

# ComputerEdge™ Online — 05/13/11



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## Digital Dave

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

Microsoft Office Hassles; Return to XP?; Upgrade or Not to Upgrade?

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*My computer came with a trial version of Microsoft Office installed. I don't need it because I already own a version of Office. But when I tried to install it, it gave me errors and won't run properly. What should I do?*

*David  
Littleton, CO*

Dear David,

Probably the best thing to do is uninstall both versions of Microsoft Office, before trying to reinstall the version you own. It is possible that there is a conflict between the two, especially since the trial version is probably newer than yours. Compatibility is often a one-way street. Once there is an upgrade it can be difficult to go back. If for some reason, you're not able to do the uninstalls cleanly, go back to an earlier restore point (before you installed your version of Office). Then uninstall the trial version before installing yours again.

For me, the real fix is to forget about Microsoft Office completely and download the OpenOffice.org ([OpenOffice.org](http://OpenOffice.org)) suite—or any one of a bunch of free business software suites. It won't cost anything and for most people it will do everything they want. There is no risk in trying it and it will nicely coexist with any version of Office—even if you don't uninstall anything. If you like it, you can get a real sense of ownership by sending a small donation to OpenOffice.org.

The primary reason for sticking with Microsoft Office is requirements within a particular organization or business environment. There are occasionally issues when reading and writing Office files with OpenOffice.org, but unless you are doing some pretty advanced gymnastics you should have no problem.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I recently purchased a new Windows 7 computer and have had various problems getting things set up properly. I'm just not quite comfortable with this version of Windows. A friend of mine suggested that I install my Windows XP on the new machine to get rid of these issues. What do you think of taking this approach?*

*Marvin  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Marvin,

Your friend is either crazy or living in the stone ages. Windows XP is *not* a better operating system than Windows 7. If you get a new computer with Windows 7 installed then you should take the time to become more comfortable with it. In the long run it will serve you much better than trying to revert to Windows XP. The regression alone could cause you way more problems than you think you might solve.

I strongly support people who own Windows XP machines and are continuing to use them. For most people, there is little reason to upgrade an XP. However, once you start looking at new computers, it's time to get Windows 7 (or maybe a Mac if you want to pay a higher price and endure even more of a learning curve).

Most people and businesses who are continuing to use Windows XP do so because they are not ready to spend the money for a new computer—of any type. I respect this. Yet, as can be seen by the accompanying letter in this column, I think that sometimes we hang on to the past too long. If there were no benefits to Windows 7, then I would say stick with XP. But I would never recommend downgrading from Windows 7 to Windows XP. Windows Vista—maybe yes. Windows 7—no.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*Nice communicating with you again. (Twice in the past 12 years). I have a dilemma that I'm sure you can help me out with.*

*In 2007 I bought the best computer I found at Costco, which happened to be an HP Dual 1.8GHz with 2GB of memory. I'm planning to buy a new one as soon as possible, but in the meantime, I would like to know if the current one can be upgraded to run at least 30% faster with minimum investment.*

*My first guess is to install Windows 7 Ultimate. I found a place in Mexicali where they install a copy for a reasonable price. Win 7 will give me the opportunity to install more than the 2GB that XP allows me. The other would be to replace the processors for 2.8GHz and then over crank them and install a better cooling system.*

*I know that there are more things that I could change, like the video card, but then it is better to buy a new computer. With the things I mentioned, Do you think it will give me that 30% I'm looking for? I wouldn't be happy with less than that, because I want it for video editing. Best wishes for your family and yourself.*

*Victor Rodriguez  
Seeley, CA*

Dear Victor,

There is no point in upgrading your old computer to Windows 7. You will not get an appreciable faster computer and it may even be slower depending upon your total configuration. Speed benchmarks place Windows XP in the same ball park as Windows 7.

It would be better to add more memory, since the actual limit for Windows XP (32-bit) is 4GB, not 2GB. Whether you can

do that will depend upon what your motherboard supports and the availability of the right type of memory. You should be able to go to the Memory Advisor at **Crucial.com** to determine the possibilities for your motherboard. Adding memory is one of the best ways to speed up a computer, especially if you have less than 4GB in your computer.

Most processors these days are easy to overclock without any heat issues as the tolerances are very generous. It's done either with software or a switch in the BIOS. No more jumpers. However, there may be an issue of even finding a faster processor that fits in that old socket these days.

On most computers, the hard drive speed may be more of a bottleneck than the processor often negating the value of a faster processor. All HDs are comparatively slow (except for Solid State Drives). Although, if you're doing a lot of video editing, you will probably want a much larger hard drive for the video files. If you're comfortable with working on a PC to the extent that you've implied, I would recommend that you just build a new one. This is still the cheapest way to go.

Finding a copy of Windows 7 in Mexicali for a "reasonable" price could be risky. You'll want to make sure it's legit, since it could affect your ability to get updates or reinstall after a hard drive crash.

In any case, you should forget about Windows 7 for the old computer. Upgrade the memory and see what happens. But, if you want more and you don't want to build, you can get a Windows 7 box for a couple of hundred dollars using your old monitor and keyboard. You may find that is a much better option with higher performance than trying to bring an old computer up to speed.

Digital Dave

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## Software to Forecast Human Behavior

“Predictive Software from Data-Mining Human Behavior.” by Marilyn K. Martin

Our "internalized code-of-conduct" allows many behaviors to be predicted. Predictive analytics is used by businesses, law enforcement, and even terrorism. Marilyn explains the needs for this predictive software plus how and where it is being used.

As much as we like to think of ourselves as special or unique, the truth is that we all share an enormous amount of behavior, expectations and desires, with every other person on the planet. In one way, this internalized database takes the stress out of knowing what to expect in new or non-daily situations. It also gives us an internalized code-of-conduct to avoid strife and get along with others. (Although if we intentionally break that code-of-conduct, we know we may not be able to predict others' reactions.)

So it should be no surprise that everything from this "internalized code-of-conduct," to repeat behaviors and interests/ desires from customers to criminals, are open to mathematical modeling. Predictive software can crunch all the algorithms in a split-second, and give us probable outcomes based on certain behaviors or patterns of behaviors. So just where in society would this predictive software be valuable? You might be surprised!

### What Is Predictive Analytics?

From Wikipedia, these arise from a variety of technologies, statistics to data mining to game theory. With a little analysis of current and historical facts and trends thrown in for good measure. Businesses, especially, want to exploit patterns to identify risks and opportunities, to guide decision making and enhance their profit margin.

One of the first and most successful applications of predictive analytics, is Credit Scoring. This is a numerical expression based on the statistical analysis of a person's "credit worthiness." Lenders use Credit Scoring to evaluate the potential risk of loaning money to people, and extend that to determine interest rates and credit limits.

Identity Scoring, of which Credit Scoring is an example, is also used to detect identity theft, prevent fraud, and verify and correct public records. It uses a vast amount of consumer data to gauge a person's legitimacy, as well as predict a person's behavior or buying patterns.

Since most private businesses rely on targeting the





**“The computer predicted that I would have a sandwich for lunch. I ate cake!”**

service on the cloud or for on site." It offers to provide a "scalable environment to deploy your data mining models and business logic and put them into actual use."

most interested or responsive customers for their products and services, Predictive Analytics usually starts with data mining. Data Mining software can cull vast amounts of information, with set parameters of exactly which customers a business wants to target. Security issues, as I discussed in a previous article, can come into focus when third parties buy into a company's mined database.

Some other basic software for Predictive Modeling and Forecasting, like dtreg.com, offers tools for "modeling categorical variables such as sex, race and marital status." Their Example Analysis files are interesting, including "Predicting which passengers survived the sinking of The Titanic," and "Iris Flower Classification."

There are even some software companies now, like zementis.com, that offer a "predictive analytics decision management platform, available as a

## Predictive Software for Businesses

This field is ever-expanding, and is primarily aimed at businesses wanting to improve their chances for success. IBM's SPSS technology is the result of acquiring software from mainly PASW and ShowCase. Their Web site even offers a handy Product Naming Guide to help users transition to the new IBM software. SPSS brags that they "encapsulate advanced mathematical and statistical expertise, to extract predictive knowledge that when deployed into existing processes, makes them adaptive to improve their outcomes."

IBM's SPSS ([spss.com](http://spss.com)) (originally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) offers everything from Modeling to Statistics, Data Collection to Deployment software. Their Web site is extensive, with applications like Regression, Bootstrapping, Missing Values and Decision Trees.

## Predictive Business Specialties

On the outer margins of Predictive Analytics, are companies specializing in Predictive Dialers, or how to make Call Centers (inbound or outbound) more successful. With so many in the public opting-out of telemarketing cold calls, Predictive Dialer software is all that more valuable to companies who rely on Call Centers. These software companies offer everything from "algorithm-driven predictive dials," to targeting just those customers interested in their services, to automatic (not manual) dialing.

Predictive Maintenance Software (such as COGZ CMMS Maintenance Software ([cogz.com](http://cogz.com))) offers to "predict equipment failure as an accessory to a good preventive maintenance program ... and extend the life of equipment components." Using a "predictable life span" of equipment, with variables like run time and speed, environment and abusive treatment, this software can help a business set up maintenance schedules to prevent equipment breakdowns.

## Law Enforcement Predictive Analysis

According to this 2010 article ([www.popularmechanics.com/technology/military/research/4346435](http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/military/research/4346435)) in Popular Mechanics, you can forget the Hollywood version of criminal masterminds, or glib international psychopaths as either beautiful assassins or cat-loving leaders of the global SPECTRE. The reality is not half as glamorous.

Most real crime is predictable and even avoidable. If you avoid certain (mostly urban) areas, neighborhoods or streets, your chances of not being a crime victim will skyrocket. Criminals tend to stick to their familiar areas. And burglars tend to return to the same places to rob, to either replicate their success or exploit vulnerabilities noticed in a past robbery.

Being able to identify criminal hot spots, however, doesn't help law enforcement clean up those bad areas, or stop crime from spreading. But in 2010, professors at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) came up with mathematical models, using data from the LA Police Department, to predict how crimes spread. As well as how these criminal hot spots react to police intervention over time.

Their report, "Dissipation and Displacement of Hotspots in Reaction-Diffusion Models of Crime," identified two kinds of criminal hot spots. SuperCritical hot spots have crime forming out of an area where there was little or no previous crime. These areas could represent a rise in burglary and car theft, and can dissipate on their own. When police concentrated on SuperCritical hot spots, the crime just moved to an adjacent area.

SubCritical hot spots, however, may represent drug markets and/or gang crime, and has crime that feeds on itself and builds without intervention. Police concentrating in these areas can stop the crimes permanently.

Granted, this kind of mathematical modeling may be less predictive than analytical. But it does give law enforcement some policing tools. Especially to help them decide what criminal hotspots to concentrate on, or how to better allocate their limited resources.

"i2" ([i2group.com](http://i2group.com)) is considered the leading provider of intelligence and investigation software. Near the end of 2010, they released "a powerful new set of tools designed to revolutionize the way law enforcement, military and government organizations fight criminal and terrorist activity, called 'Enterprise Capability'." This is their "continuing actualization of i2's Intelligence-Led Operations Platform (IOP), an integrated set of powerful analysis, visualization and management applications, built to identify hidden connections and patterns from disparate data sources."

## Predicting Terrorism

Besides the above "i2" software, the Web site for government IT professionals ([gcn.com](http://gcn.com)) presented a 2008 article titled "Predicting Terrorist Activity ([gcn.com/articles/2008/02/27/predicting-terrorist-activity.aspx?sc\\_lang=en](http://gcn.com/articles/2008/02/27/predicting-terrorist-activity.aspx?sc_lang=en))." It announced that the University of Maryland's Institute for Advanced Computer Studies had launched an online portal to let government analysts query on the behavior of terrorist organizations, and forecast their future behavior. This Web site (STOP) is only accessible by government employees, and provides a single point of contact through which analysts may access data about terrorist groups worldwide.

But there is also a downloadable PDF of the same "SOMA (Stochastic Opponent Modeling Agents) Terror Organization Portal: Social Network and Analytic Tools For Real-Time Analysis of Terror Groups," at SpringerLink ([springerlink3.metapress.com/content/r1k74p2235506767/resource-secured/?target=fulltext.pdf&sid=nqq5mca2kiekt255fyoi0y55&sh=springerlink.com](http://springerlink3.metapress.com/content/r1k74p2235506767/resource-secured/?target=fulltext.pdf&sid=nqq5mca2kiekt255fyoi0y55&sh=springerlink.com)). It proposes "a new paradigm for reasoning about cultural groups, terror groups, and other socioeconomic-political-military organizations worldwide." It has three major components: Extraction Engine, Adversarial Forecast Engine, and SOMA Analyst Network (SANE) that lets government analysts find other analysts doing similar work, to share findings and let consensus conclusions emerge.

We don't yet have a computer simulation of terrorist activities, but in the February 2011 issue of the journal "Risk Analysis," William Bulleit and Matthew Drewek report the development of an Agent-based Modeling (ABM) program, to

better understand terrorists and their choice of targets. Bulleit and Drewek created three different types of agents in an environment with four kinds of resources. Most of the agents were civilians who regularly traveled from home to work, and frequented commercial zones. Some of these civilians became radicalized by their interactions and became terrorists, seeking to eliminate the largest accumulations of resources. After terrorist attacks, civilians would devote more of their wealth to the creation of security agents, who sought out and eliminated the terrorists.

While admittedly still simplistic at this stage, the model repeatedly showed patterns consistent with actual terrorist attacks. (Curiously, the preceding article in that issue of the journal suggested that "conventional probabilistic risk assessment" may prove misleading in predicting terrorist attacks. Maybe this new ABM terrorist model can help.)

For the general public, the second edition is now out of the "Terrorist Recognition Handbook: A Practitioner's Manual for Predicting and Identifying Terrorist Activities." It was written by a 20 year veteran of U.S. intelligence agencies, Malcolm W. Nance, and is available at Amazon and other online bookstores. Among other topics, the book covers how to "recognize pre-incident indicators of terrorist activity," based on previously data-mined and analyzed terrorist behavior.

The Web site for Secure Community Network ([www.scnus.org](http://www.scnus.org)) offers an article on the "Seven Signs of Terrorist Activity," developed by the Metropolitanscnus.org Transportation Authority of New York. (There's also a free video on this topic created by the Michigan State Police.) Their "Seven Signs" are Surveillance, Elicitation, Test of Security, Acquiring Supplies, Suspicious People Who Don't Belong, Dry Runs, Deploying Assets/Getting Into Position.

## Health Care Predictive Software

In 2005, Computer Sciences Corporation ([csc.com](http://csc.com)) announced that five healthcare consulting organizations had licensed the "Johns Hopkins' Adjusted Clinical Groups Predictive Model" (ACG-PM) software. The program helps "improve their clients' health plan. (With an) ability to identify and focus on individuals who are candidates for disease management programs, thereby improving care delivery and reducing medical costs."

The software also "factors in morbidity or the 'illness-burden' of patient populations, for healthcare providers, insurers and health maintenance organizations to describe or predict a population's past or future use of a health plan and related costs."

Other medical management software from CSC can provide "analysis and mathematic modeling services to employer health plans, consultants, etc." Yet other CSC predictive medical software is "clinically focused ... improving healthcare quality and reducing costs by identifying cost-drivers, recommending action, and measuring the results of those interventions."

## Predictive Software for Science

According to a May 2011 article at [bio-itworld.com](http://bio-itworld.com) ("Predictive Analysis Is Data Mining's Future"), data-mining has now matured beyond the unsupervised learning of just discovering patterns or trends without making assumptions about the structure of the data.

Today, attribute-importance algorithms can help researchers select, say, the subset of genes most likely used in discriminating types of cancer. These types of advanced analytics can now be applied across the entire life sciences spectrum, this article reports, from drug discovery to predicting which patients would respond best to experimental treatment.

They predict that "semantic and image mining will be the next frontiers of data mining." These emerging technologies will enable researchers to find semantic meaning hidden in data and documents, share and integrate the information with others, and arrive at more valuable insights. With data mining software more focused on the "meaning" of the data and concepts, researchers "drowning in a sea of gathered data" can now structure and organize all that data, as well as tap

unmined or unstructured data (text and images) to open the door to new and exciting possibilities for research discoveries.

## Financial Predictive Software and Risk-Assessment

In some industries, like financial markets, multiple adverse events can be triggered and then quickly cascade into monstrous problems. So leisurely prediction analytics isn't needed as much as the ability to recognize disaster-triggering events (or risk) and be able to respond. Fast. Just coming out of a global recession, the recent Global Association of Risk Professionals 12th Annual Risk Management Convention (GARP) in March 2011, emphasized the need for a "new analytics paradigm" in financial industries in this post-crises age. Better regulations, better risk-assessment and better analysis of adverse scenarios were all advised.

Spotfire Analytics ([spotfire.tibco.com/about-spotfire/why-spotfire/spotfire-analytics.aspx](http://spotfire.tibco.com/about-spotfire/why-spotfire/spotfire-analytics.aspx)) advises that Risk Management is more important than ever, with added emphasis now on "insights into risk-based metrics and a universal understanding of risk measures' impact ... The fast-changing and unpredictable nature of risk drivers requires an organization to be acutely aware of all material risks, and to nimbly respond to shifts in key performance metrics ..."

While high end businesses can afford mega-predictive and analytical software to improve and track their business and finances on all levels, affordable predictive software for small businesses may be harder to find.

Corelytics ([coreconnex.com](http://coreconnex.com)) partners with various financial service providers, "to improve the financial health and performance" of small businesses. They offer a Financial Dashboard made up of Corelytics partners, ranging from Business Resources to Technology Integrators, Vendors and Organizations specifically aimed at small businesses.

So predictive software based on data-mined human behavior is here to stay. It will continue to be refined with new algorithms for more specialized applications, with new uses developed for even previously excluded data. We humans are indeed "creatures of habit." And when it comes to law enforcement, and especially stopping terrorism, I'm very glad for those models of predictability.

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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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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Purpose of Technology” by Wally Wang

Determining the right technology for you; the purpose of a job; the mouse or the trackpad; free classes; the iPad as a legitimate tool; A peek inside Apple; chat With ELIZA; AutoCorrect feature of virtual keyboards.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Fredric Paul on the Enterprise Efficiency site ([www.enterpriseefficiency.com/author.asp?section\\_id=898&doc\\_id=188945](http://www.enterpriseefficiency.com/author.asp?section_id=898&doc_id=188945)) tells a story about how IT department managers were initially against allowing the iPhone into their organizations. While these IT people gave plenty of reasons why they didn't like the iPhone, Fredric Paul noticed that: "What bugged me, though, was that no one —not one person—bothered to ask what the business benefit might be of using iPhones in the enterprise. It didn't even occur to them to think about the possible benefits of the device to the users or to the company, just about the hassles it might cause them!"

Fredric Paul goes on to state that, "As this sad little episode makes clear, all too often the IT department is all about its own needs, and not so much about empowering both the company as a whole and individual users to be as productive as possible."

You can often see this lopsided mentality when dealing with people in other industries who treat customers as a nuisance, not realizing that serving the customer is the whole purpose of any business and job. Instead of being annoyed when more customers show up at a restaurant, a smart waiter would be happy because more customers means more money. A dumb waiter would be annoyed and unconsciously try to drive away customers so he can have more time to smoke a cigarette outside. Which type of waiter would you want to work for you if you owned a restaurant?

Perhaps if IT departments were paid by earning tips like waiters in a restaurant, they would quickly learn the value of serving their customers. Until reading a book such as *Customer Service For Dummies* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0471768693/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399353&creativeASIN=0471768693](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0471768693/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399353&creativeASIN=0471768693)) becomes mandatory for IT departments, most IT departments will focus on their own needs first and everyone else's needs second, if at all, and then they'll be eager to give you all of their "valid" reasons for why their needs are far more important than their real purpose, which is to serve their fellow co-workers.

Outside of the quagmire that defines most IT departments, many individuals also lose track of the real purpose of technology. Technology is meant to be a tool to achieve a specific result. Ideally, you want to use the technology that helps you achieve a result as quickly and easily as possible, whether the company that makes that technology is called Intergalactic Digital Research or Kentucky Fried Computers.

In order to choose the best technology for your needs, you must first be willing to look at all your technology choices, not

just a limited subset of options that you like or just happen to understand. This step stops many people cold because evaluating other technology immediately means the threat of learning something new or dumping something that they've invested years and money studying.

Next, you need to identify what problem you want to solve with technology. Once again, this stops many people dead in their tracks because rather than focus on what different people need, so-called "experts" will cheerfully dictate what's "best" for everyone, regardless of their actual needs. By forgetting your real needs, you can get distracted by the "experts" that tell you what you should get, even if it doesn't meet your needs at all.

Once you know what's most important to you, then look for the technology that solves that problem the best. Ideally you want to buy this technology at the lowest possible price, but buying something just because it's less expensive is pointless if it doesn't solve your actual need. This is where too many people allow price to dictate their choices, which is like saving money buying a Big Wheel tricycle rather than a car just because the Big Wheel is cheaper.

If you just follow these three steps of evaluating all possible choices, identifying your primary need, and then looking for the technology that best satisfies that need at the lowest possible price, you'll get the best technology for you.

## The Purpose of a Job

When searching for a job, too many people emphasize education, work experience and skills. Unfortunately, none of that matters as much as actually being able to get something done.

Education, work experience and skills simply qualifies you for a position, but it can never guarantee that you will ever get that position. Earning a college degree or passing a test is like buying a lottery ticket. You're qualified for a specific position, but so are hundreds or thousands of other people.

What matters isn't what you've done in the past, but what you can do today. When you apply for a job, you can never control whether you get hired or not. However, you can improve your chances of getting hired by simply reshaping your mindset. Instead of looking for a job, look for a way to make someone else's life easier.

Jon Fisher, an entrepreneur who started an encryption company called Bharosa that he sold to Oracle back in 2007, explained his strategy for starting a company in his book *Strategic Entrepreneurism* ([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)).

Where most people go wrong is they start a company and then try to figure out how to make money while they're burning through cash keeping the company going. Jon's approach is to figure out what major problem companies already have, and then create a solution for those companies. That way you'll have eager customers right from the start.

Job-seekers make that same mistake. They essentially compile a list of skills and then go looking for someone to hire them. A better approach would be to look for major problems that companies already have, and then customize your resume so your skills offer a solution to that problem.

For example, thousands of people may list on their resume that they can use Microsoft Office, but how many people state that they know how to merge data from Microsoft Access or FileMaker into a Microsoft Word document to create form letters and mailing labels?

By reshaping your skills to promote specific results you can achieve rather than parading a list of vague skill sets, your resume will stand out from everyone else who simply lists "Microsoft Office skills" on their resume. Ironically, many other job applicants may be even more skillful in mail-merging than you, but if they don't advertise this fact on their resume, it's as good as if they never had that skill at all.

How do you find a potential employer who needs someone who understands mail-merging? You ask, which requires doing research. Instead of sending a resume to any company and hope they have a job for you, find out which companies have the biggest problems that your skills can solve.

Before applying for a job, take the extra time to find out what that company actually wants from an applicant. That might mean calling, talking to someone in person, or searching through a company's Web site to make an educated guess why they're advertising a specific job opening.

When two companies advertise an opening for someone with Microsoft Office skills, they might have two completely different needs. One company might need someone who can work with Excel and create reports in Word while another company might only need someone who can create PowerPoint presentations.

By taking the time to learn exactly what a company wants in an applicant, you'll know how to customize your skills to better match what a potential employer wants (and avoid wasting your time applying to a company where your skills can't solve their specific needs). There's still no guarantee you'll get any job, but by emphasizing what results you can produce to make someone else's life easier, your chances are much higher than just submitting a generic resume to multiple companies and hoping for the best.

## The Mouse or the Trackpad?

When buying the latest iMac, you now have a choice between the Apple Mighty Mouse, the Magic Trackpad, or the regular Apple Mouse that plugs into a USB port. The Mighty Mouse and Magic Trackpad are wireless, which means you'll need to keep shoving in batteries periodically to keep them working. The regular Apple Mouse doesn't require batteries and behaves like a traditional mouse with a cord connecting it to the computer.

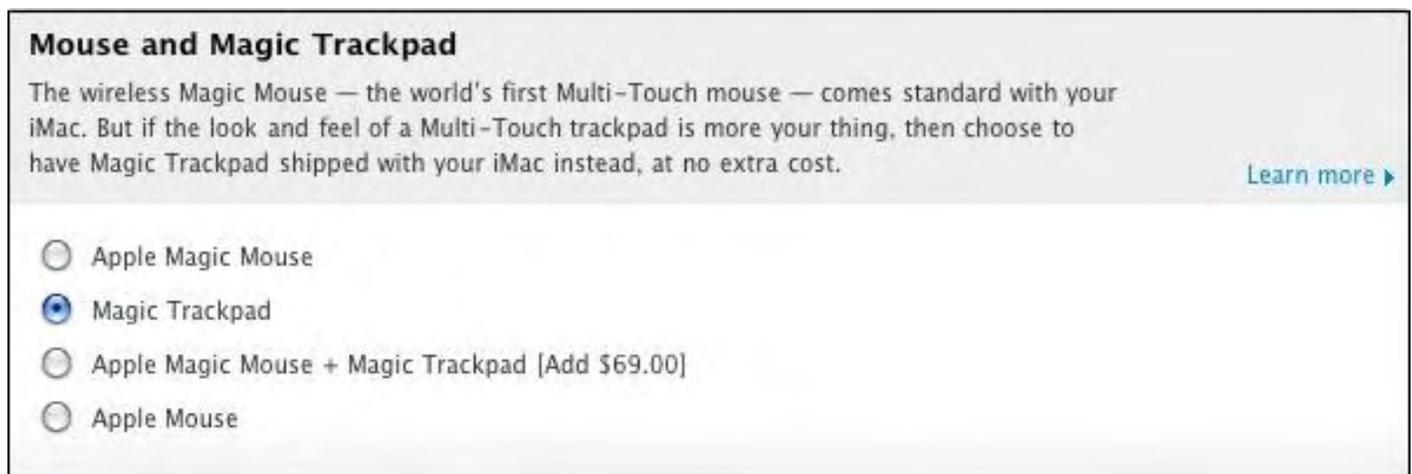


Figure 1. Choosing a mouse when purchasing a new iMac.

The Mighty Mouse is a wireless mouse that uses a touch surface so you can scroll vertically or horizontally by sliding your finger over the smooth top of the Mighty Mouse. The Magic Trackpad mimics the touch pad on Macintosh laptops and allows multi-finger gestures.

Personally I prefer the Magic Trackpad since it allows various multi-finger gestures such as sliding four fingers down (or pressing F9) to display all open windows as thumbnail images in Exposé, or sliding four fingers up (or pressing F11) to display just the desktop again. The Magic Trackpad also supports two-finger gestures to rotate images in iPhoto.

Try all three input device options to see which one you like best (or just use a mouse with the Magic Trackpad to get the best of both worlds). Just make sure you evaluate the advantages of each item before focusing on the drawbacks so you

can see whether the pros might outweigh the cons.

## Free Classes

If you live near an Apple Store, you can sign up for free classes ([www.apple.com/retail/workshops/](http://www.apple.com/retail/workshops/)) to teach you everything from the basics to using a Macintosh to using a specific program like FileMaker for running a business.

**Apple Retail Store. Come to shop. Return to learn.**

**Workshops**

**Take a Workshop. On the House.**

Learn something new by taking a free workshop at an Apple Retail Store. All of our workshops — including new hands-on workshops — are free. They're taught by people who really know Apple products and are eager to share their knowledge with you. So count on picking up plenty of tips and tricks.

At a workshop, you can learn the basics of the Mac, iPod, iPhone, or iPad. Find out how to create instant slideshows in iPhoto, rent movies using Apple TV, or get restaurant directions on iPhone. Serious photographers, filmmakers, and musicians will even find workshops on our powerful pro applications. Be sure to sign up in advance to reserve a spot. You'll have a great time and learn new skills.

**Workshop Reservations**  
Reserve your spot below or drop in on one of our free workshops.

Select a State  
Select a Store  
Reserve

**Browse Retail Workshops**

**Getting Started**

Photos  
Video

**Getting Started**  
**Getting Started with iPad 2**  
Come to this workshop to discover and explore iPad 2 – from settings, organizing, and multitasking to surfing the web, checking email, watching movies, listening to music, reading books, and more.

Figure 2. You can sign up for free classes at your nearest Apple Store.

To learn more how musicians can work with a Macintosh, visit your nearest Guitar Center store every Saturday and learn how to use GarageBand to record or play music. Each session is free ([gc.guitarcenter.com/recording-made-easy/](http://gc.guitarcenter.com/recording-made-easy/)), but you'll need to sign up ahead of time to reserve a seat.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Guitar Center website. It includes links for 'View Cart', 'My Account', 'Preferred Player Card', 'Gift Cards', 'Wish List', 'Help', and 'Login'. Below this is a search bar with 'KEYWORDS OR ITEM #' and a 'SEARCH' button. To the right are buttons for 'STORE LOCATOR' (Find a location near you), 'FREE SHIPPING' (On Thousands of Items), and '866-498-7882 Order By Phone'. A secondary navigation bar lists categories: 'Buy Online', 'Events', 'Platinum Gear', 'Used Gear', 'Vintage', 'Clearance', and 'UNITED STATES CHANGE COUNTRY'. The main banner features the Guitar Center logo and the text 'THE RECORDING EXPERIENCE' on the left, and 'RECORDING MADE EASY WORKSHOPS FREE TO THE PUBLIC' on the right. Below this, it states 'EVERY SATURDAY AT EVERY STORE FROM 10-11AM, STARTING MAY 7'. Two columns of text describe the workshops: one about home recording technology and another about learning to record a first song using Mac and GarageBand. At the bottom, there is a date box for 'SAT MAY 7 10AM', the title 'Signal Flow and Microphone Techniques', and a 'REGISTER NOW' button.

Figure 3. Guitar Center offers free GarageBand classes.

If you're interested in creating mobile apps for iOS or Android, you can do both by writing a single program in LiveCode, which uses an English-like programming language that closely resembles HyperTalk, the programming language of Apple's HyperCard.

Sign up for LiveCode's Summer Academy ([runrev.com/academy/index.html?id=academy](http://runrev.com/academy/index.html?id=academy)) and learn how to create iOS and Android apps using LiveCode. By the time you complete the course, you should have enough knowledge to create and sell your own apps for the iPhone/iPad and Android phones.

The class is free, but you'll need to purchase LiveCode to write your own apps. However, if you're not happy with LiveCode, you can get your money back.

If you've always wanted to write your own mobile phone apps but didn't want to spend (waste) time learning Objective-C (for iOS) or Java (for Android), you can learn a single language, create apps for two platforms, and do it all much faster than you could using Objective-C or Java to create apps for a single platform.

Home / Learn to Make Your Own Apps

# Learn to Make Your Own Apps

Join us for our free LiveCode Summer Academy

---

**We have the answer!**

Summer Academy is a free training course that will walk you through the process of making an app. Our experienced software developers will walk you through the process of making your own app. **Best of all, it's completely FREE.** We'll take you from any level of experience, including ZERO, through to having a complete app ready to submit to either the Apple iOS App Store or the Android Marketplace.

**Summer Academy Double Prize Give-Away**  
 Complete the course and submit an app to enter

With your newfound app development skills you'll be ready to submit an app to the store. We'll reward you if you do by entering you into our draw to win not one, but two tablets.

*"If I had to pick a favorite, I'd cast my vote for RunRev's Livecode. The product delivers a consistent UI to several popular desktop and mobile platforms from the same code base"*  
**Mike Riley, DevProConnections**

25% | 1,419 Words | Pages 2-3 of 4

Figure 4. Learn to develop mobile apps in LiveCode.

LiveCode may not provide all the features you can get through Objective-C or Java, but it can give you the power to create the more common types of apps. For creating most types of apps, you'll find LiveCode much simpler and far less frustrating while giving you the ability to reach the two most lucrative mobile markets in the world.

### The iPad as a Legitimate Tool

Many corporate executives have discovered the usefulness of the iPad according to Information Week ([www.informationweek.com/news/hardware/mac/229402983](http://www.informationweek.com/news/hardware/mac/229402983)). Gartner analyst Mark McDonald said, "You might have to deal with your boss becoming a sudden iPad/Apple convert—read fanatic—as they experience the interface, ease of use, etc. It is a significant difference from the Windows interface."

Not only are many corporate executives finding the iPad useful, but according to a report by Manhattan Research, 75 percent of physicians in the United States are currently using an iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch ([www.eweek.com/c/a/Health-Care-IT/75-Percent-of-Physicians-Prefer-Apple-iPad-iPhone-Survey-494578/](http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Health-Care-IT/75-Percent-of-Physicians-Prefer-Apple-iPad-iPhone-Survey-494578/)). Doctors are using their iPads to record notes, access EHRs (electronic health records), and view radiology images and communicate

with patients.

Doctors, business executive, and lawyers ([www.themaclawyer.com/](http://www.themaclawyer.com/)) have all found unique applications for the iPad and iPhone. Nielsen now reports that iPad owners ([www.electronista.com/articles/11/05/05/nielsen.gives.ipad.82pc.of.tablet.share.in.spring/](http://www.electronista.com/articles/11/05/05/nielsen.gives.ipad.82pc.of.tablet.share.in.spring/)) are using their notebook computers 32 percent less, their desktop computers 34 percent less, and their netbooks 27 percent less with 5 percent of netbooks owners saying the iPad replaced their netbook altogether.

In case you're wondering how an iPad might replace a regular computer, it all depends on what you need. Some people need all the features that a computer provides such as Flash support or a real keyboard, but many more do not. Believing that the iPad can never replace a regular computer is like saying that cars can never replace trucks because a car lacks space to carry a jet ski or a stack of lumber, so therefore everyone should be driving trucks instead of cars.

Obviously some people need the cargo space of a truck while many people don't. Likewise, some people absolutely need Flash support while many people don't. My toaster won't make ice cubes and my toothbrush can't remove weeds from my lawn, yet nobody considers those devices pointless because they can still perform a useful task. As long as the iPad does what you need, what's the point in arguing what it can't do?

"Argue for your limitations, and sure enough they're yours."

— Richard Bach, author of *Illusions* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0099427869/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0099427869/ref=as_li_tf_tl?)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399353&creativeASIN=0099427869](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0099427869/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399353&creativeASIN=0099427869))

## A Peek Inside Apple

Apple has churned out several game-changing products (iPod, iPhone and iPad) along with several ho-hum products such as Ping and Apple TV. Two of their outright embarrassments have been Aperture and MobileMe.

Aperture is a photo-editing tool, much like a super version of iPhoto but geared more for professional photographers. Amazingly, the first version of Aperture actually ran slower displaying still photographs than Final Cut did when displaying actual video. Apple gradually fixed Aperture until it's faster, but Adobe's Lightroom program seems more popular than Aperture, especially since Lightroom runs on Windows and Mac OS X while Aperture only runs on Mac OS X.

A more visible disaster was the initial launch of MobileMe ([www.electronista.com/articles/11/05/07/apple.corporate.structure.gets.detailed.look/](http://www.electronista.com/articles/11/05/07/apple.corporate.structure.gets.detailed.look/)). After MobileMe proved slow, clumsy and unreliable, Steve Jobs reportedly asked the MobileMe team to describe what MobileMe was supposed to do. When someone accurately described its purpose, Steve Jobs then retorted, "So why the #\$%@ doesn't it do that?" He then fired the MobileMe manager on the spot and eventually disbanded the entire original MobileMe team.

Unlike so many other companies, the main emphasis at Apple seems to be accountability. Every project always has a single DRI, or Directly Responsible Individual, who is responsible for any failure, regardless of whether or not there was a good reason for it happening,

Whether you like Apple or not, ask yourself if holding people accountable in producing results is good or not. In most companies, everyone can avoid responsibility. As a result, nobody quite seems to know what the purpose of any project is and nobody seems to take pride in the final outcome. When there's no level of responsibility or pride of workmanship, the end result tends to become bland mediocrity.

When people are held accountable, they either produce or reveal their incompetence so they can be immediately replaced. Some people thrive on such constant challenges while others prefer to do as little as possible. You can imagine the effect that non-producing workers can have on dragging any company's fortunes into the ground. If you happen to be

one of those non-producing workers at your company (and you know who you are based on your ability to make other people's lives easier), why not take a chance and create something extraordinary for a change?

## Chat With ELIZA

One of the earliest so-called artificial intelligence programs was one called ELIZA, which mimicked a psychotherapist. In case you need therapy and don't want to talk to an actual person, you can use the built-in ELZIA program buried inside your Macintosh.

Inside your Applications folder, open the Utilities folder and double-click Terminal. When the Terminal window appears, type emacs and press Return. When the emacs editor loads, hold down the Shift key and press the Esc key. Type xdoctor and hit Return to start ELIZA. Now start answering ELIZA's questions.

When you're done with your chat session with ELIZA, press Ctrl+X and Ctrl+C. Now that you know where to find ELIZA, you can consult with ELIZA any time you need to stay mentally and emotionally balanced.

\* \* \*

One of the handiest features of the iPhone/iPad is its virtual keyboard that can suggest correct spellings of words as you type. Yet on the iPhone/iPad virtual keyboard, you can't type an apostrophe without displaying an entirely different virtual keyboard.

Since this can be clumsy, just go ahead and type words without the apostrophe such as "youre" and the virtual keyboard will automatically replace that misspelling with the proper "you're" instead.

The virtual keyboard can't detect all contractions because if you type "well," the virtual keyboard can't tell if you really meant "we'll" or "well." Although you may need time to get used to typing on the virtual keyboard since there's no tactile feedback, you may find that the virtual keyboard's automatic correction feature can help you type faster and more accurately than a physical keyboard.

In Microsoft Word and Pages on a Macintosh, you can duplicate a virtual keyboard's automatic word correction feature by clicking Word (or Pages) => Preferences, and then clicking the AutoCorrect icon. AutoCorrect lets you type in common misspellings and specify what the correct spelling should be. That way if you misspell a word, Word will replace it with the correct spelling automatically.



Figure 5. The AutoCorrect feature lets your word processor automatically fix misspelled words.

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=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646](http://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](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593272758?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593272758)),

Steal This Computer Book 4.0 ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)

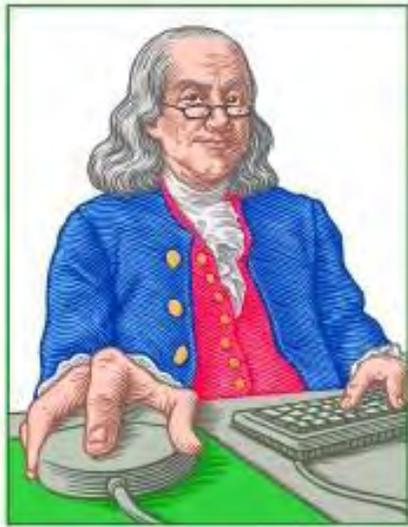
[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362))

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

**"Play All Your Music  
with a PLAYALL  
Linux Script."** by  
ComputerEdge Staff

This clever Linux script sets up  
a playlist for all the music (.wav  
audio files) in one directory.

NOTES: I give my shell files uppercase names so that *I know* they are my shell files and not the system's binaries. For example, when I save the data (the commands between the "CUT HERE" lines, which is the actual shell file) I might call it "VI", which is *not* to be confused with the system's "vi" file—but I call it "VI" because it calls (or uses) the system's "vi editor."

Filename: PLAYALL

Use: Play all the .wav files in a directory and type out each name as the file is played.

PLAYALL will make a list of all the files in a directory and will try to play them using the <sox> interface called <play>. It will end after the last file is played. If you'd like to stop it sooner you can either Control-C it or go into the directory where you started it and do a <touch end>. That will create a file called "end" and when the current song ends, the program will exit.

<play> may have been souped-up to play other sound files or perhaps has been replaced with a more powerful sound program. You might like to do a <apropos play | grep -v isplay> and try the other sound players. If you find one you prefer, edit the line below that says </usr/bin/play> and replace it with the path to the new player.

Note: <play> is not an interactive program. You tell it what you want it to do on the command line. Programs that don't work like that will most likely not work with PLAYALL.

Example:

```
tonyp% cd /music/Funk
tonyp% ls -la
total 420600
drwxr-xr-x  2 tonyp  users      4096 Dec  9 17:30 .
drwxr-xr-x 102 tonyp  users      4096 Dec 18 17:55 ..
-r-r-r-   1 tonyp  users    52764730 Mar 11  2008 Celebration.wav
-r-r-r-   1 tonyp  users    51649976 Mar 11  2008 Eyes_of_a_stranger.wav
-r-r-r-   1 tonyp  users    35266618 Mar 11  2008 Jungle_boogie.wav
-r-r-r-   1 tonyp  users    77747756 Dec  9 17:28 Love_of_money.wav
-r-r-r-   1 tonyp  users    28246074 Mar 11  2008 Satisfaction.wav
```

```
-r-r-r- 1 tonyp users 45532412 Sep 30 2009 Shakey_Ground.wav
-r-r-r- 1 tonyp users 51855418 Mar 11 2008 Sledge_hammer.wav
-r-r-r- 1 tonyp users 36315194 Mar 11 2008 Thats_good.wav
-r-r-r- 1 tonyp users 50803258 Mar 11 2008 Wang_Chung.wav
tonyp% PLAYALL
Now playing: Celebration.wav
Now playing: Eyes_of_a_stranger.wav
Now playing: Jungle_boogie.wav
Now playing: Love_of_money.wav
...
```

How it works:

```
#!/bin/csh -f (Use the csh interpreter.)

if (-e end) /bin/rm end (If the file "end" exists, remove it.)

foreach i (`ls`) (We're going to load "i" with a list of files in the directory.)
if ($i != index) then (If the filename is "index", jump to the "endif".)
echo "Now playing: $i" (Print on the screen "Now playing: filename".)
/usr/bin/play $i (Invoke <play> to play the file.)
else (Not used at this time but needed in place.)
endif (End of the "if" loop.)
if (-e end) exit (If the file "end" exists, exit the program.)
end (End of program.)
```

-----CUT HERE-----

```
#!/bin/csh -f
if (-e end) /bin/rm end
foreach i (`ls`)
    if ($i != index) then
        echo "Now playing: $i"
        /usr/bin/play $i
    else
    endif
if (-e end) exit
end
```

-----CUT HERE-----

---

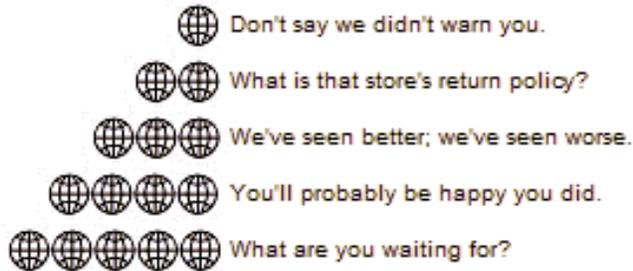
**ComputerEdge** always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at ComputerEdge.com ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook)). 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](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com).

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## Worldwide & Product news reviews



## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

Sony Security Scare: Life's a Breach; Four Ways to Make Social Technologies Relevant to Your Business; T-Mobile myTouch 3G Fender Limited Edition; Seiko Smart Label Printer 400.

### Sony Security Scare: Life's a Breach

In light of the data breach of somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred million Sony online gaming service accounts, the credit information company Equifax advises consumers to be proactive about protecting their personal information from misuse.

The company further cautions consumers affected by recent breaches that the free fraud alerts and annual credit reports from national credit reporting agencies now provided by federal law may not be enough "to provide the protection needed to prevent the use of their stolen credit card information in the future."

"Although fraud alerts have long been recognized as one of the strongest methods of identity protection, they simply aren't enough," says Trey Loughran, president of Equifax Personal Information Solutions. "Existing account information like credit card numbers are vulnerable to identity thieves even with an active fraud alert. And the longer it takes to detect identity theft, the costlier the damage that can be done."

Equifax adds, "Fraud alerts are primarily designed to protect consumers against the most insidious form of identity theft, new account fraud. However, identity thieves and hackers may still use stolen information like credit card numbers to commit fraudulent activity on existing accounts. In addition to contacting card issuers and financial institutions and placing a fraud alert on your credit report, Equifax advises consumers to consider the added protection of a credit and identity protection monitoring product like the company's own Equifax Complete which provides daily credit monitoring, as well as alerts if your personal information is found on suspicious trading sites."

Of course, the fact that the above is exactly what you would expect a for-profit company like Equifax to say does not necessarily mean it's not true. Everyone should, at the very least, take advantage of that free fraud alert and annual credit report, then go ahead and check out additional services at Equifax ([www.equifax.com/compare-products](http://www.equifax.com/compare-products)).

### Four Ways to Make Social Technologies Relevant to Your Business

Scott Klososky, tech innovation expert and author of the new books, *Enterprise Social Technology* ([www.EnterpriseSocialTechnology.com](http://www.EnterpriseSocialTechnology.com)) and *The Velocity Manifesto* (Blog: [www.TechnologyStory.com](http://www.TechnologyStory.com), Twitter: @sklososky) writes in this week:

Social media/networking and the collection of tools they have spawned have moved solidly into the strategy toolbox for organizations. If you want to be the Zen master of social tools, then first understand the need to implement elements of social that will both drive revenues, and cut back office costs. Too many people think of social tools as only being for sales and marketing when in reality, there are valuable uses in the back office. With that thought firmly implanted, there

are a handful of social tech concepts that are mandatory for every organization today:

## 1. Building Rivers of Information

One of the least talked about dynamics of social technologies is the massive amount of real time information flying around the Web—on any subject. If you are a CPA, doctor, lawyer, baseball player, or basket weaver for example, there are megabytes of data that could be critical to your performance uploaded each day. The reality is that you will harness maybe 3 percent of what could be valuable to you. Social tools give us the ability to aggregate and filter this explosion of information so that it can be funneled into your brain. Every organization can institutionalize this process by teaching employees which information sources are valuable, and what tools can be used to aggregate and filter them to a manageable state. It is a knowledge economy after all, so the smarter teams win. Ergo, use social tools to harness relevant and timely industry information, and you will be smarter.

PS. Don't use the excuse that you do not have time to digest this information. That is like saying you don't have time to be relevant.

## 2. Organizational Voice

Every organization can benefit from building a powerful Web-delivered organizational voice. There are many channels through which this voice can be delivered, Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, podcasts, text messages. The organizational voice gives entities a way to create a conversation with constituents so that they can earn the right to grab their mindshare. The only way to earn that right is by providing a valuable flow of content through the voice. The three biggest mistake companies are making when using tools like blogging, Twitter and Facebook to connect with customers/prospects/clients are these:

- Lack of a specific and human sounding tone. Every communication through whatever channel you use must sound human, and have a tone that is interesting, intriguing, or unusual. You don't want to read boring things so why would you think your constituents will?
- Mistakes with the frequency of delivery. If you deliver content too often, you annoy people and they begin to tune you out. Even if your content is great, it becomes overwhelming and people just stop paying attention. If you deliver content too infrequently, they lower the perceived value in their minds. What is the perfect frequency? It depends totally on the audience, and the type of content, there are no hard and fast rules.
- The mix of content is all wrong. As you send content through the organizational voice, you must be mindful of delivering nuggets that are valuable. For example, if you fill 80 percent of your content with sales related information it appears to be spam. If you do nothing but deliver your opinions, people might get tired of the editorial. A valuable stream of content includes a mix of stories, facts and figures, and links to valuable resources, opinions, and product or company information. Get the recipe wrong and it is akin to dumping too much cayenne pepper in the soup.

## 3. Online Reputation Management (ORM)

Regardless the size, or type of business you are involved in, an online reputation is forming—like it or not. Internet users (which now number nearly two billion) are increasingly sharing their opinions about service providers and retailers through conversations and comments online. Every time they mention your company, or your products names, these comments become searchable. That means that when any prospective customer searches to find information on you, they will find these comments. For this reason, organizations must have today a formal ORM program. The steps are simple, build a listening process, document and engagement policy, and then implement a measuring system.

## 4. Crowdsourcing

Who wouldn't jump at the chance to get work done cheaper, faster and with more innovation! That is the promise of crowdsourcing. There are somewhere north of 75 sites on the Web that now assist people with the crowdsourcing process (CrowdSPRING, 99designs, logo tournament, Innocentive, mturk, etc.) Learning to tap into the Internet herd to get work done that traditionally was sourced in house, or by local vendors is a strategic advantage. The quick way to learn how to use this tool is simply to dive in and start experimenting. The risk is low and the rewards are tremendous. The crowdsource market is growing quickly, now is the time to give it a try.

For extra credit, go back and examine these social tech concepts and note that two can directly help the front end revenue generation, and two will help with the back office operation, thus fulfilling the promise mentioned at the beginning of this article.

There are too many leaders that still believe that social technologies equal Facebook and Twitter. The reality is that every company can use the four concepts listed above to get a fast return on the investment of their time. You might see them as a luxury right now, but they will soon be mandatory if you want to stay in business.

### T-Mobile myTouch 3G Fender Limited Edition



For the past few weeks I've had the pleasure of reviewing the T-Mobile myTouch 3G Fender Limited Edition ([www.t-mobile.com/shop/phones/cell-phone-detail.aspx?cell-phone=MyTouch-3G-LE-Fender](http://www.t-mobile.com/shop/phones/cell-phone-detail.aspx?cell-phone=MyTouch-3G-LE-Fender)) (\$129 with two-year contract).

With a distinct Fender theme, the myTouch 3G is made for music lovers. Aside from the beautiful faux wood finish, reminiscent of a sunburst Fender, the phone's packaging imitates a guitar case, complete with green velvet lining, and even has a silver Fender guitar-pick attached to the front. Most of its accessories have been Fender-ized as well with a wood-look finish, including the charger and in-ear phones.

The myTouch 3G has a 16GB microSD card, able to hold thousands of songs that is preloaded with music from Eric Clapton and others. Note that a data service from T-Mobile is required to access Web features. The card can be removed without having to first remove the battery.

Adding to the music theme are some special preloaded apps. The "Solo" app, one of the first ones you'll see when you power it up, presents the neck of a guitar that can be strummed or plucked. There are literally hundreds of chords to choose from, so doing your own version of Layla or Bell-Bottom Blues should be no problem. The "Musical" app contains just about everything an on-the-go musician needs, including a tuner, metronome, pitch pipe, even a keyboard and an eight-piece drum kit.



To complete the musical package, the phone has a standard 3.5 mm headphone jack (something not as common as one might imagine on cell phones).

The myTouch 3G Fender LE served me well for the time I had it. My normal routine would be to plug it into my car stereo's auxiliary jack and stream the Pandora Internet radio service while driving around. Then there's all those tens-of-thousands of apps available on the Android Market.

One drawback was that, over time, I did notice that the phone slowed down somewhat and got a little jerky—but it was probably more of an Android issue than one with the myTouch since it all but went away when I deleted some of the apps I never used.

Specs:

- 320x480 resolution
- 3.2 inch screen
- Bluetooth, WI-FI
- 3.1 megapixel camera,
- Android OS version 1.6 updated to 2.1

## In the box:

Battery  
 Charger  
 USB cable  
 SIM card  
 Memory card  
 Stereo headphone adapter  
 Slipcase  
 Screen protector  
 English/Spanish user guide  
 Wired stereo headset

Great little phone. One important note, though: If you're a fan of Slow Hand (Clapton's nickname), you've better get your fast hand clicking over to the above Web site, pronto. T-Mobile is currently listing the myTouch 3G Fender LE as out of stock. Hopefully they'll be getting more in soon.



Review contributed by Alex Carr.

## Seiko Smart Label Printer 400



After COMDEX 1992, I received a Seiko Smart Label Printer 2000 (left) to evaluate. I reviewed the unit in March of 1993. Since then the unit has served me well until recently when it, as all things mechanical do, "gave up the ghost." That's about seventeen years of faithful service.

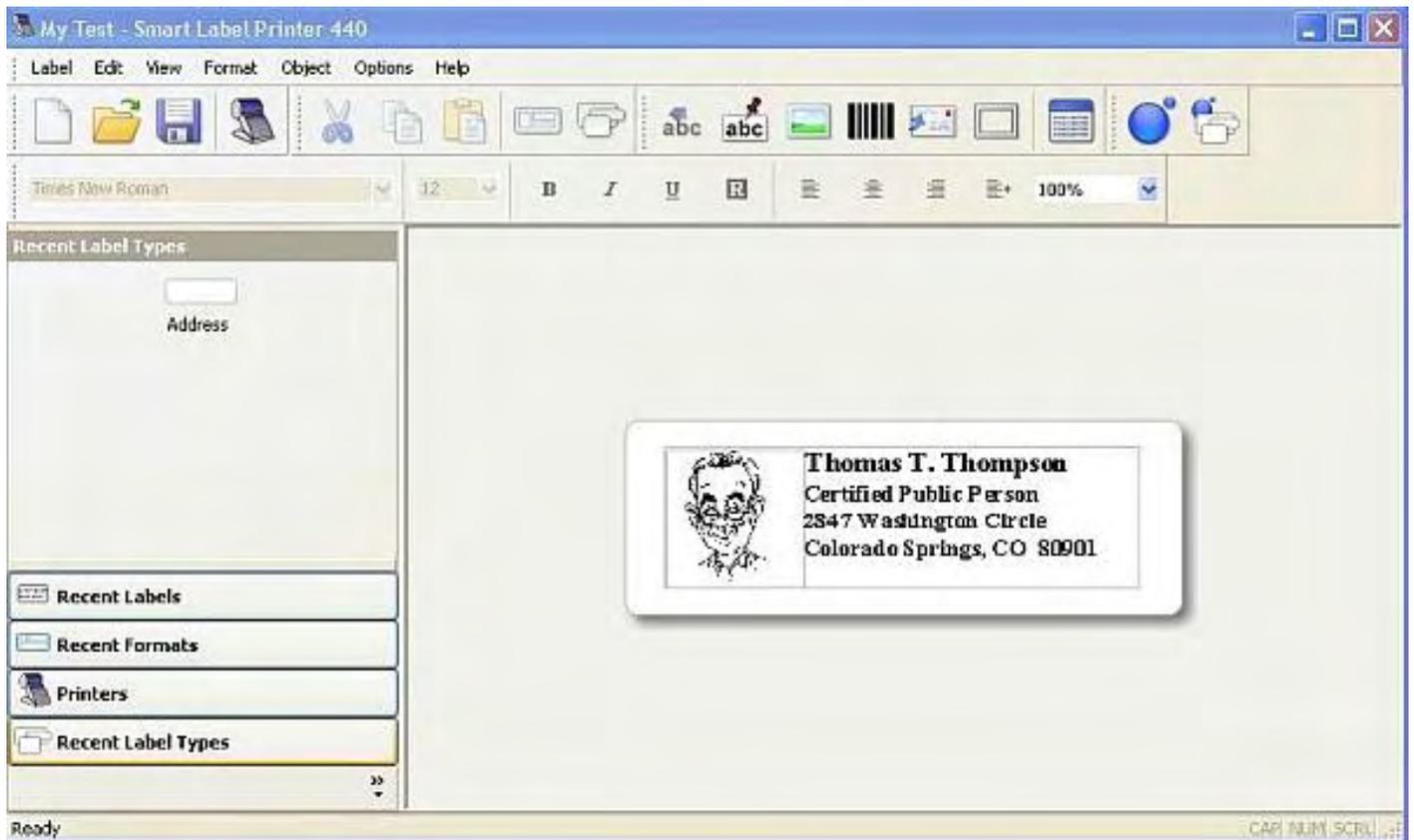
The repair option for this model was no longer available as it had expired on May 1, 2002 due to lack of replacement parts. For those not familiar with Seiko's SLP printer series, they are thermal label printers. I used mine exclusively for printing address labels but there are many other uses as well. In any event, I received an SLP 440 for my birthday recently as a replacement.



I was quite pleased to see that it allowed me to import all the labels I had designed on my model 2000. That saved me a lot of time and effort. In addition to the printer, the 440 (seen on the left) ships with Smart Label Software and a Users Guide on a CD-ROM, a USB cable, an AC adapter, a starter roll of labels, and a Quick Start Guide. Although it can be connected via USB or Serial port (remember those?), there is no serial port cable provided. Installation is quite easy. You load the software and drivers before you plug the printer into the USB port.

Follow the prompts from there. It will print labels up to 2 1/8" in width. It prints at 300 DPI and print speed is 2-3 seconds. It supports numerous barcode symbologies as well as postal barcodes and has a text capture feature that works with many Windows applications. One can import from CSV and TXT files. The editor is WYSIWYG with advanced formatting features including: shrink-to-fit, word wrap, address recognition and parsing, and serialization.

Printer sharing is available for Windows and MAC operating systems. More information on this and other Seiko Instruments printers can be found at Seiko Instruments USA ([www.siibusinessproducts.com/usa/usa.asp](http://www.siibusinessproducts.com/usa/usa.asp)).



Various labels for the printer can be purchased at this Web site as well. A list of label types and their suggested uses is available there. Current and previous versions of their Smart Label software and drivers can also be found at this site. In addition to printing address labels, you can make ID cards with saved imported images or photos captured directly from your Web cam and now you can even print USPS approved postage in conjunction with USPS's Stamps.com software. Their technical support is outstanding. I probably called them five or six times and except for once, when I was on hold for about a minute, a live person answered and usually quickly had the answer to my question. I did find one minor software bug that shows up in Windows XP but not in Windows 7. The support folks were aware of it and said it would be fixed in the next software release.

There is no manual for the software. The product uses an online Help system which I was not thrilled with. A user manual for the software in PDF format would be a nice addition to the package. The manual supplied on the CD is for the printer only. The price on these printers is much lower than it was back when the SLP 2000 came out in the early 1990's. Then the list price was close to \$300. Now the 440 lists on their Web page for under \$110. I've seen it on Amazon.com for as low as \$91.50.

The Seiko Smart Label Printer 400 is a great product and I am quite pleased with it.



Review contributed by Joe Nuvolini

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at [www.charlescarr.com](http://www.charlescarr.com).

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## EdgeWord: Take ComputerEdge to the Gym

edge **W O R D**

“ComputerEdge for Reading on Tablets Is Now Available.” by Jack Dunning

Now you can read ComputerEdge anywhere, anytime by downloading the e-book version to your Kindle, iPad, or another reading tablet.

One popular, if not the most popular, use for the iPad is reading e-books. Add to that, all Kindles and Nooks are purchased with reading e-books in mind. It is far more convenient to read a book on a tablet device than on a laptop or desktop computer screen. Plus, judging by the e-book readers available for the iPad, much more effort has been put into making the e-reader software experience easy and comfortable on tablets than any of their laptop/desktop software counterparts. With both the sales of iPads and the ubiquitous Amazon Kindle climbing, it seemed only reasonable that *ComputerEdge* would start providing the weekly issue in e-book format. Beginning last week, you can download *ComputerEdge* for reading with virtually any e-book reader. The links are at the top of the ComputerEdge Web page ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc)) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Clicking either the EPUB or MOBI e-book link will start the download of the respective e-book file (iPad for most or Kindle) for the selected issue.

There are two e-book formats available. The first is EPUB which has become the standard for most e-book readers. The second is MOBI which is compatible with the Amazon Kindle. If you would like the convenience of taking *ComputerEdge* with rather than reading it on your computer with a Web browser, then you can easily start doing it now. All you need to do is click the appropriate link at the top of the page and the download will begin.

### ComputerEdge on Amazon Kindle

If you own a Kindle, download the MOBI file at the top of the Web page ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc)) to your computer. Then connect your Kindle to your computer via USB. Next drag the file into your Kindle's Documents folder. You're done! *ComputerEdge* should appear on your Kindle ready for reading. The Web links in *ComputerEdge* should open in your browser while you're connected to the Internet.

For the Kindle, you do need to use your computer for the downloading the file since the Kindle will not directly download files with its "experimental" browser. All of the content in the selected *ComputerEdge* issue found on the Web is included in the e-book—although now it is in a book form which you can put in your purse—that's if you carry a purse.

## ComputerEdge on iPad

The iPad actually has more options for adding *ComputerEdge* as a free e-book. You can download the EPUB file to your computer, then add it to your iTunes application. It will be uploaded to your iPad for use in the free iBooks application on the next sync. Or, you can use the iPad Safari Web browser to directly download the EPUB e-book from the *ComputerEdge* Web site ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc)). You will be asked if you would like to add the download to the iBooks. (You will need to install the free iBooks app from the Apple Store prior to download.)

If you have installed the Kindle app for iPad, also free, then you can use either of the two procedures to get *ComputerEdge* into your iPad Kindle library. In the Apps section of iTunes for your connected iPad device you can add files directly to the Kindle app (scroll toward the bottom of the Apps section). See Figure 2. Also, if you use Safari to download the MOBI file directly to the iPad from the *ComputerEdge* site, you will be asked you if you want to add it to the iPad Kindle app library. Again the Kindle app needs to be previously installed.

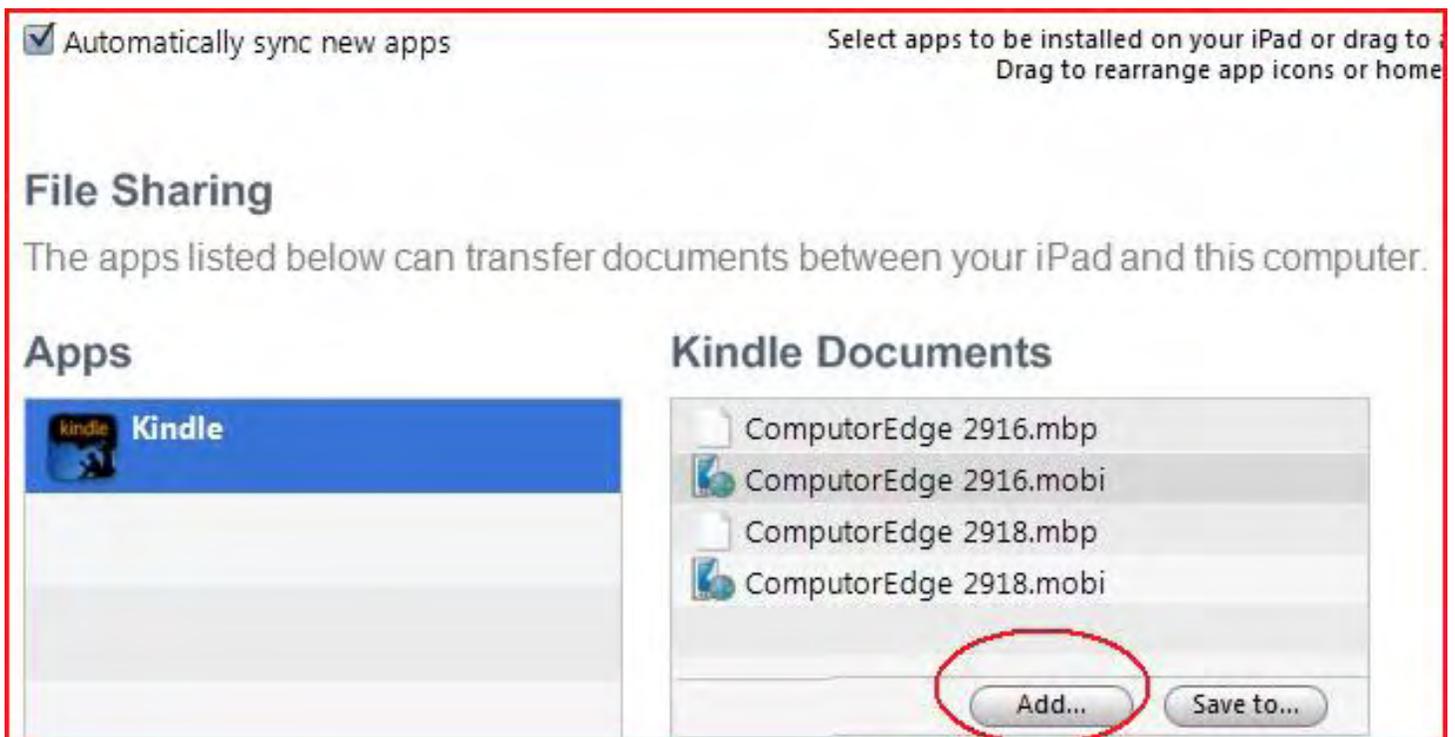


Figure 1. In iTunes select your iPad device and the Apps tab at the top of the device screen. If you select the Kindle app toward the bottom of the App screen, the Add button will allow the importing of outside non-encrypted e-books.

## Other E-book Devices

The Nook and other devices will work in the same way as the Kindle and iPad when connected to your computer via USB port. Check your instruction manual. Generally, the EPUB format will work, but if there is another format required for your device, please let us know and we'll see about providing that format.

As far as using another iPad app (such as Nook or Google Books) for loading *ComputerEdge* onto your iPad, I haven't found a way to do it—as least not yet. Unlike the iBooks and Kindle app, there doesn't seem to be a way to load files to these other libraries directly. This is not really a problem since you can always use the iBooks or Kindle apps on the iPad as you prefer.

## Apple Wants More!

Apple has some changes in mind that may affect iPad users. They are planning to force all e-book sellers to turn over 30% of their revenues from e-book sales by requiring that all e-books used in iPad apps be sold through iTunes. Some e-book sellers are already closing down their iPad apps ([news.cnet.com/as-iflow-reader-app-closes-harsh-words-for-apple/8301-17938\\_105-20061802-1.html](http://news.cnet.com/as-iflow-reader-app-closes-harsh-words-for-apple/8301-17938_105-20061802-1.html)). If Apple goes through with implementing this policy, then you can expect some fireworks from Amazon and other booksellers, not to mention the rage from iPad owners who are currently reading books not purchased through iTunes. I don't know if this will affect *ComputerEdge* since our magazine is a free offering. (We will gladly give them 30% of that.)

I suspect that Apple will back off this June 30 plan. Apple is primarily a company interested in hardware sales and 60% of the owners use their iPads to read e-books. This move could be disastrous for Apple's reputation and create an opening for the lagging Android tablet manufacturers. But, alas, a little bit of avarice ([www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/avarice](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/avarice)) (free money from e-book sales) can go a long way. There is hubris ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubris)) involved when a company thinks it has a right to control everything that goes onto your tablet computer. Apple can't stand the thought of not getting a piece of any action which may occur on an iPad—or an iPod—or an iPhone. After all, they built it. You're only borrowing it.

If you have any comments about the look and feel of the *ComputerEdge* e-books please leave a comment or send an e-mail to [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). We are continuing to tweak the program which generates the e-books.

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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](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)

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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

"DOS Dir Command," "Dave's Nonsense," "Internet Explorer," "Fear of Change"

### DOS Dir Command

[Regarding the April 22 Digital Dave column:]

Check out Powershell, the command window on steroids. It is available on Windows XP SP2 and later. Check out this introduction ([msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd835506\(v=VS.85\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd835506(v=VS.85).aspx)).

-Marcus, Alabama

### Dave's Nonsense

[Regarding the April 29 Digital Dave column:]

Come on! More nonsense like this and we'll strip you of your "digital" modifier. We're in America and at current and future prices *who cares* what's on a HDD? As your first article showed for less than \$80 one can have one terabyte or more connected in several transparent ways! Who cares?

-Michael Viehman, Julian, Ca

Unlike the prior commenter, I appreciate the question about whether to keep an "odd" program.

Yes, HDD's are cheap. But changing one is not totally trivial. And some folks just don't want their machine loaded with "junk" that they don't even recognize. A million here and a million there and pretty soon you're into billions.

-Rich, Lakewood, CO

### Internet Explorer

[Regarding the April 15 Digital Dave column:]

Brian could try a system restore pick a date one or two days before he installed the wrong IE. This is certainly worth trying. I have used this method a few times when I have has a program installed wrong. In Windows 7 System restore is a little different because you just pick the program that installed wrong and you just check that and it will go back and uninstall that program.

Good Luck,

-Melba Kalaher, Denver, Colorado

### Fear of Change

[Regarding the April 29 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Dear Wally,

One possible conclusion may be that people are afraid to change. If you ask, almost everyone will say they like changes, but that is far from the truth. We like to stay with what we know, although what we know may be not the best or the quickest or the cheapest, etc.

I used to have similar opinions about the "Company X" until I tried the xPhone and I'm very happy with it, so now I'm more open to try other "Company X" products.

Anyway, keep up the good work!

-Silverio Reyes, Tijuana, Mexico

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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 specific article/column at ComputerEdge.com ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook)). 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](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com).

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