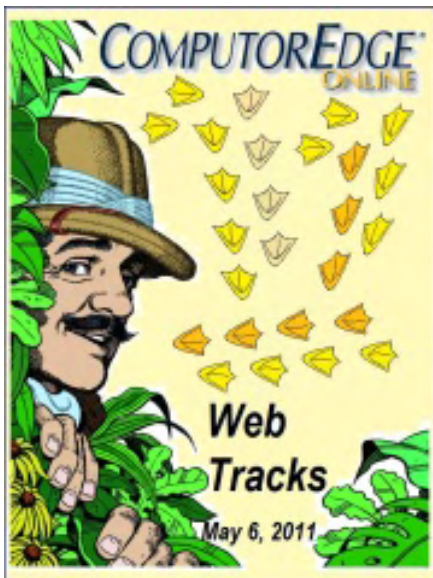


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 05/06/11



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## Digital Dave

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

Netflix Streaming Video Advice; Two-Sided Printing Problem; Windows ReadyBoost Slowdown.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I've been streaming Netflix on my computer, but now I would like to do it on my television set. What would you recommend for the best setup?*

*Aaron  
Temecula, CA*

Dear Aaron,

It is fairly easy to get streaming video to your television. While Netflix is the leading innovator in providing content, there are many companies now pursuing streaming movies and television shows via the Internet. So one consideration is to choose a device or method that will grow with other future offerings.

I'm not a fan of using a computer for sending Netflix or other streaming service to your television. The television is rarely in a location that is suitable for attaching to a computer. A laptop would probably be the most convenient, but I don't like taking a computer away from other uses just to watch TV. It is so inexpensive to get another delivery device that it seems a waste to tie up a multipurpose system.

If you already own an Xbox 360, PS3 or Wii with Wi-Fi capability, then you may have all that you need to get started. Those three gaming consoles each support Netflix. The Xbox 360 option requires an additional Xbox Live subscription, so PS3 or Wii will be less expensive. PS3 plays Blu-ray while the 360 only does DVD (and HD-DVD with an add-on). I don't think the Wii plays DVDs. Many of the Netflix installations I've seen have been done with game boxes already attached to the television. This eliminates the need for a computer. While I don't know how many streaming services are offered via the game boxes, I have no doubt that they will continue to grow.

If you don't own a gaming machine, then your next best bet may be a dedicated video streaming box such as the Roku ([www.roku.com/](http://www.roku.com/)), one of the best known. Starting at about \$60 all it does is provide service to your television. These boxes can be hooked up with either Wi-Fi or Ethernet connections. For a little more you can get 1080p HDTV and Wireless-N, the current Wi-Fi standard. And still a little more will get you USB ports which allow access to your photos and other videos.

There are other devices such as Apple TV ([www.apple.com/appletv/](http://www.apple.com/appletv/)), Logitech Revue with Google TV ([www.logitech.com/en-us/smartTV?WT.mc\\_id=usym\\_redir\\_mkt\\_revue&strf=universal](http://www.logitech.com/en-us/smartTV?WT.mc_id=usym_redir_mkt_revue&strf=universal)), and various media players designed to deliver content to your television. Apple TV is setup to bring you into the Apple iTunes

community. The Logitech Revue comes with a keyboard which may be much easier to use than most of the remote devices which make searches for movies more difficult.

Another step up is a Blu-ray player with Netflix capability. Not much more expensive than a regular Blu-ray player, it combines the DVD playing with Internet access. This may be the optimum solution if you plan to both play DVDs and stream video over the Internet. Be sure to check the reviews before you buy a particular brand (this applies to any device you're considering), some model have had problems giving consistent performance with certain setups.

If it's time to get a new television, consider buying a set with Wi-Fi capabilities (this generally means Netflix will be available) built-in. More and more TVs are coming with these features and it saves the need for any other type of box or computer. I expect that in the not too distant future most entertainment devices will come with built-in Wi-Fi and streaming capabilities. At that point, we are unlikely to be worrying about hooking up our computer directly to the television.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Dave:*

*I recently bought an Acer laptop with Windows 7 on it. When I print a two-sided document with my Lexmark E120n laser printer, it always prints an Instruction Sheet. I suspect it is done by Windows 7 because it did not do that when I printed in Windows XP. Is there a way to tell Windows 7 not to do that? Besides, I have to re-pile the paper in order (put bottom page to the top, so and so forth) to get proper print. Any idea how to correct?*

*Thanks*

*Edward  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Edward,

It does sound like there is something not working right. There are two places that you can find printer settings which will affect the final product. The first is in the printer itself. I would check all the possible settings on the control panel on the printer to see if there are settings which may be forcing items such as the Instruction Sheet. My understanding is that you should not need to re-collate to do double-sided printing.

I might try restoring the printer to factory default settings. It is possible for printer settings to become corrupted. Restoring defaults may fix the problem .

The second place to look is in the printer driver settings. These can be found by selecting "Printing Preferences..." and/or "Properties" from the right-click menu in Control Panel => Printers. The drivers for Windows 7 may not be identical to Windows XP, therefore some of your problems may be associated with these settings. It is also worthwhile to check with the Lexmark Web site to see if there are newer Windows 7 drivers for your printer. Windows 7 is unlikely to be the problem itself, but the drivers associated with it may be the source.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I received my "regular" Windows 7 newsletter and it talked about "Windows Ready Boost" so I*

*thought I'd give it a try. What a mistake. On two different computers, running Windows 7 Pro, with a one Terabyte hard drive partitioned into three partitions for files and music I noticed a real slowdown. On the second one, when I went to restart because it was so slow, I came back 1/2 hour later, and the screen still said "logging off". I pushed the reset button and removed the USB drive.*

*Had any experience with that program? Recommendations?*

*Thanks*

*Larry McLaughlin  
Aurora, CO*

Dear Larry,

Windows ReadyBoost is a program designed to take advantage of the memory in flash drives to speed up operations. It does this by pre-loading commonly used programs into the flash drive, theoretically faster than a hard drive. However, as computer are now coming with more installed memory and faster hard drives, the benefits are minimal and, as in your case, can cause slow downs. Originally, ReadyBoost was designed to help machines with limited memory.

There are a few of ways the ReadyBoost can slow down a system. First, when initially loaded, depending on how much of the flash drive is assigned to ReadyBoost, the processor will spend some time caching software into the drive. If it happens to be an older flash drive, it may be too slow to help at all—and may hinder. If your computer has plenty of memory and a fast hard drive, working with ReadyBoost can actually bog down the processor.

If you have USB 3.0 in your computer and a USB 3.0 flash drive, it's possible that the ReadyBoost feature will be more useful. I've tested ReadyBoost in the past, but have not found a significant advantage in using it. It sounds like you're not going to get any help from it. I think the slowdown at shutdown may have been related to the unloading of the flash drive, although you probably just experienced a crash. A half hour is a long time.

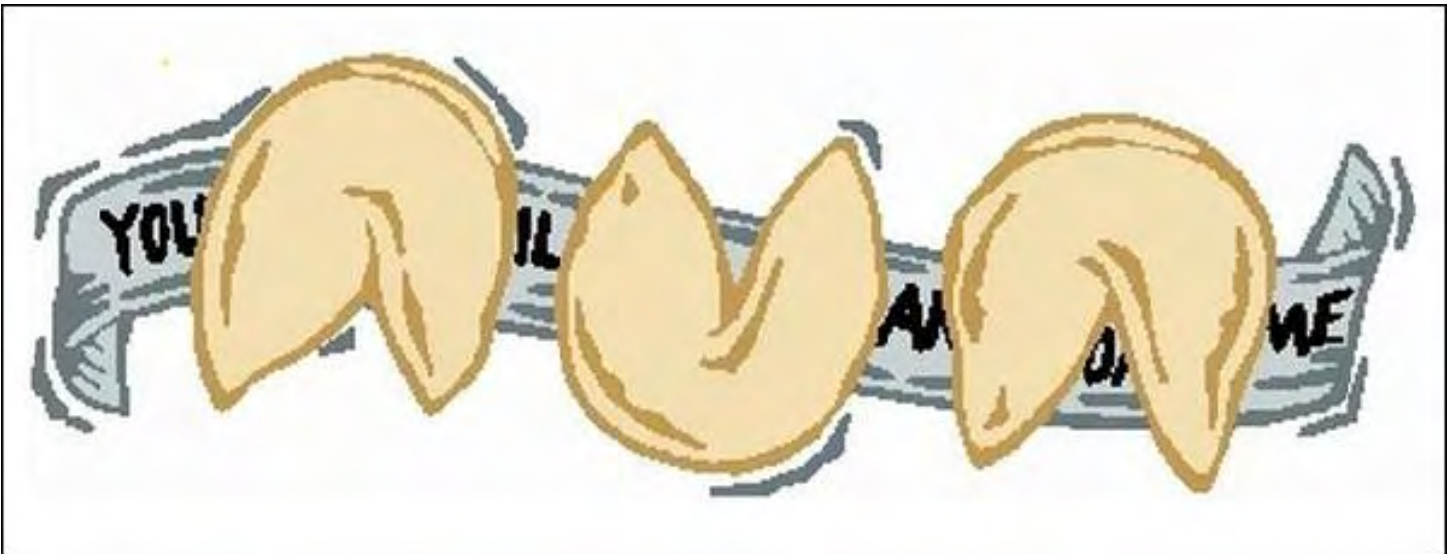
Digital Dave

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## Leaving Cyber Crumbs on the Internet

“Learn What Web Sites Can Learn About You” by Jack Dunning

Merely visiting a Web site will force you to disclose information about your computer. Knowing what is collected and how it is used will help you to protect yourself.

When browsing the Web, tracks are left behind by our Web browsers. Because of this, at times we may feel that we're being continually watched by those in cyberspace. It's as if the sites we visit are saying, "I know who you are and where you live!" Sometimes this information is exploited by some so-called virus protection sites to scare us into either using their service, or worse, downloading a real virus or spyware onto our computer. To protect ourselves and instill peace of mind, it is helpful to know what information we are actually giving to the Web sites we visit.

As long as your computer is free of viruses and spyware, the information available to the Web sites you visit is limited—although not necessarily unimportant. This information is delivered by every browser, even when running in an "incognito" mode. (Some people will tell you that the incognito—privacy—mode in your Web browser will stop this type of information from being sent to Web sites. This is not the case. The privacy mode of your browser is to protect you from others who may be snooping on your computer. In particular, it does not record a history of your browsing activities or keep a cached copy of the pages you have read.) Web browsers are designed to protect you from the Internet by not allowing direct access to your computer. With the exception of a tiny file called a Cookie, a browser will not download or write anything to your computer without your prior permission. This insulation in the Web browser is a mini-firewall protecting you from those who would do your computer harm or exploit information stored on your hard drive. Yet, there is key information available to every Web site, although it is not as extensive as some scare-mongers would have you think.

### The Web Site Cookie

The first bit of information accessible by a Web site is the cookie which is a tiny file written and read by the Web site you are currently visiting. This is the only file that a browser will automatically write to your computer—as long as cookies are turned on in your browser settings. The cookie is used to store particular information about the site visitor. Generally, it will include a caller ID which is a random number assigned to the computer on its first visit. Then when that computer comes back, the cookie is read and determined to be a return visitor. This is how Web sites remember visitors. If you have cookies turned off in your browser setup, then the Web site is very limited in determining who you

are. However, without cookies available, you will need to go through any Web site setup each time you visit. At *ComputerEdge* we use the cookie to store a zone variable, which will save the geographic region you have selected. Then, when you return, the cookie is read and you're automatically redirected to the proper region. Many data items can be saved in a cookie, but it will only consist of data which you have provided voluntarily.



**Zeke heard that cookies could contain his personal information, so he ate them all.**

The cookie from a Web site can only be read and written by that particular site. That means other sites you visit will not be able to access any other site's cookie. This protects against programs that would attempt to harvest information from the cookies saved on your computer. If a program were able to peruse your cookies, many of your activities could be easily tracked. As it is, there is no easy way for one Web site to know what other sites you're visiting unless they are participating in programs such as DoubleClick ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DoubleClick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DoubleClick)), which uses cookies to share information between participating member sites. When you visit a DoubleClick site, it will identify your computer with the cookie and record various available pieces of information. Then this information will be correlated with the same type of information from other participating sites. If you visit enough of the DoubleClick participating sites, a profile for you starts to develop. The cookie is

the best key for identifying your computer, even though, initially, the Web sites have no way of knowing who you are.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not advising you to turn-off cookies in your browser. They serve an important function for sites you visit regularly and trust. Your site preferences are usually saved in the cookie. Yet, you may want to occasionally review the cookies associated with your browser. This can normally be done through the Tools or Options menu—depending upon which browser you're using.

### Your IP Address (REMOTE\_ADDR)

While the cookie is not the only way to identify your computer, with its assigned caller id it is the most accurate. A Web site can come close to identifying your computer with your IP address, which is the twelve digit number used to locate your computer on the Internet. This address is needed for a Web site to respond to a request from you, which includes the initial loading of the site into your browser. The IP is read in the browser variable REMOTE\_ADDR. In most cases, this will not be the IP assigned to your computer, but rather the IP assigned to your router or cable/DSL modem. If you use a router, then your computer's IP will be invisible to the Web site.

This IP is assigned by your Internet Service Provider (ISP) and will be the same for all the computers represented in your home or office. Generally, you can be geographically located by Web sites by using a look up service which tells the site which part of the world your ISP and that particular IP is situated. For the most part, this is an estimated location which is commonly used by sites such as Google to return businesses and advertisers in your local area. For someone to get your actual home address, they would either need to get the information from your ISP, or correlate it with information you provide.

Unless you have a fixed IP (most people don't), you can usually change your modem IP by turning off your modem for

some period of time (more than just off and on again). When the modem is brought back up, it will usually be assigned a new IP by your provider. While this won't make it look as if you live in a different geographic location, it will break any correlation between your detailed information accumulated on the Web and your IP.

## Your Browser and Operating System (HTTP\_USER\_AGENT)

In some ways, which browser you're using (stored in HTTP\_USER\_AGENT) to surf the Web is one of the most useful pieces of information. A couple of weeks ago, I started reformatting the *ComputerEdge* Web site for viewing on mobile devices such as the iPad, mobile smart phones and Amazons Kindle. But to do that automatically, I needed to know what type of device is be used. (The primary difference between the main *ComputerEdge* Web site and the mobile version is that the navigation menu on the left is removed for mobile devices.) The HTTP\_USER\_AGENT variable contains the information I need to identify what what type of hardware is being used. The text that contains the browser information also includes words (such as iPad, Kindle, Android, etc.) that are specific to the correlating hardware. All I needed to do was have the server deliver a variation of the site for those devices that contained that keyword in their HTTP\_USER\_AGENT string.

This variable (HTTP\_USER\_AGENT) also contains information related to your computer's operating system. If they care to check, this is how Web sites know which type of computer you're using (Windows, Mac, Linux). This information is helpful in offering you the proper software download for your type of computer. The site may check your system type and only display pages with compatible downloads. Otherwise, you will need to select the proper option from a list.

These items, the cookie, your IP, your browser type, and your operating system are the most significant pieces of information you are making available to Web sites whenever you visit them. It is fairly limited in scope, but it allows sites to quickly make their pages more useful for you and your hardware. It is very difficult for any Web site to get much more information than this—unless you decided to give it to them.

It is worth mentioning one other piece of information available to Web site called HTTP\_REFERER. If you enter a site by clicking a link in another site this variable will contain the URL of the referring site. However, if you go directly to the new page without clicking a link, the variable with be blank.

## Checking Your Information

I've written a short program which will display the information ([webserver.computoredge.com/infocheck.mvc](http://webserver.computoredge.com/infocheck.mvc)) that your browser has sent to the *ComputerEdge* site. It includes the contents your *ComputerEdge* cookie, your IP address (probably your modem's IP), and your user agent variable (browser and operating system). You can use this anytime you want to know what we may be collecting on you—which isn't much.

Note: If you're using a mobile device and you see still a navigation menu on the left-hand side, please e-mail the contents of the this special information page ([webserver.computoredge.com/infocheck.mvc](http://webserver.computoredge.com/infocheck.mvc)) to me at this e-mail address *ComputerEdge Mobile Device Update* ([ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)). I'll make a change to the program to include your device for the mobile option.

While it's impossible to browse the Web without leaving some tracks, as long as you don't volunteer information the data will be limited to generic, faceless items. There are companies such as DoubleClick who are attempting to build a profile on you for marketing purpose, but occasionally deleting all your cookies and changing your IP address will set back many of their attempts. Turning off your cookies will make tracking your computer much more difficult, but you will also lose many of the benefits cookies provide. The only sure way to avoid leaving a cyber crumb trail is by staying off the Internet.



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

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Dealing with Reality” by Wally Wang

Trends show Apple sales increasing, while Microsoft and others are remaining stagnant or sales are decreasing; the techno geek mindset; animating stick figures with Stykz; MACDefender malware.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

When I was in New York where two millionaire day traders were teaching me their techniques, they hammered home one major cause for why people lost money in the stock market. Rather than objectively react to what the stock market was doing on any given day, most people would get emotionally involved with a particular company's stock.

If someone fell in love with a stock like Oracle or Exxon, they would hold on to that stock for too long, simply because they wanted that stock to keep going up. Despite ample evidence contradicting their belief about a particular stock, people would often watch a stock plummet dramatically until they lost a huge amount of money, all because they stubbornly clung to their belief that if they liked a particular stock, then that stock had to skyrocket in price and make them a profit.

When you ignore reality in favor of your emotional delusions, it's easy to dismiss facts as irrelevant and accept irrationality and illogical conclusions as proof that your emotional beliefs are accurate. Yet no matter how much you may fool yourself, reality doesn't care what you believe or what you want. The longer you refuse to accept reality, the more you're likely to dig yourself into a dead end.

In the stock market, clinging to delusion means you'll probably lose all your money. In the computer world, clinging to delusion means you'll probably ignore technological trends and avoid learning new skills until it's too late.

Here's the simple reality. Companies rise and fall all the time. Rather than fall in love with a particular company, fall in love with the technology ([www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2384672,00.asp](http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2384672,00.asp)) that offers the greatest opportunities for you in the future.

In the computer field, you can't ignore the fact that a huge majority of computers in the world use Microsoft Windows. Any programmer or computer technician who deliberately chooses to ignore Windows and other popular Microsoft products is simply shutting himself out of major opportunities.

While Microsoft may be the leader today, will it always be the leader in the computer field forever? Probably not. If you can accept this simple premise that no company can remain the leader in its field for eternity, then you can accept the reality that eventually another company will take its place and become the new leader. Before this happens, you'd be wise to learn the technology of this new leader to maintain your own edge in the computer field. The only question is

when will this happen and what will be that company?

First, let's look for evidence that Microsoft may be losing its dominant position. In announcing their latest quarterly results, Microsoft earned \$5.23 billion, which sounds impressive until you realize that Apple earned \$5.99 billion in that same quarter, making it the first time that Apple has earned more quarterly profit than Microsoft in over two decades according to Bloomberg ([www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-28/microsoft-meets-analysts-estimates-as-consumers-shift-to-ipad-tablet-pcs.html](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-28/microsoft-meets-analysts-estimates-as-consumers-shift-to-ipad-tablet-pcs.html)).

Microsoft also announced that "Revenue in the Windows division fell 4.4 percent, the second quarter in a row that sales in that unit fell short of projections."

So despite Windows 7 selling copies at a rapid pace, the revenue earned from Windows, Microsoft's major source of income, is starting to slip. This could be a temporary dip, it could be the start of a long-term trend, or it could mean that Apple sucks as a company, Steve Jobs is a greedy bastard, and everyone who uses an Apple product is a mindless idiot who can't think for themselves. Of these three options, which seems most logical based on the fact that revenue earned by Windows has dropped for two quarters in a row?

Knowing that Windows revenue has dropped for two quarters in a row, add in the fact that consumer PC shipments dropped 8 percent in the last quarter, corporate PC shipments rose 9 percent, and netbooks dropped 40 percent. What could have caused this slowdown in consumer PC sales, especially netbooks?

The most common explanation for why consumer PC sales are dropping is due to the recession. This sounds logical until you discover that Apple keeps increasing the number of Macintosh computers ([www.apple.com/pr/library/2011/01/18results.html](http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2011/01/18results.html)) they sell each quarter. According to Apple's quarterly results, they sold 4.13 million Macs in the last quarter, a 23 percent unit increase over the year-ago quarter.

Since Apple is selling their products in the same recession, how come Apple can keep increasing the number of Macs they sell each quarter while sales of PCs (especially netbooks) keeps plummeting? Could it be that the recession is causing people to hold off PC purchases while simultaneously buying more expensive Macintosh computers? Could it be that people are willing to pay more and buy more Macs because they want them over much cheaper PCs? Or is it because everyone who buys a Macintosh is too stupid to realize they're buying expensive junk that a much cheaper PC could duplicate and exceed if only Apple's marketing didn't deceive so many people into wasting their money on overpriced garbage?

Another possibility comes from Goldman Sachs, which believes that more than 30 percent of iPads sold may be replacing PC sales ([www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gde-ou9GMIAVbWkMsMdgVS5iDOfA?docId=63024faffcab43ef8edbb98c0547284e](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gde-ou9GMIAVbWkMsMdgVS5iDOfA?docId=63024faffcab43ef8edbb98c0547284e)). Rather than buy a PC, people might be buying iPads ([www.ecommercetimes.com/story/72359.html?wlc=1304342090](http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/72359.html?wlc=1304342090)) instead. Could this be because the iPad does most of what many people need in a form that's convenient to carry and use? Could it be that more people find the iPad is a better alternative to a netbook or even a traditional laptop? Or could it be that anyone who buys an iPad is foolishly wasting their money on a useless toy that lacks such crucial features as a replaceable battery, Flash support, and USB ports, and that anyone who buys an iPad simply wants the status of being seen with an iPad that has no practical use whatsoever in the entire universe?

To determine if Microsoft's Windows revenue is just a temporary dip or the beginning of a long-term trend, we may need to wait for the next quarterly results. If Windows revenue continues dropping for a third, fourth and fifth straight quarter, this could mean that sales of Windows is dropping as a long-term trend. It could also mean that the declining sales of Windows is due to everyone collectively waiting for Microsoft to reveal the wonders of Windows 8 running on ARM chips for tablet and other mobile devices, and as soon as Windows 8 arrives, sales of Windows will skyrocket,

Windows revenue will dramatically climb, and Microsoft will remain the leader of personal computing for the rest of eternity to the point where nobody could possibly think that Microsoft might ever lose its leadership since its dominance will remain forever unquestioned by legions of obviously intelligent supporters who have no need to look at other technological alternatives to Windows because they can already tell (without relying on facts) why those alternatives are so far inferior that they're not even worth considering for one millisecond.

While we wait to see if Microsoft continues reporting declining revenue from Windows, we can consider which company's technology might possibly replace Microsoft as the dominate leader of the personal computer field.

Could it be Motorola with their Xoom tablet ([www.techrockstar.com/2011/02/25/motorola-xoom-starts-shipping-but-without-flash-or-4g-support-out-of-the-box/](http://www.techrockstar.com/2011/02/25/motorola-xoom-starts-shipping-but-without-flash-or-4g-support-out-of-the-box/)), which offers Flash support (although not initially), 4G support (although not initially), and a Secure Digital (SD) micro slot (although not initially)? After all, Motorola claims to have shipped (but not necessarily sold) 250,000 Xoom tablets so far, which roughly equals the number of iPads Apple sold on the first weekend of the iPad 2's availability.

Could the next computing leader be Research in Motion (RIM) ([www.businessweek.com/news/2011-04-29/rim-plunges-as-analysts-see-lost-credibility-in-forecast-cut.html](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-04-29/rim-plunges-as-analysts-see-lost-credibility-in-forecast-cut.html)), which is seeing declining sales of their Blackberry smartphones and mild demand for their Playbook tablet that can't even use e-mail unless tethered to a Blackberry phone?

Maybe the next leader will be Hewlett-Packard, which acquired Palm Computing for their webOS operating system to use in smartphones and tablets as well as in all Hewlett-Packard personal computers? Now all we have to do is wait for Hewlett-Packard to actually release their TouchPad tablet ([www.palm.com/us/products/pads/touchpad/index.htm](http://www.palm.com/us/products/pads/touchpad/index.htm)), but until then, we can continue fantasizing that Hewlett-Packard might be the next computer leader.

Perhaps the next computer leader will be Dell Computers with their PCs and tablets such as the Dell Streak. It could also be Sony, which recently released their own tablets ([www.businessinsider.com/sony-honeycomb-tablet-video-2011-4](http://www.businessinsider.com/sony-honeycomb-tablet-video-2011-4)) that might also double up as PlayStation game consoles. Maybe the next computer leader will be Google with their Chrome OS for netbooks and Android operating system for smartphones and tablets.



Figure 1. Sony offers two types of tablets running Android.

The battle for the new leader of the computing field is actually irrelevant. Some people may believe that Microsoft will remain entrenched as the leader forever because they're the current leader today and everyone knows that you can always accurately predict the future by simply assuming that the future will be exactly like the present and the past since change, especially in the technological field, never occurs. If you believe this, then you'll stick with Microsoft products and ignore any non-Microsoft products for the rest of your life.

For those who want to avoid the trap of falling in love with any particular company (such as Microsoft or even Apple), simply learn the technology that appears to be growing more popular and pervasive in both the consumer and corporate world. That may mean following Microsoft's technology in some markets but following another company's technology in a different market.

Windows may be dominant today, but all facts indicate that it could be slowly losing its grip on the computing world. To get a glimpse of the possible future, consider the smartphone market where Nokia's Symbian OS once dominated the market with Research in Motion's Blackberry OS following closely behind.

Now the smartphone market is pretty much a competition between Google's Android and Apple's iPhone. On the other hand, Research in Motion's Blackberries are fading away ([www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-29/rim-plunges-as-analysts-see-lost-credibility-with-forecast-cut.html](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-29/rim-plunges-as-analysts-see-lost-credibility-with-forecast-cut.html)) and Nokia's Symbian OS is a dead-end that has forced Nokia to layoff thousands of workers.

The slow decline of Blackberry and Nokia phones has been occurring since the introduction of the iPhone and Android, so nobody at Research in Motion or Nokia should have been caught by surprise. Yet why did so many Nokia workers remain instead of moving on to more promising companies? How long will it take for Research in Motion to start laying off people, and how many of those workers will suddenly be surprised at this sudden turn of events that took several years to occur right before their eyes?

When you don't notice trends, or do notice trends but ignore them anyway, you risk finding yourself in less than ideal

circumstances in the future. Your choice is clear. Follow the trends and profit from them, or deny the trends and get run over by them. For too many people, denying reality, falling in love with a particular company, and justifying irrational fantasies is the easiest choice until it's too late.

## The Techno Geek Mindset

Visit the Windows 7 News Web site so you can see how the mind of a typical Microsoft fanatic works. In one of the latest articles, Windows 7 News offered the following solution for how Microsoft's retail stores ([www.windows7news.com/2011/04/27/ms-stores-works-houston-la/](http://www.windows7news.com/2011/04/27/ms-stores-works-houston-la/)) could become more profitable and distinguish themselves from Apple:

"Still while Microsoft is trying to put its name brand out for consumers to see, the store has to show things to consumers that it wouldn't ordinarily see. Like computers running the dot Net Framework, Sql Server 2008, Sharepoint networks, CRM, not to mention the Windows Phone 7, XBox and other hardware devices."

Does this sound like the magic solution that Microsoft needs to get more consumers to flock to Microsoft Stores? While Apple focuses on hiding complexity and giving users the ability to perform difficult tasks easily, techno geeks focus more on technical specifications and completely ignore what these technical specifications can actually do.

Since many die-hard Windows supporters are techno geeks enthralled with technological complexity, they would find computers running the .NET framework interesting, but does the average consumer really understand what advantage the .NET framework even offers? Will any program created using the .NET framework make you dramatically more productive than a similar program that does not use the .NET framework? How many people shop for a computer by asking the sales person, "I need a computer that runs the .NET framework and SQL Server 2008 because those features are what my grandmother wants."

Techno geeks tend to rely on technical specifications as their sole criteria for judging anything. If given a choice between a woman with measurements of 29-34-32 or a second woman with measurements of 36-24-36, the techno geeks would take the second woman every time solely due to the technical specifications, completely ignoring the fact that the first woman might be friendly and interesting while the second woman might be a corpse.

If you judge the superiority of anything solely by its technical specifications, you may be missing out on what's really important. Then again if you rely solely on technical specifications, you may dismiss this paragraph as worthless since it only consists of 53 words and 329 characters (or 277 characters not counting spaces).

## Animating Stick Figures with Stykz

If you want to develop programs for different operating systems, you often have to learn different programming languages, which essentially means writing the same program multiple times. For example if you wrote a Windows program using Visual C++ or Visual C#, you would have to translate your code to Objective-C to create a Mac OS X program.

Since learning and mastering multiple programming languages on separate operating systems is difficult, a better alternative is to use a multi-platform programming language that lets you write a program once and compile it for multiple operating systems, which is exactly what the programmers at Sons of Thunder Software did when they developed Stykz ([www.stykz.net](http://www.stykz.net)), which runs on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux.

Rather than learn multiple programming languages, Sons of Thunder simply used LiveCode ([www.runrev.com/products/livecode/new-in-461/](http://www.runrev.com/products/livecode/new-in-461/)), which was previously called Runtime Revolution. LiveCode closely mimics

Apple's old HyperCard program and uses a simple programming language that's easy to read and understand.

By using the much simpler and more powerful LiveCode language rather than something cryptic like C++ or Objective-C, you can write programs faster and easier while also compiling your code to run on multiple operating systems including Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and with optional add-ons, iOS and Android.

In the case of Sons of Thunder Software, they used LiveCode to create a stick animation program called Stykz. The basic idea is that you create stick figures and manipulate them to learn the basics of animation.

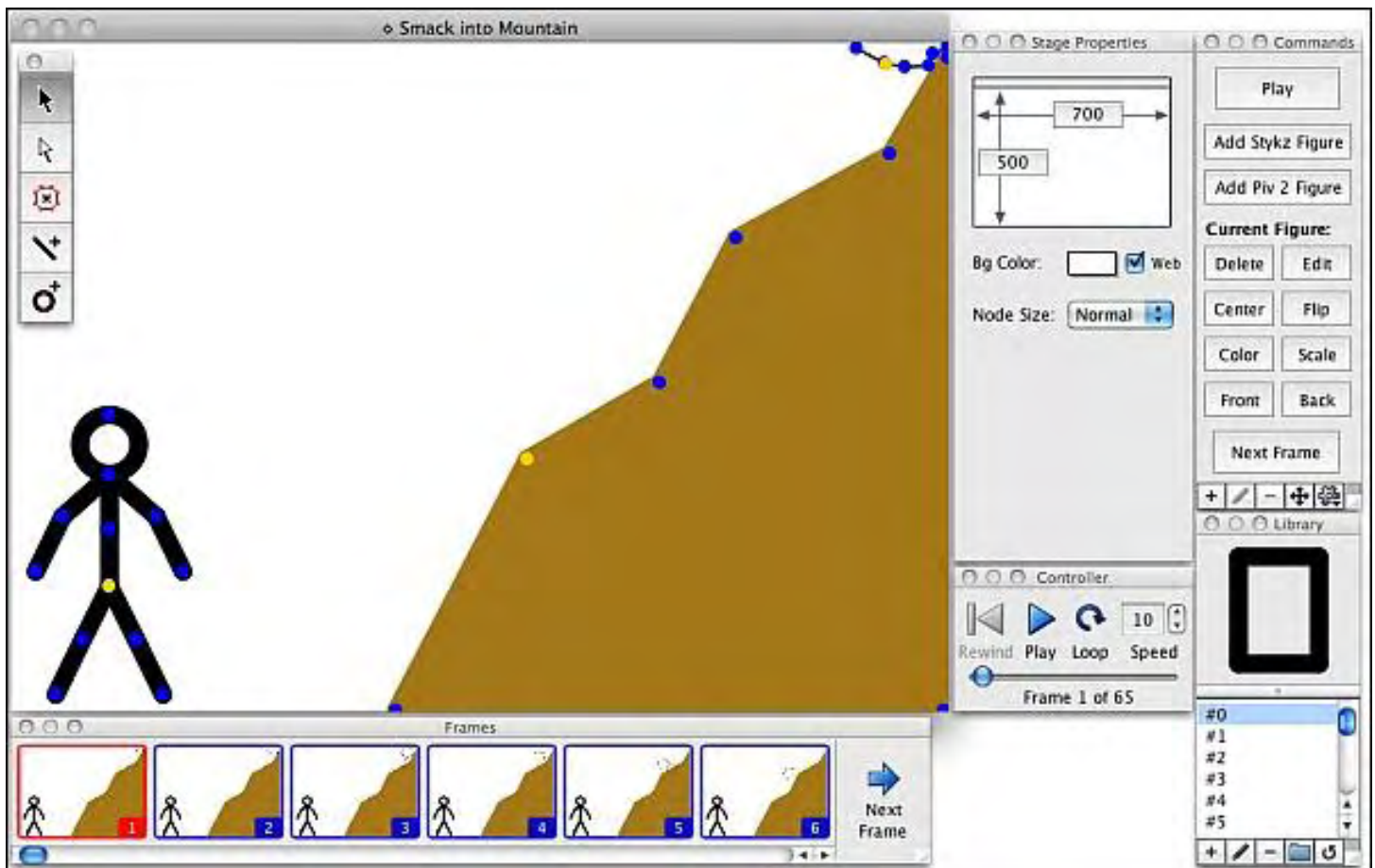


Figure 2. Stykz can teach you the basics of animation.

Without LiveCode, Sons of Thunder Software would have been forced to write and test their program in three different programming languages, using three different programming tools. With LiveCode, they simply wrote the program once and compiled it to run on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux. The ability to create a multi-platform program with LiveCode is no more difficult than creating a single platform program using popular languages like Visual Basic or C++.

If you're interested in learning the basics of animation, download a free copy of Stykz today and run it on the operating system of your choice. If you're a programmer, examine Stykz and ask yourself how much time it would take to create a similar program in your favorite programming language on a single operating system, and then multiply your efforts by three to create a Windows, Mac OS X and Linux version of that same program.

## MACDefender Malware

Windows users have long been accustomed to malware trying to trick them into installing rogue programs. Recently, a Macintosh-specific malware has been attempting this same trick. Part of the problem is that by default, the Safari

browser automatically opens supposedly "safe" files, so the first line of defense is to uncheck this option.

Open Safari and choose Preferences to open a Preferences dialog. Then clear the "Open" checkbox at the bottom.

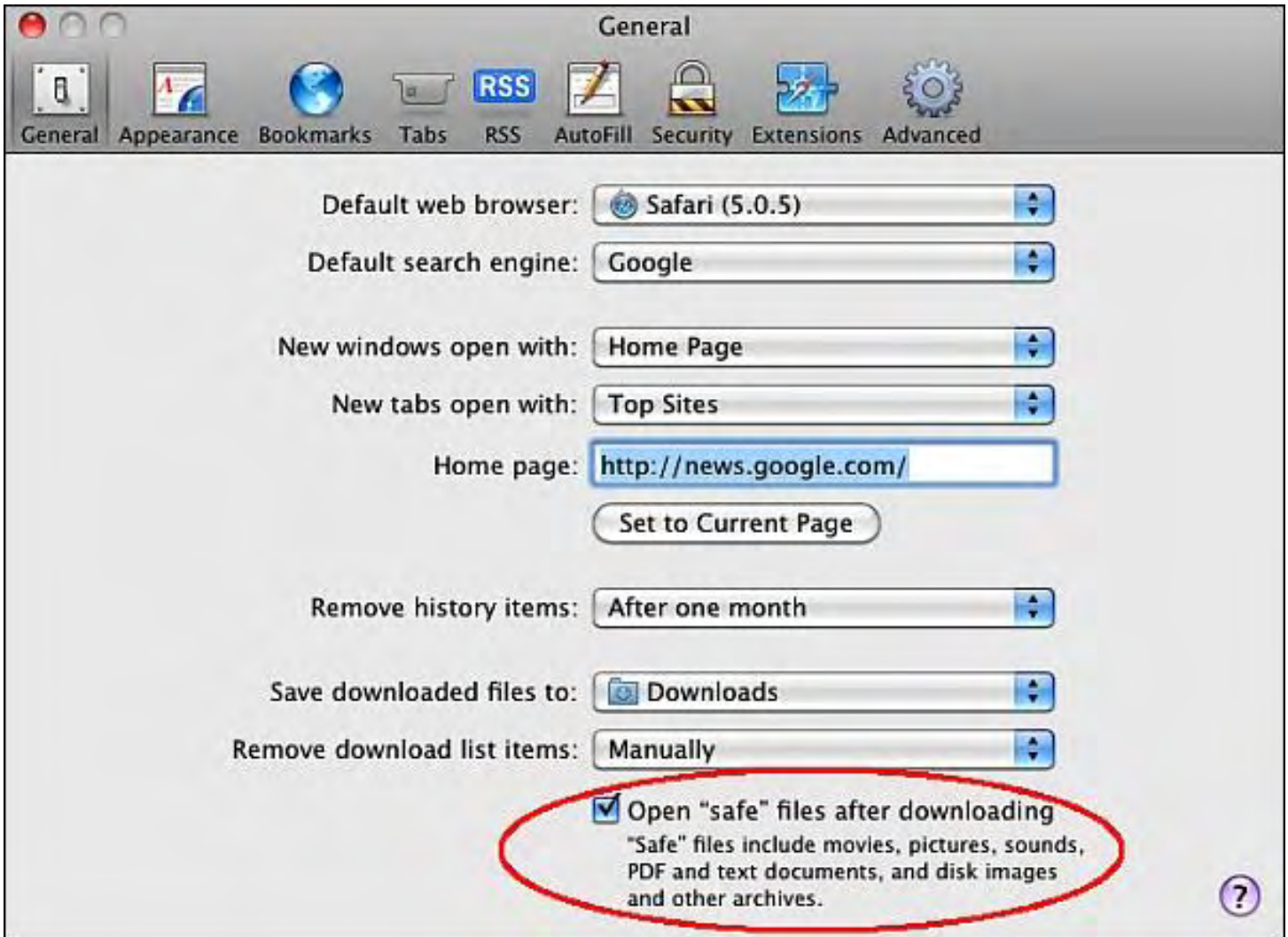


Figure 3. Turning off Safari's ability to open "safe" files automatically.

This MACDefender malware attempts to install itself automatically if you visit a booby-trapped Web page and click on a link. To allow the installation of this program, you'll need to type in your password.





Figure 4. The MACDefneder malware installation screen.

Although this MACDefender malware doesn't delete files, it does try to steal your credit card numbers by tricking you into paying for it. While the risk of danger is low, this indicates that more malware creators are starting to target the Macintosh, so you can either let this minor incident frighten you back into the world of Windows with its thousands of existing malware, or you can simply remain vigilant since no form of technology can protect against getting fooled by rogue software.

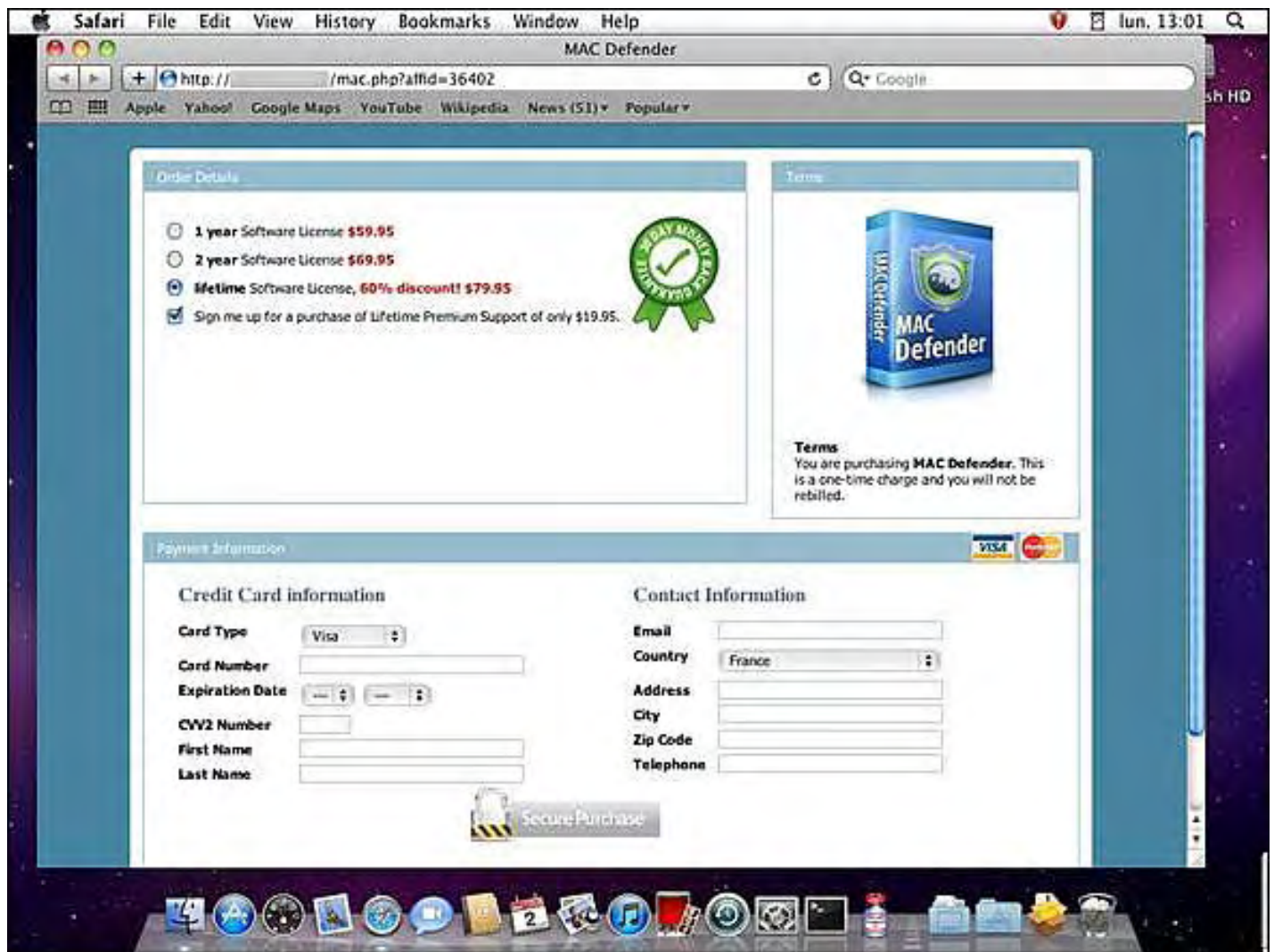


Figure 5. MACDefender tries to fool people into paying for "protection."

\* \* \*

The whole purpose of the Dock is to store your most frequently used programs so you can find and load them quickly with one click of the mouse. To make loading certain programs even more convenient, you can specify which programs should load automatically when you log into your account, which for many people simply means whenever they turn on their computer.

Just right-click on a program icon on the Dock and choose Options from the menu. Then choose Open at Login. Now your chosen program will load automatically.

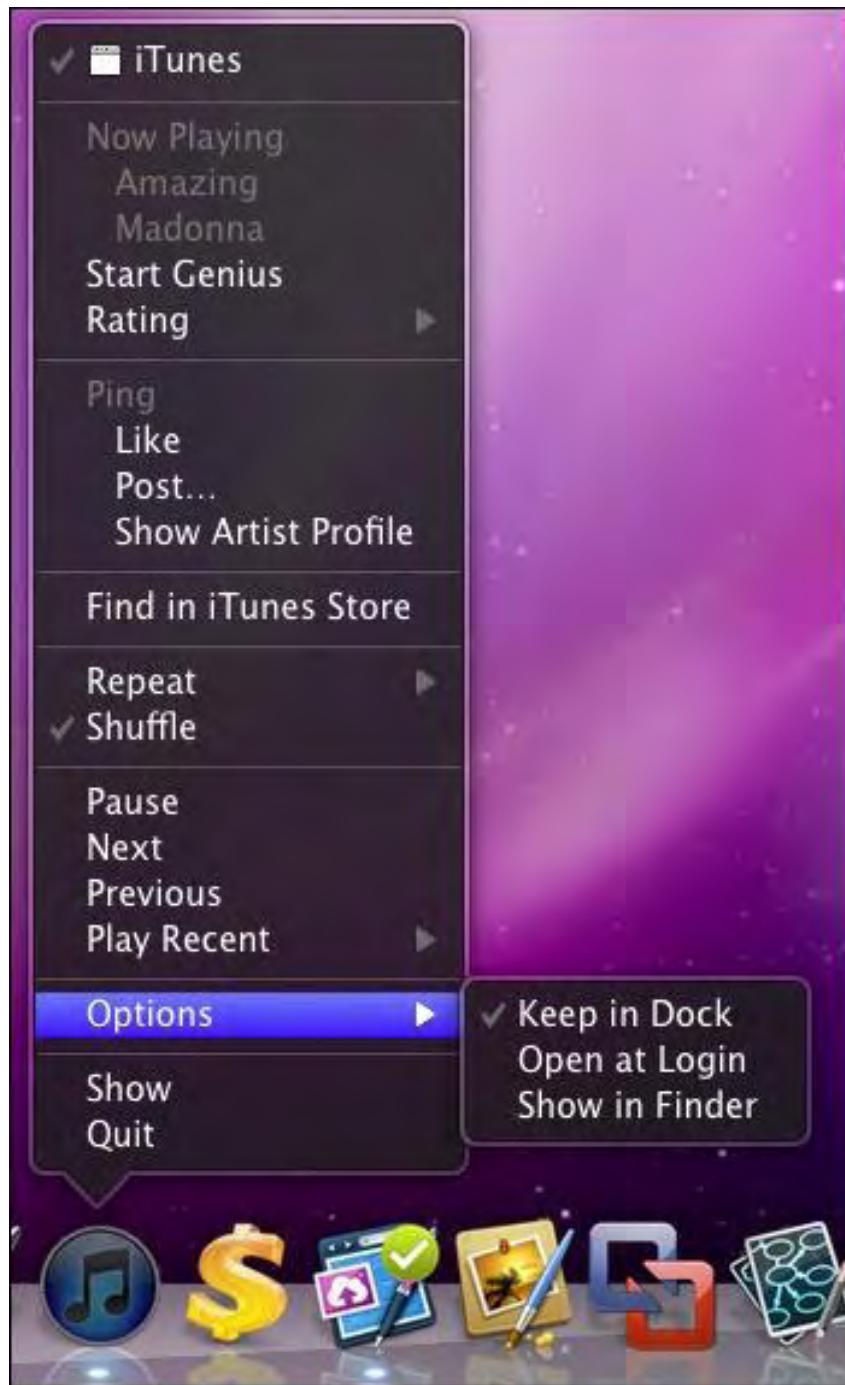


Figure 6. Right-clicking on a Dock item lets you define a program to start automatically.

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:

My New Mac ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271646?ie=UTF8&tag=the 15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271646?ie=UTF8&tag=the+15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646)),

My New iPhone ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the 15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the+15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956)),

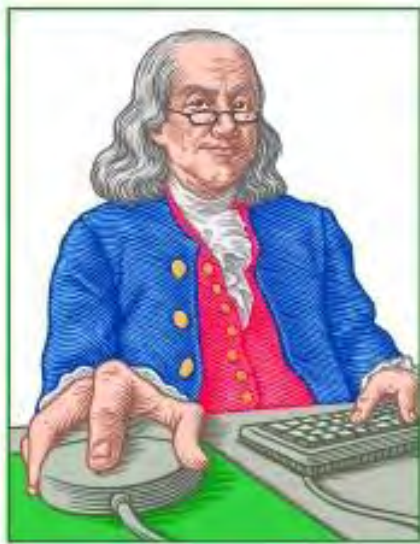
My New iPad ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593272758?ie=UTF8&tag=the 15minmovme-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593272758?ie=UTF8&tag=the+15minmovme-)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593272758](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8)),  
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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050)),  
Microsoft Office 2010 for Dummies ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)),  
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](http://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](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362))  
The 15-Minute Movie Method  
([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8))  
In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method" ([www.15minutemoviemethod.com/](http://www.15minutemoviemethod.com/)) along with blogging about electronic publishing and how authors can take advantage of technology at his site "The Electronic Author." ([www.wallacewang.com](http://www.wallacewang.com)) Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com).

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# LINUX LESSONS

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

## Linux Lessons: Tips and Tricks from Users

**"A Linux Command  
Created Using an  
Alias"** by Tony J. Podrasky

The L command is a convenient listing command using an alias which will turn the last overly long list into individual and viewable pages.

This is technique that uses an alias to simplify the viewing of repeated commands with long listings.

Filename (actually alias name): L

Use: The single-character <L> will cause the last command to be repeated and run the resulting output through the <less> program.

How many times have you listed a directory <ls -la> or cat'ed a file and had what you were looking for shoot off the top of the screen? I've had it happen so many times that I came up with the <L> command. Sure, you could just do a <ls -la | less>, or instead of <cat myfile> do a <less myfile>, but you'd have to type that in and, if you were cat'ing a file in a faraway directory <cat /usr/src/lib/X11/X11R6/snuffallupagus>, it would be annoying to say the least. Instead, you just type the letter "L" and it reruns the previous command and pipes it through <less>.

The <L> command is not a shell file. It is an alias. The <alias> command tells the system "when you receive the command XXX do YYY". After you try the <L> command, you might want to alias some of your favorite commands to a custom "word or letter" of your choice. Again, I use all uppercase letter in my personal commands so I don't accidentally create a shell script or alias that overrides one that the system has of the same name.

*If you're using <csh> or <tcsh> as your command line interpreter, try this (at *your* prompt, type in what you see after "tonyp%")*

First, we'll go to a directory with a lot of files in it: tonyp% cd /dev

Next, we'll create the alias. Type in the letters just as they appear here: tonyp% alias L `"*bckslsh*!-1 | less"`

Now verify that the "L" command looks like what is written above: tonyp% alias

(You will see some of the system's preassigned aliases along with the "L" alias. Note: If you make a mistake you can undo the alias you made by doing an <unalias L>.

Type in: tonyp% ls -la

A bazillion files will print out. When it finishes, execute the L command: tonyp% L

The listing of the dev directory will begin, and the top of the screen will have the very first file listed. You can now page through the list or you can ask <less> to display a specific filename.

When you close the xsession that you were using when you created the aliases, the aliases will disappear. If you'd like to make them available whenever you start an xsession, you can <cd> to your home directory and look for either <.cshrc> if you are using the original <csh> interpreter or <.tcshrc> if you are using the <tcsh> interpreter. Edit that file and add your custom aliases.

Note to the readers: I tried to get the <sh> and <bash> interpreter's alias to work but did not have any success. If someone out there is running either of those interpreters and would really like the <L> feature, please send me e-mail and let me know. I'll do more digging and post a version for <sh> or <bash>. My e-mail is *hunybuny@netzero.net*.

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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!" Tony can be reached for questions at Linux Questions for Tony (*hunybuny@netzero.net*).

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## Beyond Personal Computing

“The Forgettable Essentials: Password Problems” by Marilyn K. Martin

Marilyn shares some humorous anecdotes about choosing and remembering passwords.

Computer passwords started out as a prime security feature. A clever and highly personalized password (combining letters and numbers, upper and lower case) was to ensure that you were the only one who had access to your computer files or Internet accounts.

But then came along evermore sophisticated hackers, and identity theft and fraud became a major concern. Today, hackers target entire companies, such as a recent theft of Walgreen's Pharmacy customer e-mails.

But still, most private computer users treat their PC passwords like an after-thought. One of those "Oh yeah, I need a password" moments, followed up by "And it has to be something I can remember ..." Or not.

### Repeating Passwords

A 2008 MSNBC article reported that a recent survey had found that nearly half the Internet users queried admitted that they used just one password for all their online accounts. Many users casually admitted that they repeated passwords so that they didn't forget them.

Like your ATM pin number, people are advised to never *ever* write down their computer password(s). But 70% of U.K. users admitted writing down their password, while nearly half of the U.S. respondents did (49%).

Another survey around the same time, found that 88% of 800 people surveyed, correctly identified that "personal irresponsibility" is the key cause of identity theft and fraud. So what's so difficult about choosing and remembering a few computer passwords? Apparently, plenty.

### Memory Problems

Consider the call to a Support Tech where the user couldn't access his work computer. The Tech asked, "Are you sure you used the right password?" The user was indignant. "Of course it was the right password! I just saw my co-worker use it on his computer, and it opened right up."

Then there was another simple question a Tech asked a user who couldn't get into his computer, "Can you tell me

what the password was that didn't work?" The user was quick to respond, "The same one I always see around here: five little stars."

Or how about the Computer Lab in a large university. Occasional student visitors could use a generic log-in that didn't require a password. So one such student approached the Lab's Supervisor at the Help Desk. The student explained that he couldn't log-in, and kept getting Access Denied messages. "Did you just type 'student' for the user name with no password?" asked the Supervisor. "Yes, I did. Is 'no password' one word or two?"

And sometimes, "too small a memory" doesn't always apply to a computer. Consider the secretary who forgot her three-letter, power-on password over the one week Christmas/New Year's vacation. That forgotten password was her initials.

Or pity the Help Desk Tech overheard patiently explaining to a user over the phone: "No, Sir. Clicking on 'Remember Password' will *not* help you remember your password."

### Choosing the Correct Password

Or how about the Tech who did system support for a law firm. One day he had to log a user off and then back on. He entered her initials and then she gave him her password: GENIUS. After three tries, the computer wouldn't accept the password. So he asked her to spell it, and she cheerfully complied: G-E-N-I-O-U-S

One oft-repeated password joke, involves a couple setting up their new PC. The wife instructs her husband at the appropriate point that he now needs to choose and enter a password. Feeling ornery, he enters his new password: p-e-n-i-s. The computer rejects it, and his wife doubles over in laughter after they read the message on the screen: "Password Invalid—Not Long Enough".

Then there was the Support Tech trying to help a user set up a new password. "OK, your password will be a small 'a' as in apple, a capital 'V' as in Victor, and the number 7." The user still needed some clarification: "Is that a capital 7?"

And pity the consultant working on a Web development project for a client. He also had a non-tech intern to keep busy. Since part of the project involved setting up 150 user accounts, the consultant decided to let the intern set up the accounts, which included choosing the 150 passwords.

The consultant gave the lad the boiler-plate instructions on choosing passwords. Although computer gurus love hard-to-figure-out gibberish passwords, users can't remember them. So he told the intern to pick a word out of the dictionary and add a few numbers at the end.

The intern wanted to show initiative, however, and created the new passwords using a list of The 300 Most Misspelled Words. Sure enough, the consultant was soon fielding calls from angry users who kept misspelling their assigned passwords, such as asphyxiate33 or leprechaun49.

Or how about a father whose kids loved surfing the Internet. Dad thought it was cute that they'd leave post-it notes all over the edge of the monitor of their various passwords. But he couldn't understand why their Disney site password was unusually long: MickeyMinnieGoofyPluto. When asked, his son had a logical answer. "'Cause they say the password has to have at least four characters."

And then there's the smarty-pants error message, when trying to set up a new password: "Sorry, the password you tried is already being used by Dorothy. Try something else, TOTOLly different."

### Why Is That Programmer Smiling?



"To err is human. To really foul up requires the root password."

"I just tried to enter my password on the microwave."

"You know you are working at a Redneck computer if the password is Bubba."

## High-Tech Passwords

Today, straining your brain to come up with multiple clever, complicated and personalized passwords that you can remember, may still not stop the hackers. I've found a simple backdoor in Vista in Control Panel/System and Maintenance/System and "Allow remote access." Just open it and unclick the check in the "Allow remote assistance connections to this computer" box.

So your best bet for secure passwords may be Password Manager software. There is software available now to combine all your various passwords into one super-encrypted Master Password. There is also Password Recovery software, Secure Password Storage software, and ID And Access Management software available.

I've already written about spyware in your keyboard (Keyloggers) and monitor, that can render any password(s) useless. There is also remote-access spyware software available now, that downloads through e-mail.

Security software is beginning to catch up with all the spyware, however, with anti-malware tools. PC Tools offers a Spyware Doctor 2011 ([www.pctools.com/spyware-doctor-antivirus/](http://www.pctools.com/spyware-doctor-antivirus/)). And various free security software can be found at [Thefreecountry.com](http://Thefreecountry.com). (Just be careful you aren't accidentally downloading disguised viruses or spyware.)

Anti-malware programs will soon (or should) be on the security level of superior and continually running antivirus programs on all computers. And with Password Manager software, the days of racking your brain to come up with a new password will be soon be on that computer trash pile with mono-chrome monitors and dead company PCs.

(Many of these anecdotes are on multiple Computer Joke sites, but special thanks to [Rinkworks.com](http://Rinkworks.com), [Guy-sports.com](http://Guy-sports.com), [Coolfunnyjokes.com](http://Coolfunnyjokes.com), [Basicjokes.com](http://Basicjokes.com) and [Jokesy.com](http://Jokesy.com))

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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](http://www.amazon.com/Chronicles-Mathias-One-Reptilian-Rebirth/dp/1598249002)) Volume One and Two are available on Amazon.

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## Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Tablet Computing Continued," "Career Change," "Bias Drive!"

### Tablet Computing Continued

[Regarding Jack Dunning's March 11 article, "Beyond the Hype: Do You Need a Tablet Computer?":]

Regarding Mr. Fass's reply to Jack's article on Table Computing:

Mr. Fass offered three comments. I throw in my own comments after each.

*"1. 'Should someone buy a tablet for their next computer? Will tablets actually replace laptops? Is there a compelling reason to buy a tablet computer right now?'*

*Potentially better questions are: What are potential functions or uses of a tablet computer? How might users take advantage of a tablet computer? What are potential efficiencies in a tablet computer's user experience?"*

I agree here. Although you can ask if the tablets are a replacement for something else, a better question is "what are they good for?"

*"2. Jack's article states 'Tablet computers belong in one particular computer niche.'*

*What is the intent in describing iPad as belonging to a particular 'niche?' Especially when the article also states 'The Apple iPad is quite versatile.'*

*How can a product simultaneously be versatile and specialized?"*

It occurred to me that a bicycle is a very versatile mode of transportation, but also very specialized. As for tablets, I see them as having a broad niche market, applying mostly in the business world. They're too big to be truly portable (so you might as well get a phone) and not powerful enough yet to compete with things like laptops. Their benefit is in the "light portable" market, where they never stray more than a few hundred feet from their home. A warehouse would work for inventory management; a daily commute would not.

*"3. Jack's article says 'Once you understand that special type of computing, you can quickly determine if a tablet is in your future. It's called one-handed computing.'*

*How many artists, gamers ... are performing two-handed computing with their iPads, but agree that the iPad is for one-handed computing?"*

My interpretation of this is that these work better than larger devices for one-handed computing, but not as well for two-handed computing. (See warehouse comment.)

-Rob Spahitz, San Diego

## Career Change

[Regarding the April 22 Digital Dave column:]

Another option for getting experience is to find non-profit organizations that you want to support and need some IT help and provide it at no cost. You won't make any money, but you will be gaining real world experience that can go on a resume and the non-profit will be getting some much needed help. And it just might happen that some business person who supports or provides goods or services to the non-profit may hear of the good work you are doing and will help you find full time employment.

-Marcus, Alabama

Hi Dave;

It was really nice to hear your response to Mike from Washington who wants to get into the Computer Technology field (180 degree occupation change).

I did that at the age of 35. After years in a white collar, administrative job, I went into Landscape Contracting—starting out at the very bottom. It was tough knocking on doors to get work after 12 years of working in Aerospace, in contract and technical writing type work, but it turned out to be a much more fulfilling type work; utilizing my design talent to create beautiful pools and landscapes.

It was great to hear that having a degree in computer science is not absolutely necessary to get into that field (think Bill Gates, et. al). Actual 'knowledge' counts—wherever it is gained. I had no degree, but was hired into two Aerospace companies by referrals from friends who knew my capabilities; and got my resume into the appropriate managers. Otherwise, without a degree, I would not have even been given an interview by their Human Resources Department.

-Wayne Ford, Huntington Beach, CA

Hi, Dave,

Regarding Mike from WA and his new IT career. I've been a computer tech for over 30 years and don't have a degree. I work for a leading defense contractor, who likes degrees, but likes me because I get things done.

Mike, my son is doing the same thing you are and my advice to both of you is get a network security certification. I truly believe that is the challenge of the future, and those jobs aren't going away.

If you're good at that you'll be set for life, but be prepared for challenges every day!

-Marc, Santee, CA

## Bias Drivel

[Regarding the April 15 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

This article was one of the most bias pieces of journalism I have read in a long time. It felt as if Wally was transported back to the early '80s and could have been defending Apple, Commodore, Atari, or even TRS-80 devices with his eyes

blindly shut to what's around.

The article on Clorox IT Staff lacked much detail, dates, software requirements, corporate agreements, etc. Allowing the staff to choose is not always a good idea—evident in my opinion by the fractioning from 100% on blackberry (to accomplish work related tasks?) to splitting between three (iOS, Android, and Mobile 7) platforms. Now Clorox has "happy" employees but must produce support and applications for three mobile platforms—and probably more than one carrier.

Later Wally challenges why *all* Android apps look so drastically different from their iOS counterpart from the same company. How many companies at this time write their own apps? How many do so for iOS and other platforms? Are the platforms and SDKs comparable? Maybe it is a business decision (to get to market) to modify the UI? I'm no great graphic designer, but I made rudimentary apps for both iOS and Android and had no trouble getting them to appear very similar in form and function. I never found time to try a blackberry equivalent before ditching the phone.

I've read CE since its BB days and rarely write in or comment. I have several iOS devices and love the iPad, but I use an Android phone. It comes down to the best tool for the job and sometimes there are concessions; but sometimes you find the diamond in the rough. Wally's piece was definitely more of an editorial this week and should be noted as such.

-Stephen, San Diego, CA

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

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

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Send mail to [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com) with questions about editorial content.

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