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This issue: A Closer Look at the iPad— King of the Tablets

While there are plenty of tablet computers coming, Apple iPad rules the roost...for now.

Table of Contents:

[Digital Dave](#) by *Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
Auto log in a.k.a. Remember me; Lost Password; Which Web Browser—or All?

[iPad: A Walk in the Garden](#) by Jack Dunning

What It's Like to Use the iPad and Join the Apple Collective.
Jack returned his original iPad and is waiting for his iPad 2. In the meantime he discusses his observations with the iPad 1, including weight, Web browsing, ebook reading, Netflix experience and even how it deals with fat-finger syndrome.

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

Flash on Mobile Devices
Adobe keeps improving Flash's performance on mobile devices, this may not be enough when HTML5 is adopted; the iPad helps autistic children and college students; NHK World TV live for the iPhone; new users adapting the iPad 2; console gaming in trouble?; why the iPad critics were wrong; strange Apple users; a Windows 7 tablet from Asus; compressing files into a Zip file format.

[Linux Lessons: Tips and Tricks from Users](#) by Tony J. Podrasky

Sharing with the Community
Tony provides a shell backup script he created for the Linux community.



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[Worldwide News & Product Reviews](#) by Charles Carr

The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.
 Malware Friends Facebook; This Kitchen App is an (iPhone) App; PDF to JPG, TIF, BMP and PNG for Free; You Don't Know Jack for PC; Dock Your MacBook (Pro).

DEPARTMENTS:

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

ComputerEdge Staff

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.
 "Icons," "Kudos for Explaining Dangers," "Faxing with VoIP," "Hat Hanging," "Targeted Deception in Advertising," "Using Other People's Computers..."



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[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Digital Dave

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

Auto log in a.k.a. Remember me; Lost Password; Which Web Browser—or All?

Dear Digital Dave,

Just a quick question. Is it considered good, bad, or neutral to have all sorts of sites you go to on auto log in? I tend to have my eBay, e-mail accounts, and Facebook page set up that way.

Auto log in has saved me from getting malware at least once. You've probably encountered the Facebook phish by now. You get an e-mail that says so-and-so wrote on your wall, and it quotes a message saying something like "I found out who's stalking me! Find out who's stalking you by clicking here." Mousing over it seems to indicate that it is indeed a Facebook site; but clicking on it brings up a legit-looking Facebook log in page that asks for your username and password.

That's what sent up the red flag for me: my Facebook is supposed to be on auto log in ("remember me"). So, I went to my wall and sure enough, neither so-and-so nor anyone else I knew had written on my wall. And in my newsfeed there were other people who this was happening to, and the people who were supposed to have written on my wall knew nothing about it.

Pete Maurer

Dear Pete,

The answer is, yes, it is considered good, bad, or neutral to have all sorts of sites you go to on auto log in. It depends upon the function of the Web site and how important it is to you. There is always some level of risk associated with saving a username and password for auto log in. If key logger malware gets onto your computer, there is also risk to typing in your user name and password. Nothing is completely safe. You need to tailor your defenses to the situation.

If other people could easily access to your computer, you should never implement auto log in. It would make it too easy for people to open any account which uses auto log in from your computer. If you have password protected your computer, then you should use auto log in sparingly.

For the most part, auto log ins are reasonably safe. Both the browsers and the cookies which aid in the process peg the log in information to the target Web site. If anything other than the original site appears in the browser, the auto log in will not appear. That's why your auto log in did not appear when you followed the link in the e-mail. They were tempting you to submit your information for their nefarious purposes. I always counsel people to use Favorites or Bookmarks to access those Web sites requiring log in, and never use links in an e-mail—even if the e-mail is legit.

If I consider a Web site as a low value target, I may use auto log in. By low value, I mean that there is little there that could harm me. There is no access to any financial information and nothing linking me directly to the site. While people who get in may cause some mischief, there is no way to do permanent damage.

It is probably safe enough to use auto log in for your Facebook account. The worse that could happen is that someone could get you fired by posting nasty remarks about and/or photos of your boss. You can always deny that it was you. After all, someone broke into your account. (I'm surprised that everyone doesn't use this excuse.)

I will often use auto log in for paying certain type of bills. After reviewing all the information at the site, usually the worst that someone can do is pay my bill to the utility company. Not the worse result, plus there is little incentive for them to do this.

If you are accessing a higher value site (bank accounts, brokerage accounts), then you may not be able to implement auto log in. I've noted that many financial sites do not allow the saving of user names and passwords when logging into the Web site. They may also add a variety of other tests such as security questions ("What is your mother's maiden name?") and personalized logos. Even then, if something doesn't look right, you shouldn't log in on that page. Find the site through Google or use your saved Favorite.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I am running Windows 7 64-bit on a Dell 15R laptop. I downloaded Quicken 2011 Starter Edition, entered all three checking accounts and assigned a password. Now that password won't open up my Quicken account. Quicken wants me to download again and re-install all my data. Is it possible to go into a password file within Quicken and delete or re-name my password? Much help needed as I need to enter and reconcile my accounts. ;-(

*Glenda
San Marcos, Calif*

Dear Glenda,

There is nothing more frustrating then forgetting or losing a password. Be sure to check the obvious (although possibly forgotten). Most passwords are case sensitive meaning that they won't work if you have the caps lock key on. Also, if you have numbers in your password, you may want to make sure the number lock key is set to on. While these are not likely, they are worth a shot. Maybe your caps lock was on when you created the password. Try it both ways.

The problem with making passwords too easy to recover (or change) is that it defeats the purpose of having a password at all. If it were easier for you to recover your password, it would just as easy for anyone else to get into your stuff. Generally, you need your old password in order to change it to a new one. You may be forced to start over again if you can't figure out your password.

If you have a backup copy that you made before you created the password, you may be able to revert to that backup. You will need to add any information that was entered since the backup, but that would minimize the amount of work.

Go to Intuit support on their Web site. I've read that they do have a service for recovering passwords, but it doesn't apply to bank account password and such—plus it can take a couple of weeks. If you haven't put in much data, it

might be easier just to start again. Only this time, write down the password when you create it.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Can I install Firefox on a computer with Internet Explorer already installed or do I need to remove it first?

*Phil Eck
San Diego, CA*

Dear Phil,

Not only can you install Firefox without first removing Internet Explorer, but you should. Plus, you should also install the Google Chrome Web browser, as well as, any other free Web browser that strikes your fancy.

One of the great things about today's computers is that they can hold and run numerous programs without interfering with other programs. With the exception of antivirus software, which may interfere with almost any other program, most software is built to run independently. You can load Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and other Web browsers simultaneously without a hitch. This gives you a choice at all times. There is no need to pick one browser over the other. You can have them all—at the same time.

I have each of the browsers mentioned installed on my computers. I've found that at times, one will work better than another. I've even noted that occasionally Microsoft's Internet Explorer will work best for specific situations or Web sites. No, really!

Digital Dave

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



iPad: A Walk in the Garden

“What It's Like to Use the iPad and Join the Apple Collective.” by Jack Dunning

Jack returned his original iPad and is waiting for his iPad 2. In the meantime he discusses his observations with the iPad 1, including weight, Web browsing, ebook reading, Netflix experience and even how it deals with fat-finger syndrome.

As pointed out in last week's article, "Beyond the Hype: Do You Need a Tablet Computer?", the primary use for tablet computers is one-handed operations where the device is held in the left hand (if you're right-handed) and operated with the right. Whether you are sitting on the sofa surfing the Web or recording measurements at a construction site, you want a self-contained piece of equipment that is light and easy to use. In these situations, an attached keyboard or mouse is neither needed nor desirable. I looked at the iPad with these requirements in mind.

Note: I returned my original iPad for a full refund last week and have not yet picked up the iPad 2. Therefore anything I say about the latest version is pure speculation. I don't really need any of the new features (primarily two cameras and some additional software), but since it will be the same price as the old one I just returned it, why not? I saw that Best Buy was selling the old (Original Configuration) iPad for \$399, \$100 less than the new model. Sales people are hyping it by saying that if you don't need the cameras, you could get an iPad right now. If many of the owners are upgrading, there will be a flood of "Original Configuration" models. I wonder how far the price will drop? I'm not in any rush to get the iPad 2. I don't like standing in line. I have plenty of other things to do.

It is important to understand that not even Apple thinks the iPad is a replacement for your other computer. You will continue to need that other computer. To keep up-to-date, you must join the Apple collective called iTunes on your regular computer (PC or Mac). Installing iTunes is how you join the Apple collective. Being a member of a collective has its advantages. First of all, as a member you will get the benefits of the iPad applications available through iTunes. Since they are controlled by Apple there is a feeling of warmth and security that comes with the experience. It is probably less likely (though not impossible) that malware will be propagated through the Apple Store, since Apple controls all aspects of daily iPad life. On the other hand, you will not be free to buy software from just anywhere. Unless you are involved in a "jailbreak" (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IOS_jailbreaking), you will be able to continue in

the serenity (and safety) of the Apple collective. Even developers must join the Apple collective to sell their wares, paying a tribute of \$99 a year and 30% of the take to Apple. (At some point, if Apple continues to dominate the tablet market, I see antitrust lawsuits proliferating against Apple. Hmmm.)

When you sync the iPad with iTunes on your computer, it will add all the goodies, including photos and music, that you want to haul around with you. This is not a bad thing since you will need to recharge the battery on a regular basis. (The computer's USB port will charge your iPad even if the iPad says it isn't. It's just much slower (trickle) than the charger which comes with the iPad. Plus, to delete anything on the iPad, such as photos or music, you will need to first remove the item from your sync options on the computer before re-syncing the iPad.



A Sad Story

Fred received an iPad as a present on his birthday.

viable alternative for reading the morning news while eating your pancakes.

One accessory which should have been included with a new iPad is a soft, non-abrasive cloth for cleaning the display. As it happens, every time you touch the iPad (which is all the time), it leaves a finger print. You will find that polishing the screen will be required at regular intervals—every few minutes if engaged in heavy usage—especially while eating ribs.

Opening and navigating programs in the iPad is intuitive—a tap of the finger on the program icon. For PC users, the lack of a close button in the program can be a little disconcerting until you realized the button on the front of the iPad will take you back to the desktop—although this doesn't actually close the program. This is not really an issue for me

At 1.5 pounds, the iPad feels a little heavier than I expected which is not ideal for one-handed computing. I'm not sure whether this perception is from the actual weight or the greater density of the iPad (probably caused by the mass of the battery). Since it has smaller dimensions, even if both an iPad and clipboard were the same weight, the more compact iPad may seem heavier. I checked the weight of some functional clipboards and they varied between 0.8 pounds and 1.3 pounds. The new iPad 2 is 1.35 pounds (and a little thinner) which may be a significant reduction (10%) when holding it with one hand while working in the field. (I haven't yet held the iPad 2, so I can't subjectively confirm this speculation.)

If you want to use the iPad while eating your breakfast, you will need some type of stand for propping it up. A reasonably thick book or pillow works pretty well. Apple offers stands which will also recharge the iPad, but the user reviews are not very good. Actually most of the accessories from Apple were hammered by iPad users. There are probably numerous after market iPad accessories available which will work just as well and cost much less. I saw one iPad stand made from wood on the Web. It seems that would be a

since I'm well-known for never closing programs—unless I absolutely must.

The one-screen keyboard, which automatically pop-ups every time it senses that you need to type, is sensitive and takes some getting used to. Like the touchpads on laptops, it's easy to make a mistake and be sent off into Never, Never Land. However, I think it is about as good as it can get for a tablet computer. If you're not planning to write a novel on the tablet, there is enough functionality to get most jobs done. It's not a full keyboard since the keys need to be large enough to ward off the hitting of multiple keys caused by fat-finger syndrome. This means growing accustomed to switching between inputting with the letters and numbers keyboards.

It takes a little time to figure out how to select and edit text. (It helps to read the user documentation which can be assessed via the iPad.) But even once you learn how, it can be somewhat awkward, unless you have really skinny fingers—or reverse pinch to enlarge the image. It is no match for cut-and-paste with a mouse, but of course it doesn't have one.

Netflix runs great on the iPad. I watched a number of shows late at night when staying in at home with no TV in the bedroom. (Imagine, there was no TV in the bedroom! How rustic.) If you hold the iPad close enough to your face in a dark room, you can get that movie theater effect.

Web browsing with iPad's Safari browser was pretty easy, although I did occasional hit the wrong link due to that same fat-finger syndrome. (Reverse pinch to enlarge, then tap.) There seemed to be an incompatibility between the iPad and one particular Wi-Fi router. At regular intervals page loads would hang up until I turned off the Wi-Fi on the iPad and restarted the Wi-Fi connection. Hopefully, this will be corrected in the iPad 2. I know that it wasn't the router's fault because I my laptop was on Wi-Fi the entire time (one week) with no connection problems.

I downloaded iBooks and a number of free books (mostly programming manuals). Reading books was easy and intuitive—although some of the books were a little boring. By the way, you don't need to purchase any books to use the iPad. There are manuals and other references available free through iBooks. In my experience, most computer books are a regurgitation of the original hardware or software manufacturers' manuals—although there is the occasional author who will actually provide enlightenment.

Most of the Web videos (YouTube and specific sites) played without a problem. Home movies I had taken with my camera would not even sync to the iPad since they were in the wrong format for playing. I don't yet know if this will change with the new iPad 2, or if I will need to convert the files to a compatible format.

The e-mail program worked well. I set up a new Gmail account just to use with the iPad. I also added the account to my laptop program, in case I forget to check it on the iPad.

All the iPad models come with Wi-Fi. Without some sort of wireless connection, the portability function would be a joke for anything which requires Internet access, which is one of iPad's primary uses. I didn't get the version of the iPad which works with a cellular 3G data package because I don't need continual connection while I'm traveling. Not only are the 3G iPads more expensive, but you need to buy a data package to take advantage of the capability.

How much storage you will want in your iPad depends primarily upon how many photos and how much music you plan to keep in it. Books don't take up much space and most applications will not demand a lot, but if you add a ton of photos, videos and music, then even the 64 gig maximum iPad could fill up pretty quickly.

In the old iPad, Apple had broken the mute button with a software update. Hopefully, this will be fixed in the iPad 2 (and a future update for older iPads). There is some controversy about whether the button is now supposed to mute the volume or lock the auto-rotation of the screen.

One cool feature was the Location Service in the map program. By using Wi-Fi information, it was able to establish my location within a couple of block. I don't know how useful that was since I already knew where I was. Plus many places where I might get lost, like the middle of the woods, don't have Wi-Fi.

I didn't have time to look at many of the hundreds of thousands of iPad apps. I did notice that many of them were iPhone apps which run at iPhone size on the iPad. You can enlarge them at a lower resolution to take up the full iPad screen, but that feels cheesy. I didn't buy any apps, I usually just look for free ones. Actually, the software that comes with the iPad (or is free through iTunes) may be all that you will ever want or need, unless you're planning to turn the tablet into your only computer.

The iPad has enough power for anyone who wants to do one-handed computing, whether on the couch or on a break at the office. While most of the popular uses relate to reading e-books, browsing the Web and viewing Web based entertainment, there are many more possibilities within various niches of the business and consumer world. Rather than a replacement for other computers, the iPad has opened my eyes to the market category of one-handed computing. I am excited about getting the new iPad 2, just not excited enough to stand in line.

I have a number of other observations that relate to what will happen to tablet computers (shape, size, capability and uses) in the future, but I intend to save them for a future issue. For now, the iPad is the only tablet with proven market success. Therefore, I'm currently sticking with its shape and size—at least until something better comes along.

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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Flash on Mobile Devices” by Wally Wang

Adobe keeps improving Flash's performance on mobile devices, this may not be enough when HTML5 is adopted; the iPad helps autistic children and college students; NHK World TV live for the iPhone; new users adapting the iPad 2; console gaming in trouble?; why the iPad critics were wrong; strange Apple users; a Windows 7 tablet from Asus; compressing files into a Zip file format.

On March 18, Adobe says Flash 10.3 will be available for Android (www.electronista.com/articles/11/03/11/adobe.sets.flash.102.for.android.on.march.18/). While Adobe keeps improving Flash's performance on mobile devices, we've all heard these promises over and over again.

Adobe needs to get Flash working on mobile devices before everyone simply adopts HTML5 as the animation standard instead, essentially flushing Adobe's massive investment in Flash down the drain. If Adobe can prove that Flash can run adequately on Android, then Flash support on Android and other non-Apple devices will actually be a feature and not an empty promise like it is today and has been for the past few years.

Currently if you compare Motorola's Xoom with the iPad, Motorola proudly boasts that the Xoom offers Flash support (www.motorola.com/Consumers/US-EN/Consumer-Product-and-Services/Tablets/ci.MOTOROLA-XOOM-US-EN.alt). Of course, Flash support requires downloading the Flash player and waiting for Adobe to deliver it, so early buyers of the Xoom didn't have Flash support.

There's still the question of how Flash will impact the Xoom's battery life and stability, not to mention the actual performance of Flash itself. Until these questions can be answered, Flash on mobile devices remains one big promise that's getting closer every day, like the idea of cheap solar energy or low-cost, all-electric cars.

Waiting for Flash to arrive might eventually work out, but Mozilla's vice-president Jay Sullivan claims that Flash was responsible for most crashes of the Firefox browser (www.minyanville.com/dailyfeed/adobe-flash-is-doomed-says/). "HTML5 is the longer-term answer," Sullivan said because HTML5 doesn't require additional plugins like the Flash player. Rather than constantly waiting for Flash, everyone should just start supporting HTML5 as well, just in case Adobe never completely fixes Flash for mobile devices.

The iPad Helps Autistic Children and College Students

One curious use for the iPad has been to engage autistic children. Autistic children have no problems understanding how the iPad works to play games or practice educational drills with far more concentration than they've ever had with ordinary books.

However, many autistic children are also using the iPad as a communication device. Where autistic children often experienced temper tantrums, parents are reporting that when they use the iPad, their violent behavior decreases dramatically (news.cnet.com/8301-27083_3-20041856-247.html?tag=cnetRiver). For some favorite iPad apps designed for autistic children, here's a list of ten apps (www.gadgetsdna.com/10-revolutionary-ipad-apps-to-help-autistic-children/5522/) to investigate



Figure 1. The AutismExpress app helps individuals communicate their feelings by choosing pictures.

College students are also finding the iPad useful. Georgia State University's Business School has given students an iPad preloaded with all the case studies and textbooks (www.ft.com/cms/s/2/d776cbf6-4b71-11e0-89d8-00144feab49a.html#axzz1GX2YGdsY) they will need in their studies. At the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business, students got to borrow iPads on a trial basis to determine whether the iPad improved learning.

Corey Angst, assistant professor at Mendoza, published the results of the trial in January with overwhelmingly positive results. Professor Angst wrote, "Expectations were high, but performance appeared to live up to the hype."

Most students found the iPad easy to use and said that it helped make the classes more interesting. Two-thirds of the students said it was "very difficult" to give up the iPad after the trial.

Professor Angst concluded that, "While not statistically significant, the majority of students said they are learning more by using the iPad." The University of Notre Dame plans to test Android tablets as well so when this trial is over, we can see whether students learn better specifically with the iPad or with just any tablet device.

Perhaps some of these students should try using a current Tablet PC running Windows 7 to see whether a Tablet PC can be as useful and versatile as an iPad. Then we'll really know which type of tablet proves most useful for learning.

NHK World TV Live for the iPhone

To keep up with the latest updates from Japan, download the free NHK World TV Live app for the iPhone. This app plays streaming video from the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation so you can get all the news, in English, 24 hours a day.



Figure 2. The NHK World TV Live app gives you 24 hour English news coverage from Japan.

If you want to donate money through your iTunes account, just open iTunes on your computer and click on iTunes Store under the STORE category in the left pane. Then look for the Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Relief button to click.

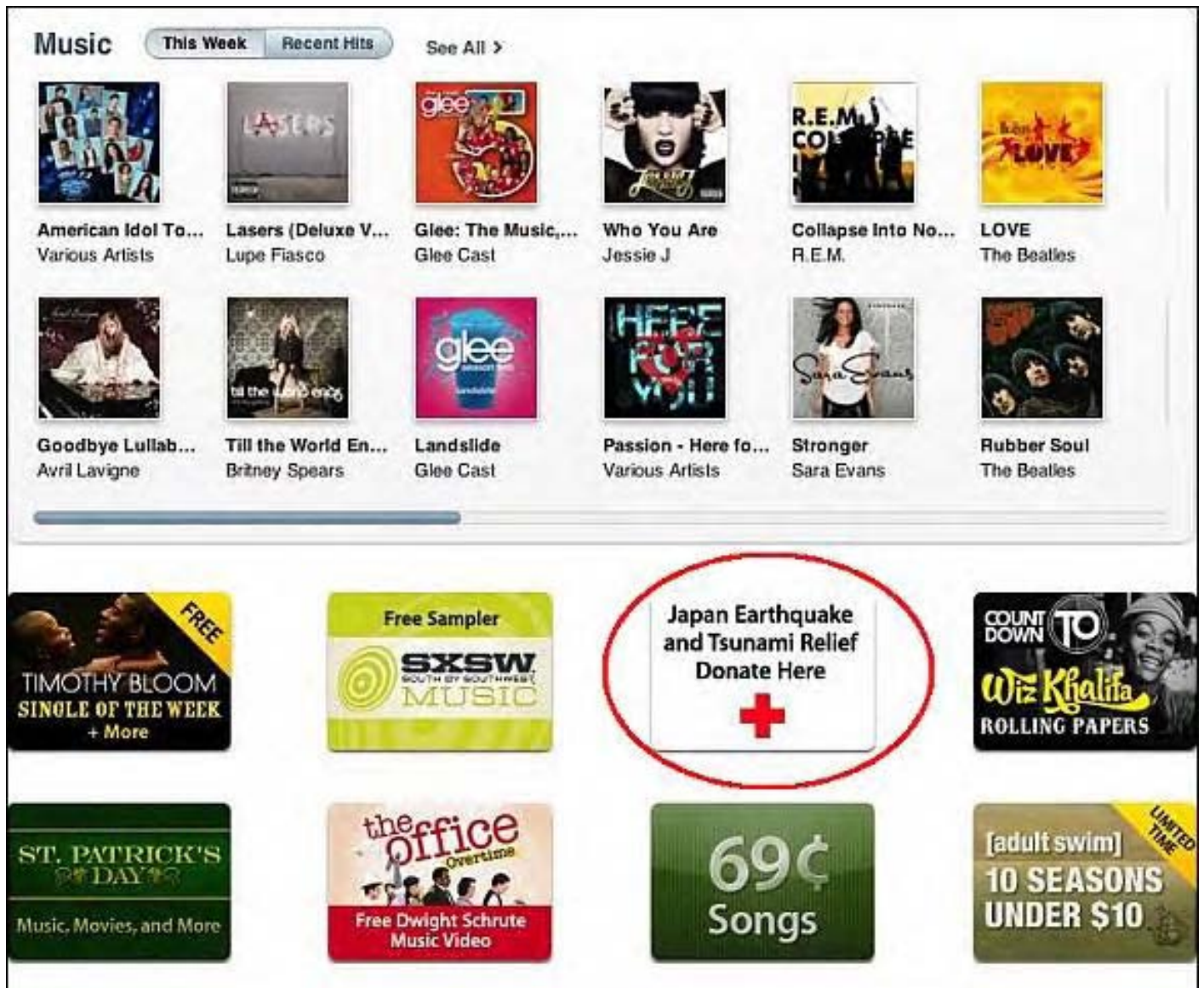


Figure 3. The Red Cross donation button appears on iTunes.

Clicking this button displays a page giving you different options for donating to the Red Cross to help the Japanese earthquake and tsunami survivors. As an alternative, go straight to the Red Cross site (www.redcross.org) and make a donation there.



American Red Cross

Help Japan earthquake and tsunami victims by making a monetary donation to the American Red Cross.

Click the Donate button under the amount you wish to donate. 100% of your donation will go to the American Red Cross. Because iTunes is not sharing your personal information with the American Red Cross, the Red Cross is unable to further acknowledge your donation. You will receive an email receipt from the iTunes Store which will serve as your only acknowledgement of your donation. The donation will also appear on your credit card statement as a transaction with the iTunes Store. iTunes Store credit cannot be used to make a donation.

\$5.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>	\$10.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>	\$25.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>
\$50.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>	\$100.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>	\$200.00 <input type="button" value="DONATE"/>

Your gift to the American Red Cross will support our disaster relief efforts to help those affected by the earthquake in Japan and tsunami throughout the Pacific. Your support will enable the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to victims of all disasters. On those rare occasions when donations exceed American Red Cross expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used to prepare for and serve victims of other disasters.

Figure 4. The official Red Cross site.

Just as with any disaster, expect to see con artists asking for donations that will end up going straight into their pockets and not helping any victims whatsoever. Whenever you donate money, make sure it's going through official channels and not through some strange Web site with a PayPal account located in Nigeria.

New Users Adapting the iPad 2

Everyone expected current iPad users to upgrade to the iPad 2, but a non-scientific survey of new iPad 2 buyers found that up to 70 percent of them were new to the iPad (www.loopinsight.com/2011/03/13/analyst-ipad-2-sold-out-70-to-new-users/). This survey also found these new iPad buyers were evenly split between Mac and PC users.

Analyst Gene Munster said, "We believe this shows Apple is expanding its base of iPad users, which is critical to maintaining its early lead in the growing tablet market. As the user base grows Apple's lead widens, and the company has a proven track record of building unmatched brand loyalty, which we believe will be a potent combination as the tablet market evolves."

If you order an iPad 2 now, you may have to wait 3-5 weeks for it to arrive. However, if you keep dropping by your local Apple Store, you may get lucky and be able to buy an iPad 2 as new shipments are supposed to be arriving periodically.

With so many people new people buying an iPad, chances are good that sales of the iPad 2 will continue climbing for the next year. The iPad 2 is not only faster than the original iPad, but also faster than the Motorola Xoom, according to AnandTech (www.tuaw.com/2011/03/13/anandtech-benchmarks-the-ipad-2-shows-huge-graphics-gains/).

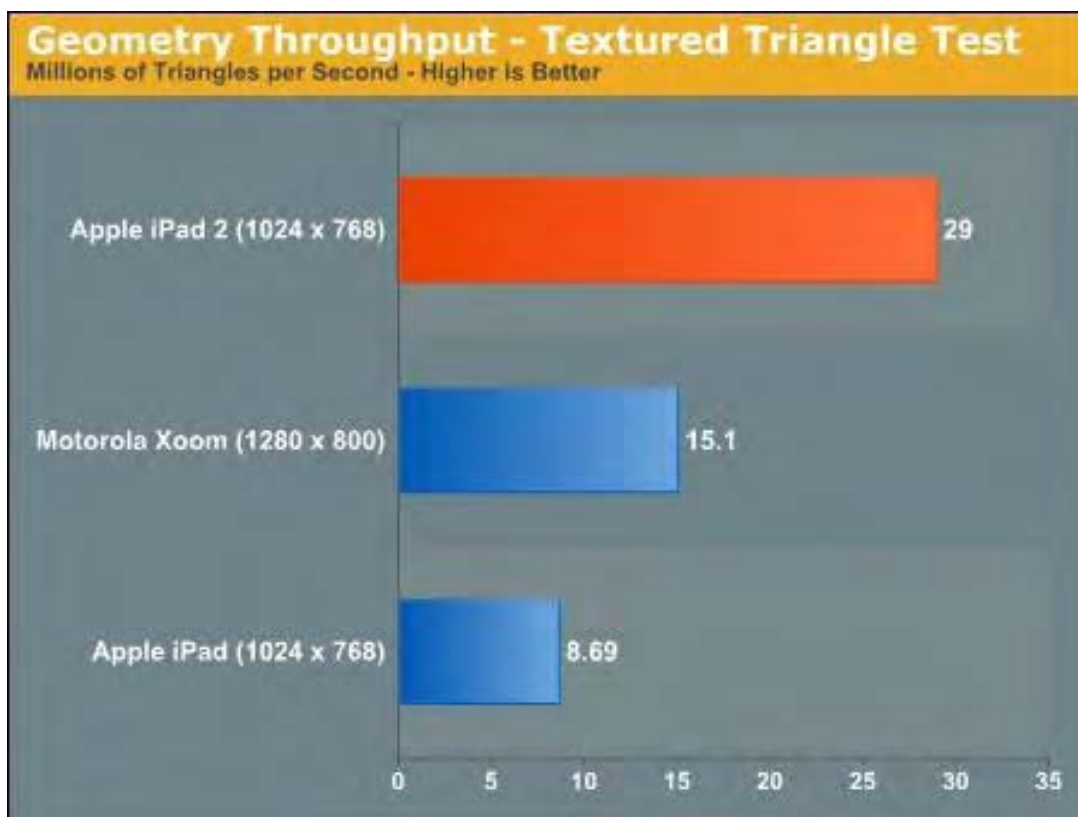


Figure 5. The iPad 2 proves faster than the Motorola Xoom.

While the Motorola Xoom may be nearly equal to the iPad 2 from a hardware specifications point of view, it lags considerably behind for now in the availability of apps. If you want a tablet that you can use right out of the box to start downloading various apps for your particular needs, you won't find that option with Android-based tablets just yet, which makes Android tablets more suitable for techno-geeks who are comfortable fiddling with devices to make them useful.

Console Gaming in Trouble?

Instead of buying a second PC, many people are getting an iPad instead, which is hurting sales of Windows PCs while Macintosh sales continue climbing. With the recent debacles of the Microsoft Kin and Vista behind them, Microsoft had some good news with their Kinect motion sensor device, but now that entire Xbox franchise could be in trouble if the developer of Angry Birds (venturebeat.com/2011/03/13/angry-birds-console-gaming/) is correct in saying that console gaming is dead.

Angry Birds has been a surprise hit for the iPhone and iPad, and is now available for Android as well. The developer of Angry Birds claims that mobile devices are attracting more gamers who like the lower cost of games and the greater variety.

One problem with console game systems such as the Wii, Xbox and Playstation is that games are expensive to produce, limiting the choices to a handful of companies able to make that initial investment. On the other hand, independent developers can easily create a compelling game for a mobile device in far less time and cost, allowing greater experimentation.

The end result could be less reliance on computers and consoles for playing games and more playing on mobile devices for gaming. With a faster processor and better graphics processor, the new iPad 2 can offer games with amazing realistic animation.



Figure 6. New games are taking advantage of the iPad 2's graphics capabilities.

While the visual quality of a game might be important, it's still not as crucial as the actual game play itself. That's where the motion detection feature of the iPad can offer a unique gaming experience by displaying a racing game and letting players literally steer the game by tilting the iPad in the air.



Figure 7. Games can take advantage of the iPad 2's unique features.

Can smart phone and tablet games knock console gaming out? Probably not since there will always be people who want the richer experience that a console game can offer. Yet with the processing power of tablets creeping up, the cost of games and development for console games also creeping up, and games for mobile devices available for playing at all times, console games may start losing market share to mobile devices.

The iPad has already hurt sales of portable game systems like the Nintendo DS and now it threatens to bite into the market share of console games as well. For a device that many people thought would fail, the iPad has certainly disrupted a lot of different markets, companies and products.

In any case, mobile gaming will only grow with the continuous growth of smart phones and tablets. For individual developers, mobile gaming will be far easier to target, with the result that console games are likely to see far fewer titles released each year compared to the flood of games for mobile devices.

Why the iPad Critics Were Wrong

Long lines greeted the iPad 2 recently and the iPad 2 is now sold out in most locations around the country. Apparently many people find the iPad interesting, useful and practical, a far cry from all those critics who predicted an early demise for the iPad just one year ago.

Where all of those iPad critics went wrong was simply comparing the iPad to an existing product and concluding that because it didn't match the capabilities of that existing product that it was doomed to failure.

The problem is simply the way critics think. If you compare any item to an existing product, it's easy to warp your logic to get the results you want. These critics compared the iPad to a netbook and concluded that the netbook was better,

without considering how the iPad could be better in return.

This type of thinking works like this. First, emphasize all the positive aspects of an existing product. Now list all the negative aspects of a new product. Compare all negative aspects with all positive aspects and it's easy to see how all the positive aspects make the existing product look superior and the new product look like a complete and utter failure.

For example, compare a pocket knife to an atom bomb. A pocket knife is portable and easy to carry for one person. An atom bomb is heavy, bulky and difficult to transport. A pocket knife can be used to attack a single person without any collateral damage to innocent by-standers. An atom bomb indiscriminately kills everyone within a specific blast radius. A pocket knife is easy and cheap to produce but an atom bomb is expensive and difficult to produce.

Therefore by comparing all the positive aspects of the pocket knife and all the negative aspects of the atomic bomb, we've just concluded that a pocket knife is the superior weapon than an atom bomb without regard to actual need.

This is the way critics compare everything to Apple products and thereby reach the conclusion that Apple products are always inferior and non-Apple products are always superior whether they cost more or less and whether they offer more or less features.

The key to avoiding such thinking is to simply keep an open mind and not only look at technical specifications, but also what you can do with each product. A Cray supercomputer may be superior to a Macintosh in terms of raw processing power, but how many people would consider a Cray supercomputer to organize their digital photographs or play their music instead of using iPhoto or iTunes on a Mac?

Technical specifications only tell half the story. Actual use for a product represents the other half of the story. Back in the early days, CP/M-86 was considered by many people to be superior to MS-DOS, yet most of the best business applications only ran on MS-DOS, so therefore people chose the inferior operating system (MS-DOS) over the superior operating system (CP/M-86) because MS-DOS gave them access to the applications they wanted.

So the next time you compare products, don't just look at the technical specifications but consider the actual use for that product as well. John C. Maxwell calls this type of thinking "possibility thinking" in his book *How Successful People Think* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1599951681/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1599951681). The idea is that you first look at the possibilities of an idea before trying to tear it down. As long as you compare products based on its possibilities rather than its technical specifications, you won't wind up buying something that looks great on paper but fails to deliver in actual use.

Strange Apple Users

It's no secret that Microsoft's advertising agency has used Macintosh computers to create some of Microsoft's ads promoting Windows (www.roughlydrafted.com/2008/09/19/microsofts-im-a-pc-ads-created-on-macs/), but what's a bit odd are the variety of people who have embraced Apple products.

Conservative talk show host, Rush Limbaugh, has been a long-time Macintosh user (www.rushlimbaugh.com/home/daily/site_031108/content/01125108.guest.html) and now shock jock Howard Stern has recently switched from Windows to a Macintosh.

"I'm totally @#&ing into Apple," Howard Stern announced (www.benzinga.com/trading-ideas/long-ideas/11/03/924451/howard-stern-loves-his-apple-do-you-aapl-siri) on his Sirius XM program. "I love it, I love it, I love it.... I don't know why I didn't do this years ago! I love my iPad 2, too. I was duped. PC my &%, I'm an

Apple guy now."

While you may not like or agree with Rush Limbaugh or Howard Stern, both of them were probably once Windows PC users since Windows PCs represented a large percentage of all computers sold and used on the planet.

Both Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern were likely familiar with the problems of Windows, saw the advantages of the Macintosh, and made a deliberate choice to switch, accepting the initial problems of unfamiliarity for the long-term benefits of a more satisfying user experience.

Most Apple users are former Windows users so they took the time to evaluate the features of a Macintosh before switching. On the other hand, most pro-Windows/anti-Apple critics have never taken the time to evaluate and use Apple products so their decision to promote Microsoft products is based on their own limited experience with just using Windows.

Asking a pro-Windows/anti-Apple critic for objective advice about an Apple product is like asking someone who only speaks English the advantages of speaking Arabic. Such English speakers won't know anything about Arabic, so they'll only know how to defend their own language and discourage people from learning Arabic using misinformation, fear and outright lies.

Sound familiar? If you objectively compare Apple products to rival products, you may find a good case for buying and using a non-Apple product, but you should do so because a rival product actually offers the features you need, not because you don't want to use an Apple product.

More people, familiar with the Windows PC world, are honestly comparing Apple products with rival products and deciding that the Apple product is worth the cost. If you just take the time to learn both sides of any story, you'll always make an informed decision rather than being prejudice against one side and never bothering to learn anything that threatens your own pre-conceived notions for what's "best."

A Windows 7 Tablet from Asus

In case you feel you absolutely need a Windows 7-based tablet (www.windows7news.com/2011/03/08/microsoft-releases-windows-7-asus-slate-commercials/), you can get one from Asus. This Asus tablet claims to offer a little over three hour battery life and a \$999 price tag, which makes it hard to compete against the 10 hour battery life and the high-end \$829 price for the most expensive iPad.

Still, the Asus Windows 7 tablet can use a stylus for writing notes or drawing pictures. If you don't mind a thicker, more expensive tablet with low battery life, then the Asus Windows 7 tablet might be for you.

* * *

To save space, you can compress files into a single file known as a Zip file format. On a Macintosh, just hold down the Command key, click on each file you want to store in a compressed Zip file, and then right-click on a selected file to see a pop-up menu. From this menu, choose Compress. If you receive a Zip file, you can just double-click it to unzip and expand it.

However, many people in the Windows world are now storing files compressed in a new file format called RAR. To uncompress a RAR file on your Macintosh, you can download a free copy of the Stuffit Expander program (www.stuffit.com/mac-expander.html). Now when you double-click a RAR file, Stuffit Expander will uncompress that file.

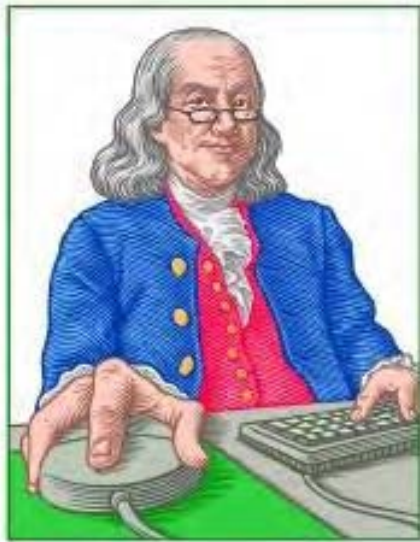
In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

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.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



LINUX LESSONS

**"AN INVESTMENT
IN LINUX KNOWLEDGE
PAYS THE BEST
INTEREST."**

Linux Lessons:
Tips and Tricks
from Users
"Sharing with the
Community" by Tony J.
Podrasky

Tony provides a shell
backup script he created for
the Linux community.

I've been running Linux since 1995. Over the years I've created quite a few shell scripts. I'm going to forward the ones that are generally useful to the user community. If you are doing this on your own personal Linux box, you might want to put the scripts into the /usr/local/bin directory.

Regards,

tonyp

—————CUT HERE—————

```
#!/bin/csh -f
```

```
# BACKUP shell script.
# CSH SHELL SCRIPT TO BACKUP A DIRECTORY AND ITS SUBORDINATE DIRECTORIES TO /tmp.
# The script will question you as to knowing which directory you are in.
# It will print the date of when it begins the backup and the date when it finishes.
# The backup (tar file) will be found in the /tmp directory and will be named
# [USER who invoked the command] [CWD - Current Working Directory or in other
# words, where you are at when you called the shell file] [DATE - full date in
# year / month / date / time in H:M:S]
```

```
echo " "
echo "WARNING: You are in the $cwd directory!"
echo " "
echo -n "Are you sure you want to proceed y/n? (n) "
set safety = $<
if ($safety != y) exit
echo " "
echo "BEGIN @ `date`"
echo " "
set dt = `date +%Y%m%d%H%M%S`
tar -cvf /tmp/$user"_"$cwd:t.$dt . >>/dev/null
echo "END @ `date`"
```

echo " "

CUT HERE

Tony has been in the computer field since 1976 when he started working for Data General Corp as a field engineer. Later going on to design hardware interfaces, write patches for operating systems, and build networks. It was in 1995 while working with the military on several projects that he ran into a "spook" who showed him a laptop that ran a then-unknown O/S called "Linux." "A laptop running a form of UNIX + tony = a marriage made in heaven!"

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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



Malware Friends Facebook; This Kitchen App is an (iPhone) App; PDF to JPG, TIF, BMP and PNG for Free; You Don't Know Jack for PC; Dock Your MacBook (Pro).

Malware Friends Facebook

According to Emsisoft (www.emsisoft.com):

Malware developers are becoming increasingly daring as they target users of the famous social network Facebook. Emsisoft warns about two variants. Recently Emsisoft discovered the activities of the Facebook threat Trojan-Downloader.Win32.FraudLoad (blog.emsisoft.com/2011/01/18/i-just-got-surprise-from-facebook/). Now there is a new version taking over complete Facebook accounts.

This Malware uses the Facebook chat system to propagate through users. It sends messages to the friends of an infected user, with the message only containing "hahahh Foto," followed by a link. This link leads to a fake Facebook page stating "Photo has been Moved." Everyone clicking "View Photo" obtains the Malware file without even knowing it.

As soon as the file is executed, another browser window is opened—and either a harmless Myspace or Google page will be opened. But the Malware remains active invisibly in the background. As soon as the user opens his Facebook account, the malware becomes active again and sends out new photo messages to all friends of the victim.

During the next log in at Facebook, the log in page will be blocked and the Malware shows a "Scam Survey" message together with the link "Win an Apple product." If followed, the user will end up at a Web page with advertisements or affiliate links.

This Kitchen App is an (iPhone) App

The people at Fooducate (www.fooducate.com) write in this week with info about their a new free iPhone app, Fooducatez:

Everyone, especially at this time of year, wants to eat more healthfully. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 80 percent of consumers read food labels in order to make better choices. But most people are overwhelmed by confusing ingredient lists, nutrition labels, health claims and marketing hype. As a result, they are making poor food choices.

Introducing Fooducate, a free and fun mobile app that empowers supermarket shoppers to effortlessly choose healthier foods based on what's really inside.

Fooducate's iPhone app enables shoppers to automatically scan the barcodes of over 200,000 unique food products, and instantly see how nutritious they really are. Shoppers learn the whole truth, as well as recommendations for healthier alternatives.

Fooducate assigns each product a letter grade (A, B, C...) along with brief explanations and warnings about its nutrients and ingredients. Shoppers can easily and clearly see what manufacturers don't want them to notice, including excessive sugar and sodium, trans fats, additives and preservatives, high fructose corn syrup, controversial food colorings, and much more.

"As a father of three young children, I try my best to buy and prepare healthy foods for my family," said Hemi Weingarten, founder and CEO of Fooducate. "But trips to the supermarket are really challenging—so many products, so many promises. If everything is so good for us, why is everyone getting fatter and sicker?" Weingarten asked.

"The original goal was to help my kids avoid that fate. It started out with the Fooducate Blog as a way to learn about the food industry and decode labels. We then put together a dedicated team of technologists, nutrition experts and dietitians to develop a mobile service using the latest barcode scanning technology."

"Most Americans consume far too many calories and precious few key nutrients," said Dr. Adam Drewnowski, Director of the Nutritional Sciences Program at the University of Washington. "As a result, nearly 65 percent of Americans are overweight or obese, many suffering from diet-related diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease," he added.

"Fooducate's mobile application points out the most relevant facts about a product, good or bad," said Dr. Drewnowski. "It helps consumers make smart decisions in seconds, paving the way for healthful food choices and healthier diets." Dr. Drewnowski, creator of the Nutrient Rich Foods Index (NRF) and a global leader in nutrition profiling, is a member of Fooducate's advisory board.

Fooducate's mission is to help millions of shoppers choose healthy, tasty and affordable food, and to affect positive change on the food industry. Using Fooducate's mobile app is an effortless way to improve nutrition habits. Making just one healthier choice per grocery trip—and sticking with it—will lead to a substantial reduction in empty calories, unnecessary additives and fake foods in one's diets, all in the space of a few months.

The free Fooducate app is available now for immediate download on the iTunes App Store.

So how about a version for us Android users? According to the Fooducate Web site:

Since launching the Fooducate iPhone App, we've been swamped by requests for an Android version. And we will be happy to oblige. We are working on an Android app, and expect it to be available soon.

If you'd like to be notified when the app is ready, click here (spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dGNiLS03d3hLWTIIVXdiYnY1d0VhLVE6MQ).

PDF to JPG, TIF, BMP and PNG for Free

A new freeware converter lets users convert PDF documents to images which they can use for OCR or when ever required.

PDF To JPG (PDFJPG.com) writes: PDF To JPG is a new windows freeware utility which helps users to convert the documents in PDF format to 5 image formats like JPG, TIF, BMP, PNG and GIF. The utility states to be 160% faster than all the other PDF converters.

PDF to JPG was created to assist users to convert PDF documents into JPG, TIF or the other image formats mentioned above and get images which they can use when ever required. It is also useful when Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is to be done. OCR comes in handy when books or documents needed to be coded into electronic

files, to convert the record keeping system in electronic or computerized form and activities of similar type. The PDF to JPG application is a convenient tool enabling users to perform a variety of transformations of documents.

As a practical application, PDF To JPG supports the batch mode allowing users to turn myriads of PDF documents into images at a single time. It is extremely user friendly; most of all it does not require Adobe Acrobat or other third-party software, making conversions all the more quicker and easier in only 3 clicks. This makes it a must have. Plus, it also enables the users to convert the DPI (Dots per inch) setting for having a finer image result. PDF to JPG has not even a single spyware and adware attached to it, 100% clean and safe.

Read more about the program at <http://www.pdfjpg.com> Download link (www.pdfjpg.com/download/pdfjpg.exe) (2.14MB). The program runs on Microsoft Windows Me, 2000, XP, Vista or 7, including X64 versions.

You Don't Know Jack for PC

The You Don't Know Jack (www.youdontknowjack.com) series has been putting players through the trivia ringer for more than 15 years. When the series faded away about five years ago, most of us thought we'd seen the end of the wisecracking party host with all the questions. But YDKJ is back and better than ever (\$20) thanks to more than 15 hours (70 rounds) of fresh questions on pop culture and general trivia, presided over by a smart alecky virtual host with a personality even fresher than the questions.





Old favorites like DisOrDat and Jack Attack are back and as funny as ever, along with new features like the Wrong Answer of the Game and the ability to collect in-game prizes for your efforts.

I wish this new version of You Don't Know Jack allowed players to buzz in with the answer before the announcer has finished talking. Also, some of the cut-scenes and chatter got a little old and repetitive from time-to-time. All-in-all, though, it's really great to be able to visit again with an old friend that has been giving players so much entertainment for so many years.

You Don't Know Jack is also available for PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, Wii and DS. Multiplayer and online challenges are available for Xbox and PS3 players via the XBLA and PSN networks, respectively.



Review contributed by Max Rennie

Dock Your MacBook (Pro)

Notebook computers' portability can be advantageous and disadvantageous. One advantage is an enhancement in efficiency and productivity gained from easily moving the computer between rooms in a dwelling or workplace. A potentially offsetting disadvantage, however, is the hassle of unplugging and replugging cables that connect to less portable peripheral devices (e.g., external hard drive, printer, speakers, etc.) each time the computer moves. The hassle of repetitively plugging and unplugging peripheral devices can be avoided with the aid of a docking station, and that's where Henge Docks (www.hengedocks.com/) fit in.

Henge Docks' products are docking stations (www.hengedocks.com/order.html) designed specifically for current and previous generation polycarbonate MacBooks and for unibody MacBook Pro models (13.3", 15.4" and 17"). MacBook Air models are not supported because their ports are distributed on both sides of the chassis rather than on only one. These docking stations accommodate audio, Ethernet, FireWire, power, USB and video cables. They can integrate seamlessly with an external monitor such as Apple's 24" LED Cinema Display or a home theater system. Advantages include less hassle associated with disconnecting and reconnecting device cables, and less cable clutter on your physical desktop. Here's how.



Figure 1. If you want to reduce the hassle of unplugging and replugging cables from peripherals such as a display, keyboard and pointing device (left) to a MacBook (Pro), Henge Docks' products can do the trick. They consist of a single sturdy piece of white plastic with a broad foot on each side and a slot that contains "voids" for cables' connector ends (right; overhead view).

Henge Docks' docking stations consist of a heavy-duty single piece of white plastic (Figure 1) with a thin strip of rubber on the underside that minimizes the risk of slip-sliding. These stations come in several sizes to match the MacBook (Pro) model it will be used with. For instance, the unit tested in this review is about 10.25" long, 4.5" tall, 6.25" wide at the widest portion of the base, and 1.25" wide at the top where the 15.4" MacBook Pro model launched in June 2009 is inserted. This unit weighs about 11 oz. without any cables installed.

Unlike competitors' docking stations that come with port connectors built in, Henge Docks' units come with openings (aka "voids"; Figure 1) into which the user installs the appropriate cables (Figure 2). The cables must be installed securely to make sure they properly align with and insert into the computer's corresponding ports (details in a moment). Otherwise, the computer's port(s) could be damaged.



Figure 2. Some assembly is required with Henge Docks' docking stations. For each port to be used, the corresponding cable needs to be installed from the docking station's underside into the corresponding void, then secured with a set-screw (red) so that the connector properly aligns with and inserts into the computer's corresponding port without damaging the port.

To ensure proper installation, standard equipment accompanying these docking stations includes the following items that come conveniently organized in a zip-lock plastic bag contained within a box within the product's larger box.

- Two white A (plug)-to-A (receptacle) USB cables (3' long)—these are intended for use in combination with a wired keyboard and pointing device (their USB connector goes into the docking station's USB cable's receptacle end), or for use with other USB peripherals (printer, hard drive, etc.);
- One white FireWire 800 cable with docking stations for MacBook Pro models, FireWire 400 cable with ones for

MacBook models (also 3' long)—this is intended to replace an external drive's cable;

- Two white audio in/out cables (3' long too)—these are intended for use in combination with wired speaker(s) and/or microphone;
- One white Ethernet cable (readers who guessed 3' long get a gold star)—this is intended to replace the user's existing one;
- Three MagSafe adapter tools (they differ with regard to the style of MagSafe connector that they support)—these are intended to make your MacBook's (Pro's) MagSafe cable connector compatible with the corresponding void in the docking station;
- Hex key and 5 mm set-screws for securing cable connectors (Figure 2) to ensure that they remain in place (rather than falling out) and plug into their respective ports when the user inserts the computer into the docking station; and
- An English-only, illustrated user guide that contains step-by-step instructions for installing the above cables into the Henge Docks unit (the guide also is available from Henge Docks LLC's Web site (www.hengedocks.com/downloads/Henge_Docks_User_Guide.pdf))

These cables are included as standard equipment ostensibly to maximize compatibility. Henge Docks LLC explains (www.hengedocks.com/support.html) that they "...ensure a consistent fit in our docking stations since USB, Audio, Ethernet and FireWire cable heads come in many shapes and sizes." The emphasis on compatibility—to minimize risk of damaging the computer's ports—is reinforced by conditions of the docking station's 90-days warranty which states that liability is "limited to the original price or \$100.00." The user guide additionally contains the stern warning "...use this product at your own risk. Henge Docks is not liable for any damage caused by use of a Henge Docks product." That caught my attention.

With six cables included as standard equipment, Henge Docks docking stations' prices seem pretty reasonable. Pricing starts at \$59.95 for a docking station that fits the current white plastic 13.3" MacBook and tops out at \$74.95 for one that fits the current 17" aluminum unibody MacBook Pro.

The aforementioned standard equipment is missing several items which the user is expected to provide—a MacBook (Pro), MagSafe power supply and Apple's Mini DisplayPort to DVI (or to HDMI for use with an entertainment system) Adapter. Henge Docks LLC recommends original video cables and adapters from Apple or their own (\$24.95 (www.hengedocks.com/order.html))

DIY installation of the standard equipment cables, video adapter plus cable and MagSafe cable is low-tech, straightforward, and fortunately a one-time ordeal for dexterity-challenged users. The installation process can be frustrating because each cable's connector must be properly oriented and inserted into its appropriate void (to avoid having to rework the installation), the docking station's underside has only so much room to accommodate multiple 3' cables, and the 5 mm set-screws are prone to take flying leaps and then hide under computer furniture. Frustration can be minimized by installing only those cables that will be used regularly.

After successfully completing the cables' installation (including a video cable/adaptor if needed, plus the mandatory MagSafe cable), the docking station is ready for use. With the MacBook (Pro) booted up and its lid closed, insert the computer into the docking station with the MagSafe power supply plugged into an electrical outlet, the USB cables connected to keyboard and mouse, the external monitor or television connected and turned on, and voilà! In my testing, this step worked like a charm on the first attempt, without damaging the computer's ports. To discontinue use, simply grab the computer with one hand and firmly pull/lift while holding the docking station with the other hand. This

step also worked flawlessly during my tests.

Although my testing included a wired keyboard and mouse, these peripherals are not required. According to Apple (support.apple.com/kb/HT3131), MacBook (Pro) closed lid mode supports Bluetooth peripherals; therefore, MacBook (Pro) owners who have a wireless keyboard and mouse can skip the docking station's USB cables altogether (for minimal desktop cable clutter) or use them with other devices (e.g., printer; hard drive, etc.). However, in this scenario, the docking station's utility becomes a bit dubious (more on this point in a moment).

Although Henge Docks docking stations' strengths (sturdy construction, stable design, reasonable price considering the standard equipment cables, low-tech installation) are noteworthy, the following weaknesses merit consideration in making a purchase decision.

The printed user guide says "The underside of each void is labeled with its connection" (p.5). If this means that symbols or letters identify each of the voids, I could not find them. Consequently, an important step in the installation process is to become familiar with which cable goes in which void to minimize potential rework and/or frustration.

The docking stations for 15.4" and 17" MacBook Pros have a void corresponding to the computer's media card slot. This void seems useless given that accessing it (from the docking station's underside, where all of the installed cables are snaked) probably would be challenging at best. As such, these docking stations are essentially incompatible the computer's media card slot. Henge Docks' products also are incompatible with most (or possibly all) MacBook (Pro) cases, sleeves and covers.

Lastly (but not least), during testing I became aware that the docking station had increased my desktop clutter rather than reducing it. The increased clutter clearly was attributable to the multiple 3' cables—the bulk of which hung outside the docking station—in addition to my peripherals' built-in cables. Awareness of the clutter logically led me to question whether these docking stations actually solve a problem and/or meet a need. In the current era of wireless networks and peripheral devices, are the standard equipment USB and Ethernet cables useful? If instead you're going to use only a video cable plus adapter and the mandatory MagSafe power supply with a docking station (i.e., imagine Figure 1 with a wireless keyboard and mouse), you could just as well skip the docking station and time spent on installation with the same (or less) amount of clutter.



Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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

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

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

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

tech world.

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

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

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Icons," "Kudos for Explaining Dangers," "Faxing with VoIP," "Hat Hanging," "Targeted Deception in Advertising," "Using Other People's Computers..."

Icons

[Regarding the February 25 Beyond Personal Computing column:]

Another clue about an Icon can be found by right-clicking on the icon and selecting properties. The properties include the name of the executable and the default location.

-Marcus, Alabama

Kudos for Explaining Dangers

[Regarding Marilyn K. Martin's February 25 article, "Data Mining: Privacy Issues to Anti-Terrorism Tools":]

As a senior citizen (80), I have finally retired as a library Internet docent after nearly 18 years. But when I read articles like this one I'm obligated to continue sharing advice to our patrons on the use and misuse of this fabulous phenomenon called the Internet and its magical powers.

Marilyn K Martin has done an outstanding job of explaining its potential and horrendous dangers, along with a lot of clear common sense advice for behavior. This article should be sent to all high schools for all youth as a must read and to the American Library Association to be posted in all libraries. Since we Seniors never had to deal with issues of this nature as our youngsters grew up, it's now up to our institutions to help with this crisis. Kudos and more to Marilyn for an outstanding humanitarian job well done!

-Grandma Julie, Alpine, California

Faxing with VoIP

[Regarding the February 25 Digital Dave column:]

Dave, In reference to the first letter. If the fellow has Skype as his VoIP service, as I do (as I have commented before), he can pick up PamFax from Skype for free. This allows Faxing using Skype as your carrier. I use it for all long distance faxing because Skype is my only LD service since it is so much less expensive. I hope this may be of use to him.

-Paula Barefoot, Borrego Springs, Ca

Hat Hanging

[Regarding the February 5 EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher column:]

I'll hang my hat with Jack Dunning. I suspect that individuals will opt for personal privacy and control in the long run, but will accept "external" cloud computing at work on behalf of their employers. But isn't it time we gave up the keyboard?

-Cicero, Colorado Springs, CO

Targeted Deception in Advertising

[Regarding the February 25 EdgeWord: Targeted Deception in Advertising column:]

Amen! But then "snake oil" sales have been around since the beginning of time; it's just easier now. Deception is tricky enough, but sneaky is its cousin.

I bought a new HP printer two months ago and their sneaky tactics seared my loyalty. The driver disk came fully loaded with a "solution center" that is a full blown advertisement to buy "their" ink—from them! It interfered with my OS, e-mail and browser *every time* these were opened for the first time. And I do mean *interfered*. It took hours of phone time to get their big, ugly, invasive "sign" removed! I'll never buy another HP printer because of it. Yes, you're right. the link you provided in the article said "San Diego"!

-Lynn Manning Ross, San Diego, CA

Just checked, and she (Jessica Holcombe) now lives in "Tijuana, 02." I kid you not!

-Werner Maurer, Baja California

Using Other People's Computers...

[Regarding the February 25 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Wally, I hope you were joking when you said, "Of course, the simplest way to browse the Internet anonymously is to use another computer. Now you can feel safe visiting the Communist Party site and any pornographic adult sites just as long as you use a computer that belongs to someone else, such as your boss's."

If you meant it as a joke, it didn't come across as one. How could you suggest something so unethical? Doing that on someone's work computer could get them fired! Would you want anyone to anonymously use your computer? What with viruses, malware, phishing, etc., there are enough hazards using computer these days without recommending another way to cause problems.

-John King, San Diego, CA

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