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This issue:
Lesser Computer Crimes

The Internet age has produced new forms of abuse and retribution, all of them technology based.

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Digital Dave

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

HP Printer Monitor; Internet Explorer Hard Drive Thrashing; Second Wireless Router in Home Network.

Dear Digital Dave,

How do I get the ink level box to quit popping up? It does it even when the ink is full.

Scott
Evansville, IN

Dear Scott,

It is relatively easy to turn off these messages in Windows, although in Windows 7 and Vista the procedure is a little hidden.

The option for turning these messages on and off is located in the Advanced tab of the Printer Server Properties window (see Figure 1). To disable the messages merely clear the appropriate check boxes "Show informational notifications for ... printers", click Apply and then OK. The hard part is finding the window.
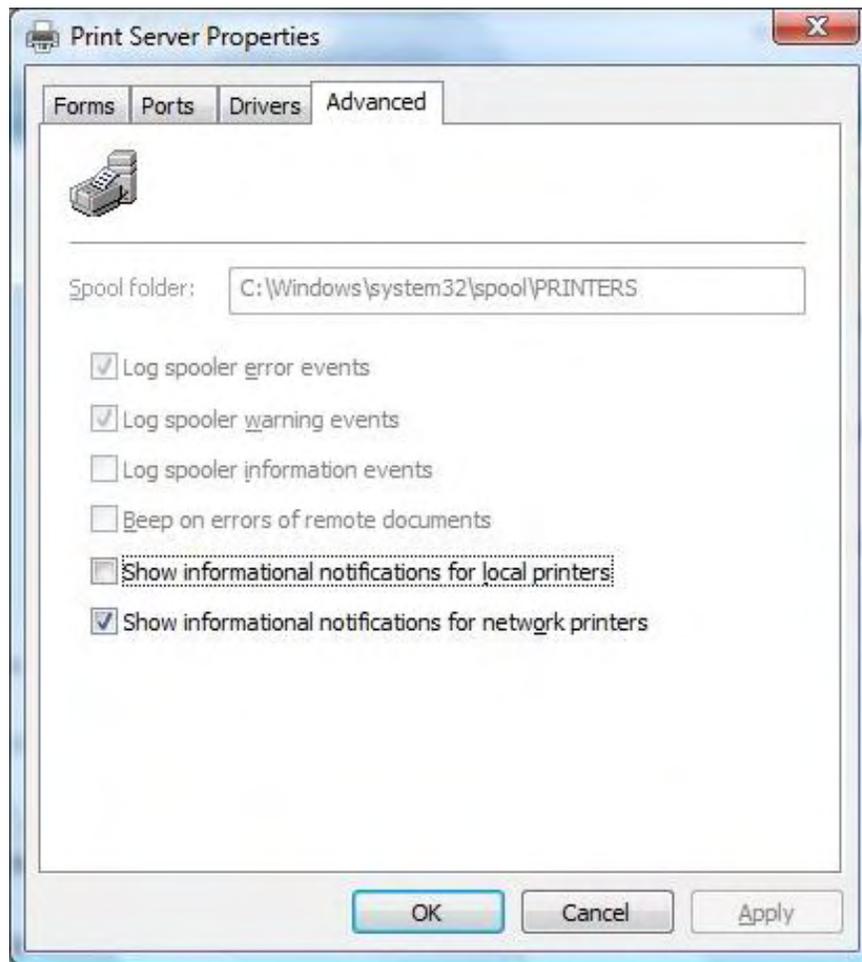
Figure 1. The Advanced tab of the Printer Server Properties window.

To find the Printer Server Properties window, open the Control Panel and double-click Printers (or in Windows 7 and Vista, type "printers" in the Start Search field of the Start Menu and select Printers from the top of the list). If you see the File menu at the top of the window, select "Server Properties..." If not (Windows 7 and Vista), hit the ALT key and the top menu will appear. The easier way to open Server Properties is to right-click in any white space in the Printer's pane and select it from the drop down menu.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I'm a weekly reader of your column for over four years. Sometimes after being connected to Internet with Internet Explorer, it starts thrashing the hard drive for several minutes. Sometimes I hit CRL/ALT/DEL, and kill the Internet Explorer entry from the list and start over. Two times this week, even CRL/ALT/DEL didn't work and I had to just shut down my PC and reboot.

My question is: What is it doing when thrashing?

Jim Adair
San Diego, CA

Dear Jim,

This is not necessarily a cause for alarm. The fact that there is a great deal of activity on your hard drive does not mean that there is a problem. There are many different reasons that your drive may be working away. However, if the amount of thrashing has changed recently, then it does deserve more investigation.

If it only thrashes with Internet Explorer, then there's something up with Internet Explorer. If it seems to thrash

for every hard drive access, then the hard drive could be starting to fail. Unless you have a slow older computer, several minutes sounds like a lot to me. Make sure that you have up-to-date virus protection and run a full scan of the drive. Your PC could be busy doing "virusy" things. Having said that, there are a number of things which may qualify as thrashing that are normal activity.

The first is your hard drive is used as virtual memory when you filled up the available installed random access memory with loaded software and data. The computer will automatically move idle programs and data to the hard drive to save available memory for other work. This will cause hard drive activity. Virtual hard drive memory can often be freed up by adding more RAM (if your computer will take more).

Another program which will cause a great deal of hard drive activity is your antivirus software. When it does a scan for malware, it will cause continuous activity (thrashing) while it checks the files on the drive. It is best to have this type of scan done in the early hours of the morning while you sleep.

Hard drive backup, as well as, hard drive defragmenting programs will also cause a great deal of hard drive activity. (In fact, the thrashing may be an indicator that your hard drive needs defragmenting.) Again, schedule these activities when your are asleep. There are also numerous Windows maintenance features which may start up at any time, plus programs running in the background may be the source as well.

Other than doing the usual cleanup techniques, there is little that you can do since hard drive activity is a normal part of computing. If you do suspect that your hard drive might be failing (excessive noise is a sure sign), regularly backup all of your important files to another medium such as an external USB hard drive. If you truly believe that Internet Explorer is the culprit, then switch to Firefox or Google Chrome. They are both free downloads.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Thank you for the rapid response to my question regarding the flashing task bar. Now another, and yet even more technical question!

My home system is wireless, one DSL modem connected to one router. Three computers (two laptops/one desktop) and one 4-in-1 printer, all connected wirelessly to the router. Since a bridge is more costly than a router, how do I add another wireless router to my home network? I do not want it hard connected by Cat cable, but rather it must be located in a completely different room (where no Cat cable exists—I'll not be making any more holes in my walls). The reason for this is I wish to be able to connect my DirecTV satellite box to my network. (Note: The TV, satellite box and sound system are all in the only location they fit. There is no Cat cable capability, so moving them is not an option.) I can only find data on hardwire connecting a second router to the first. Not what I want! They must be separate, but yet on the same network.

Jeffrey Wagner
Colorado Springs

Dear Jeffery,

I first need to dispute your contention that a Wi-Fi bridge is more expensive than a router—at least the type of bridge that you would need. Traditionally, a bridge would be used to connect two different networks with a device on both ends of the bridge. These may be more expensive than the typical router. However, the term bridge has also come to be used for situations such as yours where all you want to do is add some non-wireless equipment to your current network. It might be called a wireless bridge adapter or Wi-Fi Internet adapter depending upon the manufacturer. Some are also called wireless gaming adapters. These are reasonably priced and will have less complications than setting up a second router/access point.

By default, setting up a second router will create a second network. You want all your devices on the same network. There are a number of things that you can do to accomplish this such as make the second router a client and assign it to an IP in the first network and give it an exclusive range for reassignment in the same

network, but this is overkill for merely adding more devices to the original network. I would look for the right type of bridge adapter to connect with the original router.

An access point is a special type of router which will extend the range of your current wireless network by locating it at a place which will cover more area. Unless you have a poor signal in your TV room, you won't need an access point.

When you look at the bridge adapters, such as the Netgear WNCE2001 Universal WiFi Internet Adapter, be sure that they have the necessary Ethernet connections. Some devices only include USB ports for connecting to USB devices.

If you don't want to poke holes in the wall, another inexpensive (often overlooked) option is a power line network adapter kit. This works by using the power sockets and your electrical wiring to extend your network. DirecTV actually recommends this over using Wi-Fi. There is the caution that in apartments you may be offering your network to the entire building.

Digital Dave

Lesser Computer Crimes: Gray Areas and Vigilantes
"Cyber Crime is Rampant" by Marilyn K. Martin

Cyber crime has now exploded into highly sensitive political and diplomatic arenas, as well as our everyday lives. Grays areas such as "techno-trepass" create a concern, leading to "Scam-Baiting" as a form of Internet Vigilantism.

Cyber crime today is rampant, and encompasses everything from hardware theft, hacking and designer-viruses to identity theft. In the year 2000, the FBI reported that 85% of business respondents (from companies of all sizes and types), had been victimized by at least one computer-related crime the previous year. By 2006, the FBI announced that PC theft and digital crimes cost U.S. businesses $67 billion a year. You can probably safely double that figure (or more) for today.

Cyber crime has now exploded into highly sensitive political and diplomatic arenas, from the Stuxnet worm attacking Iranian nuclear plants, to the highly sensitive stolen government documents Wikileaks is releasing. The FBI now has their own cyber crime division, with several lists of Cyber Crime Fugitives. And the Secret Service has their own Electronic Crimes Task Forces and Working Groups. Even the Department of Justice has set up a Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section (CCIPS).

There is also a combined Armed Forces Cyber Command (subordinate to the U.S. Strategic Command) located at Fort Meade, Maryland. Wired magazine even challenged readers in July 2010 to "Crack the Code In Cyber Command's Logo." The U.S. Navy also offers its own "Cyber Crime Prevention Tips" Handbook, downloadable as a PDF.

Things have gotten so bad that Norton Security 360 Version 5 now offers businesses a direct link to a "CyberCrime Index". This program attempts to quantify the real time state of cyber security. Using a statistical model, it evaluates the relative risk of computer threats on any given day. It even provides a more in-depth look at active threats, threat trends, and offers advice on what kinds of behavior are being most heavily targeted that day.

So computer/Internet crime is big business today, from the criminals to law enforcement and even security providers. Articles and advice are everywhere, although many Internet articles on computer crime laws are

Donny is arrested for using the Internet to steal the identity of a well-known cartoon character.

outdated. But what about lesser cyber crimes, the more personal and less lucrative crimes the Big Boys haven't got time for?

Let's start with the gentleman who e-mailed a computer company with this curious message: "I've bought one of your stolen computers, which didn't come with any software or cables. Could you send those to me? And do I still have the full one-year warranty?" A funny story, but based on Internet postings, it highlights a real confusion over whether a Buyer of "fell off a truck" type stolen street-goods is liable. Although, the law clearly states that "being in possession of stolen goods" is illegal. Or even just believing/knowing something was stolen when purchased, the purchaser can still be prosecuted as "an accessory to a crime."

Are you tired of all those scams littering your e-mail spam file, with sob stories and money-hungry come ons? Well, apparently, a lot of other people are too, and they've become pro-active.

Scam-Baiting is a form of Internet Vigilantism, where the vigilante poses as a potential victim in order to gather information, and ultimately hope to publicly expose and humiliate the scammer. Wikipedia terms it "a form of social engineering," with vigilante motivations ranging from altruistic to malice to mere entertainment. The idea is to engage the scammer through their own provided e-mail return address, and string them along to use up the scammer's time and resources—while keeping them away from more gullible victims.

TheScamBaiter (*thescambaiter.com*) and 419 Eater (*419eater.com*) (started to thwart the 419 Nigerian Advance-Fee Scam) are the most popular scam-baiter Web sites. They train, offer tips, exchange stories and post photos of scammers the vigilantes have uncovered and stopped. And as a true indication that scam-baiters have fully "arrived" into the public consciousness, there are even You Tube videos of scammers getting scammed by scam-baiters.

A site called DigiCrime (*www.digicrime.com*) is part spoof (as leaders of the "digital underground"), and part valuable information that even the FBI links too. The site's President and Founder is Arjen K. Lenstra, who has a PhD in both mathematics and computer science and is most interested in computational number theory, especially the algorithms for integer factorization. (Yes, a majorly brilliant computer guy whose day-job is at Bellcore.)

Their list of "Staff" names sounds globally recruited, with think-about-it titles. Such as an Escrow Agent (to escrow keys to facilitate key retrieval), and a Three-Headed Dog Catcher (since Kerberos was the three-headed dog guarding the entrance to Hades in Greek Mythology, as well as the current name of a computer security system.) Although I couldn't crack the name of their Manager of Cryptographic Services: YPZBETRQ OHWUDRC.

DigiCrime's satiric method of teaching people about cyber crime involves their "Services" section, which invites people to reroute airline flights, move money between bank accounts, tap telephone lines, and so on. None of their tongue-in-cheek instructions actually work, or course, and each "Service" offers a real story (most with broken links) about someone who tried that idea—and failed miserably. Sort of "taking a byte out of cyber crime" by humorously educating people about what digital-crime is, and/or is capable of soon becoming.

Some of these failed-miserably stories are humorous from several angles. Such as the 1995 international flight from Detroit to Frankfurt, Germany. Someone changed the destination in the plane's enroute computers, and they ended up landing in Brussels. But the real question was why the crew didn't catch on, when the cabin's flight-path display clearly showed that the plane was headed to Brussels and not Frankfurt. (Ah yes! How much crime is facilitated by the unquestioning mind?)

One typical DigiCrime personal-data-theft story involved a California man arrested at the San Francisco Airport in 1997. He'd just sold an encrypted diskette with personal data on more than 100,000 credit card accounts. He'd gathered them by hacking into company databases and by "packet-sniffing" a San Diego ISP. His downfall came when he sold the disc to an undercover FBI Agent.

"Packet-sniffing" is a form of wire-tap applied to computer networks instead of phone networks, by turning off the Ethernet filters. Despite the increased use of network "switch" technology, packet-sniffing is still an effective tool for hackers and other cyber criminals. Controversy rages over whether packet-sniffing is illegal, with most thinking it falls in a "gray area" (or legally murky, neither black nor white). As long as you aren't stealing private data or breaking into a computer, the conventional wisdom goes, but only using it inside your own home to hack, say, a video game, it's not illegal.

This highlights the real conundrum involving lesser computer crimes. There are too many "gray area" computer technologies, techniques and behaviors, such as Grey Hat Hacking (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_hat*). Detective Thom Bell of the Tulsa (OK) Police Cyber Crimes Department, reported in a Feb. 2011 article that he has received about twenty complaints of "harassment" involving social media sites in the past six months.

"Social Media Harassment" not only has its own term now, but is another gray area which has to be carefully evaluated as to whether it is genuine harassment—or just someone exercising their First Amendment Rights. "Flags" Detective Bell looks for (that indicates genuine harassment) are people posting on someone else's page, assuming someone else's identity (especially for financial gain), or posting threats of violence.

So confusion abounds in the public over these gray area computer maybe-crimes. Posted questions asking for clarification on general information sites, feature a best answer that has been chosen or rated by other viewers. However, this "best rated answer" may be clever and informative, but ignorant of the current laws. Blue Line is a police-recruiting site with discussion forums. They occasionally host complaints and advice after someone reports being rejected for police training based on their past activity with illegal Internet downloads.

According to 'Lectric Law Library (*lectlaw.com*), other gray area cyber activities include "techno-trespass," or walking through a computer just to explore. This alone violates the owner's Right To Privacy, but is hard to catch and prove. Although if any information is stolen or the computer's programs are damaged, it would upgrade the activity to Criminal Trespass. (Someone technically skilled can become a super-user by gaining access to a computer through an operating system's "trap-door." Federal agencies are increasingly vigilant against such unknown "trap-doors" inserted in software manufactured in foreign countries.)

Similar to "techno-trespass," changing information in someone else's computer or Internet account is also a gray area, especially if no information was known to be stolen or damage done. Some people suspect hacking if they find their e-mail or other Internet account passwords mysteriously changed once a year or so. But if this happens rarely and irregularly, the experts say you probably can't prove you were hacked, and have to just chalk it up to a system failure.

However, several online spyware companies now advertise Keyloggers (or keyboard monitoring) and Computer Monitor software. Which means that whatever you type on your keyboard, or view on your monitor, can be captured or stolen. Thus all the clever passwords in the world won't keep your computer or Internet accounts safe. Computer laws on the books should cover such hardware-enabled data-theft, if only through Right To Privacy laws. But, as far as I could find, this is another gray area where laws applied to "spyware compromised" keyboards and monitors remain untested.

Highlighting the public confusion over gray area computer maybe-crimes, are sites like CafePress (*www. cafepress.com*) that produces funny "computer crime" gifts. Mainly t-shirts with mottos like "Hackers Are Not Crackers" or "Don't Copy That Floppy!" With a wide variety of "... Isn't A Crime" offerings, like "Ctrl-C/Ctrl-V/ (copy-paste) Is Not A Crime," "Open Source Isn't A Crime," "Hacking Isn't a Crime" and "Gaming Isn't A Crime."

Several law firms advertise online that they defend against alleged computer crimes. "With less than twenty years of legal precedent," writes one, "The laws governing the use of computers and the Internet are fluid and constantly open to new interpretations." But they also warn that "Activities that existed in a legal "gray" area can

suddenly be vigorously prosecuted without precedent."

Another online law firm even proposes a defense, where "alleged perpetrators (can be) victims themselves, unknowingly downloading pictures of child porn when trying to close a myriad of pop-up ads." With law enforcement's computer-forensics skills, I doubt that defense would hold up in most courts.

So it would benefit one and all to stay on top of even lesser Internet crime laws. Especially as more and more states and even countries are cooperating against cyber crimes. And ever more "gray area" computer issues are being prosecuted, even without precedence.

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

Wally Wang's Apple Farm
"The Growing Market Share of the Mac" by Wally Wang

Mac usage has increased in the US and other countries; an update on Flash for mobile devices; workers bringing in their own iPads; the failure of Microsoft's copycat strategy; training for the future with low-cost software today; AT&T buys T-Mobile.

Based on data tracked from 3 million different Web sites, an organization called Pingdom has concluded that Macintosh usage (*www.tuaw.com/2011/03/17/switzerland-leads-in-mac-market-share-around-the-world/*) has increased by up to 15 percent in the United States and as high as 17 in Switzerland, the country with the highest percentage of Macintosh users in the world.
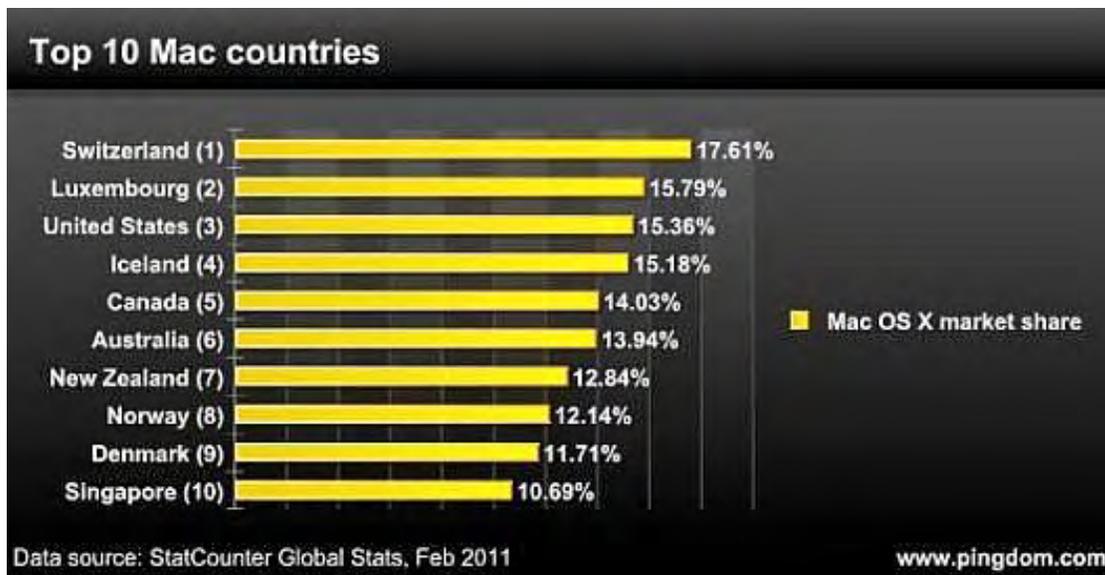

Figure 1. More people are adopting the Macintosh worldwide.

At one time, the Macintosh had a paltry two percent share in the United States and now has climbed into the double digits even through one of the worst recessions in history, despite the Macintosh costing more than a typical PC. Anyone still think people are only buying Macs because of Apple's marketing? No matter how much any company spends on marketing, you can't sell products that nobody wants to buy. Just ask Microsoft how much money they poured into marketing Vista and the Microsoft Kin phones and still didn't see any increase of sales as a result.

With iPad sales on the rise and other tablets like the Motorola Xoom, Research in Motion Playbook and Hewlett-Packard TouchPad competing in the tablet market that's eating away at the PC market, the computer market continues to change and shift away from the Windows-only world.

By 2012, Hewlett-Packard plans to load all of their PCs with both Windows and webOS (*www.digitaltrends.com/computing/hp-planning-to-put-webos-on-every-pc-it-ships-in-2012/*) while Netbook makers like Asus are looking

towards Android and Chrome OS (*hothardware.com/News/Asus-Rumored-To-Have-Sub250-Chrome-OS—Android-30-Netbook-On-Deck/*) as a less expensive alternative to Windows.

This summer, Apple will release Mac OS X 10.7 Lion, which offers a simplified user interface to make computers as easy to use as an iPad. Given all of these different choices, nobody is sure which operating system will dominant the computer industry, but there's a pretty good chance that Windows won't be the only operating system you'll ever need to use.

Basically, nobody but technical people really care about the specifics of an operating system. Most people just want a computer to help them get something done and the operating system that makes computing tasks simpler, faster, and easier will be the one people will want to use. Using this criteria, can anyone guess which operating system most people won't want to use?

An Update on Flash for Mobile Devices

Adobe recently released an update to their Flash player for mobile devices. While an improvement, the latest Flash player still offers less than stellar results. Electronista (*www.electronista.com/articles/11/03/18/adobe.posts.rough.flash.102.beta.for.android/*) found that "Many of the improvements should help overcome the early reputation of Flash on Android. While some sites already run properly, others bog the device down or hurt battery life by leaning heavily on a single-core processor that often couldn't handle the extra load. It might also improve battery life by using the more efficient video chipset, though it would still leave stability and touch friendliness as outstanding issues."

The first sentence of this quote is especially interesting. What exactly has been the "early reputation of Flash on Android"? Apparently this early reputation doesn't sound like something to brag about.

Then there's the last sentence in the above quote that mentions leaving "stability and touch friendliness as outstanding issues." How anxious is anyone to embrace something with a reputation for not being stable?

While Adobe slowly improves Flash, Flash performance seems to be improving due to the faster and more powerful processors found in mobile devices. Eventually mobile processors should be powerful enough to run the latest optimized version of Flash so we'll finally get the desktop experience of Flash on a mobile device with no compromises whatsoever—which has been the promise for the past few years.

As PC Magazine points out (*www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2382196,00.asp*), "the Motorola's Xoom's major victory over the Apple iPad 2 has yet to happen. Flash should have been working on the tablet at release; it wasn't. Now, it works in a watered-down form that improves the video experience but by no means makes the iPad 2's browser seem incompetent."

Seamless Flash support on mobile devices is on its way just as long as you're willing to put up with inconsistent performance for now. When Flash finally does arrive for mobile devices, then we can all start worrying about hackers exploiting Flash vulnerabilities to break into our devices, which is what Microsoft is warning Flash users (*www.computerworld.com/s/article/9214795/Microsoft_urges_Office_users_to_block_Flash_Player_attacks?taxonomyId=85*) running older versions of Excel.

Dealing with additional security vulnerabilities on a regular basis will certainly make the long wait for Flash on mobile devices seem worth it. Then we can all start waiting for Adobe to release a stable 64-bit version of Flash (*kb2.adobe.com/cps/000/6b3af6c9.html*) for our 64-bit operating systems.

One criticism against Apple has been its closed nature, yet one of the touted advantages of Android has been its ability to run Flash, which is a closed, proprietary system. So if people really want a more open system, they should be clamoring for Android with HTML5 instead of Flash. Assuming, of course, that people want to be consistent in their logic.

Workers Bringing in Their Own iPads

In most companies, there's an IT department that's supposed to help workers use technology to get their work

done. Realistically, most IT departments try to minimize their own work by forcing everyone to use whatever technology the IT department decides everyone should use, whether it's appropriate for people or not.

Gigaom (*gigaom.com/apple/bringing-your-new-ipad-2-to-work/*) says that "As most companies have looked to cut costs any way they could, the result has been a workforce equipped with underpowered devices, plastic enclosures and an outdated mobile paradigm that require most users to carry around a mouse and power cord to be of any real use. Most business users have simply had enough, and for a very affordable price, are starting to fund their own IT revolution by bringing their new iPads to the workplace."

When people have to buy and use their own personal devices to be productive, what does that tell you about how they feel towards the technology already provided for them for free?

Since the iPad is relatively inexpensive, small, easy to carry, and fun to use, expect to see more people relying on their iPad at work to be more productive in ways that avoid the company IT department altogether. With devices simple enough to use and reliable enough to work most of the time, what purpose does a traditional IT department serve any more?

If an IT department wanted to preserve their job and avoid learning anything new out of laziness, what kind of options do you think an IT department would suggest a company should do? Buy and use technology that makes workers happier and more productive, but makes an IT department irrelevant, or rely on outdated, but familiar technology that requires constant maintenance to justify the IT department's existence?

When someone tries using fear to keep you from looking at alternatives, that's a clear sign that you should investigate those facts for yourself. People use fear to keep others from looking at alternatives because they're afraid that if people learn for themselves, they'll no longer be dependent on the "experts" who will lose their power over others as a result.

The Failure of Microsoft's Copycat Strategy

Microsoft has reportedly killed their Zune music player (*technolog.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/03/15/6273663-fond-memories-of-microsoft-zune-in-brown-of-course*). In case you've never heard of a Zune, it was Microsoft's attempt to copy the iPod with a digital music player.

The problem was that by the time Microsoft introduced the Zune, the iPod had already captured the majority of the digital music player market. Then just as the Zune started to surpass the features of the iPod, separate digital music players became obsolete with people storing their music on smart phones like the iPhone. With lackluster sales, Microsoft has finally given up the thought of competing with Apple's iPod.

The big question is why did Microsoft feel compelled to copy and compete against the iPod in the first place? Sales of the iPod didn't affect sales of any Microsoft product whatsoever. By copying Apple, Microsoft is simply chasing a leader for the sake of chasing a leader. Microsoft might as well start building their own cars to chase Toyota in the automotive market, or start a Microsoft Airlines to compete against United Airlines in the air passenger industry.

For another questionable attempt at Microsoft's copycat strategy, just visit any high-end mall with an Apple Store and a Microsoft Store strategically placed a few doors away. While the Apple Store remains crowded with people buying iPads, iPhones, or Macs, the Microsoft Store remains largely empty with a handful of people sitting at one of the computers or Xbox game consoles. Why did Microsoft feel compelled to mimic the appearance of an Apple Store without offering an equally compelling product like the iPhone or iPad?

Surprisingly, Microsoft can innovate. Instead of mimicking the Nintendo Wii's motion controller like Sony did for their Playstation, Microsoft came out with the Kinect motion detection controller, which eliminates the need to hold on to a motion detection device altogether. By not blatantly copying a leader, Microsoft's Kinect actually leapfrogged the Nintendo Wii and proved popular enough to sell 8 million units to take the record as the fastest selling electronic gadget in history (for now).

The lesson should be clear. To succeed, don't crank out a blatant imitation, me-too product that offers nothing

unique. Instead, leapfrog the competition with a superior product that does something the competition can't do. Microsoft has proven they can innovate with the Kinect. How come they can't do that with their computer products?

Even long-time, pro-Microsoft Rob Enderle can identify numerous mistakes (*www.digitaltrends.com/computing/ learning-from-microsofts-six-biggest-blunders/*) that Microsoft has made in the past decade including Microsoft's multiple tablet failures (Origami and Tablet PC) along with media failures like PlaysForSure and Zune).

Business Insider (*www.businessinsider.com/the-microsoft-investor-mar-15-2011-3*) offers three suggestions for saving Microsoft:

1. Replace CEO Steve Ballmer with a tech visionary.

2. Hire a tech visionary as president and give that person the authority to challenge Ballmer.

3. Hire a tech visionary and strong operating chief to ensure that quality standards and delivery schedules are met while Ballmer focuses on sales.

The three solutions have the same common denominator: Microsoft needs a tech visionary. Until they can craft a vision for themselves, they'll be stuck trying to copy when they should be trying to innovate. Even elementary school children are urged to "be themselves." Judging from past failures such as the Microsoft Kin and Zune, elementary school children seem to have more common sense than all the top executives at Microsoft put together.

Training for the Future with Low-Cost Software Today

Despite Adobe's ongoing challenges with Flash, the company does make some interesting and useful programs. If you can't afford the $699 expense for Photoshop, you can get 90 percent of Photoshop's features by using the much less expensive $99.99 Photoshop Elements instead.

By using Photoshop Elements, you can learn basic Photoshop commands and store all your files in Photoshop format. Photoshop Elements also provides guides to help you perform complicated tasks without having to learn all the step-by-step commands normally required to do it. When you're ready, you can transfer all your knowledge and files into the full-blown version of Photoshop without a problem.

Figure 2. Photoshop Elements makes it easy to perform complex tasks.

For video enthusiasts, you may want the $799 Adobe Premiere Pro, but your budget will probably be happier using the $99.99 Premiere Elements instead. Learn and use Premiere Elements and you'll know most of the commands needed to use Premiere Pro.

For students, digital artists and film makers, Photoshop Elements and Premiere Elements give you a low-cost introduction to the best professional tools available today. To save even more money, just buy the combined Photoshop Elements/Premiere Elements bundle (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B003YGME88/ref=as_li_tf_tl?*

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B003YGME88)
for $149.

Best of all, both programs can run on Mac OS X or Windows so you can choose which computer to use. You can start using these programs on Windows, then if you switch to a Macintosh, you can start using the Macintosh versions of both programs without worrying about learning a new user interface or converting your files into a different format. Since the Windows and Macintosh versions of both programs come in the same package, you won't have to buy new software either.

Now if Adobe would only make low-cost versions of their InDesign desktop publishing program and Illustrator graphics program, they could really capture the graphic design hobbyist and student market for both Windows and Macintosh.

AT&T Buys T-Mobile

Now that the iPhone is available on both AT&T and Verizon, people have discovered that AT&T's network really is inferior with dropped calls and spotty coverage. To catch up to Verizon's network, AT&T would have had to spend the next five years expanding their network. By buying T-Mobile, AT&T can get those immediate benefits overnight and challenge Verizon with wider coverage. Now we just have to wonder if AT&T's network will continue dropping calls on the iPhone.

With both Verizon and AT&T battling for supremacy, that leaves tiny Sprint as the distant third place competitor with no chance to catch up to either one, especially when both AT&T and Verizon have the iPhone but Sprint doesn't. Can we expect to see Verizon gobble up Sprint or the iPhone appear on Sprint any time soon? Something needs to happen to keep Sprint from falling even further behind.

Perhaps Sprint could take advantage of Microsoft's latest Windows Phone 7 ads (*www.youtube.com/watch? v=mrhpXQqS3Is&feature=player_embedded*) that actually show real features of Windows Phone 7. Watch the ad and see for yourself if Windows Phone 7 offers a compelling feature that would make you want to drop your current phone for a Windows Phone 7 phone, which can be bought for as low as $99.

*   *   *

To access Apple's App Store for Mac OS X programs, you have two choices. First, you can click on the Apple menu and choose App Store. Second, you can click on the App Store icon on the Dock.

Figure 3. Two ways to visit the App Store.

In case you want to avoid cluttering your Dock with too many icons, just drag the App Store icon (and any other program icons) off the Dock and release the mouse button. This will keep your Dock clutter-free and if you need to visit the App Store, just access it through the Apple menu.

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.
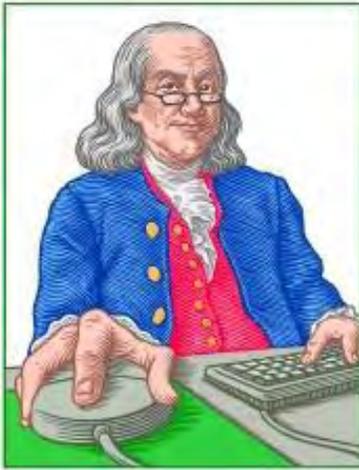
Wally is responsible for the following books:

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*.

Linux Lessons: Tips and Tricks from Users
"List Files and Directories That Were Changed Today." by Tony J. Podrasky

Tony offers a Linux script that may seem trivial now.

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

# TODAY shell script.
# This script will list the files and directories that were modified today. It
# may seem trivial now, but you will find it to be very useful as you use it
# to find out what has been modified today.

set dt = `date`
if ( "$dt[3]" < 10 ) then
        ls -la | grep "$dt[2]  $dt[3]" | grep -v " 20"
    else
        ls -la | grep "$dt[2] $dt[3]"  | grep -v " 20"
endif


#———————————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!"

Beyond Personal Computing
"Generation-Mashing and Computer-Speak" by Marilyn K. Martin

Computer technology is now a part of most people's lives, but it wasn't always this way. Marilyn shares amusing anecdotes that show how computer lingo has developed and varies among the generations of young and old.

My three-year-old nephew used to call computers, "com-pooh-ters." And he already knew how much fun they were to play with. (And his "pooh" pronunciation was probably an accurate reflection of that old adage about computer programming: Garbage In, Garbage Out.)

Today, kids talk about gigabytes of memory, printer speeds, downloads and flash-drives as everyday concepts. And emoticons and acronyms are expanding and clarifying their emotional landscape. Or at least letting the shy and tongue-tied express themselves, without the stress of face-to-face rejection: "C-U-N the lunchroom! Can I sit beside U? I promise that I won't laugh so hard this time that milk comes out my nose ... ".

Most young adults, who grew up with computers, actively embrace computing. According to an *infoplease.com* survey, Generation Y (ages 18-29) uses computers the most: 87%. But the numbers fall for the older the users, who did not grow up in the Computer Age. 72% of Boomers (ages 50-64) use computers, while only 41% of Matures (65+) do.

Usage, as expected, goes up with household income and college graduates. (A full 95% of college graduates use computers.) Although, curiously, Suburban residents use computers a little more (74%) than urban residents (71%). Maybe it's the typical suburban family home, with a computer in every kid's room, each one logging ten hours a day in chatrooms and online video games. (Which is probably why Dad and Mom figured out early, that the kids needed their own computers if they, as parents, were ever going to get online in the evenings and on weekends!)

While at the other end of the generation scale, Early Childhood Researchers continue to argue about the role of computer technology in young childhood. (Does it just create passive learning? Don't young kids need concrete objects for learning? Will their learning be stunted if they think the computer mouse is a live animal? Is playing on the "F" keys and going *boom!* an early indicator of anti-social tendencies?) While actual research data finds that young kids do better at writing, mathematics, problem solving and science skills if they *do* use a computer.

So, except for the geriatric Matures (who may have vision problems, and/or can't be pulled away from their TV soap operas and game shows), the majority of every generation in this country uses computers. We're all hooked on the ease of writing, reading, researching and communicating, with just a few keystrokes. But what *don't* the generations have in common, when it comes to computing?

Probably humor. Each generation grew up with different concepts of what is funny. If Grandma wants to refer to someone stingy as "Tighter than bark on a tree." I bet that the perplexed grandkids will rush to ask Mom and Dad what that meant. Today, whole categories of "computer jokes" are making the rounds, with various levels of sophistication and complexity, which will send most Matures looking for someone younger to explain the jokes to them. Then again, more "obvious" computer humor may be spotted quicker by those of us who grew up reading

whole words and sentences, instead of acronyms and punctuation emoticons.

Consider one of the unintentionally funniest types of computer-confusion, where posted URLs, um, may not exactly convey what a company intended to convey. Such as an agent representation site, "Who Represents," whose URL ended up www.whorepresents.com. Or the writing instrument site Pen Island, whose URL was www.penisland.net. And then there were the art designers whose not-well-thought-out URL was www.speedofart.com. Not pretty. But definitely funny.

Or consider the reported conversation on an airplane, where a man told the lady sitting next to him that he was going to a UNIX Convention. She seemed a little startled. "A Eunuchs Convention? Gosh, I didn't know there were that many of you!"

Then there is the oft-repeated story of the college class studying the French language. Like other "romance languages," French divides their nouns between masculine (le) and feminine (la). When I struggled through College French in the last century, the main thought going through my head was "How can the French possibly remember which nouns are which?" (Although, if you study French nouns carefully, most seem to line up along a quasi-sexual, "pronged" versus "receiving" sense.)

But this particular college class posed a profound question to their teacher: Is the noun "computer" masculine or feminine? The quick thinking instructor divided the class into all-male and all-female groups, and asked them to work out the reasons why the noun 'computer' should be classified as the opposite gender.

The all-male group thought 'computer' must be feminine because, among other reasons, No one but the creator understands their internal logic. And even the smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for possible later retrieval.

The all-female group thought 'computer' must be masculine because, In order to do anything with them, you first have to turn them on. And they have a lot of data but can't think for themselves. (For the record, the instructor thought the noun 'computer' was feminine.)

And then there are all these new computer jokes based on older jokes, which span the generations further back than even the Matures. Remember that ancient joke about Why Did The Chicken Cross the Road? Pre-computers, the funniest answer I heard was "So it wouldn't have to lay it on the line." That is possibly a sports-metaphor or maybe a reference to the every Fall argument with Fish and Game, about taking home untagged road-kill deer.

Today, however, some clever techies have come up with computer-specific, chicken-crossing-road answers. Below are a few examples:

• Cray Chicken: Crosses faster than any other chicken, but if you don't dip it in liquid nitrogen first, it arrives on the other side frazzled.

• Intel Pentium Chicken: The chicken crossed the road 4,999,997 times.

• Newton Chicken: Can't cluck, can't fly and can't lay eggs. But you can carry it across the road in your pocket.

In the days of vaudeville (early 1900s), I'm sure there was never a Waiter!-There's-A-Fly-In-My-Soup! comedy routine that went quite like the following, where the Waiter is now Tech Support: "Try again, maybe the fly won't be there this time ... Maybe it's the way you're eating the soup. Try a fork instead ... Maybe the soup is incompatible with the bowl. What kind of bowl are your using? ... Hmmm, a soup bowl *should* work. Maybe it's a configuration problem. How was the bowl set up?" The final bill says "Soup of the Day = $5 / Upgrade to Newer Soup of the Day = $2.50 / Access to Support = $1."

And those of us who grew up in the last century get in a few chuckles about those bygone days of LBC—"Life Before Computers." Remember when "A cursor used profanity? A keyboard was a piano? Memory was something you lost with age? A CD was a bank account? A virus was the flu? And if you unzipped anything in public, you'd be in jail for awhile?"

Or how about the computer-poet who needs to keep his day job:

"Meg was the name of my girlfriend,
And gig was a job for the night,
Now they all mean different things,
And that really mega bytes."

Although a major generation-spanning event can get a little odd. Such as a bearded techie :-{)} who sent out a New Baby e-mail announcing, "Yes! My code compiled, and my wife just produced the output!"

Or how about "Murphy's Law"? It was credited to several military officers named Murphy in the middle of the last century. One being a Capt. Edward A. Murphy at Edwards Air Force Base (California) in 1949. Capt. Murphy was an engineer working on a dubious project to see how much sudden deceleration a person can stand in a crash (nicknamed: The Pancake Project). Specifically, "Murphy's Law" (soon to be embraced by the corporate world), was "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong."

So, with the shared concept of crash, I guess, it was just a matter of time until a computer-jockey with too much discretionary-time, came up with "Murphy's Laws of Computing": For every action, there is an equal and opposite malfunction. A complex system that does not work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine. The number one cause of computer problems is computer solutions.

Now there are even the occasional references to science fiction, whose fan-speak became Internet-slang when those techie fans started programming computers. "How do I set a laser printer to stun?" Or "Cannot find REALITY.SYS. Universe halted." Or "Mr. Worf, scan that ship." "Aye, Captain. 300 dpi?" Or maybe "Man is the best computer we can put aboard a spacecraft ... and the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labor."

It's even super-cool to be a computer geek today, with the richest-person-in-the-world being a software mogul. So now we have lots of computer one-liners updating older jokes: "I'm not anti-social; I'm just not user friendly." Or "Alcohol and calculus don't mix. Never drink and derive." Or maybe "Ethernet (n): something used to catch the etherbunny." Although, I have to admit that I totally agree with "A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history—except for handguns and tequila."

Some computer-humor is meaningful to all generations, like the person with too much time on their hands who actually sat down and composed "The Ten Laws of Computing." Ranging from #1—If you have reached the point where you really understand your computer, it's probably obsolete. To #10—A computer program will always do what you tell it to do, but rarely what you want it to do. Although my personal favorite is #7—He who laughs last, probably has a back-up.

There's even a "Personal Alternative Ten Laws of Computing" which starts with #1—The more acronyms on a page, the harder the topic is to understand. To #10—Remember that your computer makes as many mistakes in two pico seconds as fifty men working for a year. With my personal favorite—Inside every program is a small module struggling to find a life of its own.

Today, we have younger generations who seem to "live" at their computer. Chatroom acronyms speak of BAK (back at keyboard), and CYO (see you online), to BIOYIOP (blow it out your I/O port). So it should come as no surprise that someone has compiled a list called "You Are An Internet Addict When ... ", starting with #1—You refer to going to the bathroom as downloading. To #28—As your car crashes through the guardrail on a mountain road, your first instinct is to search for the back button.

Although my personal favorites are: Your bookmark takes 15 minutes to go from top to bottom. All of your friends have an @ in their names. Your dog has its own home page.

Another everyone-can-share bridge between all the computer-generations is movies. Such as a list of how downright miraculous (read: unrealistic) computers are in the movies: Word processors never display a cursor. You can gain access to any information you want by simply typing ACCESS ALL SECRET FILES. Viruses cause

temperatures in computers, just like in humans. After awhile, smoke billows out of disk drives and monitors. Actors can type away, and then turn off the computer without saving the data. Any PERMISSION DENIED has an OVERRIDE function. The more high-tech the equipment, the more buttons it has. However, everyone must have been highly trained, because the buttons are never labeled.

In short, all generations have more in common with that GVD (Great Virtual Denominator) of computers, than differences. Or, to update that old saying "Keep your head down and your powder dry." "Get an ergonomic chair, and buy the best antivirus program." And by all means, be careful how you speak to strangers about your upcoming UNIX Convention.

(Many of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple computer-joke sites. But special thanks to *Guy-sports.com*, and *Squarewheels.com*)

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

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers
"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"About Recovering Data from 5 1/4" Floppies," "Another Access to Windows Task Manager," "Firefox Bookmarks Transfer," "Looking for Linux," "Quest Speed," "E-books"

About Recovering Data from 5 1/4" Floppies

[Regarding the March 4 Digital Dave column:]

There are floppy-drive-to-USB adapters available, and some will even work with the old 5 1/4" floppy drives. But the real problem is the BIOS in current computers: They probably will not recognize the old drive. My solution was to buy an old computer (as Digital Dave suggests). It cost only $20. I hooked up one of the old 5 1/4" drives (1.2 MB), and it worked fine. And it was well worth the effort, because it was able to read *every one* of the 30 or so floppy disks I wanted to recover. So don't give up hope! (Incidentally, I then gave the old computer away to a thrift store.)

-Jerry Palsson, Tucson, AZ

Another Access to Windows Task Manager

[Regarding the March 4 Digital Dave column:]

I just discovered that, in Windows 7, you can right click on the "Show hidden icons" arrow on the task bar. This will present a menu which includes Task Manager.

-Rich DiSanto, Denver, CO

[Actually, you can right-click almost anywhere on the task bar and get that menu. —Digital Dave]

Firefox Bookmarks Transfer

[Regarding the March 4 Digital Dave column:]

A Firefox extension makes bookmarks easy to transfer. Install Xmarks on the old computer and upload your bookmarks to their server. Then install Xmarks on the new computer and download. There you go.

-Dale, Loveland, CO

Tom Waleska of San Diego asked if he could transfer his bookmarks to this new computer, or can he? There is a program he can use to synchronize all his bookmarks from different browsers and to other computers. I use it and it works great its called Xmarks (*www.xmarks.com/*). Best part is it's free. Hope it helps all your readers.

-Mike Walters

Looking for Linux

[Regarding the March 4 EdgeWord: There Is an iPad in the House column:]

I sure miss that column about Linux. FYI, I use Ubuntu (Linux) embedded in Windows for e-mail (Thunderbird) and Firefox all the time. Takes about 45 seconds for Ubuntu to be up and running and those programs also run in Windows. Other programs also run in Windows like Gimp, OpenOffice, Chrome. There are of course programs for Windows only which keeps me using Windows :-).

Read your columns all the time, keep up the good work.

-73 Ted

[Coincidentally, Tony Podrasky has started sending in scripts for the Linux column. Enjoy! —Jack Dunning]

Quest Speed

[Regarding the February 25 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Glenn Mills says 7Mbps is the slowest speed Qwest offers. I only get 1.5Mbps from Qwest.

-Vince Borengasser, Denver CO

E-books

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

I agree that e-books are convenient, but I am a great fan of used books at 25 cents to $2.00, as opposed to $5.95 to $12.95 for a new book. I would go to a library and check out books for free, but I some times have two or three books going at once and forget to renew books that I have lost interest in. I have put them in a "get back to it soon" category and forget that I only have two weeks to return them.

Paying for *air* upsets me. You buy a hardcopy book and you have something in your hand. You buy an e-book and if you don't turn your computer on and navigate to the folder where you stored it, then you may not remember that you own it and months later you come across that title in your e-book reader wondering where it came from. Or you find that you have purchased it twice. I know that it is a bad pun but, "A book in the hand is worth two in the computer."

-Buck O, El Cajon, CA

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