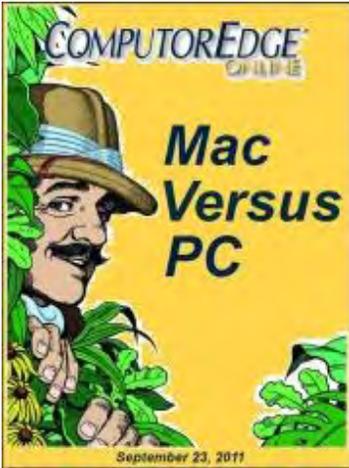


ComputerEdge™ Online — 09/23/11



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This column will introduce you to the "proc" directory, where the system keeps its information.

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Flummoxed Over Faxes

Fax machines have been in use a long time, but you may be surprised by how many people are still a little fuzzy on exactly what a fax machine is, and what it can — and can't — do.

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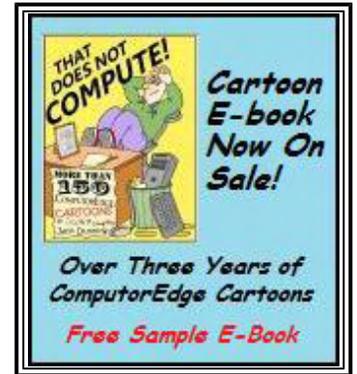
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Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.

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Digital Dave

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

A reader has lost lengthy e-mails while composing them, despite saving drafts. Why? Also, after a period of non-use, a reader's computer will no longer boot up; a reader wants to get started setting up a video chat system.

Dear Digital Dave,

Using MSN for e-mail, I have several times responded or written new e-mails that were quite lengthy, sometimes requiring considerable thought or researching while writing, resulting in 30 minutes or even more than one hour in writing the e-mail. I forward to Save-in-Draft whenever it is taking a long time—usually, about every 10-15 minutes or so. However, I have lost all the text on several occasions, which has redlined my patience. The text is even lost from the Draft e-mails.

*Wayne Ford
Huntington Beach, CA*

Dear Wayne,

That is certainly strange behavior. It's difficult to say what is happening to your e-mail. Since MSN is Web-based, it will tend to be a little more quirky than a computer installed e-mail client. While you might want to try switching to another e-mail client program (Gmail automatically saves your drafts quite frequently; you don't have to remember to do it at all.), I would recommend that you stop composing long messages in any e-mail window. I only do quick, short replies within my e-mail software.

If I have a long comment or answer that I plan to e-mail to a colleague or friend, I use a word processing program—usually with automatic backup. This allows me to take my time while researching and composing my thoughts. Plus, I have a backup copy on my computer. I don't have to deal with the peculiarities of writing text in an e-mail window, whether on the Web or in a local e-mail client. These programs were not designed for extensive writing. Once I have edited my composition, I cut-and-paste it into the e-mail New or Reply window. This technique also prevents me from accidentally hitting the Send button before my thoughts are ready for prime time.

Digital Dave

I am a 79-year-old disabled veteran. I was ill for a while and didn't use my eMachine desktop—operating system Windows XP. When I normally start it by pressing the button on the face of the tower, it usually hums, then the images start on the monitor. But alas, now when I press the button, it hums for a brief time and goes dark. What is happening, and can it be fixed? Inexpensively?

*William Porter
San Diego, CA*

Dear William,

Your computer most likely can be fixed. Inexpensively is another question. The problem is not the cost of replacement parts, but the time of the person who does the repairs. Most computer repair shops have a minimum charge to evaluate a problem—usually one hour of labor. Then there will be the price of the replacement parts added on.

Before doing anything else, I would try opening the tower, then blowing the dust out of the components. The computer could be immediately overheating because of a heatsink clogged with dust, shutting itself down in self-defense. You can use "canned air," which is available at most electronics stores, or dust with a light artist's paint brush. Also, you should make sure that the cooling fans are running.

If cooling is not the problem, then I would suspect that you have a problem with your power supply. I can't tell you how many times the symptoms you describe are related to that part of the computer. The power supply takes the voltage from the wall outlet and converts it to the various DC voltages required by the computer. If the outputs are not within the required ranges, then the system will automatically shut down. This would account for the brief hum when you try to start it up.

A new power supply may cost only about \$30, but you need to be sure to get the right one for your computer. If you have a friend who has done this type of work before (usually the neighbor's teenage kid), then you can be up and running at a fairly low price. However, even if the power supply was the problem, it could have caused other issues within the computer.

It could be worth it to buy the one hour of diagnosis. If it looks like it will cost more than a couple hundred dollars to repair your computer, then you may want to consider investing a little more by getting a new computer with a warranty.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

With all the laptops containing a built-in camera (and Web cameras readily available for the desktop), I am interested in setting up something to be able to video chat with friends and family. I'm looking to do video chats domestic and abroad. I don't have a clue where to start.

My present system is a Dell Studio 1735 with a built-in camera, mic, and speakers. No idea what the computers on the other end are. What do I need, and how do I get it going on both ends.

*Jeffrey Wagner
Colorado Springs*

Dear Jeffery,

Fortunately, video calls have gotten easier to make and they are relatively easy to set up. The only requirements are a computer (or smartphone) and a Web camera on each end. It sound like you're ready to go, but you will need to check with your family and friends.

If they need a camera there are plenty of reviews on-line (reviews.cnet.com/webcams/?tag=mncol;srt&sort=popularity+asc). Some webcam companies such as Logitech (www.logitech.com/en-us/webcam-communications) offer a free video call service to their buyers.

Once you have webcams on both ends, then all you need is a connection. There are companies that specialize in Internet communications and offer free video calls. The best known is Skype (www.skype.com/intl/en-us/features/allfeatures/video-call/). All you need to do is download the software, set up an account for yourself, and then have your friends and family download Skype and set up their own accounts. You add your friends as contacts, then when you are both online, starting a video call is as simple as clicking a button.

I've noticed that many services are starting to offer multi-person video calls—either free or at a reasonable price. Skype has a free seven-day trial if you can find more than one person who will connect at the same time. See Figure 1.



Figure 1. A three-way video call on Skype.

I see that +Google (*plus.google.com*), the new social network, is now open for anyone to join. It has a feature called Hangout, which appears to allow multi-person video conferences. Have fun!

Digital Dave

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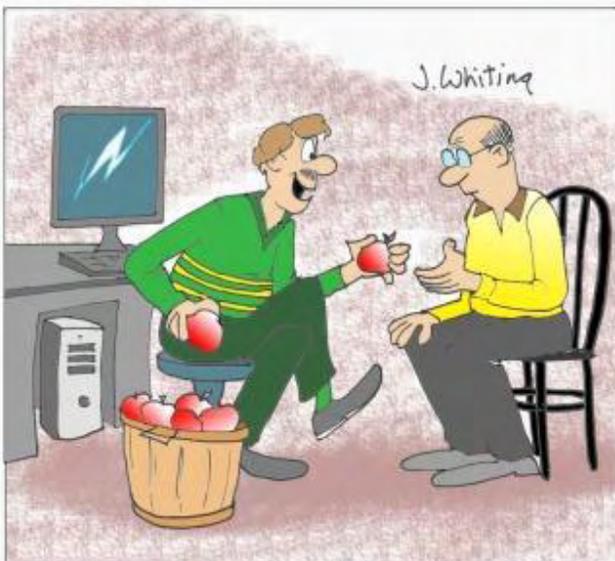


Just Buy a Mac--or Not!

“Advice for Windows XP users thinking about making a change.” by Jack Dunning

If you're still using a Windows XP computer (which millions of people are), then in the back of your mind there is the nagging thought that eventually you will need to make a change. Go Mac? Linux? Or stick with Windows and try Windows 7?

If you're using a Windows XP computer (which millions of people are), then in the back of your mind there is the nagging thought that eventually you will need to make a change. Either your computer will break down or you will find a compelling reason to upgrade or move to another computer system. For now you can put off the decision, but you know the time will come.



"The tech advised me to replace my XP with an Apple. I got a whole bushel. Want one?"

this doesn't make me an expert on all computers, it does put me in a position where I can offer some guidelines (and clear up some myths) for this computer-buying decision. When I buy my next computer, it will most likely be a Windows 7 laptop. This does not mean that you should do the same, because what you get for your primary computing platform depends totally upon your needs, your personal capabilities and your financial resources. The "right" answer varies for each individual.

The Apple Myth

To read many of the current articles about Macs and PCs, you would think that Apple now dominates the computer world and will soon replace the PC as the primary computer in use—if it hasn't already happened. Mac sales are shooting through the roof, while PC sales are dropping through the floor. It has gotten so bad for the PC that HP is thinking about getting out of the computer business completely. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Many XP owners who are in this situation ask me what I would advise them to do. They have a friend or relative who has suggested that they should get a new Apple Macintosh, yet they are not sure that is the right way to go. While the Mac is an excellent computer, the right answer for any one individual is more complicated than just getting the "best" computer at the "right" price. It is time to put this question into perspective without all the usual hype.

You Should Get a Computer Like Mine!

People make computer recommendations based upon what they know and what they would do themselves. Mac owners will recommend Macs and PC owners will recommend PCs—although Windows users may be a little less adamant than Apple users. We all have our built-in prejudice, and the more we use one particular type of computer, the more we will stick with it. Therefore, all advice needs to be taken with a grain of salt.

I currently own a number of computers: a Windows Vista laptop, a Windows 7 desktop, a MacBook Pro laptop, and an iPad tablet. (I also work with a couple of FreeBSD Linux-like servers.) While

While it is true that Apple is doing extremely well and making better margins on its sales than any other computer manufacturer, it is nowhere near dominating the computer market. PC sales have slowed with only a little over 350 million computers (www.pcpro.co.uk/news/369763/pc-vendors-flailing-as-sales-forecasts-tumble) expected to sell this year. Apple has seen a 22 percent increase in Mac sales in the current quarter, pointing to more than 17 million Macs being sold in 2011. These numbers (about five percent of the laptop and desktop market) do not make the Mac the dominant computer. If you included the iPad in the numbers, then Apple's share goes significantly higher, but it's still not a majority. There is good evidence that the iPad has impacted PC sales. Yet, is the iPad really a replacement for a PC? In some case, maybe yes.

Apple is making exceptional profits because it is the only company that sells Macs. Apple can keep the Mac's price up because it is a quality product with a loyal (and growing) customer base. There is a multitude of PC manufacturers, each one putting the squeeze on the others' revenues. The profits in PCs are so low that HP has suggested that it might get out of the computer business. (This was a rather stupid comment made by HP management, which had an immediate negative impact on computer sales.) HP didn't mean that it would just stop building computers, but only that it may sell or spin-off the computer business.

"The report of my death was an exaggeration." —Mark Twain

Currently, there are about one and a half billion PCs (www.theinquirer.net/inquirer/news/2110125/dell-pc-isn-t-dead) in the world. It is expected that there will be two billion PCs by 2014. While PC sales are only growing at a rate of 3.8 percent, they are still growing.

Also, it is misleading to look at sales growth numbers. They only compare the current sales numbers to last year. They say nothing about the numbers of units being sold. If one cow was sold last year and three cows are sold this year, that calculates to an astounding sales growth of 200 percent. It is a mistake to focus on numbers that continually vary—and the conclusions that the "experts" draw from them. Microsoft and PCs (in spite of their problems) are not going away anytime soon, and will continue to be a dominant force in the market for many years to come.

Mac or PC, Which Is Better?

As advocates line up on both sides of the "Mine is better than yours" debate, there does come a time when a decision must be made. Apple makes a quality product that is worth the price you pay. (Otherwise there wouldn't be so many people willing to pay that price.) The same cannot be said across the board for PCs. With the vast number of PC manufacturers, it is more difficult to compare the individual computers. At any given time, even the most respected brand may put out a lemon. However, on the whole, the quality of PCs from the most reputable PC companies is on par with that of the Apple Mac. (Apple owners are bound to disagree, but when you pay more, you want to believe that you bought the best—and maybe you did.) We could quibble over details, but the primary advantage a PC has over the Mac is the price.



Figure 1. Apple Macintosh desktop.

The PC price advantage over the Mac increases as more features (more memory, larger hard drive) are added to the machine. While the prices of the entry-level Macs are within reason, as you add more power, the cost goes up disproportionately to the added hardware, making high-end Macs less attractive. This is not the case with the PC, which actually drops in per-unit costs (per megabyte, per gigabyte) as more is added to the computer.



Figure 2. Windows 7 desktop.

Allowing the slight cost advantage to the PC, which operating system (OS X or Windows) is actually better? There have been a number of reviews written with this question in mind. It seems that most give a slight edge (blog.laptopmag.com/mac-os-x-lion-vs-windows-7-which-is-better/14) to Apple Mac's OS X Lion over Windows 7. Yet unless one of the key differences is critical to you, the variation in the two may not be enough to drive the computer-buying answer. There are practical or personal factors that may be much more important when deciding which way you want to go—especially if you are currently a Windows XP user.

Legacy Software

With both the Mac and, to a lesser extent, Windows 7, you may run into problems running some older programs—especially if the original software company no longer exists. Microsoft has a Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor (windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor) Web site that will help you discover if you might have problems by scanning your old Windows system. Even if there are some programs that will run only under Windows XP, you can get Windows XP Mode with Virtual PC (www.microsoft.com/windows/virtual-pc/download.aspx) if you get Windows 7 Professional or above installed.

If you are switching from a Windows XP computer to a Mac, in most cases you will be getting new software applications written to run specifically on the Mac. If you're doing the usual computing tasks (Web browsing, e-mail, word processing, spreadsheet, etc.), then you will have no problem finding software. If you have special-requirement programs that need Windows, then you can do the same as you might with Windows by running a virtual machine on your Mac with a program such as the free VirtualBox, or the paid Parallels or Fusion. If you find that you will need to run a virtual machine on the Mac for most of your software, you may as well get a Windows 7 PC.

The Learning Curve

Your current computer will (and should) have a major impact on your next computer decision. If you are moving to a new system, then there will be a time adjustment to the look, feel and operation of the new computer. How long this period will last is dependent upon both how different your new computer is from your old one and your own ability to quickly absorb the changes.

If you own a Windows XP computer and people flatly advise "Get a Mac!" without inquiring about your computer applications and experience level, they are doing you a disservice. Whether you move to a Windows 7 computer or a Macintosh, you will feel some level of discomfort. (I don't care what your level of experience is, if something is changed or moved on a new computer, at a minimum you will feel awkward until you know where everything is located.) However, the change from Windows XP to Windows 7 is not nearly as significant

as moving to a Mac from a PC.

Mac is touted as being the most intuitive of computers for new users. This may be true if you're starting from scratch, but very few people are operating without any previous computer experience. If you have a Windows background, then upgrading to Windows 7 will be easier than moving to a new Mac. This is not to say that you shouldn't get a Mac. Apple may be the best for your current (and future) situation. I bought a Mac because it was the only way to directly publish e-books to iTunes without going through a third-party. But you do need to understand that, although there are similarities between Macs and Windows computers, there are enough differences that as a former Windows user, at least in the beginning, you will feel a certain level of frustration—more than you would if sticking with Windows. Once you get past the early tests, like many other owners, you may come to love your Mac more than any other computer.

I loaded most of my necessary programs onto my Mac, but when I ran into a few glitches with some of my special applications, I found it easier just to stick with my Windows computers. I could have taken the time to hunt down solutions that I know exist, but I haven't yet found the time. I use the Mac when I need it, but I have not become a Mac power user. I have written some simple programs on the Mac, so I know how to find my way around. (I'm not brand new to Macs. I've used them on and off for decades.) I guess the only way that I would become a full-time Macintosh user is by going cold turkey.

An example of a difference between Macs and PCs that may seem odd to Windows users is the keyboard arrangement. Even though there is a Delete key on the Mac keyboard, for a Windows user it acts like a Backspace key. There is no Delete key that will remove characters to the right of the cursor, but only a Backspace key labeled Delete. Also, the special keys are labeled Fn (function), Control, Option, and Command. While many of the special key combinations are similar on the Mac to those for Windows, such as Find (Command+F on the Mac, Control+F in Windows), the Control key in Windows is the Command key on the Mac. The Control key on the Mac is used in other ways. Many features within Mac programs are accessed using various combinations of Control, Option, and Command.

When you make a change from Windows to Mac, you will need a little longer breaking-in period with your new computer. How long that will take and how much frustration you experience depends upon how drastic the change is and how adept you are at change.

Your Computer IQ

I'm not sure how honest people can be about their own aptitude for any particular activity. I've painfully watched contestants in the early stages of the American Idol auditions, wondering how most of these people don't realize that they can't sing. (I know that I can't sing. I only have two notes.) Yet, they put themselves, the judges and viewers through torture. The same is true for computer literacy.

While there are many people who quickly pick up any computer system and learn the ins and outs of getting things done digitally, there are others who struggle with the concepts and skills. Once they learn how to do an operation on their computer, they will have it down pat, able to repeat it over and over again. However, introduce a new version of a program or a different computer operating system, and they will get stuck until they learn the new way of doing things. These are usually intelligent people, but they just don't think in a computer way. Unlike the nerds of the world, they don't get computers in the same way—and they may not know that they don't get them.

People without a high computer IQ will have a little bit of a problem moving from Windows XP to Windows 7. Advising them to move to the Apple Mac, which will be even more of a learning curve, is not necessarily doing them a favor—unless you're going to help them through the experience.

If you find that it's a little harder for you to learn new software than it is for many other people, then you may want to stick closer to your area of comfort. If you are a Mac user, then you should stick with Macs. If you're a Windows users, you may want to continue with Windows.

Tablet Computers as an Alternative?

I like the iPad. Tablet computers give a convenience that you can't get with other computers, whether desktop or laptop. I will load recent photos onto the iPad so that others in the family can easily go through them by passing the iPad around. It's good for browsing the Web while watching television. Checking e-mail is straightforward—although anything more than a quick reply is awkward. The iPad works well with Netflix. For many people who mostly browse the Web, listen to music, or watch Web videos, it's possible that a tablet computer is all they need. This may be why people say that the iPad has wiped out the netbook.

However, for my purposes I consider tablet computers a convenience. I could not replace my workhorse computer with a one-handed computing device. As is often pointed out, most things that you can do with a laptop, you can do on an iPad. That doesn't mean you should do it. A tablet computer requires the addition of enough other pieces (keyboard, for one) that you will have essentially created a makeshift laptop computer by the time you're ready to get to work. Plus, the tablet has been designed to work in conjunction with another "real" computer when loading apps and content onto it.

If all you do with your Windows XP computer (or any other computer) is surf the Web, then it is quite conceivable that you will be able to replace it with an iPad or another tablet computer. Otherwise, stick with a Mac, PC, or (if you are full of confidence) a Linux computer.

Stick with Your Windows XP

I'm a believer that as long as it does what you want it to do, there is no reason to change. Computers are lasting longer, and Microsoft has extended support for Windows XP into 2014. The introduction of new operating systems is no longer a reason to change the way we do our computing. Windows 8 will go into beta testing in early 2012, with a Release Candidate version following later in the year. If you can make your XP last long enough, you may be adding Windows 8 to your list of features to consider in a new computer.

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

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The makers of Windows 8's Metro UI interface came to the same conclusion as Apple: it won't support plug-ins like Flash. Also, Research In Motion may become the next casualty in the tablet market; the NoteLife iPad app can store text, audio, and video; the Marines are using iPads in Afghanistan to help helicopter pilots coordinate with ground troops; a phony malware virus warning can easily be spotted on the iPad; Architosh provides news and information about Macintosh CAD options; and a tip on reassigning function keys to open Mission Control or control the Dock.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Microsoft recently revealed Windows 8, which will run on all types of devices, specifically regular computers and tablets that lack a physical keyboard and mouse. Windows 8 borrows the tile user interface from Windows Phone 7, which shows that Microsoft can innovate, but also leaves open the question on whether this tile interface, dubbed the Metro UI, will prove useful or not.

The appeal of the Metro UI is that it displays different chunks of information on the screen so you can find it at a glance, such as stock information, the number of unopened e-mail messages waiting, or the weather in your location.



Figure 1. The Windows 8 Metro UI displays information in tiles.

If you don't want to use this new Metro UI, you can switch back to the more traditional Windows 7 user interface. While the Metro UI is designed for tablets and touchscreens, how well will this interface work on regular computers with physical keyboards and a mouse? If you run older Windows programs on Windows 8, you'll see the older Windows 7 user interface, but if you run programs designed strictly for the Metro UI, you'll be forced to use the Metro UI even if you don't like it. This potential schizophrenic nature of Windows 8's user interface means you have to learn how to use the Metro UI eventually.

For developers, the big question is how easy will it be to convert existing Windows programs to use the Metro UI? If you create a Windows 8 program, will you have to design two user interfaces: the traditional Windows interface for people running Windows 7 and a Metro UI version for people running Windows 8? If developing two user interfaces for a single program isn't easy, then developers will likely stick with one interface or another, which will perpetuate this dual user interface of Windows.

One clue to how programs can fit into both the traditional Windows interface and the Metro UI is to examine the programs included

with Windows 8, such as Internet Explorer 10. By studying how Microsoft tackled the problem of designing features for two different interfaces, developers can learn what seems to work best.

One curious feature of Internet Explorer 10 when running in Metro UI is that it won't support plug-ins like Flash (mashable.com/2011/09/15/microsoft-internet-explorer-10-metro/). Microsoft examined 97,000 Web sites and discovered that 62 percent of them use Flash, but only to display ads. Furthermore, a large number of Flash-using sites fall back to HTML5 if the user's browser doesn't support it.

Since Metro UI will be the default tablet interface, that means everyone who claimed that the iPhone and iPad were useless because it can't run Flash will now get to publicly proclaim that every Windows 8 tablet in the world is completely useless because it also won't run Flash in its touchscreen interface.

As Microsoft discovered, Flash is simply not optimized for mobile devices. On the Microsoft blog, Steven Sinofsky said that the lack of plug-ins (blogs.msdn.com/b/b8/archive/2011/09/14/metro-style-browsing-and-plug-in-free-html5.aspx) like Flash "improves battery life as well as security, reliability, and privacy for consumers," which was pretty much the same reason why Apple refused (www.apple.com/hotnews/thoughts-on-flash/) to allow Flash to run on the iPhone and iPad. If Microsoft can reach the same conclusion about Flash as Apple, what does that say about the future of Flash on mobile devices?

Another Tablet Bites the Dust

After Hewlett-Packard spent \$1.2 billion dollars to acquire Palm Computing for its webOS operating system and then abruptly dumped webOS and its TouchPad tablet, Research In Motion may become the next casualty in the tablet market as its Playbook tablet (tech.fortune.cnn.com/2011/09/16/analyst-rimms-playbook-to-go-the-way-of-hps-touchpad/?section=magazines_fortune) shipped (not sold) only 200,000 units in the past quarter.

The TouchPad and Playbook have plenty of company with Android tablets such as the Motorola Xoom flopping as well. With the iPad 3 rumored to ship sometime in 2012, competitors are struggling to compete strictly on price alone. Hewlett-Packard dumped its TouchPad tablets for \$99 just to get rid of them while taking a loss on each sale. If losing money selling tablets is the only way to compete against the iPad, going bankrupt to gain market share may be the only option left.

Now Microsoft plans to tackle the tablet market with Windows 8. Here are some potential problems to worry about right away.

First, you'll be able to buy two different Windows 8 tablets: Intel-based and ARM-based. The Intel-based tablets will let you run all your old Windows programs. The ARM-based tablets will not, so you must understand which processor a particular tablet uses before you buy it (and we all know how much the average consumer completely understands the differences between processors used in computers).

Second, Windows 8 can display two different interfaces: a traditional Windows 7 interface for older Windows programs or a touch-oriented interface. If you get an ARM-based tablet, you can't run older Windows programs so you'll likely always see the touch-oriented Metro user interface. If you get an Intel-based tablet, you'll see the traditional Windows interface when running older programs, but the Metro touch interface when running new Windows 8 programs.

So the appeal of Windows in the past has been its ability to run older Windows programs (unless you get an ARM-based tablet) and stay within a familiar user interface (unless you use programs designed for the new Metro interface). The consistent Windows user interface also made it easy to learn and use different programs since they shared the same user interface (unless you're switching between older Windows programs and Metro programs while using an Intel-based tablet).

The confusion between choosing the right Windows 8 tablet simply makes them harder to understand, and confused customers don't often turn into buying customers. For a list of eight questions to ask about Windows 8, read Jason Gilbert's article (www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/16/windows-8-beta-questions_n_964517.html) in the HuffPost Tech. If you're interested in a Windows 8 tablet, the simplest solution is to look for an ARM-based tablet, force yourself to use the Metro touch-oriented interface, and buy programs strictly designed for the Metro interface.

Then again, learning a new user interface and buying new programs are two reasons why most people don't want to abandon Windows in the first place. By forcing too many choices on people, Windows 8 tablets already risk alienating their customer base right from the start, and that's even before anyone can evaluate the technical features of Windows 8.

With Windows 8 throwing up so many barriers just to use a tablet, there's a good chance that the TouchPad, Playbook, and Motorola Xoom won't be the only tablets to struggle against the iPad.

Taking Notes on an iPad

The iPad's light weight and small size makes it easy to carry wherever you go, and its long battery life means it will be available when

you need it without worrying about finding a nearby electrical outlet to plug it in. While you could use the built-in Notes app for typing text, you might prefer a multimedia note-taking app such as NoteLife (www.chronosnet.com/Products/notelifehd.htm).

Besides letting you type and store text, NoteLife also lets you store photographs, audio recordings, PDF files, and video. This ability to capture more than text lets you type notes during a class or presentation, take a quick picture or short video using the iPad's built-in camera, and then continue typing more text to supplement the picture or video you just captured.



Figure 2. NoteLife can store text, audio, and video.

The more notes you store, the more cluttered your information can get. To avoid this problem, NoteLife lets you search for specific notes using a search feature that closely mimics using a search engine. Just type the text you want to find and NoteLife digs through all your notes to display only those notes that match your criteria.

As an alternative to searching for notes, you can also sort them as well by title or date. This can help you find a note that you created at a particular time. Each time you create a note, NoteLife can record the location where you created that note. Now you can search for notes based on the location where you created them, such as during a business trip to Milwaukee or Boston.

Another way to organize your notes is to create separate folders. Unlike the folders you can create on a Macintosh that can store data from any program, NoteLife's folders store only your NoteLife notes. This isolates your data from other programs, while still giving you the advantage of creating folders or storing folders within other folders.

Flip your iPad in portrait mode and NoteLife can display your notes in Cover Flow mode so you can visually browse through your notes until you find the one you want. By giving you multiple ways to find your notes, you can freely dump your thoughts into NoteLife and easily find them again.



Figure 3. NoteLife can display notes in Cover Flow mode.

Most likely, you'll take notes that you don't want other people to see. To protect your notes, NoteLife lets you encrypt individual notes or entire folders using AES-256 (Advanced Encryption Standard), which is the government's own encryption standard for securing information.

You can e-mail notes to share with others, but if you want to store your notes on your Macintosh, you'll have to buy the SOHO Notes program for \$39.99. Even without SOHO on your Macintosh, NoteLife is still a handy program just for your iPad alone.

If you're a student taking notes during class, or a business professional who needs to take notes during meetings or presentations, then you may find NoteLife handy for storing your thoughts. Chronos sells an iPhone/iPod touch version of NoteLife for \$4.99 and an iPad version called NoteLife HD for \$9.99.

The iPad version will likely be handier for typing text, while the iPhone version will be easier to use for recording audio and video. No matter which version you use, you'll find that NoteLife turns your iPad (or iPhone) into a multimedia note-taking machine so you can take notes wherever you go.

In case you're still doubtful about the benefits of using an iPad in the classroom, English teacher James Harmon wrote a research paper called "Unlocking Literacy with the iPad, (thejournal.com/articles/2011/09/06/ipads-make-better-readers-writers.aspx)" where he found that students with an iPad had a six percent greater chance of passing Ohio's graduation test on the reading portion and an eight percent greater chance of passing the writing portion than students without an iPad.

Harmon asks, "Is it just putting the iPad in the kids' hands that's a silver bullet? Obviously not, and no intelligent technology-using teacher would say it's the technology that makes the difference. But it definitely has an impact."

Marines Using iPads

The iPad's light weight and small size mean it can bring computing power to situations where ordinary computers are too clumsy to use. Now the Marines are using iPads in Afghanistan to help helicopter pilots coordinate targets (www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/death-on-an-ipad/) with ground troops.

Oftentimes during a battle, ground troops will identify a target that needs to be hit, but the supporting helicopter pilots must dig through 60 to 80 pounds of paper maps to find the target coordinates. By using iPads, Marine pilots can link to ground troops to identify a target on the iPad screen.

"It is giving me the ability to give better service to that infantryman on the ground," said Lt. Col. Matthew Mowery (defensenews.com/story.php?i=7650161&c=FEA&s=TEC), commanding officer of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267, which is deployed. "This speeds up the process. When I check in with him on a close-air support mission, we can cut out probably about 15 minutes of back-and-forth on the radio."



Figure 4. Marine helicopter pilots are using iPads to replace paper maps.

By helping helicopter pilots confirm targets with ground troops, the iPad can ensure that air support hits the right targets, which can reduce casualties. With the iPad helping the Marines in actual combat, does anyone want to tell these soldiers that the iPad is actually useless just because it doesn't run Flash?

Browsing the Internet Safely with the iPad

Since Windows is the most targeted operating system for viruses, spyware, and other malware, you have several options.

First, you can layer on the antivirus and anti-spyware defenses, choose a more secure browser like Firefox, and hope for the best. Second, you can load Linux in a virtual machine using a free program like VirtualBox (www.virtualbox.org/), and browse the Internet within this virtual machine. Now you'll not only have the safety of Linux but the protection of a virtual machine, so any malware that tries to attack your computer will stay isolated away from your main computer.

Here's a third option. Many people have a Windows PC with an iPad, so browse any suspicious or unknown sites using the iPad. If any malware tries to infect your computer or trick you into installing a Trojan horse, that message might look threatening in Windows, but it just looks blatantly silly on the iPad.

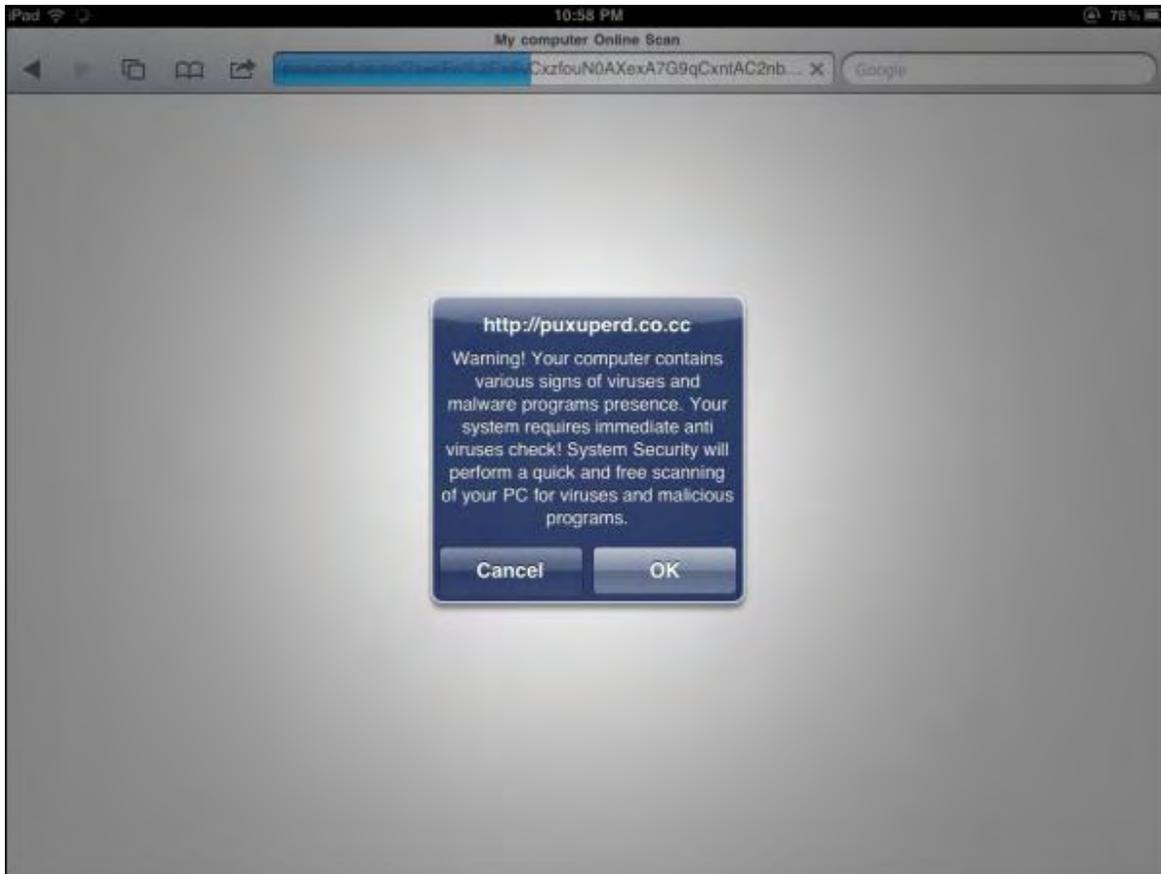


Figure 5. A phony malware virus warning can easily be spotted on the iPad.

Just use Windows to visit trusted Web sites and use the iPad to visit unknown sites. Any site trying to infect the iPad with Windows malware will simply fail, alerting you to the attempt so you'll know to stay away from that dangerous Web site.

Macintosh CAD Magazine

For years, Windows users have promoted the idea that AutoCAD only ran on Windows. Now that AutoCAD runs on the Macintosh, the argument that the Macintosh is inferior because it can't do CAD is pointless. For those interested in learning more about CAD programs for the Macintosh, visit Architosh (architosh.com), an online magazine dedicated to CAD professionals using the Macintosh.

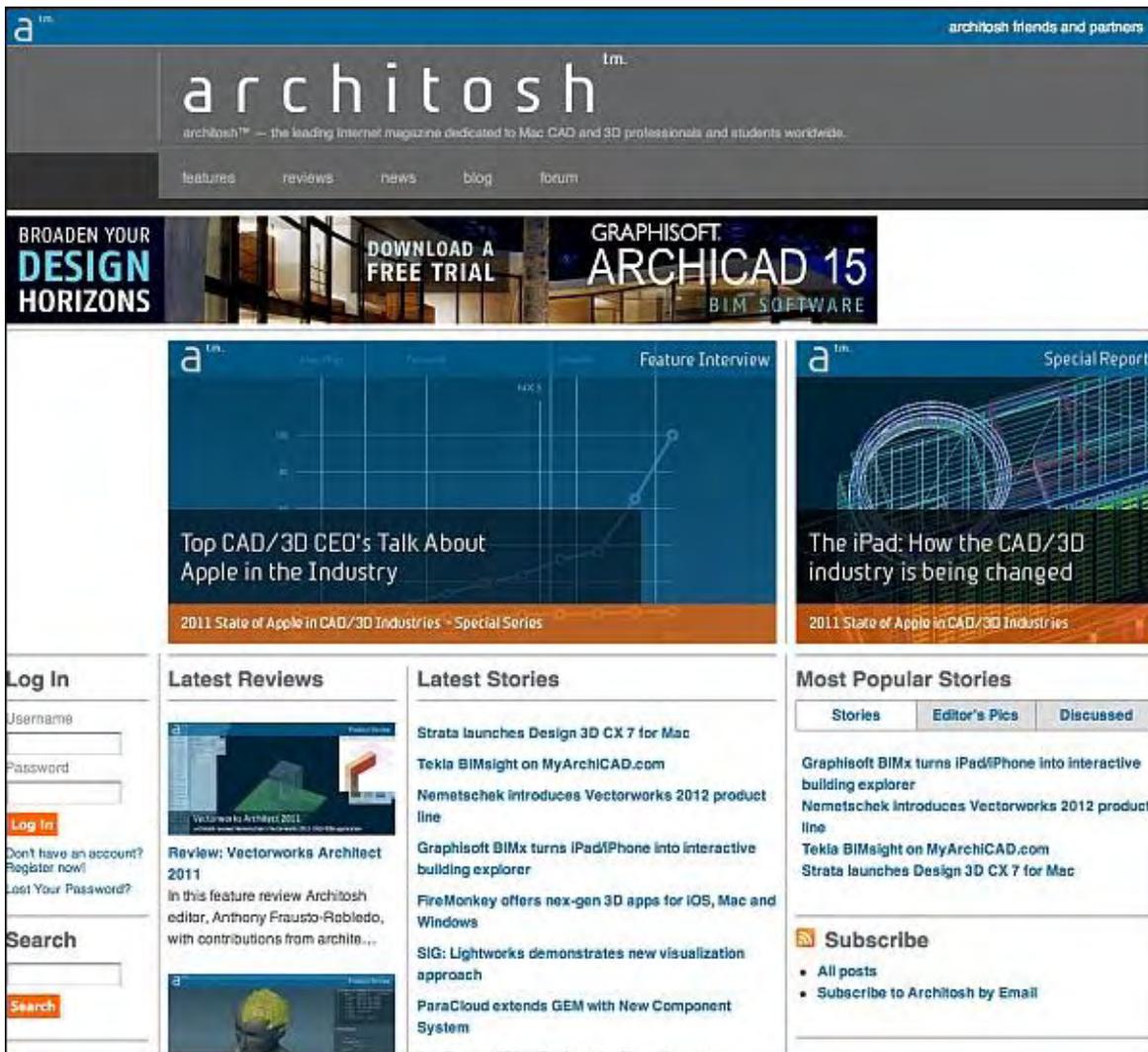


Figure 6. Architosh provides news and information about Macintosh CAD options.

By browsing through the Architosh site, you can keep up with the latest CAD programs for the Macintosh such as AutoCAD, Vectorworks, CorelCAD, and TurboCAD. With so many CAD options now available for the Macintosh, you can read the various reviews and news stories to find the right CAD program for you.

* * *

Since most programs rarely use function keys any more, most computers simply assign these function keys to control the volume or adjust the screen brightness. However, you can also assign function keys to open Mission Control or control the Dock. To reassign function keys, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences to open a System Preferences window.

Click the Keyboard icon under the Hardware category and when a Keyword window appears, click the Keyboard Shortcuts tab. Now you can click on a category such as Display, Mission Control, or Applications Shortcuts and reassign different keystrokes to these functions.

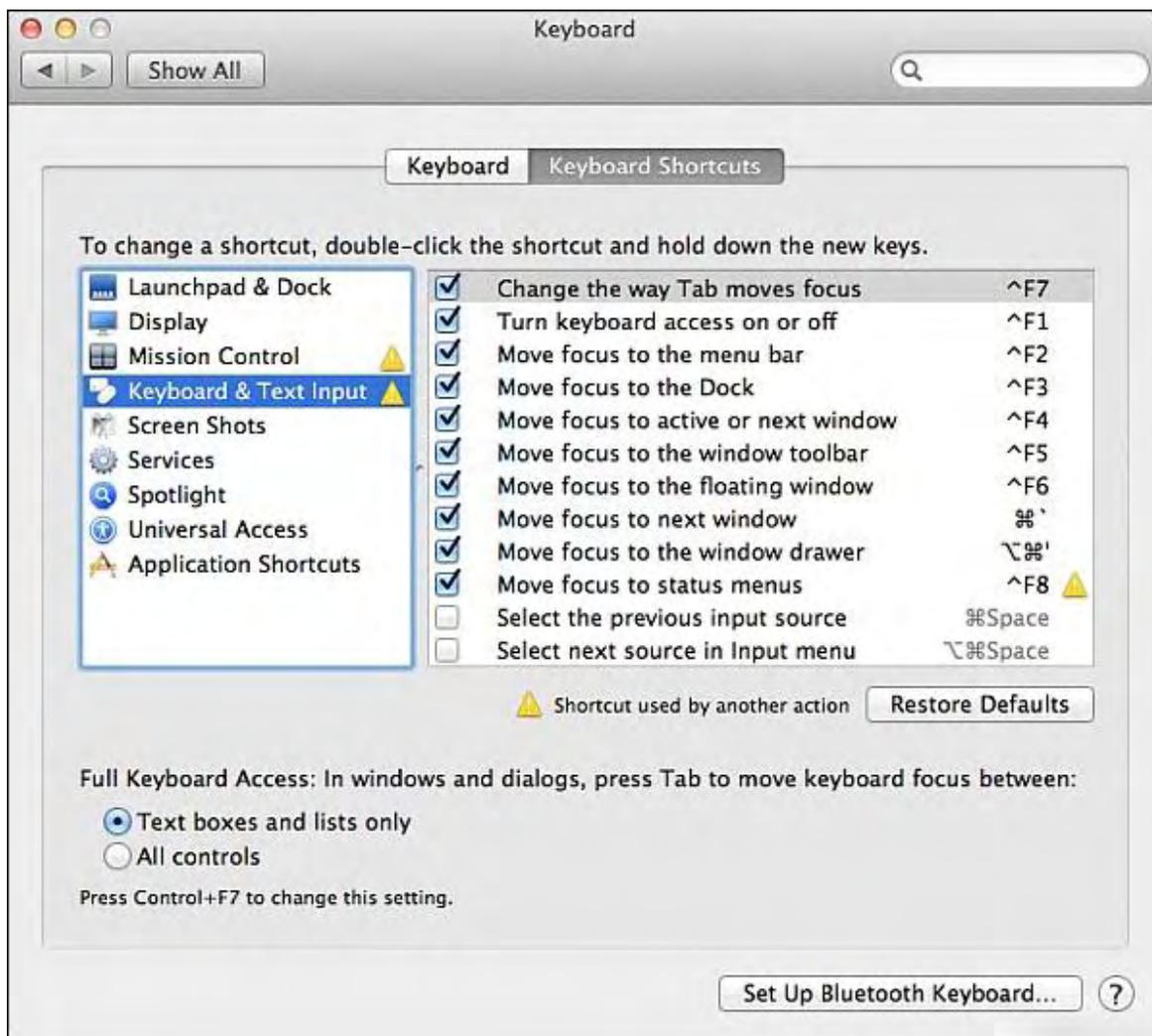


Figure 7. The Keyboard Shortcuts tab lets you assign keystrokes to perform specific tasks.

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

[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 iPhone ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956)

[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)),

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

[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)),

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=0470489987](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987)),

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=0470088702](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702)),

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=0470108541](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541)),

Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies ([www.amazon.com/gp/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541)

[product/0470108541?](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=0470108541](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)),

Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison ([www.amazon.com/gp/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)

[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/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)

product/1590791894?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894),

How to Live With a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (www.smashwords.com/books/view/18896).

Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)

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)

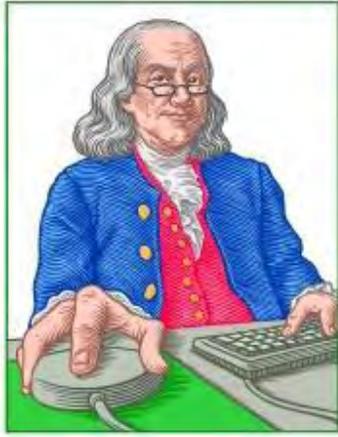
In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute

Movie Method" (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) Wally can be reached

at 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

"The proc Directory" by Tony J. Podrasky

This column will introduce you to the "proc" directory, where the system keeps its information.

Today's column will introduce you to the "proc" directory, where the system keeps its information.

Filename: proc (actually "proc" is a directory off of "/")

Use: /proc is a pseudo-filesystem which is used as an interface to kernel data structures rather than reading and interpreting /dev/kmem. Most of it is read-only, but some files allow kernel variables to be changed. The above paragraph is taken from <man proc> and if look at it, you'll see what all the odd names and acronyms stand for and what they are.

We'll take a look at some of the more interesting entries, and then you can open an xsession to reference the manpage and another xsession to go into /proc and examine some of the files.

Reminder: If you go into /proc as a regular user, you will not be able to do anything that could hurt the system. On the other hand, if you go in there as root, you could potentially crash the system.

Now, run <cd /proc> and then run <ls>.

You'll see a list of things that the system references. One of the more interesting ones is <cpuinfo>. Run <cat cpuinfo>.

You'll see the name of the cpu, the cpu's speed in MHz, its cache size, and since I have an ancient two-CPU system, I have two identical entries.

Now, run <cat filesystems>. You'll see all the types of filesystems that your kernel knows about. Here is an edited version of mine:

```
tonyp% cat filesystems
nodev rootfs
nodev proc
      ext2      - old style of Linux filesystem.
nodev ramfs    - RAM disk file system.
      iso9660   - CDROM file system.
      ext3     - new style journaled filesystem.
nodev usbfs   - USB filesystem.
```

We'll look at one more of great interest, then you can play on your own. Run <cat partitions>. Here's some of the entries in mine:

```
tonyp% cat partitions
major minor #blocks name      rio rmerge rsect ruse wio wmerge wsect wuse running use aveq
  8      0   8891620 sda  76 0 152 590 0 0 0 0 0 160 590
  8      1    128488 sda1  4 0  8  40 0 0 0 0 0 10  40
  8      2   8385930 sda2  4 0  8  80 0 0 0 0 0 20  80
  8      3    369495 sda3 12 0 24  40 0 0 0 0 0 10  40
```

We see that SDA (a SCSI disk) is the name of the device. It is around 8891620 Bytes in size (9 GB), and it has been divided into 3 partitions: sda1 sda2 and sda3.

```

8      16      8891556 sdb 188130 25537 1708736 1730640 424471 28491
          5676086 24701520 0 1866090 26432600
8      17      136521 sdb1 43 0 86 120 17 2 38 530 0 550 650
8      18      7912012 sdb2 188027 25537 1708506 1729890 424454 284910
          5676048 24701030 0 1865850 26431420
8      19      835380 sdb3 4 0 32 30 0 0 0 0 0 30 30
    
```

SDB is my other boot disk. It is almost identical to SDA. The partitions vary in size from each other because of the disk's geometry.

Side note: I have two disks for safety. I run on SDA for a month. Then, I boot SDB, mount SDA under it, TAR SDA to tape, reboot SDA, TAR the tape to SDB, and then boot SDB. At this point the two disks are identical information-wise. SDA remains offline the rest of the month, and then the next month I repeat the process, but going from SDB to SDA. This is an ancient way of doing things, but unlike mirroring, if I mess up the booted disk beyond repair, the worst-case senario is that I have to go back a month in time (or however long it has been since I switched disks). Since I do an FTP backup of my home directory each night at least, I'll have everything current for me.

```

8      32      4194157 sdc 20 0 40 180 0 0 0 0 0 50 180
8      33      4192933 sdc1 4 0 8 40 0 0 0 0 0 10 40
    
```

SDC is a 4GB disk and has one partition (sdc1). This is my archive disk that has e-mail going back as far as 1987!

```

8      48      156290904 sdd 20 2 146 3560 15 1 128 100 0 3620 3660
8      49      24418768 sdd1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
8      50      131869552 sdd2 18 0 138 3500 15 1 128 100 0 3590 3600
    
```

SDD is my removable USB storage that contains multiple images of my SDA and SDB disks. After I do my backup (explained above), I'll TAR the tape onto this disk. This disk gets swapped-out every six months (with its brother) to an off-site storage, so if something happens at home (such as a fire or theft) I can recreate my whole universe. SDD's other partition is used to store graphics (JPEG and GIF), videos (AVI, SWF, MPEGs), and all the 33 1/3 vinyl records I digitized.

```

3      0      667050 hda 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 -34081 34572829 29350918
    
```

HDA is my CDROM.

* * *

Silly Signature Du Jour:

```

Tony J. Podrasky | On two occasions I have been asked [by members of
                  | Parliament!], "Pray, Mr. Babbage - if you put into the
                  | machine WRONG FIGURES, will the RIGHT ANSWERS come out?"
                  | I am not able rightly to apprehend the kind of confusion
                  | of ideas that could provoke such a question.
                  | Charles Babbage - inventor of the analog engine (1st computer)
    
```

--:~ETX~:--

NOTE: 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."

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

“Flummoxed Over Faxes” by Marilyn K. Martin

Fax machines have been in use a long time, but you may be surprised by how many people are still a little fuzzy on exactly what a fax machine is, and what it can — and can't — do.

So by now we've all learned to think in computer-speak or Internet-speak, as we trudge up that mountain called the Digital Age. And yet, one of the earliest "miracle machines" on the market was the fax machine.

A fax (short for facsimile) is a document sent over a telephone line. Various forms of fax machines have existed since the 1800s, but the modern fax machine only became financially feasible in the 1970s. At that time, in big cities especially, new telephone area codes were called for to handle all the new fax machines and their dedicated phone lines.

Today, with increased competition from Internet-based technologies, fax machines are still used in many businesses. Some users feel that fax machines are safer than sending sensitive material over the Internet unencrypted. And in some countries, electronic signatures on contracts are not considered legally binding, while faxed contracts with copies of signatures are.

Plus, if you've ever seen the movie *Air Force One*, you'll remember that a fax machine saved the day. All the plane's other communication lines had been cut, but the fax line had been easily overlooked.

So fax machines are still in use, especially for small or home-based businesses. Thermal printers have gone the way of the dodo, mostly, and today most fax machines use regular copy paper. Some of the newer computer printers even include a fax machine option.

And, as we all struggle to keep up with computer hardware and its capabilities, it's probably understandable that some people are still a little fuzzy on exactly what a fax machine is, and what it can — and can't — do. You start by scraping all the dried correction fluid off the glass, so your fax isn't received with missing sentences. Then you need to figure out which way to put the type-side of your document through the fax machine. And for some, the confusion multiplies from there. Read on!

Which Way Did That Fax Go?

One help desk worker assured a user on the phone that, "I just received your fax, no problem." But the user retorted, "The hell you did! It's still sitting right here!"

Another person received a fax with an urgent note on the bottom. "Fax this document back to me when you're finished, because I need to keep it."

One tech got a call from a secretary in the company, complaining that she was having trouble sending a fax. "The machine keeps grabbing my letter, but then it just spits it out the other side. What's wrong with it?" (Are you kidding? How many decades did the rest of us wait for a computer printer half that fast?)

Extremely Cautious Faxers

Consider the oft-repeated tale of the secretary who kept trying to fax something, and the receiver kept calling back to say that all they received was a blank page. She consulted a co-worker, who asked her if she was sure that the print-side was properly aligned when she sent it. The woman hesitated. "Well, it's a pretty sensitive memo, and I didn't want anyone else to read it by accident. So I folded it in half so only the recipient could open and read it."

Then there was the cautious user, who wanted to register for some free stuff from a popular Web site. But he didn't want give away too

much personal information, and left some questions blank. Then he got this error message: "We need your fax number in order to respect your wishes not to receive unsolicited faxes."

A Little Misunderstanding Goes a Long Way

One office decided to use fax machines to give local authorities early warnings of severe weather. "Rather than having to rely on telephones, for instance, where lines are at risk in bad weather, we are encouraging the wider use of fax machines." (Which ... use phone lines?)

A bank clerk kept trying to send a fax to his central bank. Although the procedure seemed to go smoothly, the clerk kept resending the fax, appearing frustrated. When someone asked if they could help, the clerk responded, "I can't get this fax to go through, since they have no paper on the other end." When asked to explain, he pointed: "See this light here on the fax machine? It keeps blinking No Paper."

A mortgage company discovered that the final payment from a customer was \$30 short. So a company representative called up the customer and explained all the ways the customer could send that final \$30: "You can overnight a check to us. Or you can wire the money, although that may cost up to \$15 or more for a processing fee." The customer thought a moment, then blurted out, "I know! I'll fax you the money!"

A help desk worker got a fax one day from a disgruntled customer with modem problems. A tech stared at the mostly black fax page, and then had to call the customer back. He had to explain to the customer that, no, pulling out his internal modem, photocopying it and then faxing the copy was not going to help them troubleshoot his modem problems.

In another instance, a troubleshooting tech asked a customer for a "screen shot." He also asked her to fax him the result. Sure enough, a fax soon arrived with a photocopy of a camera-photo of her screen.

Compatibility Issues: Discs, Drivers and Fax Machines

Another tech once had a customer request that he fax a copy of a disk instead of sending it through the mail. The tech reports that he needed his job, otherwise he'd have told the customer, "No problem. I just gotta wait a bit because Domino's is faxing me a pizza!"

Another help desk worker got a call from a customer saying, "Can you fax me those drivers?" The tech replied, "Sir, I can e-mail the drivers to you. Or you can download them for free from our Web site."

The customer got testy. "No! I don't have e-mail, and I don't have Internet access. Why can't you fax them to me?" In the end, the tech sent out a disc with the drivers by overnight delivery. But the tech was never sure if the customer ever understood that you cannot send drivers through a fax machine.

A man owned a small computer shop in the 1990s. One day he got a panicked phone call. "Do you repair fax machines?" He replied, "Not really, but I'll try to help. What's the problem?" The nervous woman explained, "It's totally jammed, and I gotta get it fixed before my boss arrives back in town!"

The shop owner told her to bring it in, and he'd have a look. Upon opening up the fax machine, he found a 5-inch disc melted onto the heating roller. It turned out that her boss had phoned her and asked her to fax him what was on that disc. And she quite literally did!

Well, Those Dang Machines All Look Alike!

Someone noticed a new hire milling around the print room, looking somewhat puzzled. They asked the NH if there was anything they could help with. The NH said, "I'm waiting on a fax, but there's nothing coming through."

The older employee replied that the supervisor had turned off the fax machine when they left for lunch, so that no confidential faxes could come through while the supervisor was gone. "But look! The green light is on, and it says Ready on the display," answered the New Hire. The older employee tried not to smile. "Uh, that's the printer, not the fax machine."

An eager young man was working late one night, when he spotted the Big Boss standing in front of the paper shredder, looking puzzled. The young man jumped up and rushed over, "Can I help you with something, sir?" The Big Boss had a piece of paper in his hand, and motioned to the shredder. "My secretary usually does this. Do you know how this thing works?"

"Yes, sir!" said the young man. He took the piece of paper the Big Boss handed him, and ran it through the shredder. The Big Boss seemed pleased. "Well, thank you! When that fax goes through, will you bring it back to my office?"

Fax Facts

There's actually a Web site called www.brokenfax.com. Some of the questions they answer highlight how much fax-confusion is

really out there:

- Why can't I find anyone to repair my thermal paper fax machine? (Because these oldies-but-goodies would cost more to repair than buying a new one.)
- Why did blank columns appear on a fax I sent to someone else? (Either there was white correction fluid on the glass cover, or you need to replace the scanner.)
- Why does my fax machine display the message CALL SERVICEMAN? (Because ... you probably need to call a serviceman. Although on certain models, this message indicates that the machine just overheated. Turn off power for 5-10 minutes.)

Fax Alternatives

Today, users without fax machines can subscribe to an Internet fax service. Users can then send and receive faxes from their personal computers using an existing e-mail account. If you are interested, you can check out www.eFax.com, www.MyFax.com, www.Fax.com or RapidFAX.com, among others..

(Many of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple joke sites. But special thanks to *Rinkworks.com*.)

Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist with many interests. She has sold teen anti-drug articles, as well as had numerous esoteric articles published. She has almost seventy mini-articles on Helium.com (www.helium.com/users/573405/show_articles), and is writing a humorous Young Adult Science Fiction series, *Chronicles of Mathias*. Volumes One and Two have received a "Gold Star for Excellence" from TeensReadToo.com (www.teensreadtoo.com/ReptilianRebirth.html), and are available from most on-line bookstores.

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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

"Default Bullets," "Get a Switch," "Fixing Web Links," "Adobe Flash Alternative," "Learn to Love What You Do"

Default Bullets

[Regarding the September 2 Digital Dave column:]

This is in response to Rose from Aurora, CO, regarding the setting of default bullets. Yes, Microsoft did move your cheese. Once you see what they have done, you may agree that it is easier than ever, as a lot of things that they did in 2007/2010 really did make life easier.

Styles is the way to the solution. Select a style. Set up your new bulleting types, which can be anything that you want. Select the whole setup area. Save it as a new style and make sure that it is shown in the Quick Style selection. Now you can choose it anytime off the Main Styles selection chart. You can modify it anytime you like or set up several styles. It takes a little time to get the hang of everything; however, it is really simple and elegant once you understand it.

-Don P, Escondido, CA

Get a Switch

[Regarding the September 2 Digital Dave column:]

In Dave's response, he says if there aren't enough HDMI ports on the TV to use other hookups. What he doesn't mention is getting an HDMI switch (not splitter), which allows multiple connections to one HDMI port. Why is this important? Because the quality of the picture through HDMI vs. other connections is 100 percent better. How do I know this? Because after three years of HDTV, we finally got a \$5 cable from Amazon, and WOW!

-Teresa, San Diego, CA

Fixing Web Links

[Regarding the September 9 Digital Dave column:]

I often receive messages with links that won't execute. I forward the message to myself, and where the link is, I add a period to the end of the address. It turns blue immediately, and when I retrieve the message, the link is executable.

-Carol Salisbury, El Cajon

Adobe Flash Alternative

[Regarding the August 5 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column:]

Whoops! Most of us older Mac users are really blitzed we cannot use Power PC-based Macs any longer online, except for e-mail and reading, as Apple and a lot of other vendors have stopped support. But the most irritating [thing] is the loss of the Adobe Flash player. Even most e-mailers do not have the pop-up, "You cannot view the material on this page without upgrading your Flash player."

So I was eager to see what the alternative was! Turns out it's another Adobe program—and after all the hassle of setting up an Adobe "membership," I immediately found out I could not download it, as it's only for Mac OS 10.6 and up, and they of course don't run on the Power PC chip...AARGH!

But it is a joy to see you are still out there now that I am coming back online myself. But what happened to the so useful **ComputerEdge** Want Ads? One reason I came back to you was I thought you'd still be the best place to find out the best **used** Mac (with dual-core chip) to buy!

-Jan F. Baumgardner, MD, Boulder

Learn to Love What You Do

[Regarding the September 9 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column:]

I'm a little sick of people reissuing trite statements such as, "You've got to find what you love," even if it is Steve Jobs. It's like American Idol winners who say, "If you believe in yourself enough, you too can do it!" What about the hundreds of thousands who believed in themselves, but were eliminated in the first round because they can't sing?

While I believe in dreams and working toward goals, sometimes a person has to do the right thing, get a job and support their family. It's a fine ideal, but often leads people to waste their lives "searching for what they love." Maybe people should learn to love what they do.

-Richard, Oceanside, CA

Yes, there are plenty of American Idol contestants who love what they do, but never win. The point isn't that if you lose a single event, your dreams are dashed forever and you shouldn't even bother trying in the first place. After all, Britney Spears came in second in a singing contest once, and comedian Drew Carey came in second in a comedy competition, yet both ultimately excelled doing what they love.

It's never about letting a single loss define you. If you let a single loss stop you from pursuing your dreams, you'll never achieve anything. Following that logic, every baseball team that loses just one game during the regular season might as well just give up trying to win the World Series. Since you can't win in everything you do, let's encourage everyone to just give up and not bother trying at all, which guarantees you'll never achieve anything in the future. Some people can't sing, but their love of singing will lead them to enjoy singing anyway, whether they win any awards or not. Success never depends on external awards. If you measure success solely on what other people think of you, you'll never be happy doing anything.

If Bill Gates simply learned to love what he was doing, he would never have started Microsoft and would have just learned to love being a lawyer. Steve Jobs would have just been happy working at Hewlett-Packard and never bothered to start building personal computers. Both Bill Gates and Steve Jobs ran into plenty of setbacks pursuing their dreams. Failure is simply part of any success.

You can live life by pursuing lofty goals, or you can look for justification for why nobody should even try anything at all. Which way do you think will make your life the best it could possibly be?

-Wally Wang

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). 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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