ComputorEdge™ Online — 01/28/11

This issue: Friends in Cyberspace

A look at the People on Internet Social Networks.

Table of Contents:

DEPARTMENTS:

EdgeWord: Are Your Data Safe? by Jack Dunning

Is It "Is" or Is It "Are"?

A reader points out that 'datum' is singular and 'data' is plural. He is correct. But, as Jack points out, language evolves in a way that disregards the rules.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers by ComputorEdge Staff

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

"Cleaning LCD Screens," "Online ComputorEdge," "Printer Cartridges—Premature Expiration"

Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *cewebmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2011 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

ComputorEdge Magazine, P.O. Box 83086, San Diego, CA 92138. (858) 573-0315

Digital Dave

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

A reader is having trouble downloading photos or videos—Digital Dave helps narrow down where the bottleneck exists; a multi-core CPU is not always necessary, but is now more common; a reader's computer shuts off after a few hours of playing games.

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a Dell Inspiron laptop. I'm having trouble downloading photos or videos. It takes forever—if at all. I'm a novice at computing, so I don't know what to look for. Any help you can give me is greatly appreciated.

Robert Mullet
San Diego, CA

Dear Robert,

To understand downloading problems, it's necessary to know where the bottleneck exists in the system. There are a number of pieces to the puzzle which start at the server (the computer where you are getting the download) and ending with your computer. These include the Internet, your Internet connection (dial-up, DSL, cable, etc.), your router, and the network card in your computer.

Assuming that you don't have other issues, such as viruses, the most likely cause of slow download speeds is your Internet connection. Generally, the Internet connection is the slowest part of the system and therefore the bottleneck. The slowest type of connection is dial-up and will result in very slow downloads. It is not uncommon for this type of connection to terminate during a download. I don't know if this is your problem, but there are many Web sites which will test your Internet connection speed (*www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/*). If you are getting download speeds of less than 1 megabit per second then this may be the source of your problem.

DSL providers may offer download speeds of up to 3 megabits, but cable Internet can provide bandwidth of 15 megabits or more. Unless you have a very old network card in your computer, the speeds your computer is capable of receiving are much greater then any Internet bandwidth you have available at your home. If you determine that your Internet connection is not your problem and you don't have a slow network card, then somehow your computer is becoming bogged down. This could be caused by too many programs running or a virus. In this situation you should use the techniques for cleaning up your computer.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I use an older eMachines Athlon 64 3400 (2.4GHz, 512KB L2 cache, 1600MHz FSB) 2GB RAM,

decent video card, running Windows 7 Ultimate 64-bit. I seldom run anything more than Outlook and one Firefox browser window open at the same time. When I play any game, I shut down Outlook and Firefox, so that only the game in running. Is there any conceivable reason that I would need to upgrade to a multi-core processor?

I'm not a techie, don't overclock, just basically a plug and play guy. I have always been an AMD fan, but everything nowadays seems to be four and six core processors. From the little that I've read about them, when you open multiple programs, they're all assigned their own core (processor) until they're all used up. If I'm only running one game, why would I need multiple cores? Am I missing something?

Scott
Mira Mesa

Dear Scott,

The basic rule of thumb is as long as your computer is running and doing what you want it to do, there is no need to change anything. Just because something exists (multi-core processors), doesn't mean you must own one.

Having said that, over time, if you buy a new computer it will become more difficult to find one which doesn't have a multi-core CPU. That is just the way of technology. The processors become both more powerful and cheaper. If you did upgrade, you would be astonished at the greater speed, even though you only use one or two programs at a time. Plus, you wouldn't have to always close Outlook and Firefox to play games.

There are still plenty of uses for multi-cores—even if you only run one program at a time. The Windows operating system has many programs running simultaneously just to do all of its maintenance functions. These will also be shared among the cores in a multi-core machine. So, even if you only run one program at a time, all CPUs will be in regular use.

The problem of speeding up individual programs with multi-core machines is a little more difficult. Applications have been written to run on single CPUs. Dividing up the tasks within a program to take advantage of multiple cores greatly increases the complexity of the algorithms and creates more hardware compatibility and timing issues. It will be a while before common applications will take advantage of multiple processing cores, rather than running in an individual core.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When my computer is used for four or five hours playing games it shuts off. What would cause this? I have a cooling pad which seems to help, but doesn't stop this from happening. Any thoughts on this subject?

David
oceanside,ca

Dear David,

It sounds like some portion of your computer systems is overheating. Most commonly, it could be the CPU, the video card (especially if it happens while playing games), or the power supply. This may be caused by a malfunctioning

cooling fan or the one of the components may be getting ready to fail. First you should monitor your CPU temperature with a program such as Core Temp (*download.cnet.com/Core-Temp/3000-2094_4-10794077.html? tag=mncol;1*). If the CPU temperatures are getting too high, then you will need to get more cooling to the processor.

The CPU will have a fan attached to the top of it, plus there is often another fan attached to the case to expel the warmed air. If either of these fan is not operational, it could result in your computer shutting down when the core temperature gets too high. If all of the fans seem to be operational (you will need to open the case and power up the computer while watching to determine fan function). Another test is to leave the case cover off while running the computer. If it is an overheating problem, this will often supply enough air to keep it running, although leaving your computer open is not a desirable solution—and may actually reduce the proper air circulation. It depends on the case.

If the fans are running, look for a build up of dust. This can cause poor cooling. Clean the fans and heat exchangers carefully with a small vacuum, compress air, or a small light brush. Be careful not to damage any components.

If everything seems to be operational and clean, and the CPU continues to overheat, then you have a faulty CPU. It will either need to be replaced, or it's time to get a new computer.

Another strong possibility is that your video card is overheating. These days, video cards often have giant fans and heat sinks of their own. If the fan fails or is inadequate, the game won't run for long. Try updating the video card drivers. I've seen more than a few gaming crash problems fixed by updating the video drivers. If that doesn't work, it may be time for a new video card. It is not unusual for gamers to need to replace burned out graphics boards.

If all is right with the CPU and video card, then the power supply itself may be starting to fail. This is not uncommon. Once a power supply starts to go, it is only a matter of time before it stops completely. Overheating is one of the signs of a faulty power supply. If it is failing, it will need to be replaced.

Digital Dave

Ten Types of Friends

"The People You Might Meet On the Internet" by Nicole E. Hansen

There are ten (or more) types of "friends" on social networks. Which description fits you?

You may be familiar with a certain social network, which will remain nameless, that has revolutionized the face of communication between friends of all ages and walks of life.

I was reminded of the ease and accessibility of this site when I ran into an old roommate the other day that I hadn't seen for almost a decade! I never thought I would see her again and now she was asking me to be her friend online! I was ecstatic, but got her number just in case it didn't work out. We fumbled through our contact lists and joked about how we never return phone calls.

Once we had accepted each other as friends, I suddenly realized that we appeared to be better friends now online than we had ever been as roommates! We now knew each other's birthdays, favorite music, movies, books, and even political viewpoints! I thought about warning her about my strict censorship rules because of my profession, but I decided that message might rival the awkwardness of ignoring a friend request online from someone that you know at the office. I suddenly found myself distracted as I began to look at all of the pictures she had posted of her three year old! As I continued to look through her pictures and comments, I realized how much she seemed to fit the profile of a particular type of friend. I started to recognize that many of my friends seemed to fit a particular profile like she did. As a result, I compiled a list of ten types of friends that exist on the social network. What type of friend are you?

1. The Frequent Friend

You frequent this site making sure to check your wall at least once a week just to maintain a good profile. You're usually reminded to visit this site by several e-mails a day updating you on every single move your friends make. You've considered setting up an e-mail solely for status and wall reminders. Once logged on, you'll browse status updates, photos and likes. Every now and then something will catch your eye and you'll make a comment, but it's more

of an extracurricular activity.

Eddie posted his mother's chili recipe on his FaceSpace page.

2. The Friend Collector

You are determined to find every person you have *ever* been acquainted with in your life up to this point. Even reading this reminds you of a friend you could look up. You search your high school, college and even support group databases for anyone who might remember your face or name. Even if they don't, you are here to remind them they should. You will find the person you sat next to in sixth grade Math class. They're out there somewhere and you're going to find them! You also make sure you friend every one of your friends' friends. You foster a strong belief that there is no such thing as *too* many friends. Wall maintenance continues to take up a significant portion of your day job.

3. Under-the-influence Friend

Due to certain luxuries of the technological age, including portable laptops and online access through a cell phone, you don't hesitate to post on your friend's wall after a night out. If you still happen to be friends with your ex or someone you met in South Padre, they will usually hear from you. Whether it's appropriate or not, never seems to enter your mind. And even if you don't remember what you posted, luckily your friend, as well as dozens of theirs, will be there to remind you the next morning! Whether you realize it or not, you are a small part of what makes this network truly entertaining.

4. Self-loathing Friend

Even the thought of what you've become a part of, drums up a sick feeling in the bottom of your stomach. You still can't believe that you have succumbed to all of the peer pressure over the years from family and friends about getting online. Wasn't being their friend or relative already enough? The guilt of ignoring countless friend requests started to gnaw at you after a while and you threw in the towel. When you finally rejoined the online community or set up a fresh account, you were reminded that you do have a conscience after all! Always a people-pleaser, as a result you suddenly seem to feel some strange form of acceptance that you never knew you needed before and would never admit. However, every day when you look in the mirror, you contemplate shutting down your profile, but you can't bear to deal with the social ramifications.

5. The Available Friend

Forget all those dating sites! They're way too serious anyway and after all these years in the dating pool you've finally figured it out—just become friends! If you see someone's profile picture you might be interested in, you just shoot them a request. Your profile picture definitely sends the message that you're ready and willing to start something casual with potential to lead up to something serious. Maybe you met them once before and just looked them up again. Your hope is that you will finally meet that perfect person for you. Plus, it's a great way to see updated pictures of potential dates or to find out whether or not they have kids!

6. The Mothering Friend

You've come to realize that the best way to keep tabs on your kids, and stay off their radar, is to become friends with them. It's also a great way to screen their friends, sometimes even before they invite them over to your house or go to the movies. However, you are still learning how to navigate through this site and you often forget that your child's wall is visible to every single one of their friends too. You feel sending an "I love you" reminder every now and then is harmless. When did parenting become so much easier?

7. The New Parent Friend

In this case, the technological stars were aligned when you had a child because you were suddenly able to document your child's every move all on one page! Once you started with pictures, it gradually turned into video clips and easily became your obsession. Everyone knows there is no such thing as too many baby pictures! Every "precious" comment seemed to feed into your little "star's" celebrity status. Oh wait—they're making a cute face—grab the camera!

8. No Inhibitions Friend

Your personal belief is that censoring is for sissies. Those who appreciate censorship should probably not be your friend. You hold onto this belief more strongly than anything else in your life. To you, it has become an exercise of your first amendment rights that no one can take away from you. You can finally be yourself without judgment! This site is just an extension of the online circuit you've come to love and appreciate! Your friend request should almost come with a small disclaimer or an age minimum at the very least.

9. The Creeper Friend

You remember meeting a friend at a party in college or sat next to them in Speech class. You swear you became the best of friends, but there's only one problem—they don't seem to remember you! Every time you send them a message or make a comment, they don't seem to respond. Making friends has always been very easy for you, especially online. You really want to find out what's going on without seeming like a stalker so you send them a very brief, friendly message. When they don't respond, you send them another one. They're really starting to put a strain on your friendship! You start to wonder if they're trying to ignore you. Then you realize maybe they're just busy with work or school. You check your profile as often as possible, just in case they respond.

10. The Photographer Friend

You always take your camera with you wherever you go, and inevitably the people who are out with you will end up in a picture at some point in the night. These pictures will then end up promptly the next morning on your wall. Who cares if you're doing something inappropriate! It was a great time and the picture was too good to *not* be posted on your wall and everyone that was with you! Who needs permission to do something so great? You believe with all your heart that you're providing a very important service, plus you looked fantastic! After all, not posting that picture would have been a waste of a perfectly good outfit!

Whether you fit into one profile perfectly, are a sort-of hybrid friend, or are even still contemplating becoming one at all; it's important to recognize that not all of your friends may have the same agenda as you. There is an element of social networking etiquette that seems to have fallen through the cracks during its infancy. Before the site was even in grade school, its popularity grew exponentially, leaving a huge gap between what's fun and what's appropriate. For some of you it's easy to be offended if a friend seems to ignore your wall's censorship rules and regulations. For others, it's easy to spill secrets or expose something that could jeopardize a friend's personal life or career. How much can you

trust your online friends and what do they think is appropriate? You might learn this lesson the hard way if you're just getting to know a friend for the first time online.

Even if a social exchange with a friend can be tricky, networking has definitely transformed the act of friendship into one fast and easy package designed to make our lives easier. Maybe we all need to loosen up our censorship belts, forget about agendas, and appreciate our friends for who they may be—human.

Nicole E. Hansen is a freelance writer who specializes in writing fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. Her award-winning writing has been published in The National Library of *Poetry's Soft Parade*, *The Anthology of Poetry* by Young Americans, and the daily newspaper, *The Star Herald* in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. In 2001, she was awarded a Philosophy Scholarship by the University of Nebraska at Kearney for her entry in a philosophy essay contest. In 2004 she received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and later received a Master of Education Degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2007.

Hansen lived in the New York metro area where she worked as an elementary school classroom teacher and editor of the school newspaper. She recently moved back to her home state and currently resides with her husband in Omaha, Nebraska where she works as an elementary school teacher. She enjoys reading, traveling, the arts, and volunteering.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"The Dying Print Industry" by Wally Wang

E-books are the future, while printed books are going to disappear—the Kindle and other e-books offer tremendous advantages over printed books; the iPad continues changing the computer industry; what's next in tablets; the continuing growth of Apple.

Fewer people are buying physical books, which is why Borders is flirting with bankruptcy (*www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20110118/FREE/110119840#*). Yet, according to a study by Marketing and Research Resources Inc. (*online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703846604575448093175758872.html*), 40 percent of people said they now read more with e-books than they ever did with print books. The future is clearly e-books.

Recently I attended the American Library Association's winter conference. This conference is geared towards libraries so most of the vendors were selling library furniture, book scanning devices, library cataloging software, and even book vending machines.

Figure 1. Book vending machines allow people to check out a book even when the library is closed.

What struck me most wasn't the vast array of services and products specifically geared for libraries, but how nearly everything at this conference depended on the existence of physical books. Take away physical books and nearly all of these vendors would suddenly go out of business.

Can anyone guess what's going to happen to these people when printed books get too expensive to print, store and ship?

At every vendor, I asked how they planned to deal with e-books replacing printed books. The typical answer was that they all loved physical books and didn't see how physical books could ever disappear, despite the popularity of e-books. If anything, these vendors seemed to agree that e-books would co-exist with printed books.

If e-books and printed books co-exist equally, everyone will be happy. But, given the cost advantages of e-book distribution compared to printed books, is that likely to happen? Just ask Tower Records, Wherehouse Records and even Borders what happened to their music sales of audio CDs.

Talk to music industry people a decade ago and they might have been spinning that same fantasy that audio CDs could co-exist equally with digital audio files, and that holding a physical product of an audio CD would always appeal to people over a digital file.

Perhaps the oddest fragment of antiquity comes from loaning e-books through a library (*www.quora.com/How-does-eBook-lending-work-with-libraries*). The idea is that libraries can only loan out a fixed number of e-books, yet there's no physical reason why a library couldn't loan out a million copies of the same e-book. Libraries can only loan out as many copies of a physical book as they can store, but an e-book can be loaned out an infinite number

of times. All you have to do is make sure borrowers can't keep the e-book and copy it to share with others (good luck with that).

A long time ago in the 90's, I attended BBSCon, a conference devoted to the then burgeoning BBS (electronic bulletin board system) market. There were vendors like Mustang Software, who sold the popular WildCat BBS along with other highly regarded companies that sold software like PC Board, TBBS, Procomm Plus, Searchlight BBS and Telix.

Within one year, the Internet wiped out the BBS market. What did all these companies do? At first, they clung to the fantasy that their products could evolve and co-exist with the Internet. Mustang Software turned their WildCat BBS into a combination BBS and Web server. The trouble was, the world just wanted a Web server and not a BBS, so the BBS market got left behind.

Anyone see a pattern here?

The printed book industry is finished. With fewer people buying physical books and fewer stores selling them, the cycle is spiraling down. Printed books are obsolete. E-books are clearly the future with lower cost of storage and distribution.

In the old days, most books were printed in black and white because color was too expensive. With e-books, the cost is the same whether to print in color or black and white, so given a choice, e-books will always be printed in color.

In the old days, only a few books were printed in large type due to the small market for people with vision impairments. With e-books, any book can appear in large type just by increasing the font size.

In the old days, only a few books were converted into audio books because it cost money to hire someone to read and record an entire book. With e-books, a computer generated voice can read any book at no additional cost. Say good-bye to separate audiobook titles.

In the old days, you needed huge buildings to house collections of books. With e-books, you can store thousands of books on a single flash drive. In the old days, you needed librarians to organize, search and sort through a book collection. With e-books, you can search through text in multiple books without any human intervention, with no more difficulty than using a search engine.

In the old days, you could destroy a book by burning it. With e-books, you can easily make multiple copies and store them as digital files, making it nearly impossible to eradicate completely. In the old days, you had to physically transport a book from one place to another. The longer the distance, the more time needed to transport the book. With e-books, you can instantly transfer any e-book, no matter what its size, within seconds to the other side of the planet.

Anyone still think printed books are going to survive against e-books? With cost, convenience and storage working against printed books, not to mention physical limitations like the inability to display large text or read to a person, printed books look antiquated compared to the possibilities available with e-books.

If e-books are the future and digital files can be easily copied and pirated, what's going to happen to the book publishing industry? The music industry already showed us what happens when digital content is more important than physical packaging. To survive, the book industry will need to move beyond the static information of printed text and embrace the multimedia world of information presented as text, graphics, audio and video.

Combine the written information of a book with audio information and video content and you have the makings of the e-book format of tomorrow.

Billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin company recently launched a digital iPad magazine called Project (*www.*

observer.com/2010/virgin-ipad-magazine-full-sorcery). Initially, Virgin sold it for $2.99 an issue, but when demand failed to appear, they gave the first issue away for free.

The Project magazine combines text, graphics and video along with interactivity. In one article, you have to wipe away virtual dirt on the page to read the text. On another page, a short video plays.

Right now these video and animated effects are more gimmicky than useful, but when interactivity becomes more practical, that's the future of e-books, e-magazines and e-newspapers. Just as movies evolved from their filmed stage play appearance to a visual art form all its own, so will e-books break away from the limited paradigm of static text and move to interactivity.

Like putting together a movie, the e-book of tomorrow will be more of a collaborative project between a writer, a video director and a graphics/page layout designer. Tomorrow's e-books will gradually evolve until they become a unique information format that looks radically different from today's printed books.

Until that happens, there's no point in fighting the future of e-books. It's coming whether you like it or not. Now all you have to do is make sure you don't get blind-sided when it does arrive.
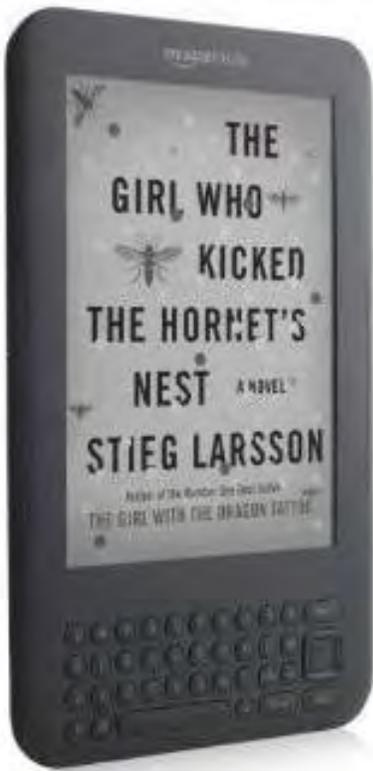
Highlighting on the Kindle

If you visit Amazon's Kindle site (*kindle.amazon.com/*), you can see a unique feature of e-books that will likely further promote the popularity of Amazon's Kindle e-book format. Since you can highlight different passages of a book, Amazon's Kindle can track which passages of text people find most useful. The following are the most popular text that Kindle readers have highlighted from the book *Strategic Entrepreneurism (*www.amazon.com/gp/ product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894*)* by Jon Fisher:

Highlighted by six Kindle users: "To succeed in business, you just need to identify a problem with an existing business and find a way to make it better."

Highlighted by four Kindle users: "A strategic customer is one that is both representative of your target customer and possesses a reputation as a leader in its field."

Highlighted by four Kindle users: "true entrepreneur isn't someone motivated solely by money or power, but by the desire to make a difference."

Highlighted by 3 Kindle users: "You don't just want any customer; you want the type of customer who can help establish your company as the leader in its field."

Figure 2. Amazon's Kindle lets you view what other people have highlighted in an e-book.

By studying what other people find valuable in a particular book, you can skim through a book's main points and decide for yourself if you want to read that book too. Can such collaborative highlighting be possible with printed books? Nope, and this is another huge drawback that will help bury printed books into the ground.

Even if you don't share your highlight text with others, e-books still offer tremendous advantages over printed books. With a printed book, highlighting is permanent. However with an e-book, highlighting isn't as destructive. You can highlight as much text as you want and remove it later. Multiple people can highlight text in different colors and choose to view only their own color highlighting or highlighting created by other people.

Anyone still think printed books will peacefully co-exist with e-books despite the lower cost, minuscule storage requirements, and multiple advantages of e-books? Printed books have advantages that e-books cannot match, but e-books have so many more advantages that printed books can't match, and that's what's going to bury printed books into the dust bins of history.

The iPad Continues Changing the Computer Industry

In Knoxville, Tennessee, a private school is requiring all fourth through twelfth graders to have an iPad. If they don't have one, they can lease one (*www.ksla.com/Global/story.asp?S=13880126*). Jim Manikas, technology director at the school, says that the school wants the iPad to replace textbooks over time.

"Once I explored it, I was really excited, because there are things we can do better on this than we can on a paper text," said Elli Shellist, an English teacher at the school.

With continuing interest in the iPad, it's no surprise that Apple sold more than 14 million iPads (*business. financialpost.com/2011/01/18/apple-reports-record-breaking-quarterly-results-again/*) in 2010, even though the so-called "experts" estimated that iPad sales would be as low as 1 million (*www.asymco.*

com/2011/01/19/unforeseeable-growth-analyst-failure-on-ipad-as-indicator-of-disruptive-change/)
for the entire year. Not only is the iPad hurting laptop sales (*www.netribution.co.uk/stories/173/1984-forecast-apple-ipad-2011*), but with the iPad and MacBook Air relying on solid-state drives, the iPad is now hurting the sales of mechanical hard drives (*www.tickerspy.com/newswire/?p=3918*), another obsolete technology that's just waiting to disappear.

Even Acer has announced that they're going to focus more on tablets (*www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/acer-tablets-will-be-replacing-netbooks/*). Today, nearly every student has a laptop or netbook. Tomorrow, many students will have an iPad or other tablet device instead of a laptop or netbook, cutting into the potential sales of the laptop and netbook market.

What people want is a fully functional, lightweight computer that they can take anywhere and use without worrying about its battery life for an entire day. No device meets this criteria completely, but the iPad is getting the closest. Whether you get an iPad or another tablet device, the tablet category is simply defining a new growth market for computers with Apple's iOS leading the way into the enterprise, according to Good Technology (*www.good.com/resources/Good_Data_Q3_2010.pdf*).
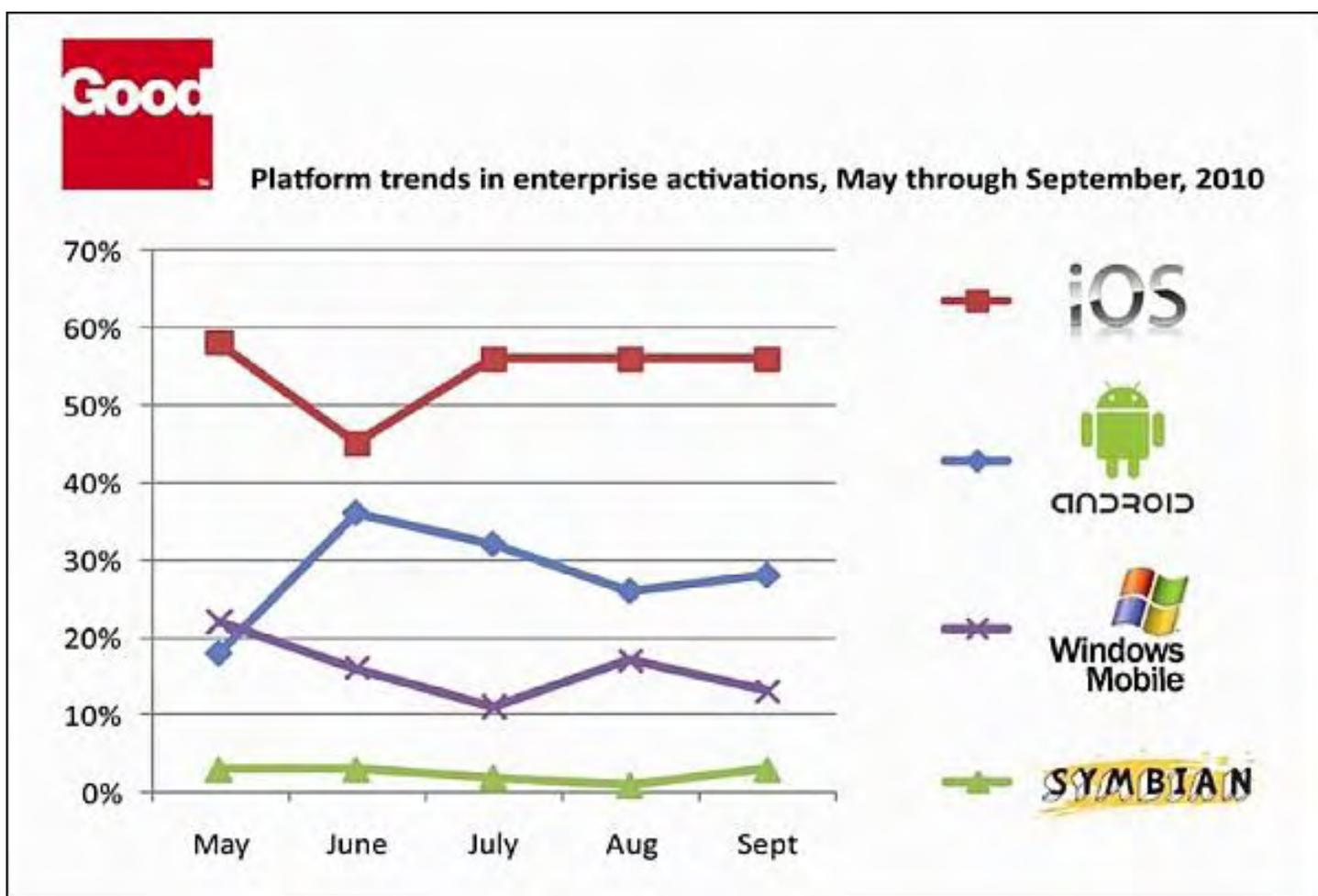

Figure 3. Apple's iOS devices continue to gain rapid enterprise adoption with Android in second place.

What's Next in Tablets

It's no secret that Apple is preparing to launch version 2 of the iPad around March or April. The two most likely features include front and back facing cameras and a higher resolution display. Other possible features include a built-in SD

(Secure Digital) card slot, dual processors and GSM/CDMA chips to allow the iPad to connect to AT&T or Verizon's cellular phone network.

These seem the most logical new features, so if you're still trying to decide whether to get an iPad or not, you might as well wait a few months longer. Then you can either get the newest iPad or buy the current model iPad for a lot less.

In the non-iPad market, you can still wait for an official release of Android 3.0 designed for tablets. Until then, all those rival tablet manufacturers can do nothing. On February 9th, Hewlett-Packard will announce webOS running on a tablet, so that might be the first non-iPad tablet to consider.

RIM also plans to launch their Playbook tablet sometime in the first half of 2011, so you can expect to see it right after RIM gets a chance to examine the iPad 2 before committing themselves to their own tablet. With so many tablets coming from different manufacturers, the only clear winner will be Apple, while everyone else measures themselves against the iPad to search for an advantage.

The Continuing Growth of Apple

Apple recently announced their four quarter results (*blogs.computerworld.com/17688/ apple_holics_shocking_aapl_stats_and_fiscal_facts*) and as expected, sales of every Apple product (except for the iPod) continues growing. In the past quarter, Apple sold 16.24 million iPhones, 14.79 million iPads and 4.13 million Macs, along with reaching 10 billion apps downloaded from the Apple App Store. The sales of Macs alone increased 23 percent from the previous year. The same Macintosh users probably aren't buying multiple computers every quarter, so it's likely that many former Windows PC users are either buying a Macintosh to supplement their current Windows PC or as a replacement altogether.

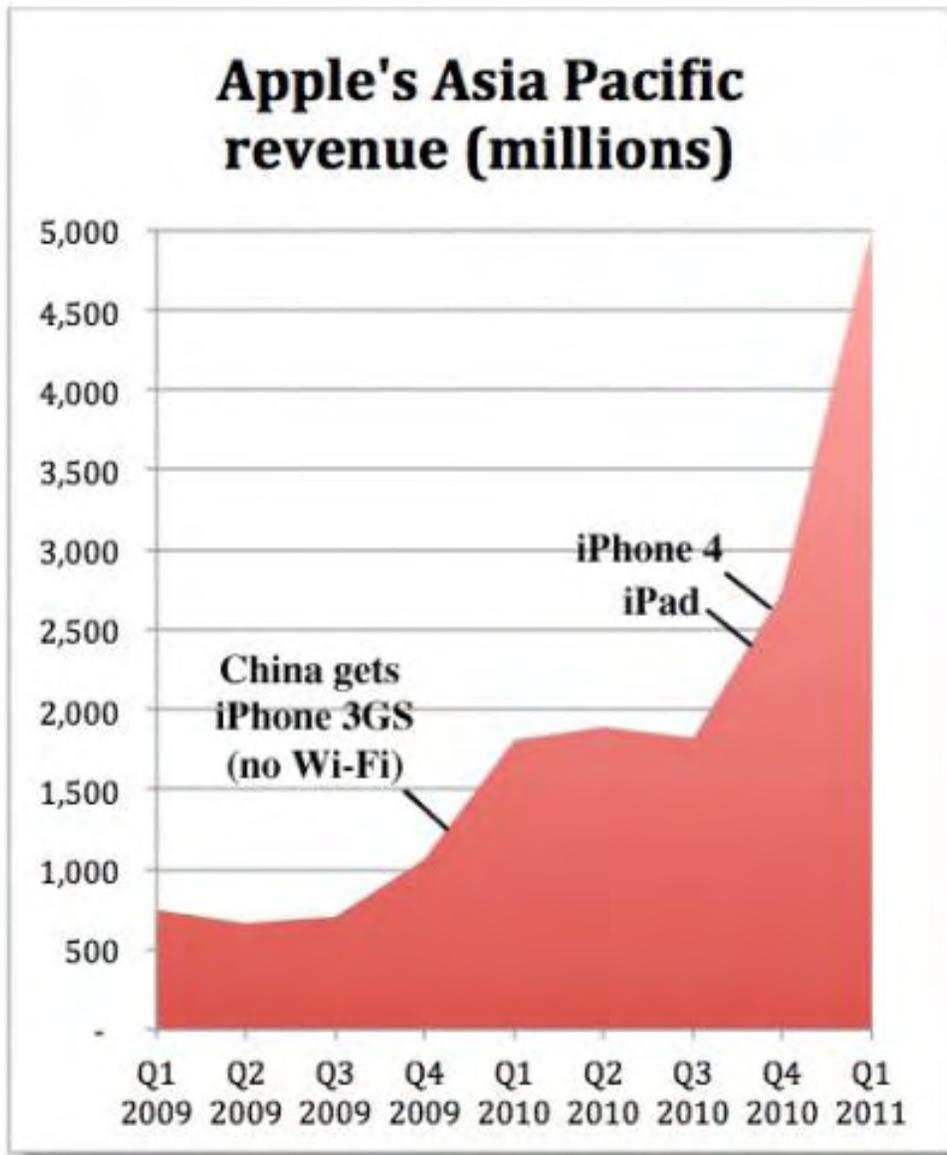Figure 4. Sales of Apple products have skyrocketed in China.

Macintosh growth in the Asia-Pacific region (*tech.fortune.cnn.com/2011/01/22/chinas-love-affair-with-apple/*) is up 67 percent, while in Japan Macintosh growth is up 56 percent. One reason why the Macintosh may be popular in Asia is due to its unique character recognition feature, which lets you draw characters with your finger on a Magic Trackpad.

Figure 5. On the Macintosh, you can either type characters or draw them on a Magic TrackPad.

As you draw part of a character, the computer displays a list of likely characters you may be trying to write. That way you can just tap the character you want without having to finish writing out every stroke of your desired character.

Figure 6. The Magic TrackPad lets you draw Chinese characters with your finger.

In the last quarter, Apple earned $2.6 billion in China alone. With the iPhone 4 available on both GSM and CDMA networks, and with Apple devices able to recognize Chinese characters drawn by hand, it's likely that Apple will continue selling more products in China.

The iPhone and iPad's virtual keyboard can easily adapt to another language such as Chinese while the Macintosh can adapt to Chinese through a Magic TrackPad. Of course, Windows also allows Chinese input just as long as you follow these simple instructions (*www.pinyinjoe.com/windows-7/win7-chinese-intro.htm*).

*   *   *

If you're one of many former Windows PC users who are switching over to the Macintosh (or have an old Mac that you no longer need), you can recycle your computer through Apple. Just visit Apple's recycling page (*store.apple.com/ us/browse/reuse_and_recycle*), specify the type of computer you have, and the company will send you a postage-paid box to ship your computer.

Figure 7. Apple accepts used computers for recycling.

When the company evaluates your computer, they'll quote a price and if you accept, they'll buy your computer by sending you an pre-paid gift card. If you don't accept the price, they'll mail your computer back to you.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

Microsoft Office 2010 for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?*
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987),
Beginning Programming for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?*
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702),
Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?*
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541),
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*).

Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362*)

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*. He also blogs about the latest technology trends at his personal site *www.wallacewang.com*.
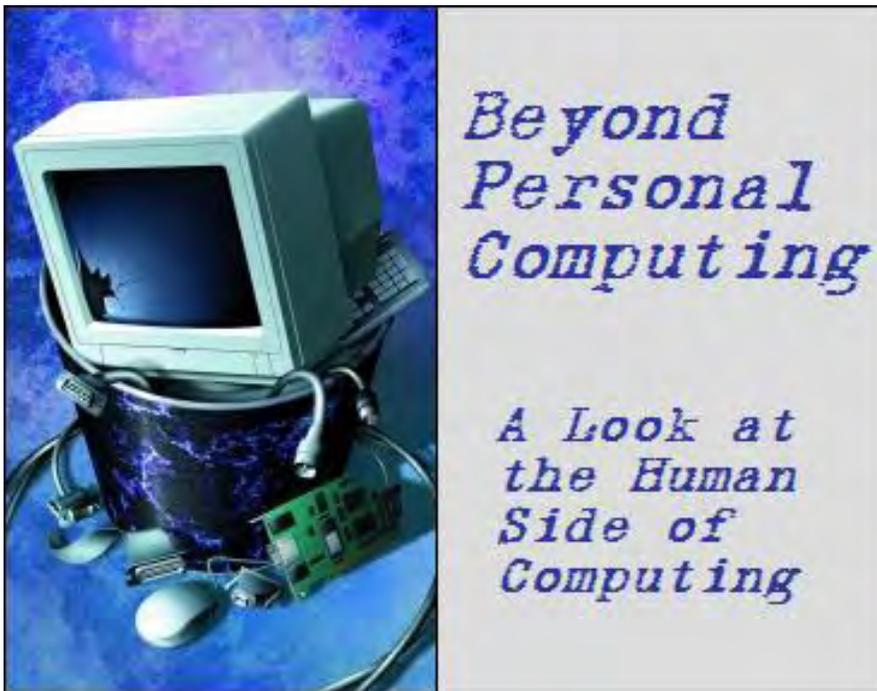
Beyond Personal Computing
"Internet Acronyms and Emoticons: Let's Hear It for BRVTY!" by Marilyn K. Martin

Acronyms and emoticons have evolved, starting to dominate both Internet and text messaging communication. Marilyn points out high tech visual shortcuts that are commonly, and uncommonly, used today by both children and adults.

In the old days, we called them "contractions," like "don't" for "do not." Or "abbreviations," such as "inc" for "incorporated." And the government slammed it out of the park long ago, using "acronyms", like GAO for Government Accountability Office. Or HRBSL for 'High Radiation—Blistering Skin Likely.'

Besides the government, major industries have also had their own specialized acronyms, as understood short-cuts for their internal usage. Some science/tech acronyms that caught the public fancy even ended up in popular usage, like AI for Artificial Intelligence, or LASER for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.

NASA has some great acronyms in the "Say what?" category. AES means Atmospheric Exchange System. ("So I can breathe in O2, but don't have a high enough clearance to breathe out CO2. How exactly is that supposed to keep me alive, again?") Although CR can mean Card Reader, Certification Requirement, Crew, Control Room, Change Request or Configuration Review. ("That's affirmative, Houston. Tell the CR that the CR has put in another CR for a CR to get a new CR, if the other CR continues to be held up by the old CR.")

Today, however, especially for that 24/7 blizzard of electronic instant-messaging, acronyms and emoticons are in everyday use for both brevity and added emotional-expression. Most common-use acronyms (also called initialisms) started out as science fiction "fanspeak" in the middle of the last century.

When science fiction fans started building and programming computers, they brought along their "fanspeak." And suddenly it spread to a wider audience, and turned into "Internet-slang." (Such as the all-important AFK for Away From Keyboard. As in "Been working on a motherboard to run four mouses and twelve speakers simultaneously, but I'm back now.") Other colorful geek-speak includes IRL for In Real Life. And my personal favorite, RTFM for Read The Flaming Manual! (And, um, depending on how angry the sender was at that moment, other 'F' words can be substituted for 'Flaming.')

Some of the most well used examples of these Internet-slang acronyms include LOL for Laugh Out Loud, and OMG for Oh My God! Kids, especially, love to use these exuberant acronyms, to express their surprise and/or excitement. "OMG! The Jonas Brothers will be in town next week! I can't wait! Although, my parents still think they are a juggling act. LOL!"

Adults have picked up on LOL too, many times using it down-cased in a more droll or ironic sense. ("He's got a PhD, but probably still thinks the sun orbits the earth. lol.") FYI (For Your Information) has long been in use in the corporate world. And BTW, or By The Way, is just another version of FYI. These are usually adult type acronyms, as in "Here's something else to consider ...."

Other acronyms used more by adults include IMHO (In My Humble Opinion), which is usually added to a sharply-worded opinion, to deflect any criticism that the writer is a know-it-all. Also used mostly by adults are the acronyms AFAIK, for As Far As I Know, and TNSTAAFL for There's No Such Thing As A Free Lunch.

The expansion and accessibility of the Internet has even spun off specialized acro-speak. People who haunt chat rooms have no problem understanding that *$ means Starbucks, and LMIRL means Let's Meet in Real Life. To the much younger set of chat room participants, PLOS means Parents Looking Over Shoulder, LTTIC means Look The Teacher Is Coming, and LKITR means Little Kid In The Room (who presumably knows how to read a computer monitor).

A lot of Internet-slang are just substitutes for Goodbye. These are especially important in chat rooms, to put just the right emotional spin on your parting. From the friendly-generic TTFN for Ta Ta For Now, to TTYL for Talk To You Later. Also CYA for See Ya, and BFN for Bye For Now. Some more clever partings combine acronyms and one-letter words or punctuation, like BCNU, for Be Seeing You, or ::poof:: for I'm Gone! More specific reasons for ending a chat include IHAIM for I Have Another Instant Message, to AAK for Asleep At Keyboard.

In today's cyber-culture, people also love to use picture or punctuation emoticons, as a shorthand to express how they are feeling. From a variety of programmed "smiley faces," to clever punctuation, people can now use this short-hand to express exactly how they are feeling at that moment. Usually added at the end of a sentence or message, you too can let others know that you are sleepy, hungry, crying or hung-over. (Possibly to explain why your disjointed, fragmented message looks like it was written by a third grader in a hurry to get to the lunch room, before all the mac 'n cheese is gone.)

Do-it-yourself emoticons using punctuation keys are fairly easy and widely used. These range from the ubiquitous :-) for Happy, to :-(for Unhappy. But also include :-D for Laughing, and :-/ for Perplexed, Frustrated or with Mixed-feelings. And :-O can be Surprise, while >:-O is used for Being Angry and/or Yelling.

Some kids get into such sophisticated emoticons, however, that "computer monitoring parents" end up more than a little baffled. How many parents would recognize that *(.:......:.)* is a Monster With Claws, or (^||^) is a Smiley Vampire? Or how about @-_-@ for Princess Leia ("Star Wars"), which is similar to (@_@) for Dazed and Confused?

With many punctuation emoticons, clarity is many times a little muddled. Especially confusing are emoticons that can mean vastly different things. Such as :-* which can mean I'm Drunk—or Sending You A Kiss. While :3 can be a kitty face—or a butt-face. Which is also one punctuation-change from <3, representing a Heart, as in "I <3 U!"

In adult usage, as mentioned before, these punctuation emoticons can take on a richer subtext or subtlety. They can be used to try and not hurt someone's feelings, or soften-the-blow of what they just wrote. Like "You really were being a jerk. :-)" as in, But I Still Like You. Just as verbal politeness and courtesy once served as softening-barriers between angry individuals, emoticons can now be used in cyber-space to mute hostilities, but still get your point across. Such as "OK, I'll stop stalking you. :-(" (Which IRL generally means, don't cancel the Restraining Order just yet.)

Some of these punctuation-emoticons can break down along gender lines. Ladies can identify themselves with :-{}, as in Wearing Lipstick, or 0:-) for wearing a Halo and being Innocent (however tongue in cheek). Females would also be

more inclined to use :'-) for Crying Happy Tears, or (='-'=) for a Kitty Face. And remember the days of writing SWAK (Sealed With A Kiss) on the back of letters (actual, paper and envelope) to boyfriends? Or signing letters with XOXOXO for Hugs and Kisses? Today in cyber-space, the proper punctuation emoticons are * for Kiss and () for Hug.

While guys are more likely to use more graphic punctuation-emoticons like %-(meaning they are Confused and/or Drunk. And they would be more inclined to reference someone else as :-(), for Won't Stop Talking, or even post _!_ for Giving Someone The Finger. There is even, um, rather graphic punctuation to describe a guy's favorite body part. (Which opens up a whole new category of porn-icons which, if you are so inclined, you can research yourself on the Internet.)

Computer software specifically for cute and colorful picture-emoticons is now available, mainly of the smiley-face variety. A few even come with toolbars so that you can include just the right face/picture emoticon to express yourself. Some software even has applications that can replace text emoticons automatically with small picture emoticons. Such as certain versions of Microsoft Word which have an Auto Correct feature that replaces punctuation-smileys with a single smiley-character.

More sophisticated or detailed emoticons can even represent a larger concept, like a guitar for 'music,' with some notes even being played. While other applications use text codes which are automatically replaced with graphical-motion emoticons, like :dance: which turns into a dancing, animated figure.

So acronyms and emoticons have added a whole new level of emotional and text brevity to instant messaging, in everything from e-mails to blogging. Although mistakes can occasionally occur with installed text-code-to-graphics software emoticons. One office was horrified to discover that e-mail discussions about their 401(k)s, turned up on the receiving end with the (k) translated as a big pair of puckered red lips ready to Kiss.

With government regulators and IT departments now dealing with corporate Message Storage and Retention Directives, all this graphic-expressiveness may or may not be such a good thing. Will people in 2069 really know what is meant by "Enjoyed your speech yesterday. (-.-)" (sarcastically meaning I Slept Through It)? Or what about "Glad your trophy was almost as big as mine :-P" (for Sticking Your Tongue Out, or a Wry Grin)?

Or will all these added emoticons just use up corporate e-mail storage space faster? At least until someone creates 'Auto-Delete For Emoticons Before Storage' software. And future historians will end up thoroughly puzzled by ignored insults, warnings and threats. When the original cyber-messages all contained "defusing" or "just kidding" emoticons.

But, hey, historians occasionally get it wrong anyway. "04/23/2303, Today In History: An inflammatory instant-message from the U.S. President to the Leader of the Nuclear Glow Archipelago, was warmly received and a genuinely kind reply was sent back. Pharma-historians think the U.S. President was under the influence of power-hostility drugs. And the calming-drugged Archipelago Leader was attempting to take the conversation into a higher intellectual and emotional-replacement level." (With an animated emoticon at the end depicting that specific historian, scratching his bald head as he sits in a giant question mark.)

Then again, far future communications software may go in the other direction. Instant-messages may contain all acronyms, to be "fleshed out" on the receiving end. "TSMMBGMFMBJBU.IORD?" will be received as "The Saturn moonlet my boyfriend gave me for my birthday just blew up. Is our relationship doomed?"

For now, just watch out for those acronyms and emoticons. If you don't download specifically clear picture emoticons, be sure you know what your punctuation-emoticons really mean. And, in the immortal words of Mr. Spock, *bckslsh**bckslsh*V/ ('Live Long and Prosper').

Marilyn K. Martin is a freelance writer of nonfiction and fiction living in East Texas. She is the author of several published mini-articles and is currently writing a Young Adult Science Fiction series, Chronicles of Mathias, (*www.amazon.com/Chronicles-Mathias-One-Reptilian-Rebirth/dp/1598249002*) Volume One and Two are available on Amazon.

EdgeWord: Are Your Data Safe?
"Is It "Is" or Is It "Are"?" by Jack Dunning

A reader points out that 'datum' is singular and 'data' is plural. He is correct. But, as Jack points out, language evolves in a way that disregards the rules.

Hi, Jack—Thanks for continuing to make ComputorEdge Online *so helpful and worthwhile. The articles are informative; Digital Dave is priceless. So I regret a complaint, but I was taught that 'datum' is singular and 'data' is plural. Wikipedia agrees. So "Is Your Data Safe" sort of grates on the ear—at least mine.*

OK, small complaint—sorry—keep up the good work for all of us.

Dana Moran

You're technically correct, Dana, and I sympathize with your position. When I was a kid, my father worked at the Naval Programming Center at Point Loma in San Diego. He was the first to inform me that it is supposed to be "these data" rather than "the data." He continues to note this fact ever since. Sadly, today, if the title had been written "Are Your Data Safe?", there would have been many more ears tweaked. Even your Wikipedia reference (*en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Data*) acknowledges that this is an unsettled issue. "Data is accepted and often treated as a singular mass noun in everyday educated usage." There are not enough native Latin speakers (engineers and scientists) to make using plural conjugations and articles with the word data to make it sound right to the the average person's ear.

It is annoying that language evolves in ways which totally disregard the rules established by centuries of academia. Ordinary people are allowed to create non-words (or use real words in the wrong way) and eventually push them into general acceptance. The television and computer age has only made things worse.

One of my pet peeves is sports commentators who use the word "athleticism" when they mean "athletic ability." My ears always perk up with disdain when it is invoked. Many of the fans sitting in the stadium have more athleticism (enthusiasm for sports) than the players. However, I know in my heart that I am most likely fighting a losing battle. The more it is used, the more likely it will become the norm, eventually being officially accepted. The only thing which might change this inevitable course would be an internal memo at ESPN banning the use of the word "athleticism."

Total Irrelevant Side Note: Whenever I see Joe Buck doing a football game, I think back to when someone claiming to be Joe Buck's (or maybe Jack Buck's, both sports casters) nephew borrowed $20 from me to make up the difference for a ski lift ticket. I gave him my address, but he never sent any money. I suppose that he probably lost my address. The story has now become part of any sporting event where Joe Buck is acting as a commentator. It's almost like Joe Buck owes me $20—which he doesn't.

Another change in the American language, I think we can attribute to the British and the influx of their murder mysteries. I now regularly hear on the television news the term "gone missing" when they are referring to someone's disappearance. I can't remember ever hearing those words used in that manner while growing up (and I lived all over the United States). It's not like the word missing is a active verb such as fishing. "First, I'm going fishing, then I'm going missing—or maybe in the other order." "Gone missing" is used so much now, that it almost sounds as natural as "He has disappeared."

Another problem with the word data is that it was used as a name for the android in *StarTrek: The Next Generation*. For many people, that alone would make the word "data" seem singular. We don't call people Larrys, Freds, or Jacks, unless there is more than one person with the same name. (When I was in college, there were nine Jims all living on the same floor. If you called one by name, they all turned around.) Data on StarTrek was a singular entity which (rightly or wrongly) reinforced the concept of oneness for the word data.

People don't like most change even though it is inevitable. Our language will continue to make these little adjustments. It is out of our individual hands, but, if we like, we can still get annoyed when something doesn't sound right.

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

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Cleaning LCD Screens," "Online ComputorEdge," "Printer Cartridges —Premature Expiration"

Cleaning LCD Screens

[Regarding the January 7 Digital Dave column:]

There is a solution that's available by mail (that's where I found it) for cleaning LCD/Plasma screens etc. It's also great for eye glasses and anything else delicate. It's called Purosol. It's not particularly cheap, but it works and works well and comes in different size spray bottles. I've used it on big screens, laptops and electronic face plates and it has done a great job. Hope this helps.

-John, Encinitas. CA

I clean my glossy LCD screen, on my HP laptop, with 96% drinking alcohol. It cuts grease and grime easily and does not hurt the screen. It also leaves no residue, if you use a new paper towel or napkin. For the frosted (non-glare) surface of my Samsung LCD TV, only water and paper leave no residue or discoloration.

-Pat, Sebastopol, CA

Online ComputorEdge

[Regarding the January 7 Digital Dave column:]

Regarding Stan in San Diego reading the online version of CE. He can also sign up for an online subscription (*webserver.computoredge.com/subscript/subscriptlist.mvc*), and receive it in his e-mail inbox every Friday as I do.

-Eric, Temecula

I have set "*ComputorEdge* Online" as my home page on Microsoft Internet Explorer. This way, I obviously get the latest issue as a greeting every time I use IE. I also use Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome, so I make it a point to open all three each week. Ironically, I don't recall what my home page is from time to time on Firefox and Chrome!

-Cicero, Colorado Springs, CO

Printer Cartridges—Premature Expiration

[Regarding the January 7 Digital Dave's response to Peg Salisbury:]

I had exactly the same problem just last week. I took the malfunctioning cartridge back to where I purchased it, and they simply replaced its microchip. Problem solved, no questions asked, and I was on my way again in five minutes.

-Jerry Palsson, Tucson, Arizona

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

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