ComputorEdge™ Online — 02/04/11

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Our Best Defense Is Self-education.

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Digital Dave

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

A reader's HP Compaq is freezing—Digital Dave offers some possible solutions; how to find hidden files and programs; a reader is getting a dialog box that a program is not responding and wonders if there is a way to test if his computer memory is working to full capacity.

Dear Digital Dave,

My HP Compaq (Vista Home Premium) freezes up. This is happening more frequently lately. Is it a hard drive problem or a virus? Sometimes ESC will bring it back. Otherwise I have to "kill" it and reboot. Any info will be appreciated.

Paula Sutera
Santee, CA

Dear Paula,

Overtime, as you do various tasks and install programs, Windows computers (especially Vista) will start accumulating routines (virus scans, files backup, etc) which will slow down the computer. These slowdowns can be significant. It is quite possible that there is nothing wrong with your computer hardware or software, but the delays (apparent freezes) you're experiencing are outlasting your patience. There are times when you may think that your computer has crashed because it is not responding, while it is merely bogged down with a multitude of maintenance routines. The only way to check this out is to leave the room, get a cup a coffee, then come back to see if the computer has revived. This is an important test, because if you keep rebooting every time your Vista machine appears to freeze, then you won't be able to rule out either a hardware or software problem.

If you find that your computer does indeed recover (given enough time), then you need to start the cleaning process. Some issues may be caused by specific programs (especially virus scans) running at the wrong time. You will want to run a program such as CCleaner (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?zone=SD&issue=2731&article=persrev*) to remove unneeded software remnants. You may need to limit the number of programs which will automatically load on start up.

If you computer does not come back after a wait, then there is something (software or hardware) causing the problem. It could be a problem with over heating as expressed by last week's letter from David. Be sure to review the comments from other readers at the bottom of the column regarding laptops overheating.

You will want to rule out software. This could involve uninstalling recently installed software, rolling back your system to an earlier restore point, or, in worse case scenarios, it might involve reinstalling the operating system. However, you don't want to overlook hardware problems. I've seen bad USB ports on a computer cause random crashes.

There is no way to rule out either a hard drive problem or viruses without going through systematic troubleshooting techniques. The first steps are always to run virus scans and otherwise clean up your machine. If you can't find an

infection or a software problem then you will need to start troubleshooting your hardware. Run the error checking program (chkdsk.exe—open Properties for the drive and select the Tools tab) for the hard drive. If it finds and fixes numerous errors, it could be a indication that your drive is starting to go bad. Be sure to backup all your important data before you start this process.

Ultimately you need to eliminate all the possible causes one by one—and there are many. Hopefully, you will eventually isolate the problem and get your machine running again reliably again. If you are forced to do a reinstall of the OS and the problem is still there, then it is almost certainly a hardware problem. Sad to say, sometimes the answer is a new computer. However, there is plenty to do before you resort to buying a new machine.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have hidden accessories and some other programs that I do not know how to recover. I know they are somewhere in the dark recesses of my computer. Please help.

Jerry Waddell
San Diego, Ca

Dear Jerry,

It can be pretty frustrating when files disappear. Our greatest fear is that we accidentally deleted them. However, even if we have inadvertently hit the delete key, there is a good chance that you can recover them.

In the default mode, when removed with the delete key, files are moved to the trash folder called the Recycle Bin. They will sit there until an action is taken to Empty the Recycle Bin. The Recycle Bin will have an shortcut on the Desktop (unless you have removed it). You can also find it toward the bottom of the list of file locations in Windows Explorer (Windows key plus E). But before even looking for deleted items, I would do a search for one of the lost files.

One of the most common ways to lose a folder or file (I've done this myself) is to accidentally drag it to another folder or drive. It's easy to do. All that is needed is the depression of the left-mouse button while over the file's/folder's name and the movement of the mouse. When the left-mouse button is released, the folder or file is moved into whichever folder the cursor happens to be hovering over. "Where the %$## did it go?" If you do a search for one of the files, after found, you can open its folder location (right-click on file/folder name) and drag everything back to where it belongs.

Since it is your accessories that appear to be hidden, it is important to note that the Accessories folder contains links (or shortcuts) to the programs and not the programs themselves. Even if you deleted the Accessories folder, you would not have deleted the programs—but you would need to recreate the shortcuts. If you do a search for one of the programs such as Notepad, you will most likely find the shortcut and thus be able to locate where all the Accessories have wandered off to.

If those shortcuts are no where to be found, then you will need to recreate the Accessories folder and the individual shortcuts. Find the actual programs, most in the system32 folder, right-click and select Create shortcut. Drag the shortcut into the new Accessories folder.

Another possibility is that the files or shortcuts may actually have become hidden. In that case, you will need to open the Accessories folder, select Folder and Search Options from the Organize menu, and select the View tab (Windows 7 and Vista). See Figure 1. In Windows XP, use Tools => Folder Options.
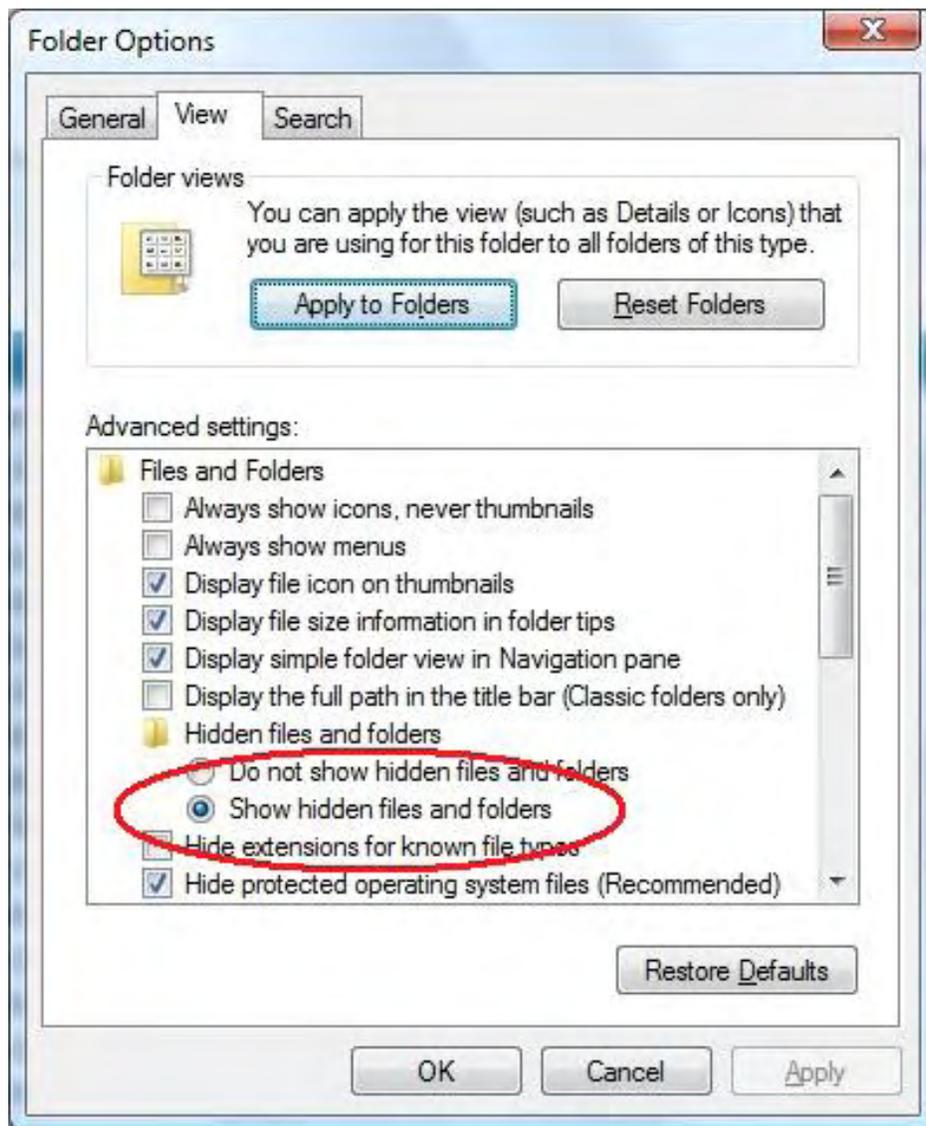
Figure 1. Windows Folder Options window.

Be sure to select and Apply "Show hidden files and folders." If this was the problem, then the files should now appear in Windows Explorer.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When I shut down my computer, I always get the dialog box that the program, CDirectoryChangeWatcherHelper, is not responding and I have to always click the End Now button. What is this program? I've thoroughly searched the Registry and can't find any trace of it.

Also, is there a way to test your memory, to know if each DIMM is working to full capacity. I have 4GB (Four 1GB sticks) but every program that gives me system info, including windows system info says I have 4.096 physical memory, but then says 2.27 available physical memory. Does that sound right?

Thanks,

Rob Macfie
San Diego

Dear Rob,

It seems that the error you're getting is most likely related to the program Nero Scout. You can find out how to disable it on the Web either here (*www.help2go.com/Tutorials/Software_Utilities/ Disable_Nero_Scout_in_Nero_7.html*) or here (*kc-studio.blogspot.com/2007/12/solution-cdirectory-change-watcher.html*). Finding these answers wasn't brilliance on my part. I merely used your error message as a search term for a Google search and up they popped. Whenever I see a strange error, I always do a search trying to find a solution. It isn't always successful, but it will often point me in the right direction. In your case, the error is so specific that it is most likely a Nero Scout problem—even if you didn't know that you had it.

It doesn't sound like you have a memory problem. Nowadays, I rarely see memory going bad, plus there is nothing to indicate that you have a memory problem. However, you can run Windows Memory Diagnostics, MdSched.exe, with the run command, or in Windows 7 or Vista, type "memory" in the Start Menu Search field and select Windows Memory Diagnostics from the list. When the system is rebooted the memory test will run.

What you are seeing for your available memory is normal if you have a 32-bit operating system for your computer. 4GB is the maximum addressable memory in a 32-bit computer. Any other devices with their own memory, such as video cards, will steal memory addresses from the original 4GB. It is not uncommon to see available memory that low when there is a capable video card (with lots of memory) installed. The only solution is to either get a less powerful video card or get a 64-bit systems—although both of those approaches may present other problems (not enough video power or problems running legacy software).

Digital Dave

Geezers, Computers, and Cyber Crime (Maybe)
"A close encounter of the Internet kind." by Keith Taylor

Hewlett Packard keeps an eye on Keith's computer, periodically running diagnostic checks. This was great until he received a phone call from Steven—leading Keith to file a report to the Internet Crime Complaint Center.

Even we geezers find that writing and rewriting and tweaking is easier with a computer's word processor than with typewriters or (gasp) paper and pencil. It's the computer's connection to cyberspace that gives us fits. And while computers make our lives easier, the ease of conquering once laborious tasks with a few clicks of a mouse lulls us into complacency—or so goes my theory on cyber-crimes.

The manufacturer of my latest computer, the redoubtable Hewlett Packard Company, tries to keep my ten-month-old model purring along by keeping an eye on it. Periodically it runs a diagnostic check, but only after a notice, and always with my permission. It's a polite program, and quite honest.

So far it has worked. HP discovered a malfunctioning hard drive. A technical representative explained the problem. Then he sent a replacement drive free because the computer was still under warranty. My son, a computer engineer installed it. Later a call to a tech representative cleared up another problem. In addition to that, I was starting to understand folks whose first language was Hindi.

Protecting my computer is important. As a freelance writer and author I have many thousands of manuscripts, plus dozens of dirty pictures of people doing impossible things. Valuable stuff! I extended my warranty and even paid extra to cover personal

"I just found the FBI's list of most popular Internet fraud schemes. All we need to do is pick one!"

service so I wouldn't have to actually pick up a screwdriver and get inside the thing. It cost $135 or so, but my computer and its contents were secure.

Or, were they? A while back I received a phone call, sounding just like a tech rep, accent and all. Strangely his parents had given him an Anglo Saxon name, Steven. Steven either claimed or insinuated he was from Windows and he was bearing bad news. According to him my computer had many issues with my Windows 7 program. "Issue" is new doublespeak for problem. I think it has religious connotations.

To prove his point, and maybe scare me a little, he sent me to a Web address where he had me click up something or other. Then Steven led me through the steps to a page where it showed how my computer had been talking to the Window's program and had reported some 1588 issues. He remarked that was a lot. He also told me that a dozen or so were serious and one or two of them were critical.

Then, as had HP representatives, Steven asked permission to access my computer and he would show me how to fix it. Naturally I agreed. Hey, I was used to this. Help was offered from afar—or from India—at least.

The solution was unveiled. I should replace my warranty and McAfee with a special package for only $500 which was the only way I could get rid of those issues.

Whoa! Something was wrong here. I felt as if I'd been transported back to my younger days when I sold encyclopedias to supplement my Navy income. Peter was giving me a sales pitch. He followed the script right down the line. He compared what I was paying for what his plan provided. Hell I could buy all sorts of stuff with what he was going to save me. All I had do was send five hundred bucks! His program would last a lifetime. I'm not sure if he meant my lifetime or the computer's. Neither figured to be a long time.

I had one helluva time getting him off the phone. His foot was in the door and had the persistence of a Tijuana salesman selling a tapestry of a bullfight. The spiel reminded me of those "free" home security systems. The installation is indeed free, but they charge every time their sensors detect any unusual activity. My neighbor's cat wanders into our lawn at 3 am just to see my porch light come on. That mangy critter would run up an amazing bill for me.

But I finally prevailed in my insistence to "think it over." I shut off the computer, including the modem. Meanwhile my wife had called my kid. Then I called HP tech support. As Sherlock would say, "the game was afoot."

I was on the line with Peter from HP when Mike arrived. He drank the last cup of coffee and said Windows never calls anybody, not even if my computer was going to blow up the world.

And Peter from HP was an affable dude. He even offered that I was lucky because a guy with a really bad accent had just got off duty and his own accent was great even if only by comparison. Peter also affirmed that the other call probably did not come from Windows.

We spent a good hour on the phone checking things out and running a complete scan. When it was done my computer got an absolutely clean bill of health—no malfunctions or viruses—nothing evil of any sort.

I did what I always tell my kids and grandkids to do, called the cops. A friendly Chula Vista cop listened politely. Then he told me as long as I didn't send the guy any money it wasn't a crime. I didn't ask if it would be a crime if a guy pointed a gun at someone and demanded money, but the victim walked away? He suggested I report it to the The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)—a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the National White Collar Crime Center, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

I called our own FBI guy and special agent Jonathan Cupina, and I filed a report to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (*www.ic3.gov/*).

But, was a crime committed or was this just a bending of the rules? And how far does our jurisdiction extend? I'm guessing that with the worldwide scope of cyberspace and the limitations of American law enforcement outfits to our national boundaries, the bad guys can get away with it in India.

They've been doing it from Nigeria for a long time.

Keith Taylor is a retired navy dude who lives in Chula Vista. He can be reached at *KRTaylorxyz @aol.com*.

Knowledge is Your Best Protection from Cyber Crime

"Find out what they are trying to do to you." by Jack Dunning

> Jack reminds us how to protect ourselves from Internet scams and malicious Internet criminals—with a guide to the many articles published about this topic in ^i#ComputorEdge#^.

The best way to ensure that you are not a victim of computer or Internet rip-offs is to educate yourself. Learn what's happening in cyberspace and watch for any signs of malfeasance. Be suspicious of everything—even if the offer appears to be blessed by a friend. Over the years, *ComputorEdge* has published a number of articles on the malicious efforts of those who would like to victimize you. While it may not be the same people who are doing it today, the current crop of crooks tend to employ the same old scams. Remember the number one rule is: "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is a scam."

A couple of months ago, Marilyn Martin wrote the column "Spam, Ham and Related Scams" (*webserver. computoredge.com/online.mvc?zone=SD&issue=2838&article=beyond*) with tips about e-mail Spam, which turns out to be Spam.

Last year we devoted an issue to protecting yourself from Internet fraud. Michael Ross offered "Identity Theft Countermeasures: Basic security precautions to protect your identity" (*webserver.computoredge.com/online. mvc?zone=SD&issue=2829&article=cover*) and Pete Choppin wrote "Is Online Shopping Safe? Basic safety measures when shopping online." (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc? zone=SD&issue=2829&article=in1*) Each article gives specific tips on how to protect yourself.

Thinking of starting your own business? Earlier in 2010 Pete Choppin wrote about "The Most Insidious Scams: So-called business ventures may lure your money away." (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc? zone=SD&issue=2818&article=in1*)

In 2009, Wally Wang and Michael Ross gave us "Online Fraud 101: Con artists have expanded their reach," (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?zone=SD&issue=2712&article=cover*) and "Scams Online: The Net is a moneymaking opportunity for fraudsters" (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc? zone=SD&issue=2712&article=in1*) respectively in the *ComputorEdge* "The Latest Internet Scams" issue.

Although written in 2008, Wally Wang's "How to Avoid Phishing Scams: Your own intelligence is the best defense" (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?zone=SD&issue=2630&article=cover*) continues to offer important advice for today. In that same issue, Michael Ross wrote about ransomware (*webserver. computoredge.com/online.mvc?zone=SD&issue=2630&article=in1*).

Even articles which are over five years old, such as Dawn Clement's "Auction Scams: Anyone who bids in an online auction can become a victim of fraud." (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc? zone=SD&issue=2402&article=in2*), will give you insight into how to deal with computer and Internet fraud.

Unfortunately, there will always be nefarious people attempting to take advantage of the unaware. The Internet has merely offered another medium to be employed in those schemes. Yet, at the same time, those who are fighting all types of crime are also using the Web to help us protect ourselves. The Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section of United States Department of Justice has a Web site (*www.justice.gov/criminal/cybercrime/ccnews.html*) which will keep us up-to-date on the latest cases being pursued. As more people are sent to jail for hacking into computers, the legal deterrent grows. Hacking is not merely kids testing their computer skills. People are being locked up for long periods

of time.

Naturally, the FBI is at the forefront of passing along tips for protecting ourselves from Internet fraud (*www.fbi.gov/ scams-safety/fraud/internet_fraud/internet_fraud*). Do you want to know the current scams being employed on the Internet. The Internet Crime Complaint Center offers a list of Internet Crime Schemes (*www.ic3.gov/ crimeschemes.aspx*) with detailed descriptions. The same Web site gives us Internet Crime Prevention Tips (*www. ic3.gov/preventiontips.aspx*).

One of the primary delivery systems for Internet fraud is e-mail. It helps to know the e-mail tricks employed by the crooks and the slime who wish to damage your computer. Reviewing the Spam highlighted in previous issues (*webserver. computoredge.com/sitemap.mvc?feature=Columns&columnedcode=spam&column=Spam%20of% 20the%20Week*) of *ComputorEdge* will help you to recognize the malicious messages as they arrive—and they will arrive!

There is no shortage of information which will help make us aware of the risks involved with using computers and the Internet. It is up to us to take advantage of those resources, thereby better protecting ourselves.

If you have any protection tidbits or schemes you have encountered while roaming the Internet that you would like to pass along to other readers, please leave a comment by clicking the link at the top or bottom of this article.

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*

Wally Wang's Apple Farm
"Spotting Trends" by Wally Wang

> Spotting trends is easy if you observe—the iPad is a trend Microsoft missed; fighting and healing people with an app; trial versions of office suites; the Wall Street double standard against Microsoft; a twist in piracy; reading faster with AceReader Pro; the Egyptian Internet blockade.

It's easy to spot trends in hindsight, yet the same information seen in hindsight was equally visible at the time they were occurring. The reason most people don't spot trends is because they simply refuse to look for them, clinging to the past while ignoring the present.

To learn how to spot trends, follow these suggestions from Yahoo! (*www.associatedcontent.com/article/104136/ how_to_spot_the_next_big_trend_.html?cat=41*) The secret is simple; just observe. More importantly, keep out your fantasies about what you want or think should happen and deal with the reality you see around you.

Paul Thurrott writes a pro-Windows blog and initially declared the iPad an iDud (*www.winsupersite.com/blogs/ tabid/3256/entryid/75681/apple-drops-an-idud.aspx*). However, less than a year later with iPad sales exceeding 14 million in 2010 and corporations like Wells Fargo and DuPont buying iPads (*www.cnbc.com/ id/41222669*), Microsoft has responded with a PowerPoint presentation to convince enterprise customers not to choose the iPad (*www.zdnet.com/photos/microsofts-ipad-battle-plan-for-partners/6188774*) and to look at Windows-based solutions instead.
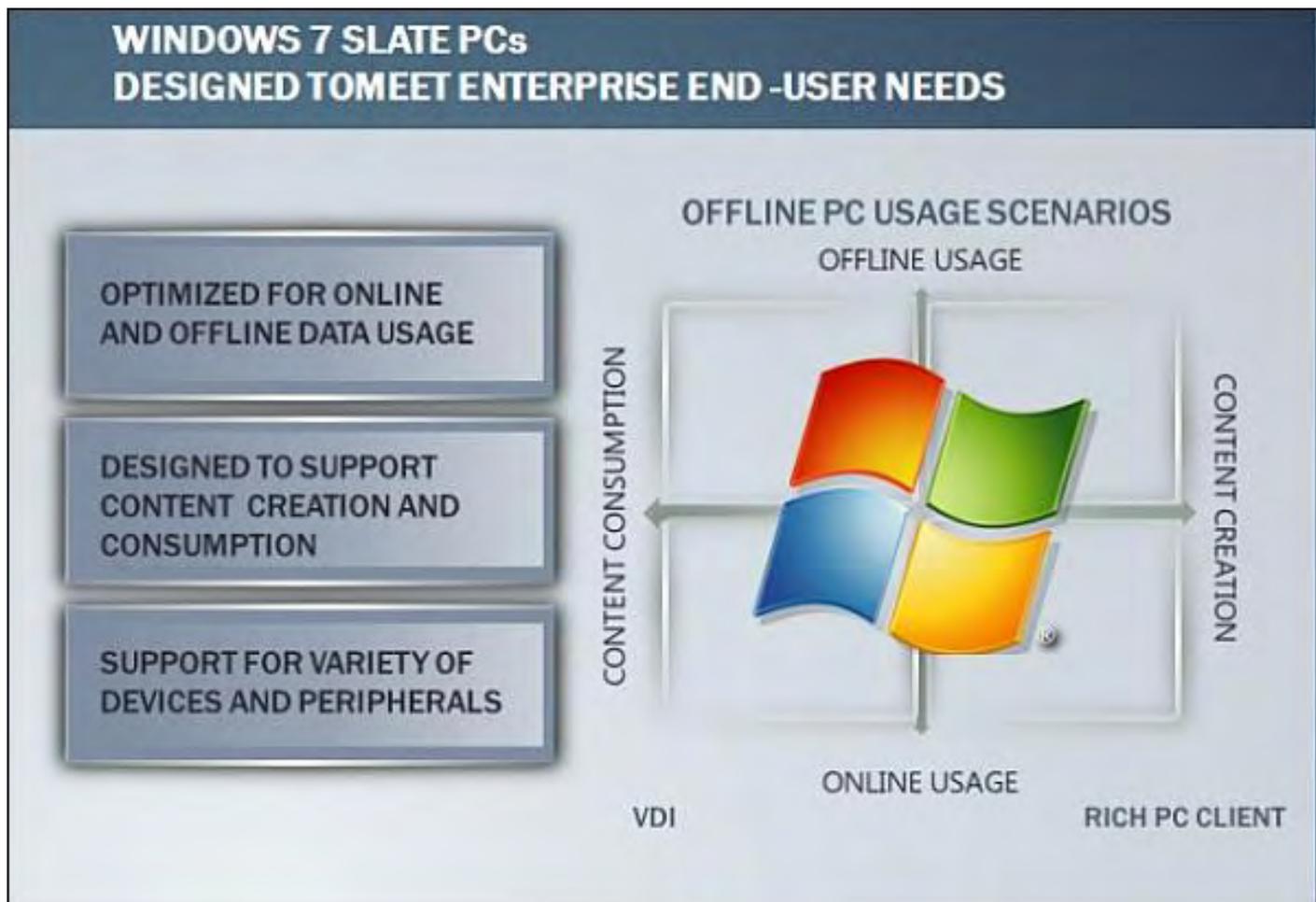
Figure 1. In response to the iPad, Microsoft claims that Windows-based tablets offer an enterprise solution.

Even Paul Thurrott, who initially thought the iPad was a dud, can't ignore facts about the iPad's success and Microsoft's typical tactic of trying to convince people to avoid getting technology available now if they just wait a few years to get an inferior solution from Microsoft later.

Paul Thurrott declares (*www.winsupersite.com/article/paul-thurrotts-wininfo/Microsoft-s-iPad-Response-is-Too-Tepid-Too-Late.aspx*), "Microsoft, I'd like to introduce you to reality. In reality, Apple sold tens of millions of iPads last year and is on track to sell tens of millions more next year. In reality, people are buying iPads. In reality, they're not buying Windows 7 based tablets. And in reality, they never will...This year, millions of people will choose tablets. Virtually none of them will run Microsoft software."

When pro-Windows enthusiasts can't avoid hiding from reality any longer and unapologetically criticize Microsoft while praising Apple, that's obvious a sign of a changing trend.

Even the pro-Windows site, Windows 7 News & Tips (*www.windows7news.com/2011/01/25/microsoft-slideshow-takes-aim-ipad/*) has this to say about Microsoft's attempts to convince enterprise customers to shun the iPad:

"It's not that Microsoft doesn't have a point, it's just that they don't seem to be learning from the past. Microsoft seems to be forgetting that promises of manageability and enterprise-readiness only really sells products to stodgy IT middle-managers incapable of seeing beyond the next Windows release. Historically, though, the wants and needs of consumers have driven enterprise adoption. People buy and use things at home, they begin to see how these things could benefit them at work, and then they start asking for them. Once enough people have gotten them, centralized management and

enterprise-friendly features follow. The same has held true with Windows—poor consumer reaction to Vista kept it out of businesses, and Windows 7's good reviews and consumer adoption has in no small part driven business adoption.

"It doesn't matter how many slideshows they throw at the problem—until Microsoft develops and releases a compelling tablet OS (or a compelling tablet front end that sits on top of Windows) that consumers want to use, Windows tablets are going to be relegated to the same niche they've always occupied."

The trend is clear. Contrary to the wishes of the anti-Apple critics, the iPad is a success and has spawned a growing tablet category with Android, RIM's Playbook and Hewlett-Packard's webOS jockeying for a share of the market, while Microsoft still tries to convince everyone that Windows 7 is the answer for tablets and in another two years, Windows 8 will be even better. Meanwhile, all of Microsoft's former partners such as Dell and Hewlett-Packard are focusing on alternatives to Windows to run their tablet computers.

Does anyone still think the iPad will fail because it lacks built-in USB ports, Flash support, or a replaceable battery? With the success of the iPod, the iPhone and the iPad, does anyone still think that Apple products should always be ignored and avoided at all costs? More importantly, does anyone still think that Microsoft will forever maintain their dominant position in the computer industry from now until eternity?

Here's a final comment from the Windows 7 News & Tips site regarding Microsoft's response to the iPad. Is this the type of comment you'd expect to find on a pro-Windows site with no one else angrily refuting the conclusions?

"They [Microsoft] failed to anticipate iPad (even though they had years to do so), and spent the last year trying to deny it was succeeding instead of working on a competitive alternative. Now, because PC sales are being affected, they are forced to acknowledge there's a problem and are doing their usual routine when that happens: FUD to play for time. It won't work. And by 2013, when they finally have something, the tablet market will already be decided between Apple and Google. Which means the accelerated decline of Windows and Office, and therefore the company, is now assured."

Fighting and Healing People with an App

The U.S. Army has discovered the usefulness of smart phones like the iPhone and Android (*www.washingtontimes. com/news/2011/jan/24/soldiers-on-battlefield-turn-apps-into-arms/*). The early use for apps in the Army focus on information access, location awareness and training, but in the future, the Army anticipates using smart phone apps to control tanks, fighter jets and machine guns.

While the U.S. Army focuses on using apps to make soldiers more effective, the San Ramon Fire District near Silicon Valley has come up with an app to help save lives (*blogs.forbes.com/kymmcnicholas/2011/01/26/apples-life-saving-potential/*).

For anyone trained in CPR, this app can notify you when someone nearby needs your help. Since response time is critical in saving lives, the idea is that CPR-trained people can respond to a victim before paramedics can arrive on the scene.

While this CPR app is initially available only on the iPhone for the San Ramon area, the developer hopes to expand the app's use to people in other parts of the country. Given the popularity of iPhone apps that eventually migrate to Android, you can expect this app or a similar one to spread on other smart phones and one day this type of app could save your life or the life of someone you know.

Trial Versions of Office Suites

To help promote Microsoft Office 2011 for Mac, Microsoft is now offering a trial version of their office suite so you can see for yourself how the program works (*www.tgdaily.com/software-brief/53763-macheads-can-now-try-before-*

you-buy-microsoft-office). If you're switching from Office on Windows, you'll find that Microsoft Office 2011 for Mac behaves nearly identically although the Mac version of Office gives you the option of pull-down menus, which the Windows version of Office does not.

If you don't really need the features of Office, you might be interested in iWork. Like Microsoft, Apple also offers a trial version of iWork (*www.apple.com/iwork/download-trial/*), so you can try the program before buying it.

Generally, Keynote in iWork is considered superior to Microsoft PowerPoint but Microsoft Word and Excel are considered superior to Pages and Numbers in iWork. As another alternative, just buy the iWork programs you want separately by going through the Mac App Store. Unfortunately, buying a copy of Microsoft Word for the Mac costs at least $100 while you could get the entire Office 2011 for the Mac suite for $149 through the student and home edition, which is Microsoft's way to encourage you to buy and use the entire Office suite.

Then again, you can save money completely by using the free OpenOffice (*www.openoffice.org/*) or Lotus Symphony (*symphony.lotus.com/software/lotus/symphony/home.nsf/home*) instead.

The Wall Street Double Standard Against Microsoft

When Apple releases financial reports that exceed analysts' forecasts, everyone cheers and Apple stock rises. When Microsoft announces that they sold 300 million licenses for Windows 7, sold 8 million Kinect units, and exceeded analysts' forecasts, Microsoft stock tumbles and everyone groans that Microsoft is failing (*www.marketwatch.com/story/microsoft-net-falls-as-sales-rise-5-2011-01-27*).

Part of the reason is that analysts and investors are looking beyond today's profits and into the future. At one time, Kodak had the film processing business all to themselves and Kodak stockholders once tried to steer the company away from investing in digital photography and focus strictly on their cash cow of film processing.

Fortunately for Kodak, some forward-thinking executives forced the company to invest in digital photography to prepare it for the future, although Kodak is nowhere near the leader they once were. At that time, Kodak's film processing business was still earning a hefty profit, but they had no plan to deal with the future of digital photography.

The same pessimism pervades Microsoft's future. Microsoft still makes the bulk of their money from Windows and Office, yet revenue at the Windows unit fell to $5.1 billion from $7.2 billion in the period a year earlier. Profit at the Windows unit fell to $3.3 billion from $5.4 billion.

Selling 300 million total licenses for Windows 7 is fine, but if profit and revenue is falling, then growth is falling as well. Microsoft Chief Financial Officer Peter Klein admitted that growing demand for tablet devices, which don't use Microsoft's technology, "created a bit of a drag on the consumer side" of the Windows business.

Microsoft's business division, which includes its Office software, reported that revenue rose to $6 billion in the second quarter from $4.9 billion in the period a year earlier, while profit rose to $3.97 billion from $2.9 billion. While the Windows unit isn't making as much money as before, the Office unit is still doing fine.

The big question that's dragging down Microsoft's stock is how they plan to handle the smart phone and tablet market, two categories where they're getting buried by iOS and Android. So far, nobody's lining up to buy Windows 7 based tablets and while technically a solid foundation, Windows Phone 7 is simply late to market and has a long up hill climb to compete against iOS and Android, not to mention RIM's upcoming Playbook and Hewlett-Packard's webOS.

Comparing the future prospects of Apple vs. Microsoft, Apple seems poised for rapid growth and leadership while Microsoft just seems poised for steady growth. For any other company, that would be a cause for celebration, but for

Microsoft, this is the first time they're no longer a dominant player in two major and rapidly growing computing markets (smart phones and tablets), which is what worries all those analysts and investors. When you're no longer at the top, anything else just looks like you're falling behind.

Even Lenovo's chairman, Liu Chuanzhi, claimed that smart phones and tablets will dominate the computer industry (*www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-01-28/lenovo-takes-on-apple-with-extreme-focus-on-lepad-lephone.html*) and said, "Anyone who loses this battle will be phased out from the history of this industry."

Guess who's losing the battle in smart phones and tablets?

A Twist in Piracy

In the past, Hollywood studios sent DVDs of Oscar-nominated movies to the people qualified to vote for the different nominees. At that time, everyone thought that digital files transferred over the Internet were easy to pirate and physical media like CDs and DVDs were more secure. Unfortunately, pirates often intercepted the DVDs sent to voters, copied them, and then sent the original DVD to its intended recipient. Then they took this copied DVD and pirated it over the Internet or sold bootleg copies on the street.

To reduce this type of piracy, studios are now allowing voters to watch Oscar-nominated movies through iTunes (*www.montereyherald.com/business/ci_17226036?source=rss&nclick_check=1*). By eliminating the need to make DVDs and streaming videos straight to the recipients, the studios hope to limit the chance that others will intercept a disc and make illegal copies.

Anyone remember when studios claimed that streaming video would increase piracy? Now they've discovered that streaming video can actually reduce piracy. The next time someone tries to suppress a new form of technology, they could be arguing against the very benefits that they really want after all.

Reading Faster with AceReader Pro

There's so much information flooding everyone in any field that it's no longer a matter of not having the information, but in not knowing how to find the information you want. To help you wade through information at a faster pace, learn speed reading.

Since most people may not want to take speed reading courses, the next best option is to use a special reading program like AceReader (*www.acereader.com/*), which runs on Windows and Mac OS X.

Figure 2. AceReader is a speed reading program for both Windows and Mac OS X.

The problem with speed reading courses is that they train you to look at text in different ways to improve comprehension. This all sounds good in theory, but in practice it's hard not to revert back to your old habits without a teacher to guide you.

Ace Reader eliminates this problem completely. Instead of looking at a page of text and training yourself to follow your speed reading tactics, Ace Reader simply allows you to copy a chunk of text and load it into the Ace Reader program. As the program runs, it flashes words individually on the screen.

By watching these individual words flash on the screen in rapid-fire fashion, you can read faster with no extra effort at all. As odd as this may sound, it works amazing well. Since you can't see any adjacent text, Ace Reader forces you to focus on the single word in front of you.

Figure 3. Ace Reader works by rapidly flashing individual words on the screen

Naturally you can slow down or speed up the rate that words flash by. Reading text with Ace Reader is as simple as copying that text off a Web page or e-book and pasting it into Ace Reader.

Since reading large chunks of text, one word at a time, might seem odd, Ace Reader provides training games to improve your eye coordination and comprehension in watching words flash on the screen. The program includes a series of training courses that Ace Reader guides you through until you get familiar with the way Ace Reader works.
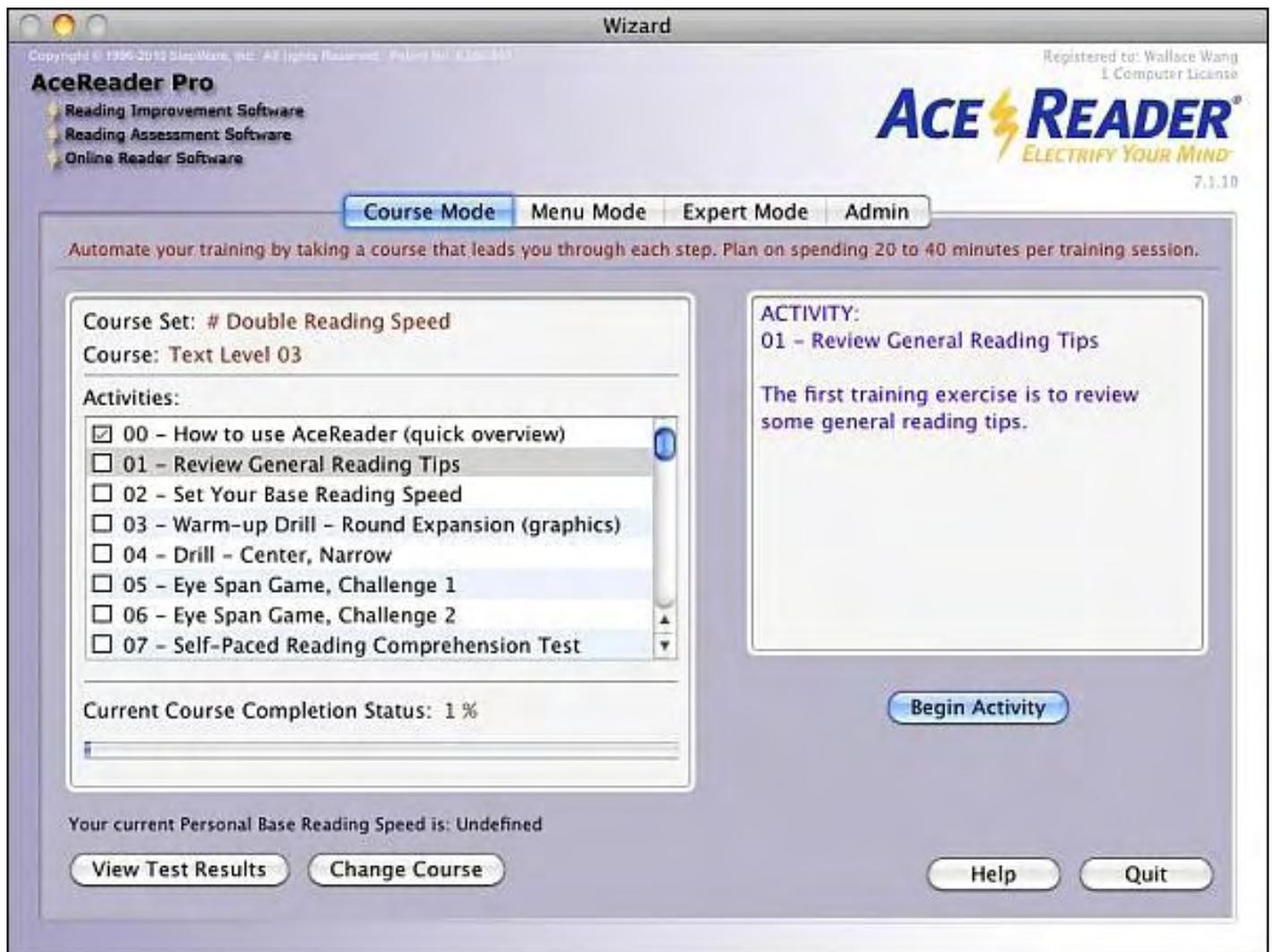
Figure 4. Ace Reader can guide users through a series of training courses to learn speed reading.

This Course mode forces you to follow each course in strict sequential order. If this feels too confining, the program also offers a Menu mode that lets you jump to a particular training course while avoiding the rest.

Figure 5. Ace Reader lets you choose which training courses to follow.

Figure 6. Training games help develop your speed reading skills.

When you're comfortable using Ace Reader, you can choose its Expert mode, which lets you control the speed of flashing words and stop or rewind to a previous word. Despite the seemingly complex appearance of the program, you can ignore nearly every command except for the stop and play buttons.

Figure 7. Expert mode gives you complete control over the program.

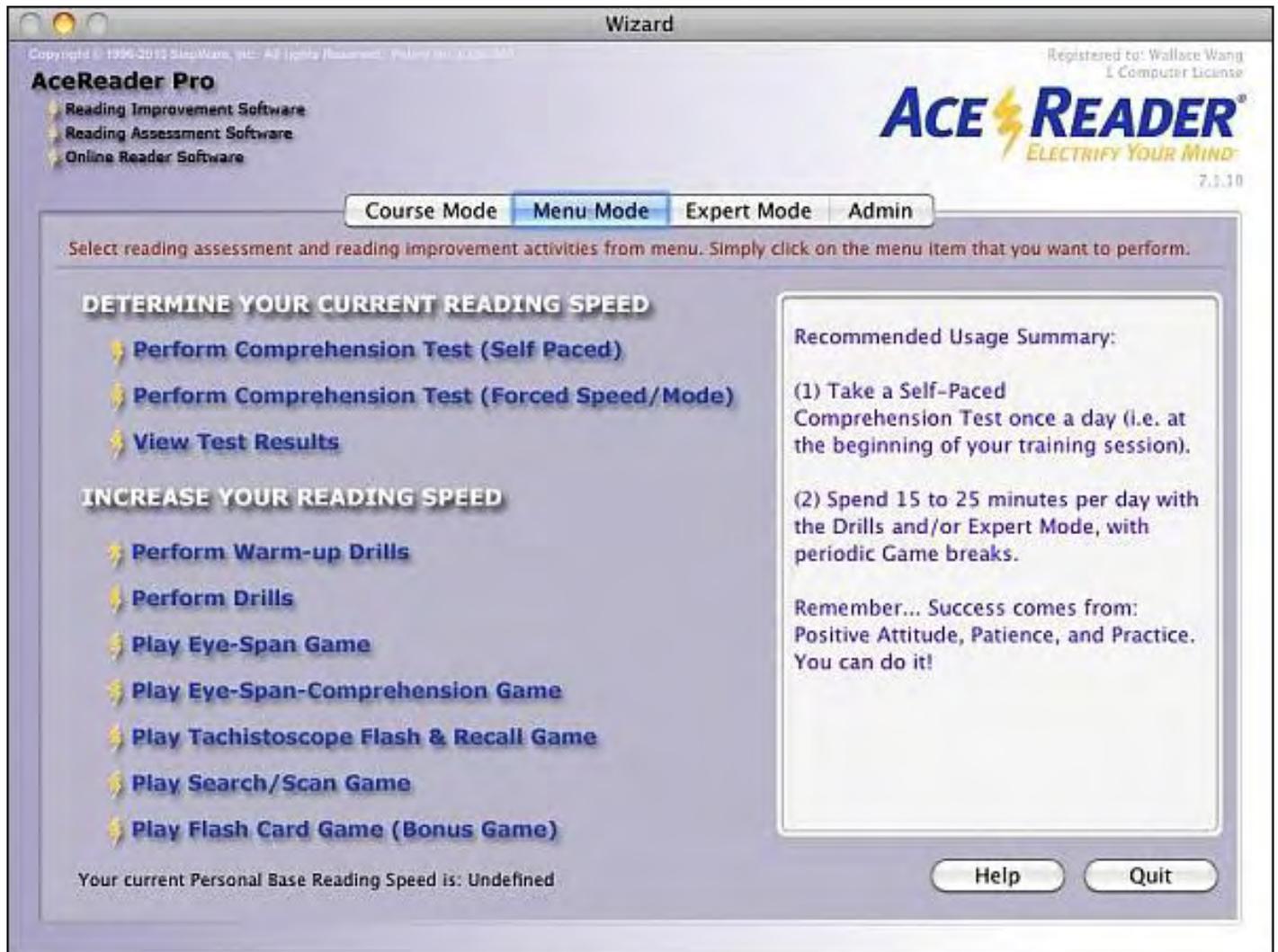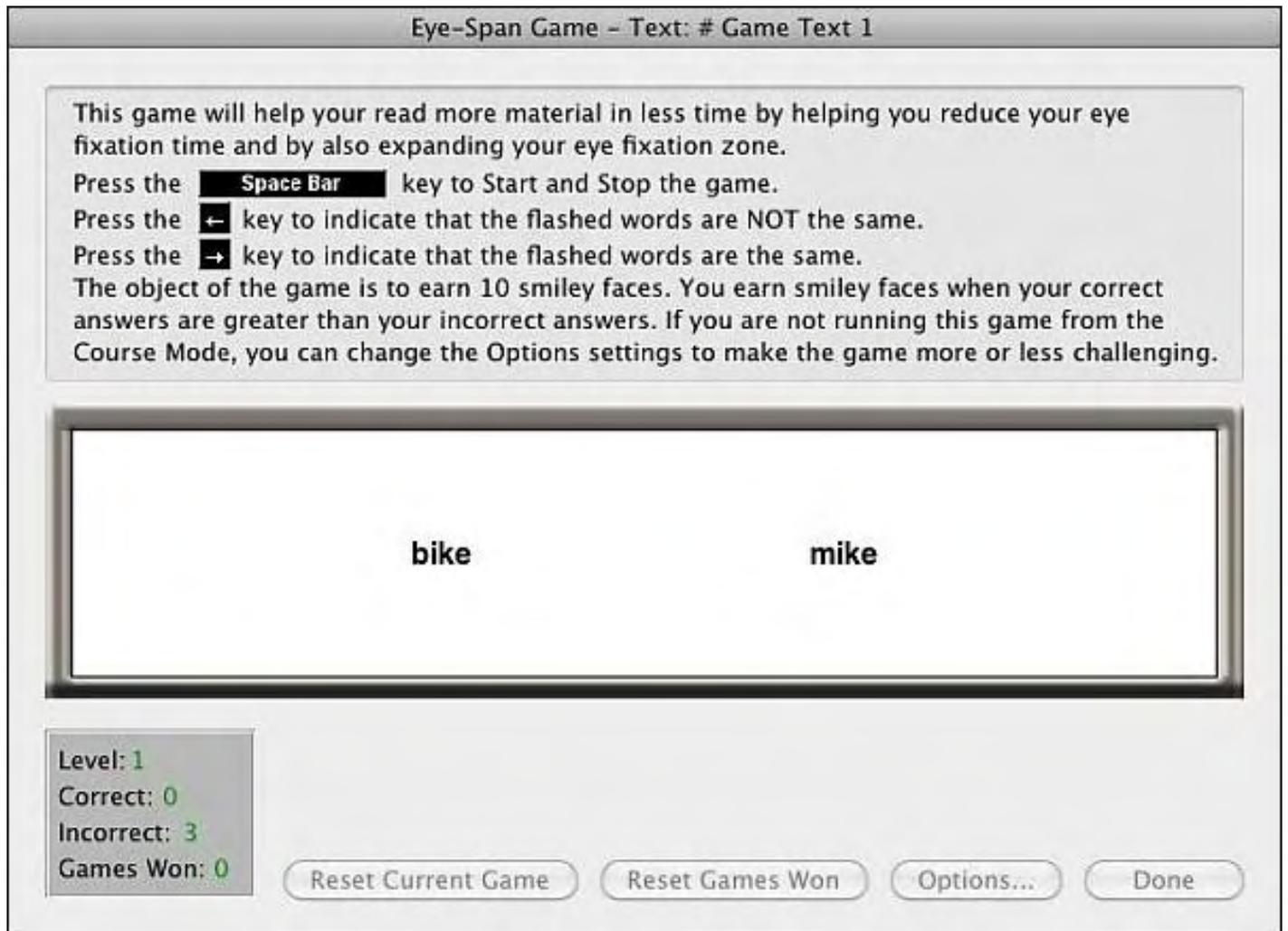Ace Reader helps eliminate two major problems that slow down reading and comprehension. The first is subvocalization where you mentally pronounce the words in your mind while you read. The second is letting your eyes wander around text and forcing you to re-read the same chunk of text over again.

Since Ace Reader only displays a word at a time, it focuses your attention so you can't possibly let your eyes wander around a page of text. By flashing words rapidly in front of your eyes, Ace Reader doesn't give you time to read the word in you head so you have to improve your understanding of each word or else the next word will appear and you'll fall behind.

By adjusting the speed that the program flashes words on the screen, you can gradually increase your reading speed until you'll find yourself reading faster with greater understanding in just a short period of time.

Ace Reader takes time to learn and use, but the effort is worth it. Whether it increases your reading speed by a little or a lot, Ace Reader makes speed reading easy, fun and effective.

Busy people can use Ace Reader to read articles on the Internet faster while students can use Ace Reader to sharpen their reading skills. If you need to process information faster than before, Ace Reader can help you improve your reading level no matter what your current skill might be.

The Egyptian Internet Blockade

Egypt recently cut off Internet communication to the entire country in an effort to prevent its citizens from reading the latest news and communicating with others. To get around this problem, Egyptians are turning to other forms of communication (*www.computerworld.com/s/article/9207078/ Without_Internet_Egyptians_find_new_ways_to_get_online*) including fax machines, ordinary landline phones and ham radio. While these methods may not be as fast as the Internet, they show that all forms of communication can be useful at the right time.

Another way Egyptians are skirting around the Internet blockade is to use old fashion dial-up modems. They simply dial into another country that still offers Internet access, and then they can connect again.With Internet access in another country, Egyptians are setting up crude sites to spread information to their fellow citizens who also manage to get dial-up Internet access.
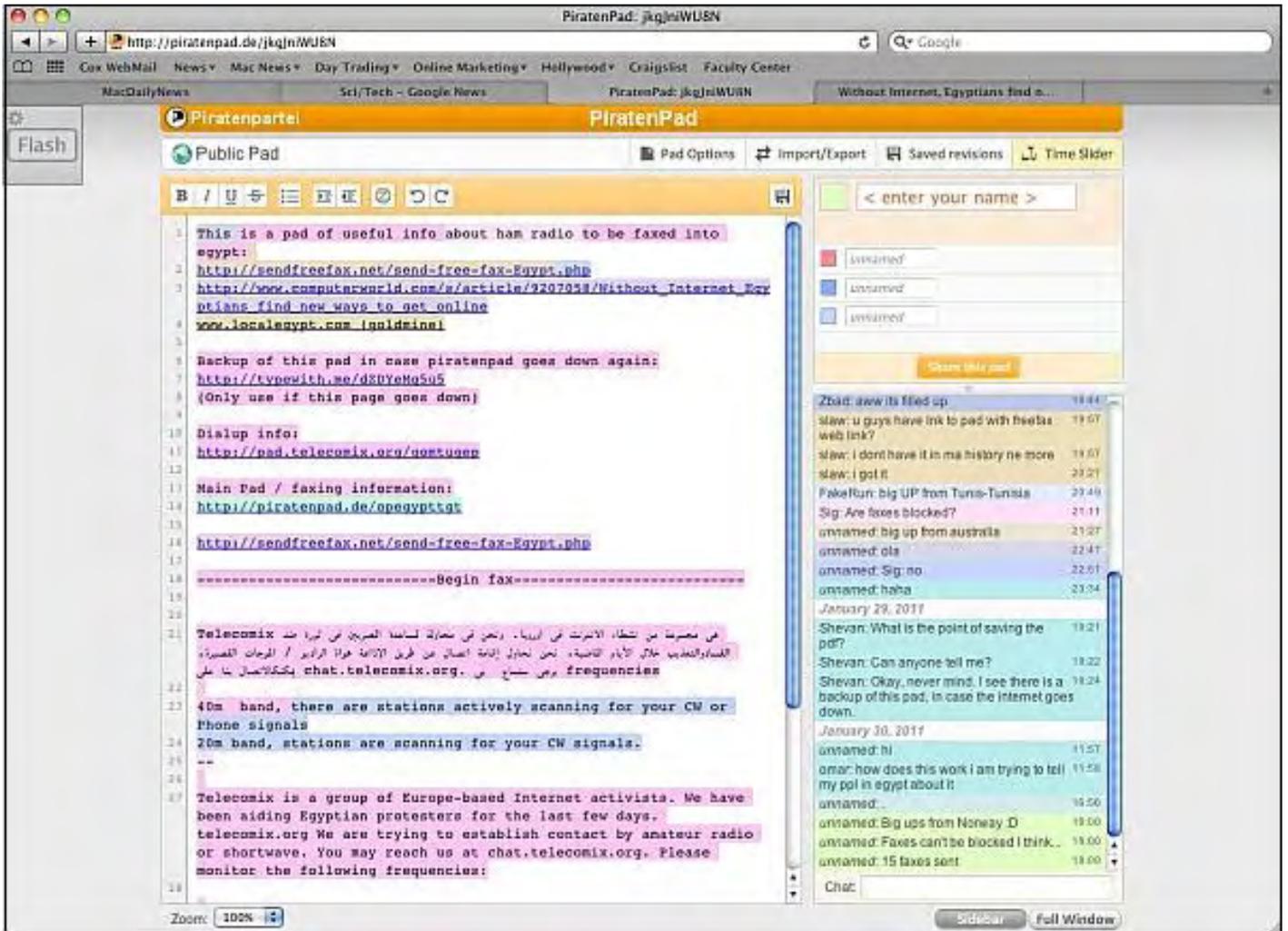
Figure 8. Egyptians are spreading information through impromptu wikis and Web pages.

The ingenuity of Egyptian citizens to share information without the Internet is encouraging because it allows citizens in other countries to learn what works in case they need to duplicate their actions. Whatever happens in Egypt, you can be sure that their use of alternative communication will be studied by activists and government security forces alike.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

If you have several windows open in a single program, such as multiple documents in a word processor like Pages or Microsoft Word, you can quickly switch between different files by right-clicking on the program icon on the Dock. This

displays a menu and at the top of the menu you'll see all open files. Just click on the open file you want to view and you can switch to that file instantly.

Figure 9. Right-clicking on a program icon on the Dock lets you see all open files.

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.
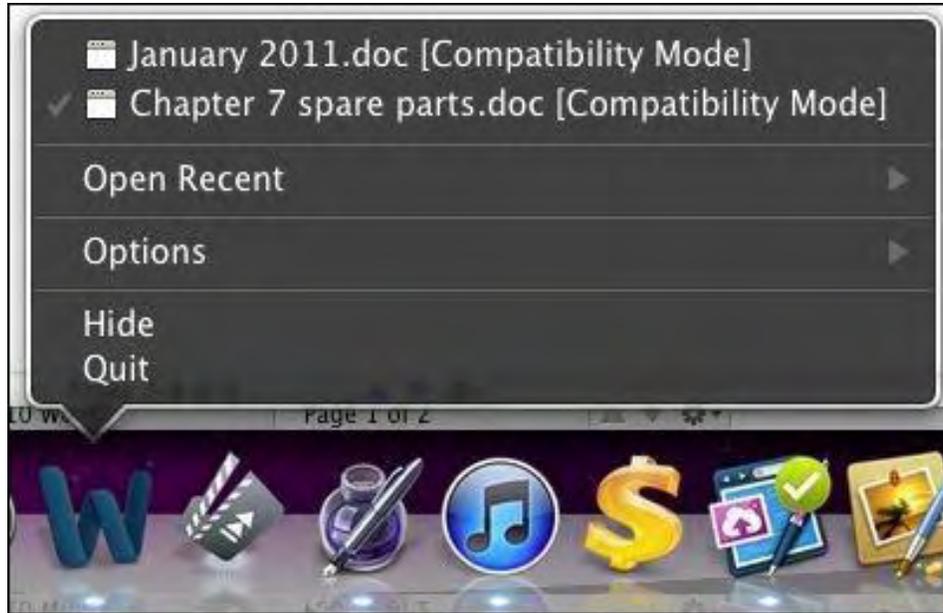
Wally is responsible for the following books:

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*.

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

The Social Networking Knowledge Gap; Find That King Again—for Free; LittleBigPlanet 2: Five Guinness World Records in Three Days; iVisor AG Screen Protector Banishes Bubbles, Scratches and Smudges.

The Social Networking Knowledge Gap

Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum from Smith Publicity writes in this week with information about a surprising information gap between users of social networking sites and many of those who implement them—or don't implement them, but should:

Between MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, just to name a few, it's no surprise that the past couple years have seen an explosion of social technology tools at a personal level. However, these same tools are now rapidly being adopted in the business world. Social tech has already started to change organizational behavior and is poised to dramatically alter the way the business world operates in 2011. According to thought leader and tech innovation expert, Scott Klososky, we ain't seen nothing yet.

Klososky discovered through years of consulting with organizations on the implementation of social technology as a tool the unsettling reality that social tech tools are still seen as mere novelties rather than used as a means to measurably improve the bottom line. In a recent 2010 study of 1,654 IT managers (source: FaceTime Communications) and end users:

• 62 percent of IT professionals estimated that social networking was present on their networks, while the actual data showed social networking present in 100 percent of cases.

• File sharing tools were found to be present in 74 percent of locations, although only 32 percent of IT professionals estimated that they were in use.

• Web-based chat was also found in 95 percent of locations, with only 31 percent of IT professional estimating that it was in use.

According to Klososky, Social technologies have infiltrated the business world, yet most don't know what to do with them. Many organizations are either blocking their use, or simply experimenting with how they might be of benefit. Because tools like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn started with personal use, little has been done to holistically address how social tools can be fully integrated into an organization. In addition, most leaders have little idea what the full collection of capabilities is that exist under the social umbrella.

A new book by Klosoky, *Enterprise Social Technology (*www.EnterpriseSocialTechnology.com*)* (about $10, print or eBook), aims to demystify this much-hyped subject and gives readers a levelheaded, growth-focused approach to putting all kinds of social technology—not just the big, well-known platforms—to work.

"I want to move the discussion past whether a CEO should be tweeting or the organization developing a Facebook fan page, and toward how leaders can holistically integrate the full range of social technology tools to make a truly meaningful difference in their organizations," said Klososky, "that will teach you a process for implementing social

technology in its most powerful form. Just as personal computers, the Web and e-commerce has caused dramatic changes in how organizations operate, social technology also will alter the way we do business."

"When you implement a powerful tool before your competition," Klososky added, "you can win market share, create wealth and even generate social good. Considering all these benefits, it is obviously that the race is on to figure out how to leverage social teach tools to win big in business."

Find That King Again—for Free

AGD Interactive's Emily Morganti writes:

Fans of the old Sierra adventure games will be happy to learn that AGD Interactive (*www.agdinteractive.com*)—the fan group who remade the first two King's Quest games and Quest for Glory II with VGA graphics and a point and click interface—has revealed the imminent release of King's Quest III Redux for PC and Mac.

At the behest of King Edward the Benevelont, set out to find Daventry's three lost treasures.

Experience Daventry like never before! In glorious SVGA with all-new hand-drawn custom background art and animation!

AGD Interactive has been covertly developing King's Quest III Redux for the past eight years. Like their other projects, this is a labor of love that both modernizes the original game while maintaining its retro charm. More info and an explanation of the project's history at AGDI Forums (*www.agdiforums.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=32&t=14848*).

• King's Quest I: Quest for the Crown is a straight remake of Sierra's first King's Quest game, with all of the original gameplay preserved. (Based on fan feedback, AGDI did implement a "no dead-ends" option that prevents getting irreversibly stuck, but this can be turned off.)

To download for PC or Mac, go to AGDI Interactive Download King's Quest I Remake (*www.agdinteractive.com/games/kq1/download/download.html*).

• King's Quest II: Romancing the Stones is a creative retelling of Sierra's second King's Quest game that spins the original's (fairly random) puzzles into a comprehensive story. For those who have not played King's Quest II, AGDI's remake is a more satisfying continuation of the series than the original game, and for those who have, it's a neat way to experience the original from an entirely new perspective. It also sets up a new overarching subplot that the team continues to explore in the upcoming King's Quest III Redux, so playing it now will help you prepare for the game to come.

Since its initial release in December, 2002, AGDI's King's Quest II remake has been downloaded over 451,400 times. The original speech add-on pack was downloaded more than 172,450 times, and the digital music add-on pack over 202,000 times, again proving that there is still vast interest in the adventure gaming genre.

To download for PC or Mac, go to AGDI Interactive Download the King's Quest II Remake (*www.agdinteractive.com/games/kq2/download/download.html*).

All of AGDI's King's Quest remakes feature enhanced game visuals including hand painted backgrounds and character portraits, full voice acting (with former Sierra employee Josh Mandel reprising his role as King Graham), lip sync and digital soundtracks. Plus they're free to download, and run on today's computers without fiddling. The games were created using the Adventure Game Studio engine (*www.bigbluecup.com/*).

LittleBigPlanet 2: Five Guinness World Records in Three Days

Sony Computer Entertainment tells us about a a three day celebration that set five Guinness World Records attributed to LittleBigPlanet 2 (*www.littlebigplanet.com/*), sequel to the award-winning, multi-million unit selling hit LittleBigPlanet:

Beginning January 17 dedicated LittleBigPlanet fans took over the PlayStation Lounge at the Sony Style store in New York City to earn their place in history. The five Guinness World Records that were set:

- LittleBigPlanet 2 game
- 7" collectable Sackboy plushie
- Exclusive LittleBigPlanet 2 game ends (bookends)

"Longest marathon playing a platform video game"
"Longest marathon playing LittleBigPlanet 2"
"Most video game genres played in one video game in 24 hours"
"Most user-generated video game levels played in 24 hours"
"Most user-generated video game levels played in a video game marathon"

For those fans who were not able to attend the festivities, you can see them online on the PlayStation Blog (*blog.us. playstation.com/*) and Guinness World Records' official Web site (*www.guinnessworldrecords.com/*), showcasing all of the activities that took place.

LittleBigPlanet 2 offers four-player offline and online multiplayer, a host of fun and challenging trophies to collect, and is backwards compatible with LittleBigPlanet allowing players to access the more than three million online levels created with the original game. LittleBigPlanet 2 is a single or multiplayer creative gaming experience that has an ESRB rating of "E" for Everyone.

The record-setting event also commemorates the release of the Guinness World Records 2011 Gamer's Edition. Known as the "Video Game Bible," the fourth and latest edition of the popular series comes packed with 90% new or updated records and 750 never-before-seen amazing images appealing to everyone from hard-core gaming veterans to first time gamers and families. The Guinness World Records 2011 Gamer's Edition (*gamers.guinnessworldrecords.com/*) is available widely for $14.99.

iVisor AG Screen Protector Banishes Bubbles, Scratches and Smudges

Have you ever longed for an Edit=>Undo feature in everyday life? Such a feature could be really handy in plenty of oopsie moments, such as immediately after scratching, dinging, and/or smudging the high gloss screen of a shiny new iDevice. In the absence of a real world Edit=>Undo feature, Moshi, Inc. offers a line of preemptive products for iDevices called iVisor screen protectors. Moshi's iVisor Anti-Glare (iVAG) (*store.moshimonde.com/ivisor-ag-ipad.html*) model for iPad is the subject of this review.

iPad's 9.7" (diagonal) expanse of glass poses a different challenge from other iDevices' screens. The challenge is applying a protective film over a relatively large area without introducing bubbles or trapping dust particles that distract and detract from the user experience (the larger the protective film and screen area, the greater the likelihood of trapping air and/or dust). In my testing, iVAG handled this challenge elegantly and effectively. Here's how.

iVAG consists of a glare-reducing protective film within a sufficiently rigid frame that closely matches the dimensions, shape and color of iPad's bezel (Figure 1). On iVAG's back surface is a residue-resistant adhesive that sticks to the bezel. This adhesive's sticking power, in my testing, is qualitatively stronger than a post-it note's but weaker than the glue used on lick-free postage stamps. Consequently, iVAG stays on board but readily can be removed for cleaning with plain water and then reinstalled without fuss or hassle.

Figure 1. iVAG measures 9.3 x 7.2 inches, tips the scale at about 0.5 oz., installs easily without introducing bubbles, reduces glare from iPad's high-gloss screen, protects against scratches or smudges, and does not interfere with taps or gestures. Who could ask for more?

Installation is a piece of cake, even for a klutz like yours truly. To install iVAG, simply remove the coating from its back (adhesive) side, position its frame over the iPad's bezel as shown in the well-illustrated installation instructions (English, French and Spanish; printed with eco-friendly soy-based ink on the packaging which consists of a recyclable envelope-like sleeve), apply gentle pressure, and voilà! Most importantly, Moshi claims that installation is "100% bubble free guaranteed...takes only seconds." Consistent with this claim, I nailed a bubble-free installation on the very first try; by contrast, I wasted countless minutes installing, reinstalling and fruitlessly attempting to coax out hoards of bubbles from beneath a competitor's "shield" film.

iVAG's top features, as described above, include bubble-free installation, glare reduction (which, in my testing, was at least adequate in bright daylight), protection against scratches and smudges, easy removal for cleaning, and compatibility with iOS' touch and gesture based interface. An additional strength is iVAG's non-intrusiveness. This product adds only about half an ounce to the iPad's weight, and it blends in so well with the bezel and screen that I scarcely noticed it during usage.

Is iVAG too good to be true? Does it have some deal-braking weakness(es)? Not in my testing—if iVAG has any weakness(es), I have yet to find it (them). Is it overpriced, then? Not in my humble opinion. The $30 MSRP is entirely reasonable because (if nothing else) iVAG is highly likely to spare the user from wasting time and enduring frustration in dealing with bubbles. The user's time and sanity are worth at least as much as this product's modest price tag.

In conclusion, here's the bottom line for readers who own an iPad and want to ensure that their tablet's screen stays pristine and glareless without intruding on functionality—what are you waiting for? iVAG is the bomb.

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Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at *www.charlescarr.com*.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Multi-Core Chips," "Clock Time," "Word Perfect Password," "Apple Informative"

Multi-Core Chips

[Regarding James Hartnett's January 14 article, "The Multi-Cores Are Coming!":]

So, how many transistors fit on the head of a pin and how does it compare to the number of angels?

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

A dynamic and valuable article for anyone in software development. It's obvious by just reading this article, the writer has a depth of understanding—a necessary quality and one that is not often seen by the reading public!

Thanks,

- Lynn Manning Ross, San Diego

Would it be possible to have a multicore machine that utilizes one core as the primary runner of the application? There would be 20 cores for a maximum of 20 applications running at same time. Then you could have 60 cores to the side that are utilized by the 20 primary cores to subdivide out the job to 60 cores.

Or you have 10 primary cores that each have dedicated 10 cores each for a total of 100 secondary cores. The primary cores could subdivide out the job to the dedicated 10 cores to run faster.

-Tom Chouinard, Chula Vista

Well one program springs to mind as being very able to use multi-cores. A spreadsheet when it recalculates. It already has a bunch of tasks (equations) it has to perform to get the job done. As one reader said, you could also use one core controlling a set of cores, each controlling a smaller set of cores (like a tree, the trunk is the top most controller).

Another problem that sets in at some point (one that Google has in fact) is that at some point you have so many cores doing so many mini-tasks that a few of them might fail (temporarily or permanently) or worse be slow. So now you also have to monitor the smaller set of cores to see if they are doing the job right, and in the case of slow, task another core to do the job and see which one finishes first.

Now multi-cores are great for things like weather prediction and video graphics performance, but some tasks simply can't be broken up into smaller tasks. Sometimes programmers and mathematicians find a way to 'shortcut' the problem, but until then it's still down to brute force. That's why encryption is such a big deal. It's one of those tasks that can't be simply solved just by tossing a bunch of CPUs at it.

All in all it's a good thing(tm) because it gives us better tools. And with better tools we find interesting solutions.

-Carl Wyles, Denver, CO

Clock Time

[Regarding the January 14 Digital Dave column:]

I have used "Socket Watch" for many years to set my computer time automatically when I start up or at intervals I choose. It gets the time from the Navy observatory.

-Jim Mc Ilraith, San Diego, CA

You can make the built-in time client sync every hour by setting the "SpecialPollInterval" in the registry to 3600 seconds.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

I've used the freeware from Duality Software (*www.dualitysoft.com/dsclock/*) for a number of years. I turned off the Windows clock display and use only the format-able display from this program. Various time reference sources can be selected, as well as the interval of checking/correcting. A log file of the corrections can also be optionally used. Settings can be made to play .wav file sounds, either included or user-provided. A great program.

-Dick Kutz

A good site to know about is NIST (*www.nist.org*), The National Institute of Standards and Technology. It is the official National time standard. They also mention several program to allow you to set you PC clock to the standards clocks if you have a Internet connection. Windows time program can be configured to use the NIST sites to re-sync the clock.

As for slow downs: I have seen some very serious ones on a production server, that was under an abnormally huge workload. The software clock would drift 20-25 minutes in a day. Ouch! This time drift was noticeable in Windows with the task manager under the performance tab. Normally you will see a green line showing CPU usage. In this case it was showing 100% usage and another red line indicating excessive usage. That is usually an indication that not even Windows is getting enough CPU to do its jobs.

Once the problem was fixed it resumed its normal time drift of a few seconds per day.

I would suggest another possible cause of time drift being malware/toolbar programs/services/etc. (eg. all the little programs that start on bootup and use a bit of CPU). A few don't matter—a swarm of them can really bog down a system.

-Carl Wyles, Denver, CO

Word Perfect Password

[Regarding the December 31 Digital Dave column:]

I've had basically the same problem. What I did so that would not happen to me again is make a spreadsheet with all my IDs and passwords, e-mail, banking, modem passwords, etc. Then I saved it to my USB flash drive. Just a suggestion for future problems. I carry the flash drive with me on vacations too just in case I need to access something on the net that I have a password enabled.

-Garry, Kansas City, mo

Apple Informative

[Regarding the January 14 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Although I do not use the "Apple" for computing, I must say this is one of the most informative and provocative articles I have read in *ComputorEdge* in some time.

-Cicero, Colorado Springs, CO

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*.

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.
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