rodi possesses two advantages over the typical BitTorrent client: Firstly, you can search for torrents within the client program, without having to use torrent search sites, such as The Pirate Bay (*thepiratebay.org*). Secondly, the program is designed to provide full anonymity for your IP address, using a process referred to as "bouncing." If you want a file from someone else, X, who may or may not be a malicious source, then a second person on the network, Y, is temporarily placed as a middleman between your computer and X's. As a result, X gets Y's IP address, but not yours. In fact, using IP spoofing, it can even be set up so that Y's address is hidden from X.

To download the installable program and not the Java source code files, go to the Rodi SourceForge page (sourceforge.net/projects/rodi), choose "View all files," and on that page click on the link for *rodi_0.3.60.zip* (or whatever the latest version is when you read this). Open up the Zip file and save its contents in a new Rodi directory. For Windows users, run the file *runRodiWin32.bat*, click the "Setup wizard" button, and follow the instructions. It performs a number of highly technical steps, and eventually asks you to restart the application. When you do so, it tries to connect to the server *larytet.sourceforge.net*, which can be allowed. Your Windows firewall, if enabled, may try to block the Java program from accepting connections from the Internet; simply choose Unblock.

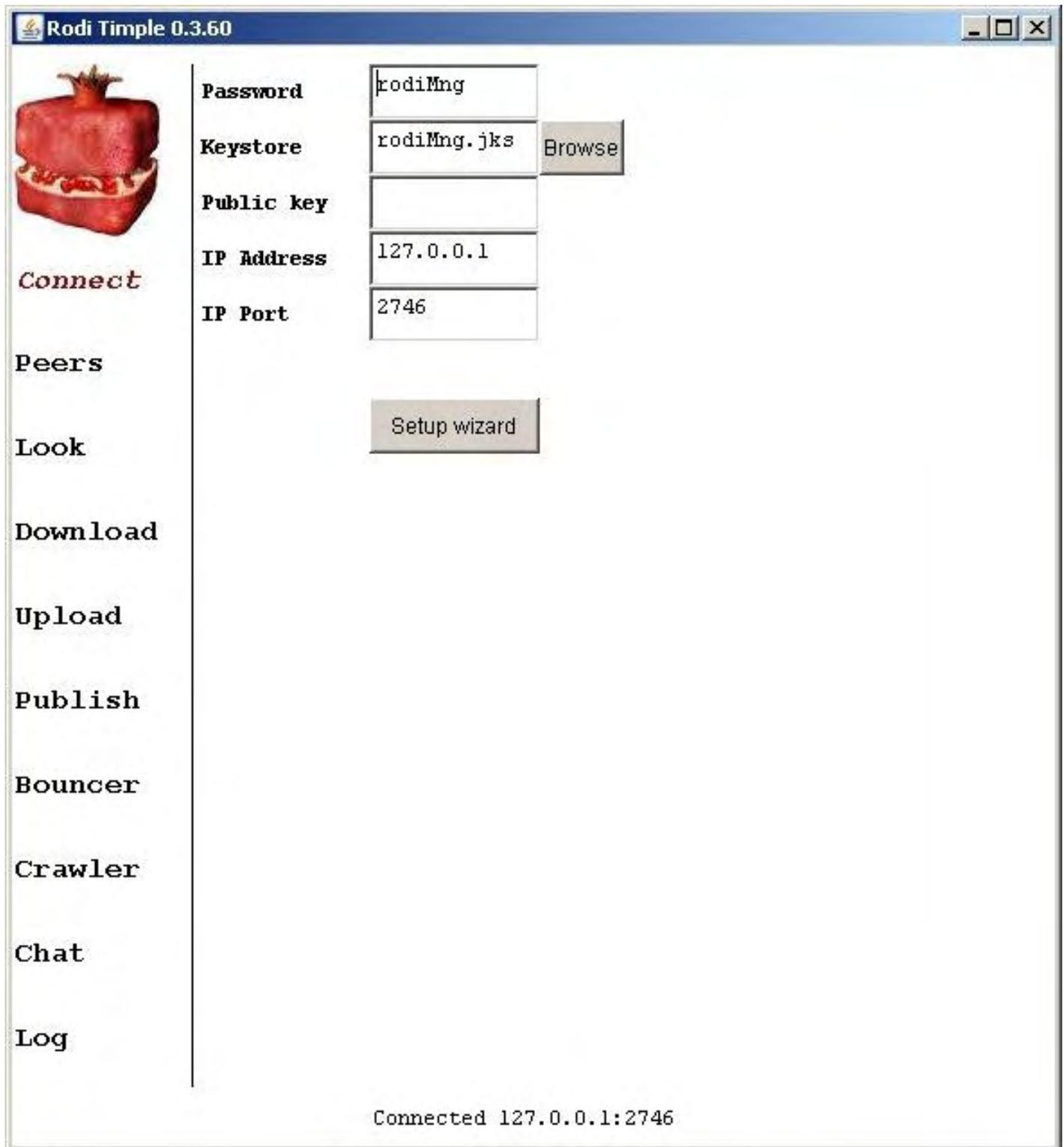


Figure 6. Rodi user interface.

American universities are known as hotbeds of file sharing, so it is no surprise that research and development in file-sharing security has been done on U.S. campuses. OneSwarm (oneswarm.cs.washington.edu) is a file-sharing program that was created by computer science researchers at the University of Washington to provide better privacy on P2P networks. It runs on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux machines. The Web site offers a couple of screencasts, consisting of an overview of the product and a demonstration of remote access.



OneSwarm

Privacy preserving peer-to-peer data sharing

New: Version 0.6.9 [released!](#) Follow OneSwarm's [development log](#) on twitter

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Overview

Although widely used, currently popular peer-to-peer (P2P) applications offer no user privacy. By design, services like BitTorrent and Gnutella share data with anyone that asks for it, allowing a third-party to [systematically monitor](#) user behavior. As a result, using a P2P network means that your online activities become public knowledge.

OneSwarm is a new peer-to-peer tool that provides users with explicit control over their privacy by letting them determine how data is shared. Instead of sharing data indiscriminately, data shared with OneSwarm can be made public, it can be shared with friends, shared with some friends but not others, and so forth. We call this friend-to-friend (F2F) data sharing. OneSwarm is:

- **Privacy preserving:** OneSwarm uses source address rewriting to protect user privacy. Instead of always transmitting data directly from sender to receiver (immediately identifying both), OneSwarm may forward data through multiple intermediaries, obscuring the identity of both sender and receiver. For more details, check out the [OneSwarm overview screencast](#) or our [papers](#).

Figure 7. OneSwarm home page.

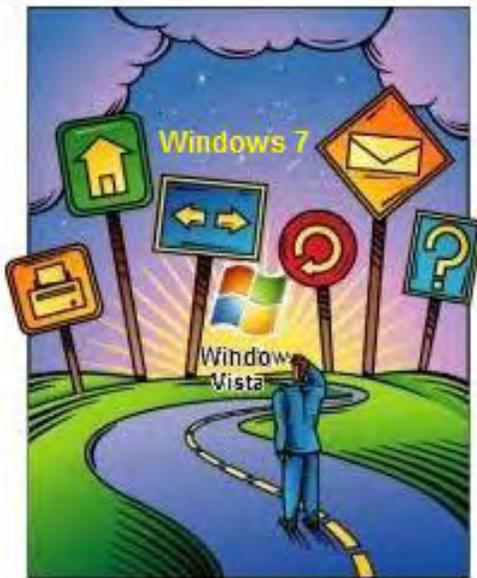
OneSwarm uses what is often referred to as a "friend-to-friend" method, because instead of allowing direct connections between you and other file sharers, multiple intermediaries are used. In addition, the program uses multiple sources for downloading, rewrites the sources of IP addresses, and uses SSL-based point-to-point encryption.

Even though the OneSwarm installation file is much larger than any of the others mentioned here, the installation process is quite straightforward. Once again, the Windows firewall will try to block the connection. As soon as the program runs, it immediately starts Internet Explorer (for Windows users) and goes to the address <http://127.0.0.1:29615/>. The online help information can provide more details as to what to do from that point.

Whether you choose to employ only one of the security tools discussed here, or combination of them, do not make the mistake sharing files legally without some sort of protection. Practice safe hex!

Michael J. Ross is a Web developer (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 Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks

**“Troubleshooting
Program Problems”** by Jack
Dunning

Every once in a while, strange things start happening with a computer—no matter how careful you are or what type of computer you're using. Jack's latest issue takes him to the world of software repair.

Every once in a while, strange things start happening with a computer—I don't care how careful you are or what type of computer you're using. It may be that an update to a program starts interfering with other operations, or the operating system itself has become corrupted. Possibly, it's the beginning of a hard drive failure. It can be difficult to determine what the problem is. In my case, I just noticed an issue yesterday with a program I hadn't used in a few weeks. When I attempt to load the program, it pretends to start, then (when I'm not looking) just disappears. This started to happen on more than one computer, but only with that one program. Hmm.

Of course, viruses, corrupted files, operating system updates and program updates all came to mind. Even with guidance from the Web, it is difficult to know what to do first. I did the standard first attempt to Repair the program. This can be done by opening the Programs and Features windows. (Programs and Features can be found under Programs in the Control Panel/Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP.) As you select each program (depending upon which version of Windows you're using), you will see options for Uninstall, Change and/or Repair. Some programs may only have Uninstall as an option, while others may have all three.

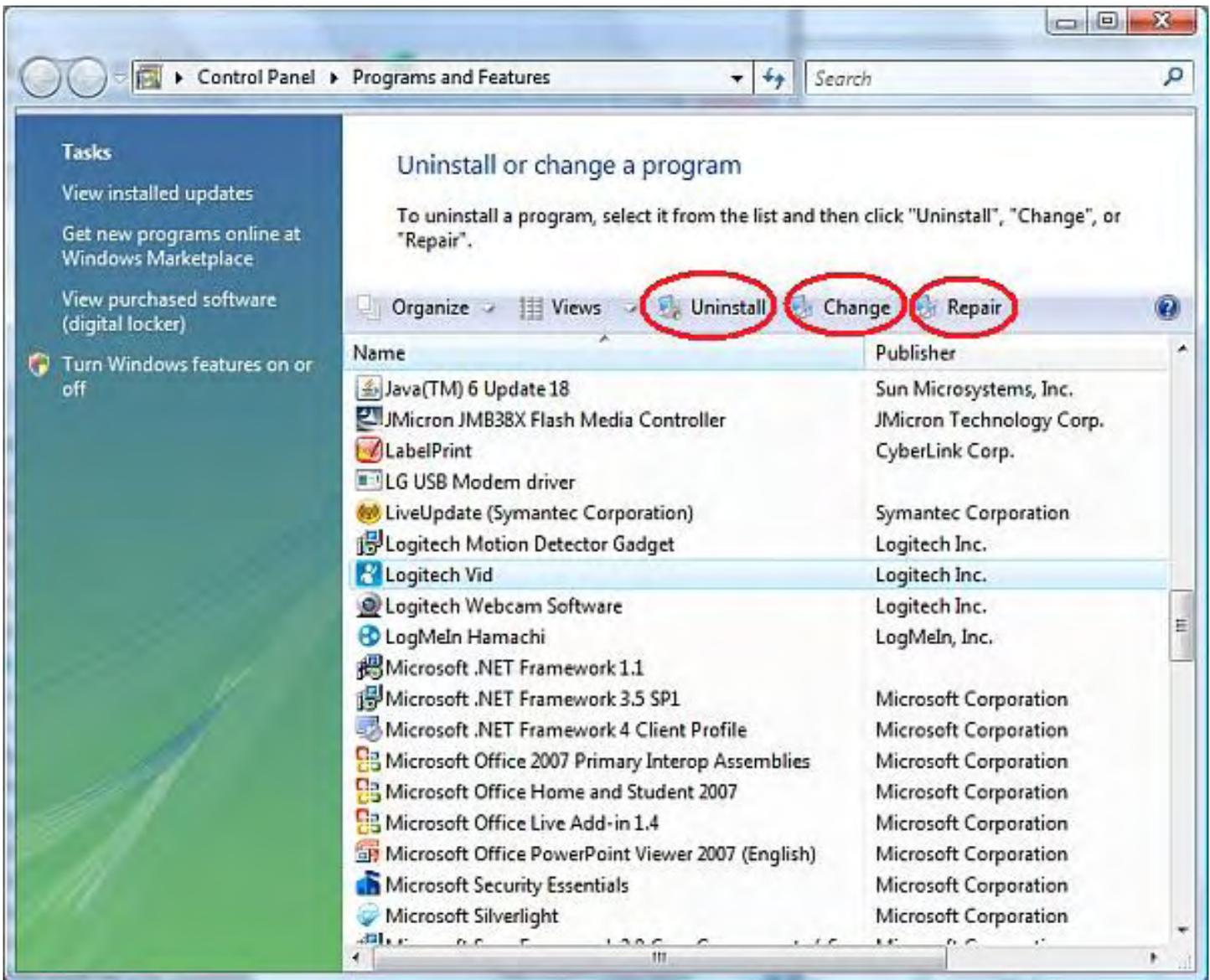


Figure 1. The Programs and Features window in Windows Vista.

If you are having problems with a program, the first step is to attempt to repair it—if the Repair options appears in Programs and Features (see Figure 2). (Some programs may not show the Repair options until you click an Uninstall/Change button and enter the setup program. Windows XP will show the Remove or Change/Remove button at the bottom right of the selected program listing.) If in fact the program can repair itself, then you are way ahead of the game. In my experience, the Repair option almost never resolves a software problem.

The next step is to reinstall the software. It is possible that you will be able to fix a problem by reinstalling without removing the faulty copy first, but in many cases you will need to uninstall the old program first. This is done by clicking the Uninstall button (Remove in XP) and following the steps in the wizard. (Note: If there is an uninstall program provided by the software itself, then you should use it. It will generally do a better job of removing all the extra bits and pieces in an uninstall. If one exists, it should appear in the program folder listed under programs.) Once you have removed the defective program, you are ready to re-install—either from the original disc or an Internet download. This process generally has more success than hitting the Repair button.

If re-installing the software has not resolved the problem, then (if not a virus) you are probably looking at an operating system problem in Windows. It may be corrupted files. There is a tool called SFC (System File Checker). It is designed

to check the integrity of all system files and fix them if there is a problem. To run SFC, open the Command Prompt by right-clicking on the icon and selecting "Run as administrator." In the Command Prompt window type "sfc /scannow" as shown in Figure 2.

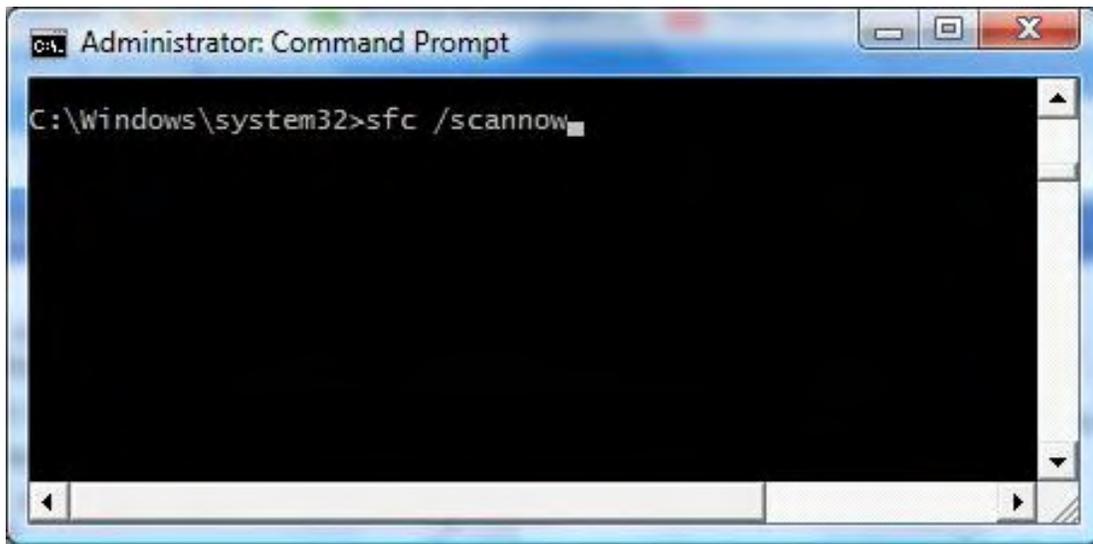


Figure 2. System File Checker to be run in Command Prompt.

It will take a little while to run, but all the system files will be checked by SFC. It may or may not fix the problem. I have no idea what the success rate is, but it's worth a shot.

What worked for me on one of my computers was a system restore. I had to go back about a week, but after I completed the restore, the program worked again on that computer. The system restore on the other computer didn't work, so—since it is a Windows 7 machine—I'm going to wait until it magically fixes itself or I find more time to research the problem. (I'm thinking a .NET problem.) That reinforces the old adage, "Just because a problem acts the same, doesn't mean it's the same problem." I'll keep you posted.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The World of Apps” by Wally Wang

Smartphone apps represent a new growth market, and we have Apple to thank. Also, iPads continue to find new functionality; Macintosh growth continues increasing; quick and easy video editing with Premiere Elements 9; Microsoft's giving away Windows Phone 7 devices; and a tip on using the Reopen Last Closed Window command to open any Safari window you closed by mistake.

There are probably two reasons why the iPhone redefined the smartphone category. First, the iPhone provided a multipurpose touchscreen that could display data or provide a way for users to type data in.

Previous mobile phones separated these two functions, which gave you minuscule screens and clumsy physical keyboards that either filled half the phone or slid out in a Rube Goldberg-like contraption. The iPhone's touchscreen simply replaced multiple physical features of a phone that made the best use out of the limited real estate available on a mobile phone.

Second, the iPhone helped simplify the idea of extending the functionality of your smartphone using apps. The idea of smartphone apps has been around for years, but the process of finding and installing apps was always left to chance, which meant most smartphone users never bothered to download—let alone know where to look for—apps. Apple solved this problem with its App Store, which provided a one-stop convenient place for developers to market their apps and for consumers to find and buy them.

More than 100 million people will buy their first smartphone in 2011, 250 million people bought a smartphone in 2010, smartphone sales are predicted to exceed PC sales in 2011, and one billion people will own a smartphone by 2013. The smartphone market is growing like crazy, much like the early days of PCs or the Internet. The iPhone has even grabbed a major share of the Japanese market (news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101126/ap_on_hi_te/as_tec_japan_iphone_apps), which has traditionally been difficult for non-Japanese electronics firms to crack.

One reason why smartphones are so popular and versatile is that they provide the power of a computer in a handheld, portable device. Instead of just duplicating a typical computer program like shoving the power of Excel or QuickBooks into a smartphone, apps focus on doing a single task well, exploiting the portability of a smartphone.

For example, suppose you're out shopping and find an item that you want to buy. Without a computer, you would have to drive to different stores to compare prices. With a computer, you can go home, look up the product on the Internet, and then find the best prices online or locally.



Figure 1. RedLaser is a bar code scanning app for the iPhone.

However with RedLaser (*redlaser.com*), a free app for the iPhone, you can scan the bar code of any product such as a book or electronic device, and instantly get a list of all the best prices for that item online or at a nearby local retailer. With the iPhone's Internet connectivity, you can choose to order the item online right away or buy the item from your local retailer. By providing instant access to a product's prices, you can comparison shop in a split second and get the best price without wasting time driving around to different stores.

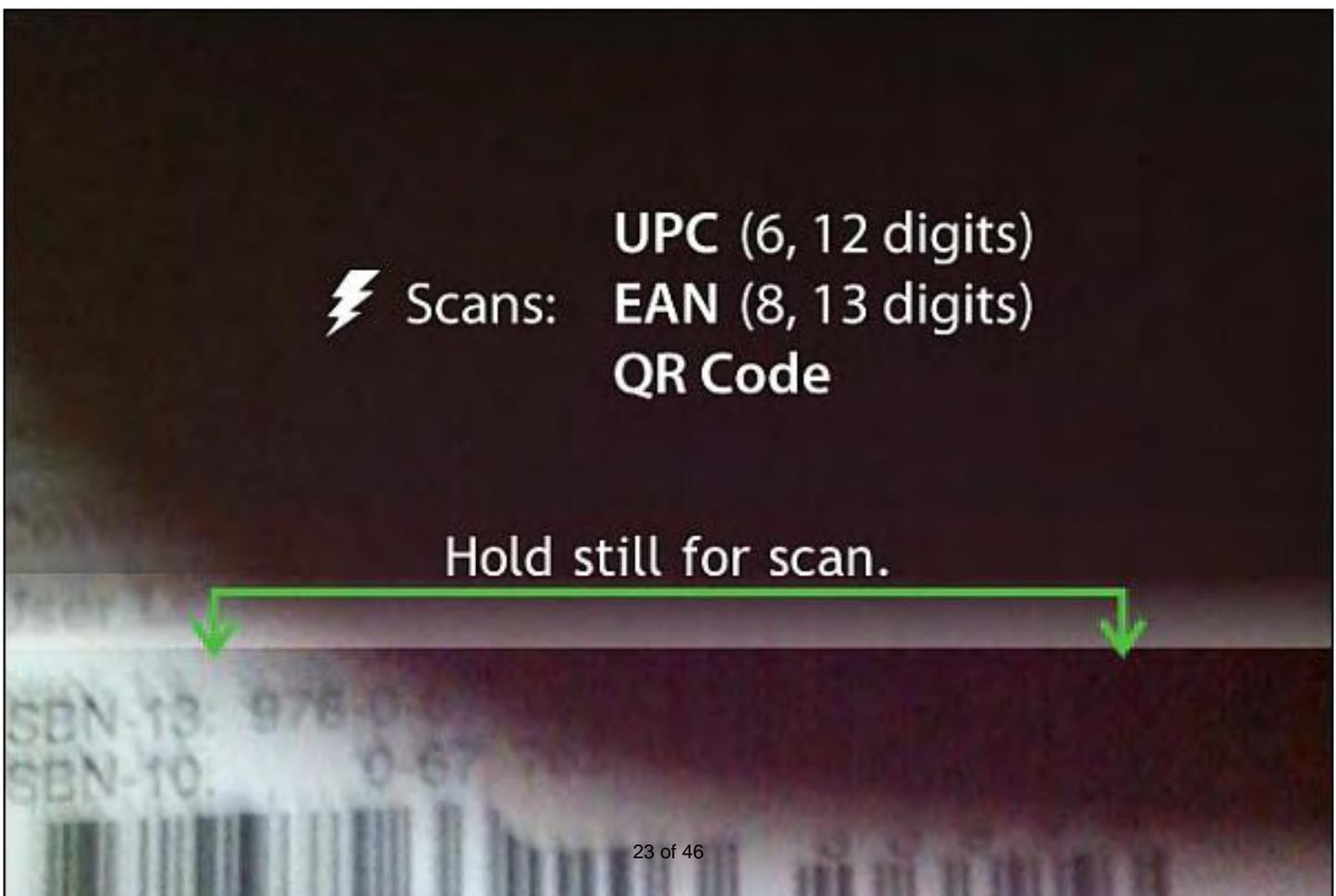




Figure 2. Scan any product's bar code using the iPhone's built-in camera.



From \$0.99 online

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- T'ai CHI Ch'uan and I Ching... **\$1.10** >
ValoreBooks.com
- T'ai Chi Ch'uan and I Ching... **\$1.13** >
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half.com Search Results

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Used
- T'Ai Chi Ch'Uan and I Chin... **\$1.10** .

Figure 3. A list of prices for your item appears.

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Product Search:

Keyword, ISBN, Title or Author



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Password:



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Tai Chi Chuan and I Ching: A Choreography of Body and Soul

by Liu, Da

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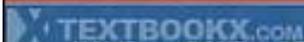
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There is no description available for this item.

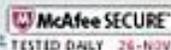


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a program of AKADEMOS, INC.



Figure 4. Tap an online retailer to purchase the item or purchase that item from a local retailer if the price is right.

An app like RedLaser can turn your iPhone into a price comparison shopper (www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_hFGsmx_6k), which you could never duplicate with an ordinary computer program running on a netbook. Considering that RedLaser is just one of many apps available, you can already see why smartphone apps represent a new growth market.

All it takes is a bit of imagination and creativity to take advantage of new technology. Sadly, there are still those who lack such imagination and can only see why something will fail without noticing why something might also succeed.

David Platt, the author of *Why Software Sucks* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0321466756?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0321466756), wrote an amusing blog about why the iPhone will fail (suckbusters2.blogspot.com/2007/06/apple-iphone-debut-to-flop-product-to.html) back when it first came out. David Platt claimed that the iPhone's touchscreen was inferior to a physical keyboard because it lacked the tactile feel of pressing physical keys. Never mind the fact that physical keys gobbled up limited real estate on a mobile phone and lacked the versatility of a virtual keyboard displayed on a screen.

You have to look at the advantages of new technology compared to its disadvantages to determine if the trade-off is worth it. As millions of people have already seen, the iPhone's touchscreen and app market place is worth the trade-off, especially if you're willing to exploit the advantages of new technology to simplify your own life.

The Versatility of the iPad

Like the iPhone, the iPad had its early detractors who insisted that the iPad would fail just because it lacked a USB port, replaceable batteries, or a camera. For those who want a tablet device that offers these features, grab an HP Slate 500 (h30406.www3.hp.com/campaigns/2010/promo/HPSL/index.php), which does offer those features that critics claimed were absolutely necessary for success. Of course, the HP Slate is not succeeding, and Hewlett-Packard even refuses to loan out demo units to reviewers while emphatically denying that the HP Slate directly competes against the iPad.

In Melbourne, volunteers are using iPads to help feed the hungry (www.itwire.com/your-it-news/mobility/43376-ipads-now-feed-the-hungry-what-cant-they-do). Drivers pick up food and use iPads to alert the cooks ahead of time so they know what ingredients they have. In addition, the portability of the iPad eliminates the need for paper forms.

Delta Airlines is using iPads (www.usatoday.com/money/industries/travel/2010-11-22-airportcheckin22_ST_N.htm) in its New York JFK terminal. Waiting passengers can use the iPads to order food from nearby restaurants and a server delivers the meal to the customer.

If you want to get a glimpse of the future of newspapers, download the free Wall Street Journal (itunes.apple.com/us/app/id364387007?mt=8) app for the iPad. This app displays the complete contents of the Wall Street Journal (some access is limited to subscribers only), so you can read the paper without lugging around a physical copy.

The screenshot shows the iPad app interface for The Wall Street Journal. At the top, it displays the time as 8:13 AM and the battery level at 84%. The main header is "THE WALL STREET JOURNAL." Below this, it says "Welcome, Wallace Wang" and "LAST UPDATED ON 11/24/2010 8:00 AM PST". A market data bar shows DJIA at 11,173.77 (up 1.24%), Nasdaq at 2,541.40 (up 1.86%), S&P 500 at 1,196.34 (up 1.32%), and Nikkei Average at 10,030.11 (down 0.64%).

The main content area features several articles:

- U.S. Sends Carrier to Korea Region** by Evan Ramstad: "SEOUL—South Korea on Wednesday took its first steps to penalize North Korea for its artillery attack on a South Korean island, announcing a naval drill with a U.S. carrier group, cutting off humanitarian assistance and halting traffic into the North. Meanwhile, hundreds of residents left the island through the day Wednesday and military personnel who arrived to clean it up discovered the bodies of two civilians." Below this is a photo of a soldier in camouflage and a helmet, holding a blue folder, standing in a debris-strewn area. The caption reads: "South Korea and the U.S. took their first steps to penalize North Korea for its artillery assault. Evan Ramstad and John Bussey discuss. Also, Stephen Fidler discusses pervasive investor worries that Ireland's debt troubles will spread to nations like Portugal and Spain."
- Tiffany Gives Stocks a Pre-Holiday Sparkle** by Jonathan Cheng: "U.S. stocks surged on an improving domestic economic picture, erasing most of Tuesday's sharp declines ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. However, overseas »"
- Consumers, Factories Diverge** by Meena Thiruvengadam And Jeff Bater: "The household sector of the economy showed some positive signals with increases in consumer spending and income, while initial »"
- Ireland Outlines Austerity Measures** by Quentin Fottrell, Jason Douglas and Nick Winning: "DUBLIN—Ireland's government Wednesday outlined €15 billion (\$20.55 billion) in spending cuts and tax increases over four »"

On the left side, there is a "What's News" sidebar with three items:

- Business & Finance**: "Madoff Trustee Sues UBS" - "The trustee recovering money for victims of Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme is seeking \$2 billion from UBS through a lawsuit that accuses the Swiss banking giant of actively participating in the fraud." »
- Profiling Technology Mounts a Comeback**: "One of the most potentially intrusive technologies for profiling and targeting Internet users with ads, 'deep packet inspection,' is on the verge of a comeback." »
- Deere Swings to Profit**: "Deere swung to a fiscal fourth-quarter profit from a year-earlier" »

At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with "powered by ca technologies", "Subscribe Now", and navigation icons for "Edition", "Tools", "Sections", and "Next".

Figure 5. The Wall Street Journal iPad app offers video.

Best of all, the app updates its stories so the newspaper constantly changes with new information throughout the day. Instead of just displaying static pictures, the app provides pictures and video, giving you an interactive newspaper running on your iPad.

Oprah Winfrey recently highlighted the iPad on her TV show and proclaimed it her all-time favorite thing (techcrunch.com/2010/11/22/oprah-ipad/). Why did someone like Oprah get excited about the iPad unless it allowed her to do things in her life that no previous device could offer before? Unlike the techno-geek crowd, people like Oprah don't gush over products just because they have a USB port, replaceable battery, a built-in camera, or the ability to run Windows programs.

Apple even received design patents (www.patentlyapple.com/patently-apple/2010/11/apple-wins-big-time-with-iphone-4-and-ipad-design-patents.html) for the iPhone and iPad, which recognizes the uniqueness of Apple's designs.

Once people realize the power and versatility of smartphones like the iPhone and tablets like the iPad, some people will rush out to get one, others will deliberately avoid trying anything new, while others will simply look for cheaper alternatives just because they don't want to buy anything made by Apple.

For a really cheap iPad alternative, take a look at the Maylong M-150 tablet (arstechnica.com/gadgets/

[reviews/2010/11/worst-gadget-ever-ars-reviews-a-99-android-tablet.ars](#)), a \$99 tablet running Android. While the Maylong M-150 ([www.maylonggroup.com/M-150_MID.htm](#)) may look like an iPad, it lacks the iPad's marketplace of apps, physical quality and touchscreen responsiveness. Then again, if you're one of those people who refuse to buy the best product available just because you don't like the company that makes it, throwing your money away and torturing yourself with a cheap \$99 iPad-clone may perfectly sum up your mentality.

Macintosh Growth Continues Increasing

A recent article by DigiTimes claims that Apple will sell a million MacBook laptops a month ([www.digitimes.com/news/a20101126PD204.html](#)) with the MacBook Air making up nearly a quarter of all those sales. While global Macintosh market share has increased from 3.7 percent to 5.2 percent, U.S. market share has increased from 6.7 percent to 12.6 percent, and all this occurred during one of the worst recessions in history.

The growth rate of the Macintosh exceeds the general computer market by nearly a 3-1 ratio ([tech.fortune.cnn.com/2010/11/23/mac-shipments-outpace-market-3-to-1](#)). Surprisingly, the one market that Apple fell behind the rest of the computer industry is in education.

<i>The Mac's Growth vs. the Market's Growth by Segment, September 2010</i>		<i>Figure 2</i>
Segment	Apple	Market
Education	5.1%	11.4%
Government	503.9%	8.3%
Home	25.3%	10.4%
Very large business	201.7%	26.0%
Large business	145.6%	17.8%
Medium business	90.4%	6.7%
Small business	46.1%	5.3%
Small office	46.7%	1.8%
Business	66.3%	8.5%
Total	28.5%	9.7%

Source: IDC.

Figure 6. The Macintosh continues to grow in nearly every market.

The most astounding growth of the Macintosh is in the government, although the Macintosh also made impressive gains in the business world. For anyone who works with computers in government or business, you absolutely must take time to learn about the Macintosh or you'll risk obsolescence.

If you think that PCs will never go away, then you probably won't be alarmed at this speculation by Barron's ([online.barrons.com/article/SB50001424052970204374404575630811207157780.html?mod=BOL_hpp_dc](#)) that for every 2.5 tablets sold, one less PC will be sold. Since Apple dominates the tablet category with the iPad, that means manufacturers of PCs will likely see lower sales in the future.

If you're deliberately avoiding Apple products out of prejudice, then you're only hurting yourself in the long run. Why would any sane person want to limit their own future opportunities just to prove that they don't like a particular company?

Quick and Easy Video Editing with Premiere Elements 9

Video cameras are available separately or buried inside nearly every smartphone. While it's easy to capture video, it's not as easy to edit that video. Apple offers iMovie, which comes free with every Macintosh, but if you plan on doing more serious video editing, you'll probably want to move up to a more versatile product like Adobe's Premiere Elements 9 (www.adobe.com/products/premiereel/).

The idea behind Premiere Elements is to give users the editing features of the more powerful (and expensive) Adobe Premiere, but in a low-cost and easy-to-use program. Perhaps the biggest problem is simply getting your video from your camera to your computer. To help you do this, Premiere Elements can recognize a variety of video sources, such as Web cams, phones or separate video camcorders.



Figure 7. Premiere Elements makes it easy to import your video.

After you've imported your video into the program, Premiere Elements lets you preview your clips so you can see exactly what you want to use.



Figure 8. You can preview your imported video clips.

Editing a video clip is simple by watching your video and selecting which parts to trim. Besides editing video, the program also lets you modify the audio of your movie to make sound louder or softer.



Figure 9. Premiere Elements 9 can edit the audio portion of your video.

After you're done editing your video, you can burn it to a DVD or post it on your Facebook page to share your creation with the world. Adobe Premiere Elements 9 runs identically on both Windows and Mac OS X, so you can switch between computers and still use Premiere Elements.

If you enjoy capturing video for family vacations or get-togethers, Premiere Elements 9 makes it easy to polish your movies quickly and easily. Once you get familiar with the features and commands of Premiere Elements 9, you can easily make the leap to Adobe's more powerful Premiere designed for video editing professionals.

For the holiday season, expect to capture plenty of video. You can let that video sit on your camera or you can edit and share it using Premiere Elements 9. Premiere Elements 9 (\$99.99) may not be free like Apple's iMovie, but it's a program you probably won't outgrow any time soon.

Microsoft Employees Get Free Windows Phone 7 Devices

Initially, Microsoft claimed it would reimburse any employee for their monthly data plan when using a Windows Phone 7 phone. When this didn't cause much excitement among its own employees, Microsoft decided to give free Windows Phone 7 devices to all employees instead.

Despite this generous offer, many Microsoft employees are apparently still using the iPhone (moconews.net/article/419-will-microsoft-employees-ditch-their-iphone-for-a-free-windows-7-phone/). Anyone want to guess how many Apple employees are willingly paying for a rival phone like a BlackBerry or a Windows Phone 7 phone because they'd rather have that instead of an iPhone?

To boost sales of Windows Phone 7 devices, Microsoft Stores even gave them away for free on Black Friday (November 26) as long as you signed up for a two-year contract. While Windows Phone 7 isn't a bad operating system, it's not a radical upgrade from the iPhone and Android like the iPhone was from Windows Mobile or BlackBerry's phones.

Will Windows Phone 7 ever dominate the smartphone category? Probably not. Will it carve out a respectable share of the smartphone market? Maybe, but if Microsoft has to resort to giving away phones for free, that doesn't indicate much demand for these devices. Perhaps instead of staging mock funerals (www.dailytech.com/Microsoft+Holds+Mock+Funeral+for+iPhone+BlackBerry/article19600.htm) for rival phones, Microsoft should just hold a real funeral for its own phones. To see a video of Microsoft's Windows Phone 7 team celebrating the impending demise of the iPhone and BlackBerry, watch this odd YouTube clip (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQTemf043tw&feature=player_embedded).

What's the difference between Apple and Microsoft? Tony Hsieh, the author of *Delivering Happiness*, (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0446563048?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0446563048) explains it best in defining what makes his own company, Zappos, so successful.

Tony focused Zappos around three elements: superior customer service, corporate culture and employee training.

Likewise, Apple strives to provide superior customer service through its Apple Stores and well-designed products. People may complain that Apple's products are too expensive, but few people can complain that they aren't designed well and solidly built. Compare the aluminum unibody design of a MacBook Pro to a plastic laptop case of a Dell or Gateway computer and there's no comparison in physical quality.

Another aspect of Apple's superior customer service involves its Apple Stores with a Genius Bar where customers can get one-on-one service with an actual technician. Compare this to calling Dell's call center for help, where you reach someone in India who reads from a script and tries to teach you, over the phone, how to troubleshoot your own computer to turn the calling customer into an expert computer technician. Think it's the same level of customer service that Apple provides?

Culture is another intangible that Apple nurtures and that Microsoft lacks. At Apple, the corporate culture revolves around thinking different and surprising and delighting the customer. At Microsoft, the corporate culture focuses more on copying other companies and reacting to competitors instead of leading them.

Ton Hsieh says that customer service, culture and employee training are the only competitive advantage that any company really has, since everything else can and will be copied by others. With companies like Microsoft, Dell, Research in Motion, Acer and Hewlett-Packard busily copying Apple, they're missing Apple's customer service and culture. As a result, their products may mimic Apple's products, but they almost never equal them, let alone exceed them.

To compare the two companies, just look at an Apple Store compared to a Microsoft Store as seen through the eyes of the Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-microsoft-stores-20101126,0,4878500.story). Where Apple Stores sell computers, monitors and phones made by Apple, Microsoft Stores sell computers, monitors, and phones made by Samsung, Sony, Acer, Logitech and Hewlett-Packard. It's hard to promote the Microsoft brand when every Microsoft Store sells major products that aren't made by Microsoft.

* * *

If you accidentally close a Safari window and want to "undo" your mistake, just click on the History menu and click the Reopen Last Closed Window.

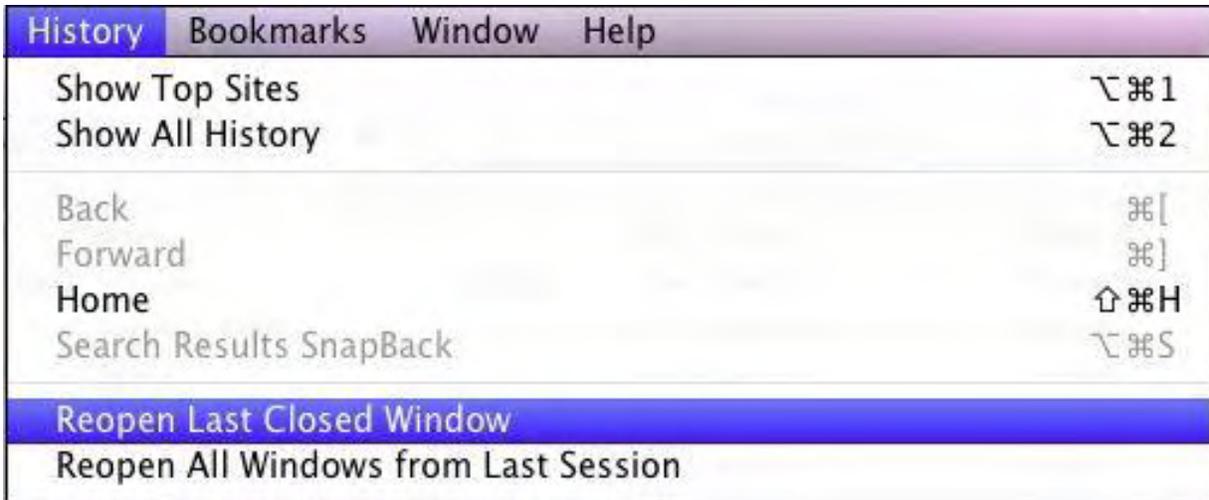


Figure 10. The Reopen Last Closed Window command can open any Safari window you closed by mistake.

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.

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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Rob, The Computer Tutor

Rob, The ComputerTutor: Technology Solutions

“Open Office Impress” by Rob Spahitz

This week we start our investigation of the Impress tool from OpenOffice, a free competitor to Microsoft's Office suite. Impress is the competition for PowerPoint.

This week we start our investigation of the Impress tool from OpenOffice, a free competitor to Microsoft's Office suite. Impress is the competition for PowerPoint. As a reminder, you can download the free OpenOffice applications from www.OpenOffice.org.

Show Off

Sometimes you want to show off some ideas in an electronic presentation. For example, maybe you want to present some vacation photos with nice sliding transitions between slides. Or, with this job market, you may want to impress potential employment candidates with an electronic, animated resume.

To begin, launch OpenOffice's Impress tool (or open a New Presentation from one of the other tools). You'll see a window appear as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Impress presentation creation.

In this case, I'm going to look at the templates and see what's available, so choose the From Template option, and then click on the Next button.

Step 2 of this Presentation Wizard asks you to pick a design theme for the series of slides, as shown in Figure 2.

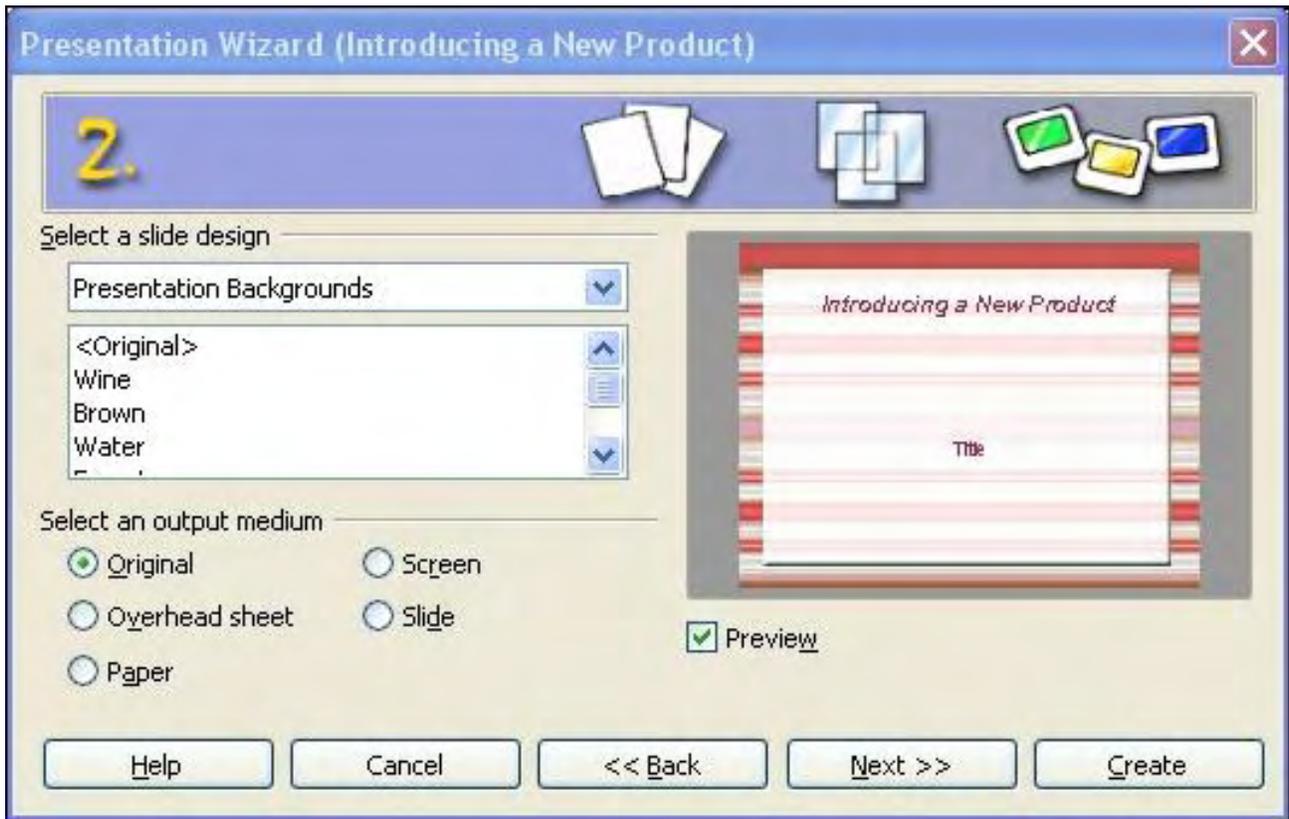


Figure 2. Design selection.

With the idea of a presentation for a family vacation, I'll select the Forest background from the list. When you do this, the preview on the right side shows a sample (after a small delay). And this will be presented on a computer, so I'll select Screen to see how that goes, and then click on the Next button.

Step 3 allows you to pick an effect for transitioning between slides, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Slide transition.

Aside from different effects, you can also indicate how quickly these transitions will occur (Slow, Medium or Fast) and other timing settings for how long a slide will appear before moving on. I'll keep the default and click the Next button.

The fourth step allows you to add additional settings about the presentation, as seen in Figure 4.

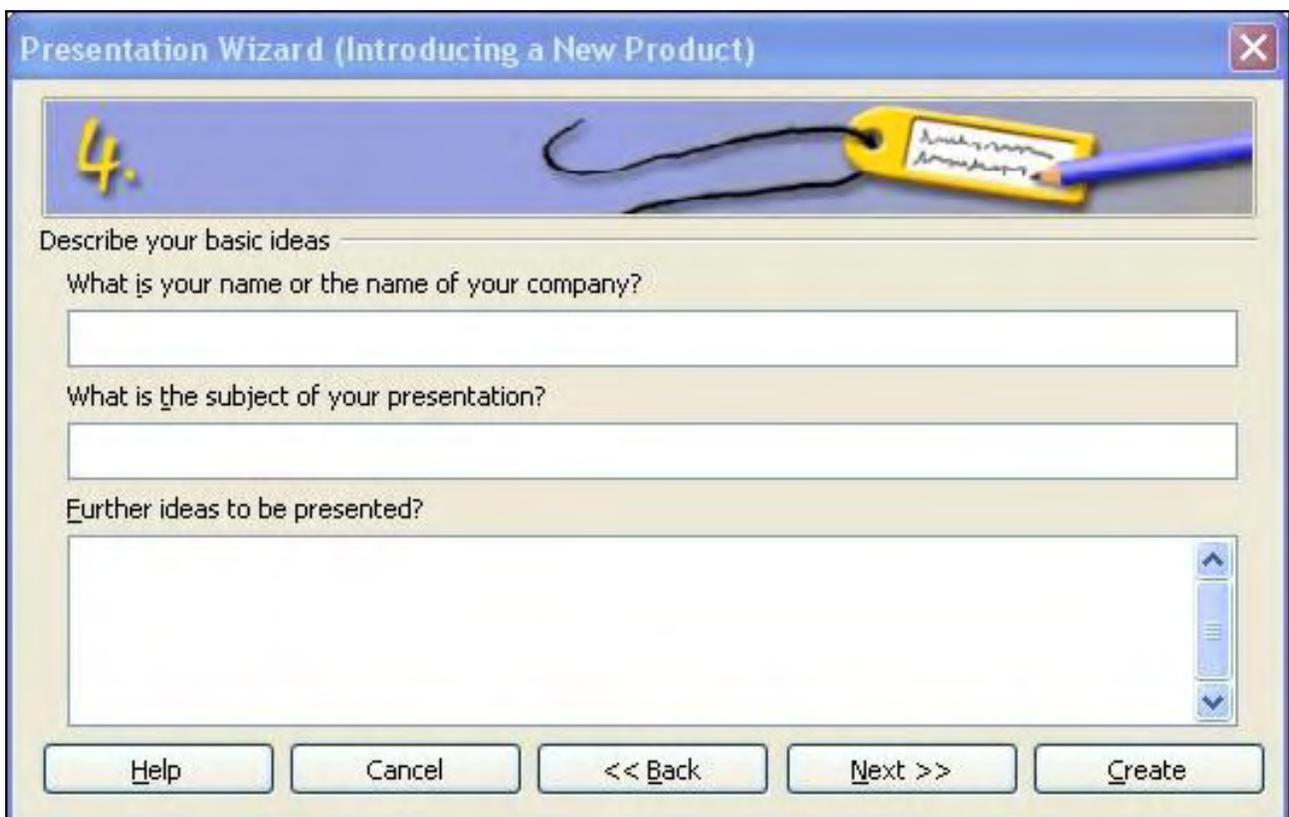


Figure 4. Other presentation information.

I indicated that the subject is my vacation and clicked the Next button.

In step 5, the last step, you get to choose some predefined pages that will get created, as seen in Figure 5.

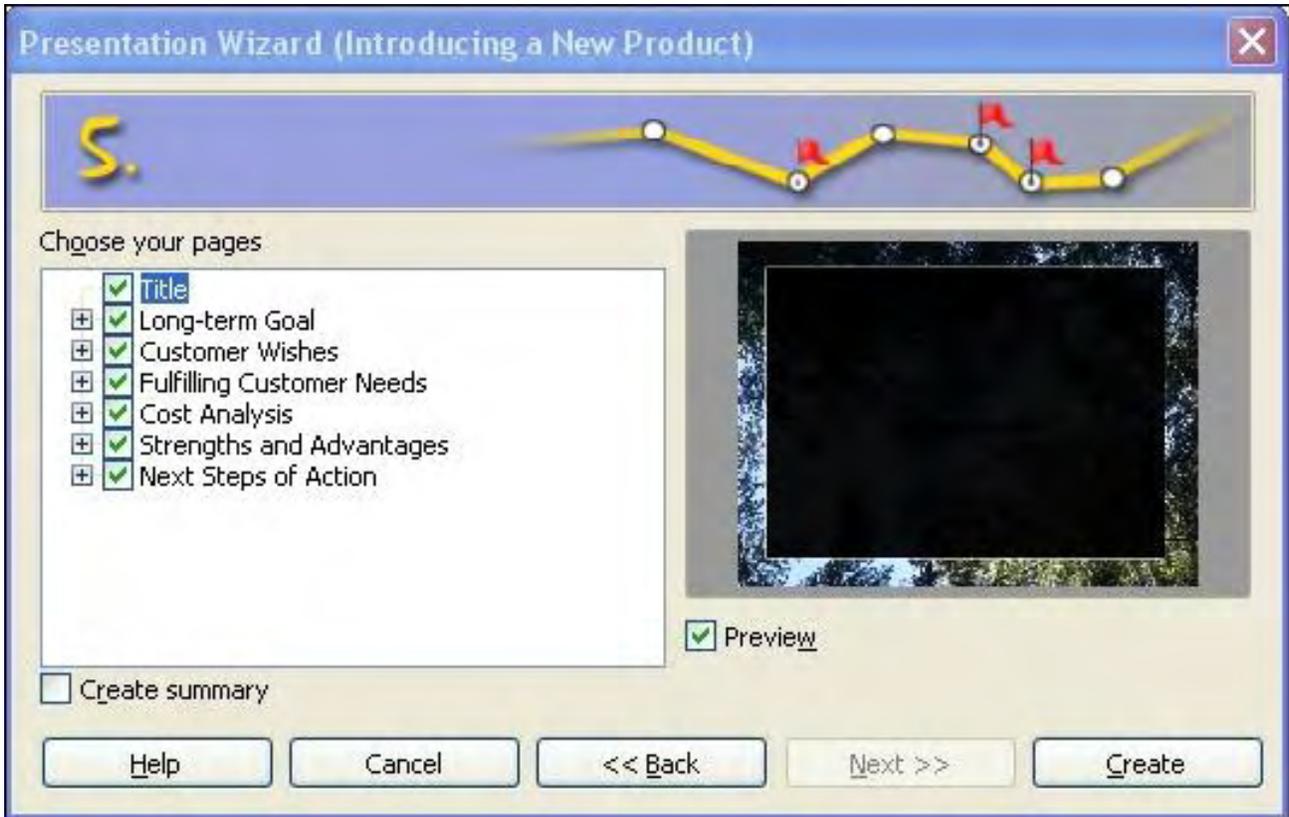


Figure 5. Slide selections.

This is obviously focused on business presentations. Since we will only be using family vacation pictures, it's a bit much. I'm keeping only the Title and Next Steps of Action (just so I have a working page to start dropping photos). Clicking the Create button prepares the presentation, as seen in Figure 6.

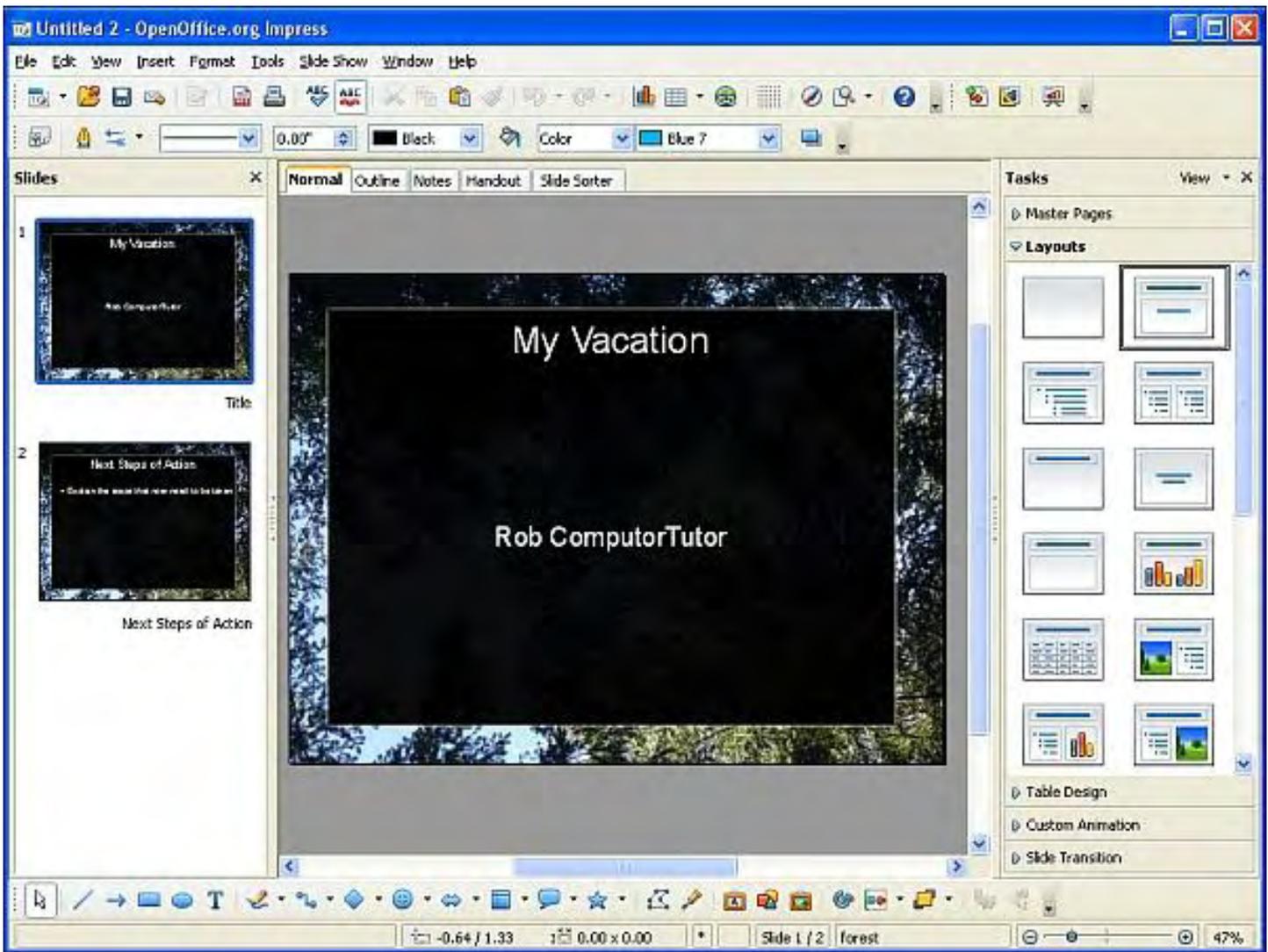


Figure 6. Slide show.

As seen, this product has many similarities to Microsoft PowerPoint. Along the top you see many toolbars that offer a variety of features, including things like a spell-checker, a print option and various editing features.

On the left there's a panel that shows the current selection of slides in the presentation. On the right, you have some sliding tabs. The selected one, Layouts, lets you change the slide to help you organize it. In between these, in a design area, you have a page that lets you prepare the slide the way you want, similar to how you might set up a fancy word processing document.

For now, I'll simply add a picture to the second slide.

On the left, clicking on slide 2 will show it in the main design area. When I go to the menus and select Insert/Picture/From File, I can select a picture, and when I click on the Open button, it appears on the slide as seen in Figure 7.

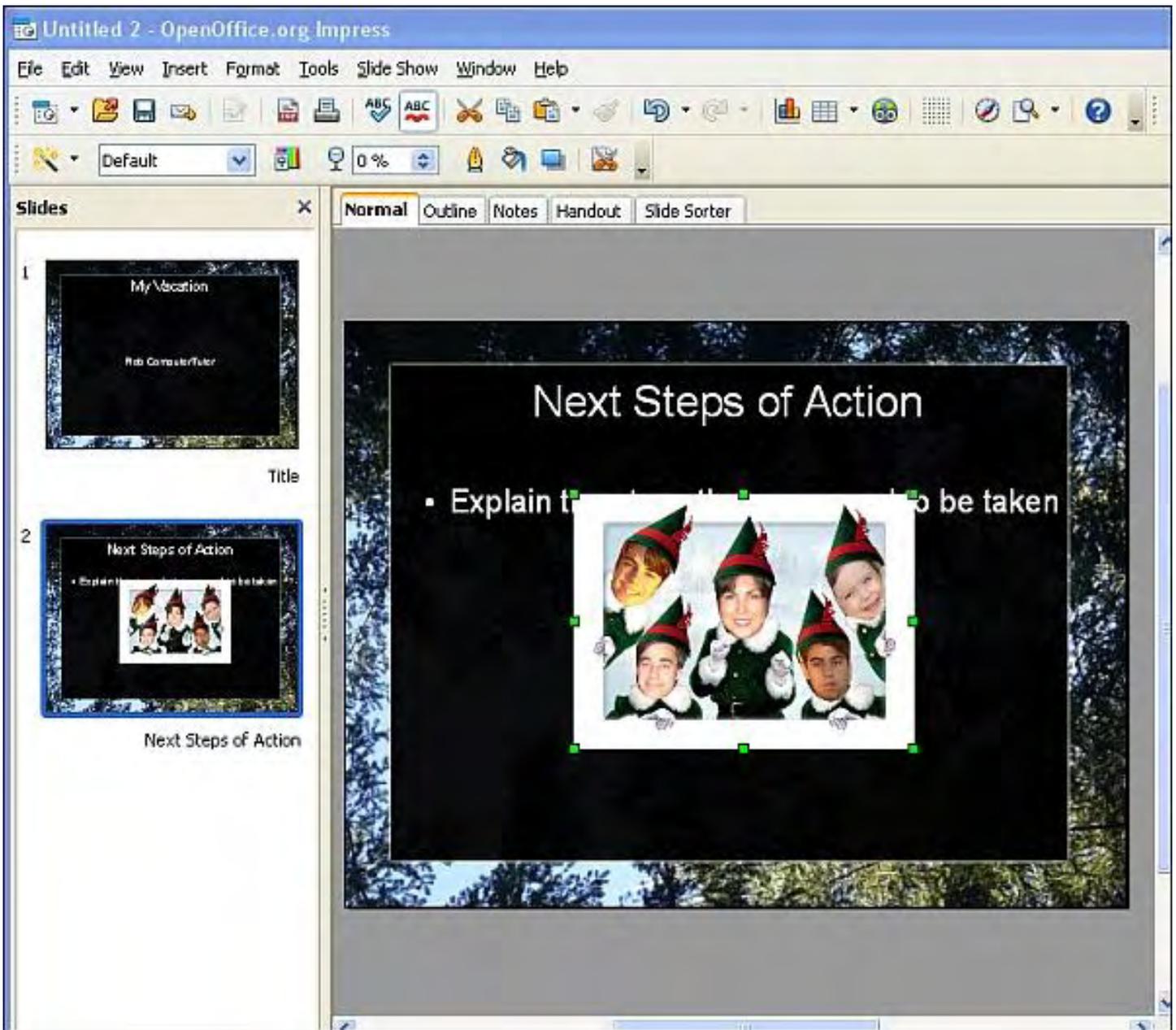


Figure 7. Presentation with picture.

Next, I can click on the bullet near the text behind the picture, and it selects the frame that holds that text. Typing the Delete key removes that.

Then, clicking on the title, I can edit the text to show something like "Happy Holidays."

Finally, after all changes are made, I can go to the View menu and select Slide Show (or press the F5 key) to see how it looks full screen.

Next week we'll explore a few more features of the Impress tool.

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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EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher

“Copyright protection or extortion?” by Jack Dunning

edge WORD

While organizations have a right to protect their copyrighted material, some attorneys for BitTorrent piracy cases may be going too far.

While I haven't downloaded any torrents lately, I did do a little of it almost two years ago. It was an interesting experience, but notably most of the torrents available were copyrighted material—usually movies. It was impressive to see it work—slowly pulling together seemingly random pieces of a file from diverse locations. If you only downloaded for yourself without offering to act as a seed (server) for the torrent, then you were called a leech—not a pleasant thought. With so many other people seeding for the torrents I was downloading, it almost seemed obligatory to act as a seed myself. Who wants to be a leech? However, it is a little scary to seed a torrent when you know that there are predatory attorneys looking to make a few bucks off you—even if you don't download legally protected songs or films.



I do believe that companies have a right to protect their copyrighted property. There are huge investments in these commercial entertainment products, and pirating only makes it more difficult to produce the next blockbuster. However, turning loose groups of lawyers to threaten the family of a 10-year old boy is a cruel way to recover costs and may be illegal. (I don't have any particular 10-year old boy in mind. I've merely read that this sort of thing happens.)

The basic approach to protecting copyrighted material from piracy is to first identify computers that are downloading protected material by the IP address of the violating computer. This can be done by downloading a BitTorrent and identifying the IPs of the seeds (sharing computers). Then the Internet service provider is forced to turn over the names and addresses linked to the IPs. Once the owner is identified, he or she is sent a letter threatening to sue if they don't settle for a

specified amount of money. You can imagine the chill that is felt when such a letter is received by the computer owner—especially if no such downloading has ever taken place. Many people end up paying just to make the whole thing go away. Defending oneself could be even more expensive. The lawyers collect nice fees and, possibly, their clients get a little bit of it. More and more lawyers are getting into this racket.

These attorneys for BitTorrent piracy cases may be going too far. Right now there is a class action suit against a group of anti-piracy lawyers for fraud, abuse and extortion (torrentfreak.com/anti-piracy-lawyers-sued-for-fraud-abuse-and-extortion-101129). If you go too far in protecting copyrights, you may actually be breaking the law. The problem is that the lawyers have little or no interest in actually pursuing any in-court legal remedies. They pump out thousands of letters to lists of possible targets in hopes of churning easy revenues. There is no real investigation.

In fact it is quite possible that the list of targets is almost random. No one is likely to respond unless they think they have something to fear.

Plus, the firms participating in this scheme don't have the resources to sue all the people on their mailing list. In fact, they couldn't sue even a tiny percentage of the people that they go after. Since this is the case, the class action suit contends that this threatening behavior constitutes extortion, abuse and fraud.

Whether this counter punch against the lawyers will go anywhere, I couldn't say. I'm not an attorney. I get my movies from Netflix and haven't had much reason to use BitTorrents. Yet, if one day I happen to receive such a threatening letter, I couldn't help but feel I was being extorted—especially if all my neighbors receive the same letter on the same day.

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

"HTML Programming for Web Sites," "The Future of ComputerEdge,"
"Memory Jogger"

HTML Programming for Web Sites

[Regarding the November 12 Digital Dave column:]

I have just completed a *free* four-hour course in HTML programming at the North City Campus of the San Diego Community College District Continuing Education at 8401 Aero Drive. The instructor, Gini Pedersen, did a great job for the 30 students at their individual workstations. The class consisted of lecture items followed immediately by hands-on experience on the subject items in a Windows 7 environment. Ms. Pedersen did a professional job of instructing as well as providing individual help for those students who needed it. This course is to be offered again later this semester and should more than meet the needs of most of your readers.

-Robert D., Parker, Escondido, California

The Future of ComputerEdge

[Regarding the November 19 EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher column:]

I've read and enjoyed most of your issues both printed and online since the early-'80s days of the Byte Buyer. Your articles and columns have been informative and full of little tips that make use of these now indispensable machines much more user-friendly.

I hope this is not the beginning of a decline in your interest in keeping this publication going. It is a resource that should be kept on the cyber-shelf with all the current manuals and texts available for us all.

I do miss the days when I could sit down in a coffee shop and mull over the ads in the magazine and see what was available for my new "screamer" as I ate my sandwich and let the caffeine tighten the wires. I hope some of the local shops step up to the plate and realize how many of us use this medium to make our choices on equipment and often patronize their businesses after doing so.

-Michael Ker, La Mesa

Your columns will be missed. I've always found your columns the most valuable and entertaining part of *ComputerEdge*. Especially when I'm reading them on Windows 7 and can try out your suggestions on the spot!

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

I have written before, and for many of us who have been dedicated readers since the beginning, just as we have seen changes in the computer world since personal computers were introduced in the mid-'80s, we also should reflect back

on the changes that have already occurred with the *ComputerEdge* Magazine and continue to stay dedicated and contribute to transitions that will be occurring. As an occupational therapist who has used computers and the related technologies to help make my clients' lives better and more productive, possibly with the new changes, non-themed editions, readers with disabilities or their representatives would be able to start contributing on a regular basis to share how the new technologies have and can apply to them. It would be a way to educate/familiarize others who may not be aware of these special groups of people of how a contribution/invention, etc. someone is already making or may make in the future can provide a secondary contribution with wonderful positive results.

-Susan F. McClure, MS, OTR/L, San Diego, CA

I have loved *ComputerEdge* since the mid-'90s, and always looked forward to getting my copy every two weeks of the latest edition. It has always been useful, and I've implemented so many tips and suggestions throughout the years that I read in it. I have bought several products from advertisers in the mag, and loved checking out the latest items and prices to compare.

I missed the hard edition when *ComputerEdge* went digital only, but have learned to love my e-mail editions every Friday. I hope the new format brings the same wonderful articles, tips, advice, etc. Looking forward to many more years of *ComputerEdge*!

-Shon, Littleton, CO

Memory Jogger

[Regarding James Hartnett's November 5 article, "The History of Memory":]

I was in the Navy during the transition from vacuum tubes to transistors, and on to ICs. This was a real memory jogger.

Thank you very much,

-Bill Riddell, 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.

Send mail to ceeditor@computoredge.com with questions about editorial content.

Send mail to cwebmaster@computoredge.com with questions or comments about this Web site.

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