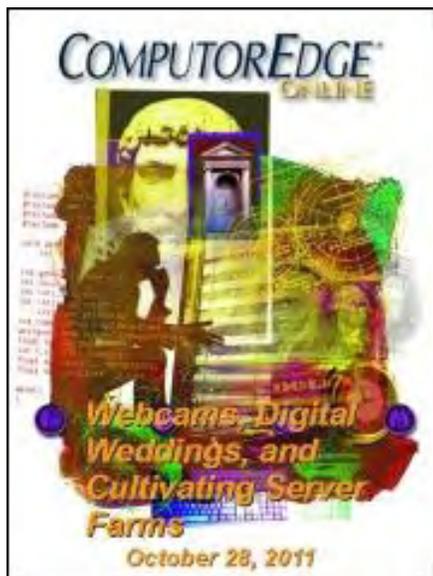


ComputerEdge™ Online — 10/28/11



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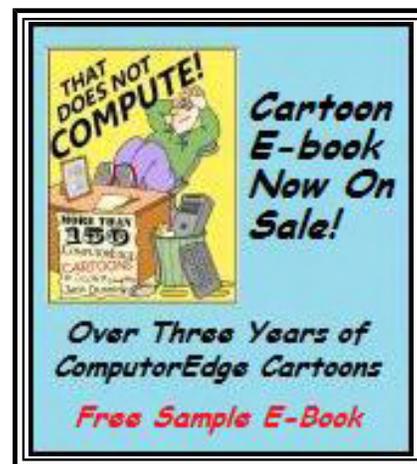
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Digital Dave

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

Cannot Open Windows Live Messenger; Lost photos; Playing Mac and Windows Files on DVD Players.

Dear Digital Dave,

When trying to open Windows Live Messenger on my laptop (it does not happen on the desktop), I get the error code 84cc0009. There are many different solution on the net, all very different and confusing, almost impossible to follow. Any help would be welcomed.

Thanks,

*Alfredo Giachino
San Diego, CA*

Dear Alfredo,

When looking for information on the Web I generally check the source of the software (or hardware) first—in this case Microsoft. When searching for an error code you will often find many other people leaving the same question on various forums—not always with an answer that will work for you.

According to Windows Live Solution Center (windowslivehelp.com/thread.aspx?threadid=85a62600-dfc6-419d-a77c-eae2782d9a75), your log in data for Windows Live Messenger is most likely corrupted on your laptop. There is a series of steps (windowslivehelp.com/solution.aspx?solutionid=48cb38e4-dffa-4250-8671-8b44fe19383b) which you should take to clear up the problem.

Microsoft has done a pretty good job of providing troubleshooting information on their site. I always check there first. I hope that this will help.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I've "lost" some vacation photos and wonder if you would have any suggestions on how to get them back.

I have an older Olympus digital camera with a smart card. While taking about 40 photos of my vacation, I deleted just one photo off the card (via the camera) and continued taking more photos—about 20 more. But when I tried to download all 60 photos, the camera reported that there

were only the last 20 on the card and that's all that downloaded to my computer. But when I checked the megabyte room on the smart card, my camera reports that there is only room on the card for 40 fewer photos, even though no photos are listed. In other words, the space that these photos would take up on the smart card is still "occupied," but I can't download them and the camera is still reporting that there are no photos on the card. Is there any way I can get to these photos that I hope are still on the smart card or is all lost?

Thanks for you help.

*Jerry Hughes
San Diego, Ca.*

Dear Jerry,

The first thing that I would do is take the smart card out of the camera and see if it can be read with a card reader attached to the computer. It is difficult to tell how the camera software is affecting your ability to read the card while in the camera. If you don't have a compatible card reader it is fairly inexpensive to buy one. You may find the all of your images are directly readable. (I've seen situations where for whatever reason the camera creates a new photo folder leaving the old one inaccessible via the camera.)

I always plug the camera chip into my computer for downloading (and deleting) photos. This saves me having to deal with the quirks and occasional incompatibilities of camera downloading software.

If you still can't find the lost photo, try to recover them with software such as the free PhotoRec (download.cnet.com/TestDisk-and-PhotoRec/3000-2248_4-10511775.html). If they are still available on the smart card, you should be able to get them back. You should avoid saving any more photos to that chip until you have investigated all possibilities. New photos could overwrite the old ones.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Thanks for the answer about playing Mac videos on Windows and vice versa (October 21 issue).

OK, now how do I play them on a television or on an Xbox? Specifically, I'd like to download YouTube files as .mp4 or .flv and then convert them to some format that I can put on a CD or DVD which my television DVD player or the younger clan with the game console can use. I'm told that the XBox can "play some music CDs" (not sure which ones until he tells me), so the game consoles apparently recognize CDs and it's just a file format issue (container, 360p vs 480p, etc). And Grandpa spends all day in front of the television, and he does know how to stick a DVD into the player there. If I can get YouTube into the XBox and the television then I can start handing them the thrills of advanced algebra, Ice Follies highlights and (my favorite) Pearl Jam concerts.

*Peter Skye
Los Angeles, California*

Dear Peter,

If you're using Windows Vista (Home Premium and Ultimate) or Windows 7 (Home Premium and above), then the program Windows DVD Maker is included. This program will allow you to burn videos and images to a DVD for playing with any DVD player. You can find the supported formats when you add files to the program. If the files are protected, I don't believe that you will be able burn them to a DVD with DVD Maker.

If you are using a Windows XP computer, or just want to try another program, then you might download Free Movie DVD Maker (download.cnet.com/Free-Movie-DVD-Maker/3000-18554_4-10669082.html?tag=mncol;4) or the free to try AoA DVD Creator (download.cnet.com/AoA-DVD-Creator/3000-18554_4-10598941.html?tag=rb_content;contentBody). I haven't used either of these programs. Possibly other readers will offer their recommendations.

If you're working on the Mac side of things you can use iDVD (www.apple.com/ilife/idvd) which is part of the iLife suite of applications which come with every new Mac and includes iPhoto, iMovie and Garage Band recording studio.

An Xbox 360 will play videos off of a memory stick or directly across the network from a PC (wireless or otherwise). No need to burn a DVD. It definitely plays Windows Media Videos (WMV) and I'm not sure what else. PlayStation 3 has similar capabilities, but for different formats—AVI I think.

Digital Dave

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Simulator Gaming, Streaming movies and Occupy Wall Street

“Technology items you may not have seen in your newspaper.” by Marilyn K. Martin

Seasonal Smartphone Apps; More In motion Texting Bans; More Research Using Social Media; Webcams: Here, There and Everywhere; Digital Business; Occupy Wall Street and Their Social Media Apps; Digital Weddings Using Social Media; Simulators Merging with Gaming for the Home Market; TV Content on Gaming Consoles; Digital movies bypassing DVDs; So What Do You Grow on Server Farms?; Using Social Engineering to Hack into Computers.

Seasonal Smartphone Apps

According to Applicious, there are eight iPhone apps (www.applicious.com/shine/articles/3637-eight-iphone-apps-for-trick-or-treaters-of-all-ages) "for trick-or-treaters of all ages." From the What Was I Scared Of? (Dr. Seuss) app for little ones who are frightened, to the free UNICEF USA app, for older trick-or-treaters collecting for UNICEF. Other offerings range from the Angry Birds Halloween app, featuring everything from "pumpkin smashing to pig pulverizing," to horror movie clips with Scene It? Horror.



“Your daughter was so bad today that I sent her to bed without her iPhone!”

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The Best Holiday iPhone Apps (www.babble.com/holiday/holiday-entertainment/best-holiday-iphone-app-reviews/) from 2010 for families, courtesy of Babble.com, include Holiday Travel (packing and To-Do list), SitterCalc, SimpleSoiree and Quickwish (sharing desired gift ideas). Keep the little ones occupied with SantaMessage2, SuperDreidel or CraftFinder.

More In motion Texting Bans

In my last "Little Known Stories" article, it was revealed that 23% of vehicle accidents in the U.S. are caused by the driver texting or talking on a hand-held cell phone. Cities and states continue to pass their own bans on drivers talking/texting

“Your daughter was so bad today that I sent her to bed without her iPhone!”

while driving. And now auxiliary modes of transportation are coming under the same bans.

The Chicago City Council recently passed an ordinance (www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/clout/chicago-city-council-bans-texting-while-bicycling-20111005,0,6418190.story) "prohibiting bicyclists from texting while moving." Bicyclists are also banned from making cell phone calls while moving, unless they have a hands free device. Fines will start at \$20 for a first offense, up to \$500 if the bicyclist is involved in a traffic accident. (Chicago drivers are already prohibited from texting/talking on cell phones while driving.)

Meanwhile, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) unanimously adopted "a regulation prohibiting the use of cell phones by rail transit operators (www.contracostatimes.com/news/ci_19060555)." This not only makes CPUC's 2008 Emergency Order permanent, but also requires the installation of cameras to enforce the rule.

Also in 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration also adopted an Emergency Order banning the use of cell phones and similar devices by rail transit operators.

More Research Using Social Media

Sociologists at Cornell University (New York) recently published a cross-cultural study of daily mood rhythms (seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/health/2016361134_twittermood30.html) based on analyzing text messages on Twitter. Using messages posted by more than two million people in 84 countries, researchers discovered "that the emotional tone of people's messages follows a similar pattern, not only through the day but through the week and the changing seasons."

Basically, no matter how grumpy people are getting out of bed in the morning, their mood tends to brighten by breakfast. Then their mood tapers gradually down to a low in late afternoon, only to rally again near bedtime. Researchers concluded that "the analysis suggests our moods are driven by a shared underlying biological rhythm, that transcends culture and environment."

Webcams: Here, There and Everywhere



A German camera firm (www.mobotix.com/) has installed a Webcam near the summit of legendary Mount Everest (www.geeky-gadgets.com/webcam-installed-near-mount-everest-summit-30-09-2011/). The high altitude, solar-powered Webcam from Mobotix has been set up between gigantic boulders on an opposite mountain called Kala Patthar.

Partnered with Ev-K2-CNR, it transmits a live stream of Everest's western slope (www.evk2cnr.org/WebCams/PyramidOne/everest-webcam.html) from 6AM to 6PM, daily. Besides being a cool idea to check out real time conditions on Everest, scientists will use the Webcam view to study climate change.

If you just want to watch a live scene from, say, New York's Times Square or Frankfurt, Germany, check out EarthCam (www.earthcam.com/). Or if you are into the paranormal, check out the live Webcams in haunted locations at GhostStudy (ghoststudy.com/camlinks.html).

Digital Business

Freelancer (www.freelancer.com) is an innovative site that calls itself "the world's largest outsourcing marketplace, empowering entrepreneurs and small businesses worldwide." It pairs up skilled professionals, from Web site IT to product sourcing to accounting or legal, with people or companies who want to outsource small projects (\$30-\$200). Similar companies for outsourcing projects via the Internet are Net4manpower (net4manpower.com), and Outsourcing.org (projects.outsourcing.org).

Something the late Steve Jobs and Apple had been planning in secret for years, took on new urgency when Jobs' health started to deteriorate. Jobs wanted to leave his company with executives who could continue his success. It is an executive training program called Apple University (seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2016429837_appleuniversity07.html). The company won't comment on this training program, but do admit that Jobs personally recruited the dean of Yale's Business School, Joel Podolny, in 2008 to run the program.

Research identified tenets that supposedly unleashed "innovation and sustained success at Apple: "accountability, attention to detail, perfectionism, simplicity and secrecy. Jobs oversaw the creation of university-caliber courses that taught Apple execs how those principles translated "into business strategies and operating practices."

Occupy Wall Street and Their Social Media Apps

According to PC Magazine, tech-savvy protesters on Wall Street, NYC, have turned to lesser-known social media tools to coordinate their strategy (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2394043,00.asp#fbid=AAI2H7vV3Qgj). Although maintaining an active Twitter account, they turned to a new app called Vibe to exchange time limited whisper messages anonymously with people within 160 feet. They are also relying on older or unexpected media like Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Livestream for longer updates and video.

And for protesters who need a shower, are recruiting for a Protest Band, and/or spot someone hot they want to know better? They turn to Craigslist (www.observer.com/2011/10/the-ten-best-craigslist-pick-up-ads-for-occupy-wall-street/?shot=all), among other mobile meeting apps. The New York Observer printed their Top Ten favorite "anarchist seeking" posts. (Note: Adult language and situations in referenced article.)

Digital Weddings Using Social Media

According to the Denver Times more brides and grooms are using social media for their weddings (www.denverpost.com/lifestyles/ci_19037981). From high-speed scannable "QR" barcodes on invitations, to a bride at the alter who pulls out her iPhone to accept her groom's Facebook relationship status change to "married," brides and grooms are making ample use of social media.

According to surveys by magazine sites Brides and The Knot, 65% of couples now set up special Web sites to do everything from manage RSVPs, to stream video of the ceremony and/or reception. Some couples even open their party play lists to let friends and families help choose the music, or create interactive reception seating charts so table mates can chat online ahead of time.

And one in five future couples are using mobile apps for planning the Big Event, from "virtually" trying on wedding dresses, to shopping through on line vendors, and going paperless for save the date and wedding invitations with e-mail or Web tools for RVSPs. 17% of brides-to-be register for gifts exclusively online, like at MyRegistry.com. While some couples simply ask for cash for a honeymoon or home repairs through sites like DepositaGift.com or Honeyfund.com, which allows the couples to transfer the cash deposits from PayPal directly to their bank accounts.

Simulators Merging with Gaming for the Home Market



I guess it was only a matter of time before full-scale simulators moved out of military/corporate training or arcade gaming, and into private homes. Gizmodo reports that there is now a 1:1 scale Formula 1 simulation race car (gizmodo.com/5617764/this-full-scale-f1-simulator-is-insane) from BRD (www.brdsim.com/product/simulators/brd-06m-car.html) with fiberglass and carbon fiber composite monocoque chassis, that "looks perfect inside and outside." No word on price, but so-yesterday's Motion Pro II Racing Simulator (cxcsimulations.com) sold their base model for \$26,000—with add-ons that could jump the price to \$45,000. And

CXC had no shortage of buyers.

Even without the hardware, simulator software incorporating real life graphics or information can make for an ultra realistic home gaming experience. ProFlightSimulator (www.proflightsimulator.com/) offers 120+ different planes, over 20,000 real global airports, with changeable weather, NASA Flight Models and realistic worldwide terrain from the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency. And RailSimulator (www.railsimulator.com/) recently signed an agreement with Amtrak to produce Amtrak content in their train simulators (www.marketwatch.com/story/railworks-expands-train-simulator-franchise-with-amtrak-agreement-2011-09-22).

Scalable Display Technologies (www.scalabledisplay.com/markets/gaming) is a simulation and training company that also produces software displays for "The Serious Gaming Market." "Technological advances are blurring the lines between high end consumer gaming and traditional commercial simulators," their advertising states. They offer ultra high resolution extended field of view (FOV) displays, that are perfect for "immersive desktop and large venue gaming".

TV Content on Gaming Consoles

Microsoft Corp. recently announced that they were partnering with Comcast, HBO, Bravo and others, to bring on demand and live TV to gaming consoles (www.contracostatimes.com/technology/ci_19047471) like their Xbox 360. Microsoft said that the new entertainment content will be available this holiday season in more than 20 countries. (Sony has also worked to turn their PlayStation 3 into "an entertainment hub for games, music and movies".)

Digital movies bypassing DVDs

I wrote last time how Hollywood movie makers, distressed over the 40% drop in DVD revenues, were investigating new ways to stream movies directly into the home. Universal Studios/Comcast are trying out a new idea to let film buffs watch a new movie (www.contracostatimes.com/business/ci_19056383) still in theaters, in their own living rooms—for \$60 a pop. Comcast subscribers in Atlanta and Portland (Oregon) can participate in a test with the November 4th release of "Tower Heist" (PG-13 comedy starring Eddie Murphy and Ben Stiller). Comcast subscribers with high-definition TV and an HD channel package in those cities, can rent the movie starting Nov. 23rd, and watch it unlimited times in a 48 hour window.

Dish Network recently announced that they are pairing with Blockbuster and major movie studios to launch what it calls "a stream come true," for online movie streaming (www.streamingmedia.com/Articles/Editorial/Featured-Articles/Dish-Launches/Blockbuster-Movie-Pass-but-Faces-Serious-Hurdles-77886.aspx). Hoping to compete successfully against similar offerings from Netflix, which has had its share of recent stumbles, Blockbuster faces its own hurdles from negative brand perception to inconsistent service and delivery

limitations.

Netflix did score major points recently, despite their missteps, when they completed a historic deal with DreamWorks Animation to supply Netflix with premium films and TV (www.streamingmedia.com/Articles/News/Featured-News/Netflix-Signs-Deal-with-DreamWorks-Animation-77898.aspx) specials starting in 2013.

DreamWorks chose to sign with Netflix rather than re-upping with HBO, making it "the first major movie studio to opt for a streaming service rather than pay TV."

So What Do You Grow on Server Farms?

According to the Contra Costa Times, Server Farms (www.contracostatimes.com/technology/ci_19047702) are sprouting up in Silicon Valley (California). Based on the growing mass of data from mobile and social media, the business of independent server farms (or data centers) is growing.

In the past four years, eleven large and independent server farms have been built or are in the planning stages in Santa Clara County, Northern California. They can house and store everything from family photos to content from Facebook and Zynga. One new server farm has room for tens of thousands of servers in multiple rooms backed up by 32 diesel generators and fuel tanks, with 32 rotary power systems to kick in whenever there is a power outage. The cooling system includes 16 chillers and two 500,000 gallon tanks filled with chilled water.

Using Social Engineering to Hack into Computers

A 2006 PDF from the SNS Institute InfoSecurity Reading Room discussed how some hackers have been gaining access to secure computer systems (www.sans.org/reading_room/whitepapers/engineering/social-engineering-means-violate-computer-system_529) simply by calling up and convincing whoever answers to let them into that company's computer system.

Recently, an investigative journalist with a TV station in San Francisco, reported on an updated version (abclocal.go.com/kgo/video?id=8380740&rss=rss-kgo-video-8380740) of this scam. A phone call, supposedly from a "Microsoft Tech Support," warned home computer users that their PCs were infected with serious viruses, and instructed them to go to a specific Web site. At the Web site, users were told to click a button to allow "remote access" to their PC. Once inside, the bogus tech rummaged through all the computers' files, while questioning the baffled users about their banking practices.

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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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Running a Company like Steve Jobs” by Wally Wang

Running a Company like Steve Jobs; Disappearing Gadgets by 2020; Proprietary vs. Open: The Battle of E-Book formats; Contrasting Videos; MacBook Pro Updated; Another Excuse Bites the Dust; Adobe Photoshop Elements 10; Another Computer Pioneer Passes Away; Defining a Default program for Your Camera.

Following the death of Steve Jobs, Walter Isaacson's biography about Steve Jobs (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1451648537/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1451648537) will likely become an instant best seller and a classic book that business students will study for years afterwards.

Perhaps one of the more interesting tidbits of information from this book is the fact that Steve Jobs gave industrial designer, Jony Ive (www.appleinsider.com/articles/11/10/21/steve_jobs_left_designer_jony_ive_more_power_than_anyone_at_apple.html), more power than anyone else at Apple. Jony Ive is the man responsible for many, if not most, of Apple's designs from the MacBook Air and the iPhone to the iPod and the Mac mini.

By essentially giving Jony Ive free reign to do what he wants, there's a good chance that Jony will never want to leave Apple since he'll never get that kind of freedom at any other company. More importantly, giving Jony Ive freedom from reporting to someone means that no one can dictate or modify Jony's designs based on some committee's group opinion.

As Steve Jobs mentioned in a 2004 interview (www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/oct2004/nf20041012_4018_db083.htm) with BusinessWeek, the problem with most companies is that they're eventually run by accountants who only look at the short term profits while ignoring more crucial items like product design and customer service, all of which appear to cost money but actually increase sales.

"People always ask me why did Apple really fail for those years, and it's easy to blame it on certain people or personalities. Certainly, there was some of that. But there's a far more insightful way to think about it. Apple had a monopoly on the graphical user interface for almost 10 years. That's a long time. And how are monopolies lost? Think about it. Some very good product people invent some very good products, and the company achieves a monopoly.

"But after that, the product people aren't the ones that drive the company forward anymore. It's the marketing guys or the ones who expand the business into Latin America or whatever. Because what's the point of focusing on making the product even better when the only company you can take business from is yourself?

"So a different group of people start to move up. And who usually ends up running the show? The sales guy. John Akers at IBM is the consummate example. Then one day, the monopoly expires for whatever reason. But by then the best product people have left, or they're no longer listened to. And so the company goes through this tumultuous time, and it either survives or it doesn't.

"Q: Is this common in the industry?

"A: Look at Microsoft—who's running Microsoft?

"Q: Steve Ballmer.

"A: Right, the sales guy. Case closed. And that's what happened at Apple, as well."

Look at the turmoil that Dell Computers went through when they cut costs by outsourcing their telephone support to India. That saved money initially, but frustrated so many customers that Dell is still trying to improve their tarnished reputation. In the long run, outsourcing actually cost Dell money by losing future sales from previously loyal but now disgruntled customers. These lost sales never appear on the accounting books so for all intents and purposes, they don't exist in the eyes of most executives.

Companies continue looking for short term benefits at the expense of long term development, which eventually short circuits both the long term and short term future of any company. As long as maximizing short term, quarterly profits is all that matters, cutting costs like jobs, product quality and customer service will always be successful tactics to temporarily create the illusion of success while undermining the future of even the strongest company in the world.

Kodak focused on the short term benefits of profits from film and ignored the long term prospects of digital photography. Now Kodak is a shell of its former self and ready to disappear altogether. Is looking for the long term future that difficult for CEOs to understand with numerous examples to guide them every day?

Why do companies continue paying CEOs millions for their myopic vision of the future that eventually dooms the company? Perhaps it's because too many people share the same short term, limited vision as the CEOs they keep hiring. Given the choice between hiring a short term thinker or a long term visionary, most companies hire someone who thinks exactly like they do, and that's the problem right there.

Disappearing Gadgets by 2020

Yahoo! recently published a story about seven gadgets (shopping.yahoo.com/articles/yshoppingarticles/717/7-gadgets-that-wont-be-around-in-2020) that will likely disappear by 2020 that includes stand alone GPS systems, CD and DVD players, low end digital cameras, and video game consoles.

The reason why these gadgets will likely disappear is because they're either being bundled with other items or are becoming obsolete altogether. In the case of low end digital cameras, more people will just buy a smart phone that includes a low end camera. Stand alone GPS systems are disappearing because smartphones include GPS and many cars include built-in GPS systems as well. CDs and DVDs are disappearing because digital delivery is faster while taking up less space.

This is the reason why the MacBook Air makes an optical drive an optional accessory, much like floppy disk drives were once optional for iMacs. This is also the reason why Macs won't have a Blu-ray drive because the disc medium itself will become obsolete.

Perhaps more surprising is the prediction that video game consoles will disappear soon. The most popular mobile apps these days are iPhone/iPad/Android games, which have destroyed the mobile game console market like the

Nintendo 3DS. Although Microsoft's Xbox continues selling well with their Kinect motion detector, Nintendo's Wii and Sony's Playstation are fading.

Combine video game consoles with games stored on DVDs and you have a volatile combination. Video game stores like GameStop have a limited future much like Blockbuster Video and Borders Books.

The future may be murky, but its outlines are becoming clear. Everything is shifting to mobile and everything is shifting to digital. Video game consoles are under attack from smartphones and tablets while video game stores risk competing with digital delivery of video games through sites such as Apple's App Store.

When you think about it, the future is actually fairly clear if you're just willing to take the time to look for it. If you want to hold back or deny the future, just become a CEO of a major company that will reward you for short term thinking that never works in the long run.

Proprietary vs. Open: The Battle of E-Book formats

Both open source and proprietary systems have their advantages. Open source provides access to everyone, but when run by committee, tends to move slowly and mimic rather than innovate. Proprietary systems lock people out, but often innovate and move technology forward for a price.

In the e-book format world, the battle lines are dividing along the open source EPUB format and the proprietary Amazon Kindle format. Open source tends to win because it's freely accessible (think Linux). Proprietary tends to win because it can progress faster than open source (think iPad).

While the EPUB standard plods ahead with the consensus of a committee, Amazon's Kindle can forge ahead to embrace the future. In the e-book world, the latest Kindle e-book format is dubbed Kindle Format 8 (KF8) (www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?ie=UTF8&docId=1000729511), which heavily relies on HTML5.

Instead of simply displaying text, Kindle Format 8 allows pop-up text to emphasize certain phrases when selected, sidebars, nested tables and embedded fonts. The ability to define fixed formatting in all or part of text prevents an e-book from accidentally cutting a page in half, making the book hard to read such as cutting a cookbook page in half.

Children's books

Children's picture books come to life with brilliant images, fixed layouts and Kindle Text Pop Up.

Comics and graphic novels

Comics and graphic novels are presented in high resolution color with Kindle Panel Views.

Technical and engineering

Technical and engineering books are created more efficiently with Cascading Style Sheet 3 formatting, nested tables, boxed elements and Scalable Vector Graphics.

Cookbooks

Basic Cupcake Bites

The cupcake pops are extremely popular, but these cupcake bites come in a close second. They rely on the use of a plastic candy mold to help form the shape of the cupcake bottom. No sticks. No tapping off excess coating. Just a neat, professional-looking finished product. And best of all, they're easy!

When visiting the candy-making sections in craft and cake supply stores, I began to pay attention to the various candy molds that are available. When I saw one for candy cups, I immediately thought it would be perfect to replicate baking cup liners. I love the ease of this method.

Cookbooks and other titles requiring rich design look spectacular with embedded fonts, callouts and sidebars, drop caps and text on background images.

Figure 1. Amazon's Kindle Format 8 advances the power of e-books.

Most likely the EPUB standard will catch up to Amazon's Kindle format again, but then Amazon will likely forge ahead once more to help drive sales of their Kindle devices while also establishing Kindle as the most popular e-book format on the planet.

The EPUB format will never disappear because nobody wants books locked into a proprietary format. Yet the EPUB

format, like Linux, will likely remain supported by a vocal but small group of supporters while the rest of the world shrugs their shoulders at the whole proprietary vs. open source debate and just accepts what's easiest for them. In the case of e-books, the format that's leading the way is Amazon's Kindle Format 8.

Contrasting Videos

On October 19, Apple filmed an event at their headquarters, celebrating the life of Steve Jobs. While Apple limited the live event to their own employees, they've posted the video (events.apple.com.edgesuite.net/10oiuhfvojb23/event/index.html) of that event on their own site in case you want to watch it yourself.

While this video highlights what Steve Jobs accomplished with Apple, here's an entirely different video (www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-KLwVfi0uaU) to watch about the opening of a new Microsoft Store in Seattle. To entice people to show up, Microsoft always gives out free concert tickets. However, as this video shows, everyone lined up at the Microsoft Store that day only wanted the free concert tickets with almost nobody lining up to buy anything at the Microsoft Store. The end of the video even asks the mayor which phone he uses, and he admits he uses an iPhone.

The fact that Microsoft feels compelled to bribe people to show up at their Microsoft Stores grand openings means they don't feel confident that their products can draw in a crowd. Basically, paying for customers is as embarrassing as buying a prostitute to take to the high school prom to trick everyone into thinking you're capable of getting a date.

Go to any shopping mall that contains an Apple Store and a Microsoft Store and count how many people are in each one during a regular shopping day. The contrast cannot be more striking as Microsoft continues flushing money down the drain in another money losing venture to copy Apple.

MacBook Pro Updated

If you're in the market for a Macintosh laptop, you can get the MacBook Air or the MacBook Pro. The main difference between the two is that the MacBook Pro includes more storage (500GB vs. 64GB), faster minimum processor speed (2.4GHz vs. 1.6GHz) and a heftier weight (4.5 pounds vs. 2.38 pounds) along with a slightly higher minimum price (\$1,199 vs. \$999). The new MacBook Pros also support the Thunderbolt ports that offers higher transfer speeds than traditional USB ports.

As portable computers dominate, desktop models like the iMac may still be selling well, but their popularity is fading. After all, why be stuck using a computer at a fixed location when you can take your computer anywhere you need it?

The small size and light weight of the MacBook Air makes it a perfect alternative to the iPad for people who crave a physical keyboard. If you need hard disk space at a budget price and don't mind the sacrifice of the heavier weight, then take a look at a MacBook Pro. If want sheer portability, then just get an iPad.

The minor MacBook Pro update will likely be the last Apple product updates of any kind until early next year when we can expect new iMac and Mac Pro models along with the forthcoming iPad 3 around March or April. If you're shopping for any Apple product, wait until the day after Thanksgiving for the traditional sales from Apple and other vendors like MacMall. Or save even more money and just buy from Apple's refurbished store and get last generation's MacBook Pro at a discount right now.

Another Excuse Bites the Dust

For years, anti-Apple critics claimed that Apple products were overpriced and thus inferior. Now the New York Times points out how Apple's long-term vision of locking up parts in advance (www.nytimes.com/2011/10/24/

technology/apples-lower-prices-are-all-part-of-the-plan.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1) has allowed it to buy components at a lower price, leaving competitors scrambling on the remaining inventory, thus driving up their own prices.

While the MacBook Air costs \$999, Samsung's Series 9 ultrathin laptop costs \$1,049. With a two-year contract, the iPhone 4S costs \$199 while a Droid Bionic (www.verizonwireless.com/droid-bionic.shtml) at Verizon costs \$300. While competitors are bashing their heads against a wall, trying to compete against the iPad, The Street lists five tablet competitors (www.thestreet.com/story/11286107/1/the-tablet-graveyard-5-failed-gadgets.html) that failed despite having prices equal to (or less than) the iPad.

With price no longer an excuse to avoid many Apple products, critics will have to rely on a new line of "logic" for why nobody in the world should buy anything made by Apple. Perhaps they can claim that paying more gets you a better product or that it's not the price that matters but the ease of use and features of that device—which were the exact same claims that people used to offer for justifying buying Apple products. If other companies are going to copy Apple, they might as well copy the same justifications for buying their products as well.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 10

Programs like iPhoto can be handy for storing pictures and doing simple modifications such as rotating an image or enhancing its brightness. However, if you want to do more sophisticated modifications, you'll probably want to use Adobe's Photoshop.

For most people, Photoshop is an expensive and complicated program. It gives you the power to do practically anything, but it takes practice and dedication to master just a fraction of its features. For graphics artists, learning Photoshop is a must, but for everyone else, there's a simpler alternative called Photoshop Elements 10 (www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-elements.html).

Surprisingly, you can accomplish practically everything in Photoshop Elements 10 as you can in the regular Photoshop. The big difference is that where Photoshop hands you a million features and expects you to figure out how to use them in various combinations to create unique effects, Photoshop Elements 10 provides step-by-step guidance to make difficult tasks easy, simple and fast, especially for casual photography hobbyists who want to spend time taking and fixing pictures rather than learning the arcane features of a program.

One new feature of Photoshop Elements 10 is its ability to quickly select parts of a picture and then modify it in roughly two steps. Drag the mouse to select the parts of the image to change and then choose a way to modify that image. Since Photoshop Elements 10 makes this task so simple, you can experiment with different ways to change your images until you find the exact look you want.



Figure 2. You can easily modify parts of a picture to create unique effects.

One problem with many "beginner's" programs is that they suffocate you with too much help. Fortunately, Photoshop Elements 10 gives you a choice of the guidance you want. By clicking on different tabs, you can choose between modifying various components yourself through sliders, or through guided instructions.

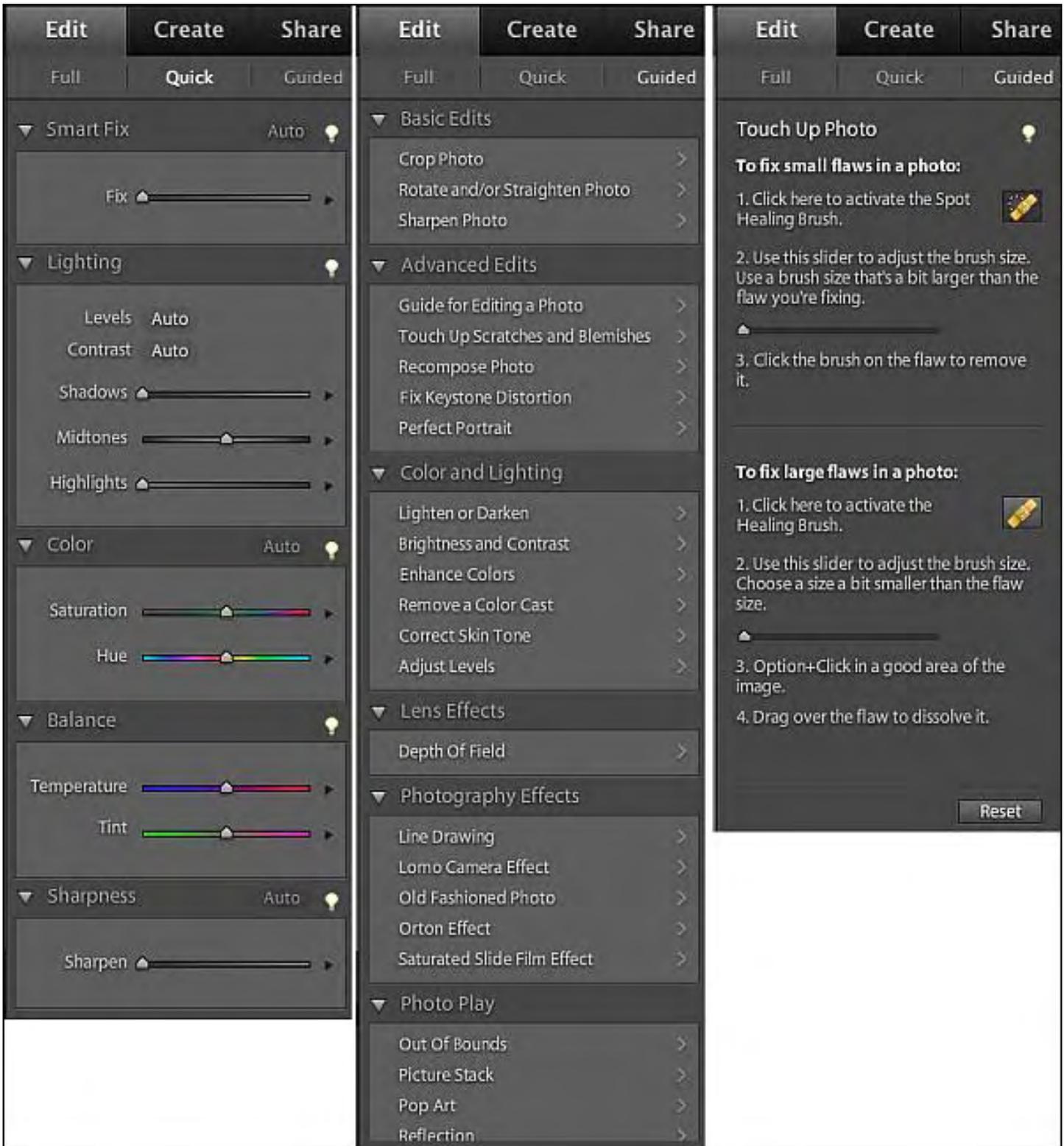


Figure 3. You can choose guided instructions to help manipulate an image.

Now you can modify pictures by following step-by-step instructions, and then as you get familiar with the tools, you can

skip the instructions and just use the features you need. In this way, Photoshop Elements 10 can gently guide you into learning its features. If you plan on graduating eventually to the full-blown Photoshop program, all of the commands and file formats between Photoshop and Photoshop Elements are identical, so all your Photoshop Elements skills will translate into using Photoshop quickly and easily.

For casual photography hobbyists, iPhoto may be all you need or want. For more dedicated photography hobbyists who may not want a full-blown product like Adobe's Photoshop or Lightroom, Photoshop Elements 10's low cost (\$99), complete Photoshop compatibility, and step-by-step guidance may be exactly what you need to turn your pictures into works of art without becoming a graphics artist to do it.

Another Computer Pioneer Passes Away

John McCarthy, the inventor of the LISP programming language, died on October 23. Although LISP is a relatively obscure programming language used in artificial intelligence research, it's the second oldest programming language around after FORTRAN. LISP is notable for its excessive use of parentheses that define a block of data such as:

```
(let ( (a 1) )
  (while (<= a 10)
    (princ (* a a)) (princ " ")
    (setq a (+ a 1))
  )
)
```

In LISP, anything inside parentheses is treated as data, even commands, which allows LISP to literally rewrite its own programming, hence its use in artificial intelligence. While LISP may not have been dominant in the personal computer industry, it's still in use today. In case you want to try this odd language, you can download a free version of LISPWorks (www.lispworks.com/downloads/index.html).

This free version lacks certain commands and only lets you run it for five hours a session, but it will give you a chance to write your very own LISP programs on a Windows, Macintosh, or Linux computer.

* * *

When you plug an iPhone, iPad, or a digital camera into your Mac, you'll probably want to take pictures off your device and store it on your Mac. However, you have several options.

If you store the pictures in iPhoto, your pictures actually get stored in iPhoto's own iPhoto Library file. That way if you have hundreds of pictures stored in iPhoto, you don't wind up with hundreds of pictures stored all over your hard disk.

If you want to store pictures as files that you can search and view in the Finder window, you'll want to yank your pictures off your device using the Image Capture program.

Since you'll likely have a preference for where you want to store your pictures all the time, take a moment to define which program automatically pops up every time you connect a camera to your Mac. Just load iPhoto, click the iPhoto menu and choose Preferences.

Click the General icon and in the "Connecting camera opens" pop-up menu, choose the program you want to start automatically each time you plug in your camera to your Mac.



Figure 4. Defining the default program to load when you connect a camera to a Mac.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

My New Mac (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271646?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271646),

My New iPhone (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956),

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

Steal This Computer Book 4.0 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050),

Microsoft Office 2010 for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987),

Beginning Programming for Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702),

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

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

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541),

Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468),

Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon Fisher and Gerald Fisher (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894),

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

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

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)

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

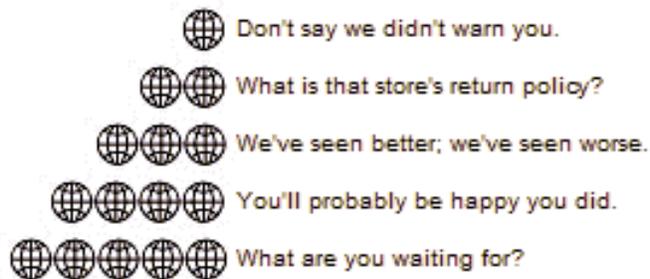
Method" (www.15minutemoviemethod.com/) along with blogging about electronic publishing and how authors

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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Worldwide & Product news reviews



Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

Tech Tips for Keeping the Halloweeners Safe;
Keeping the Peace in the Browser Wars; A Rave for RAGE: A Great Game for Busy Gamers.

Tech Tips for Keeping the Halloweeners Safe

AT&T has compiled a list of safety tips to keep in mind before your children hit the streets in search of goodies:

Over the years, Halloween observance has evolved into a light hearted celebration associated with candy and fun spirited pranks. Though tales of wicked witches, evil goblins and ghost haunting are merely part of the fun, safety precautions remain a necessary part of the merriment. High tech devices and apps can also ensure that you don't get spooked!

As we know kids from all ages hit the streets to trick-or-treat on Halloween while parents oversee in the fun while keeping their kids safe. Wireless calling is usually up on Halloween while people stay connected and there's no denying text messaging is here to stay. In 2010, AT&T had 647 billion text messages sent across the AT&T's network. The 2011 projection is 854 billion, nearly twice as many as two years ago.

1. Go mobile and ensure accessibility: Make sure wireless phones are fully charged. Since costumes and carrying bags of candy can become cumbersome, consider using a belt clip or other accessory that keeps the phone within easy reach.
2. Secure the line of communication: Pre-program contact information of parents, neighbors and emergency services into your and your child's speed dial, and be sure you know how to access these numbers with ease.
3. Establish boundaries: Families should have in place a familiarized route for children to follow while out on the town. Mobile navigation tools can assist parents and kids in creating routes, and goblins on the go can reference maps throughout the evening. Similarly, AT&T's FamilyMap Viewer allows parents to easily and immediately locate a family member's whereabouts from their mobile device or PC so they can keep a close watch.
4. Be in touch: Set up periodic alarms with Halloween-themed tones as a reminder for trick-or-treaters to text or call home between candy collecting stops.
5. Keep ears on the ready: As part of a continued effort to remain aware of surroundings and keep smooth the lines of communication, sweet seekers should turn up their phone volume and listen for incoming call and message alerts.
6. Don't miss a thing: Phones also come with photo, video and audio recorders, allowing spur-of-the-moment happenings to be captured and shared among friends and family in real time. AT&T's Video Share allows you to see live video on your handset while a voice call is taking place.

7. Be a wireless Samaritan: Any suspicious behavior must be immediately reported to the proper authority and shared among neighbors, whose numbers should be on hand and in reach.

8. Drive safely: With pedestrians filling streets and sidewalks, it is more important than ever for drivers to stay alert behind the wheel. If a call needs to be made or a message checked, pull over. Don't text and drive. Check out AT&T DriveMode mobile application—it automatically sends a customizable reply to incoming texts— notifying the sender that the user is driving and unable to respond.

Keeping the Peace in the Browser Wars

Oliver Baltuch, president of .Futuremark Inc (*futuremark.com*) writes in with info about its free universal browser speed test, Peacekeeper:

The question on many of your readers' lips today is "How does the performance of iPhone 4S compare to iPhone 4 and other smartphones and devices?"

Running Peacekeeper is a great way to answer that question as a device's browser performance is strongly linked to the power of its CPU.

We first launched Peacekeeper way back in March 2009 as a free tool for measuring the performance of different browsers on desktop PCs. Two years and more than 1.6 million results later, we have rebuilt Peacekeeper to offer an easy and accurate way to compare browsers on any Internet capable device, from desktops and notebooks, to tablets and smartphones.

Whether at home or on the go, people turn to the Web for an ever increasing range of activities, covering everything from entertainment and socializing to shopping and productivity. Many Web sites, such as social networks, video sharing communities, Web mail and other cloud based services, place a heavy load on the Web browser. For people who use these sites a lot, choosing a browser or a mobile device with better performance can make visiting those sites more pleasant, with less waiting for pages to load and display correctly. Peacekeeper makes that choice easier than ever.

For devices where the user can choose which browser to use, such as desktop PCs and notebooks, Peacekeeper offers an easy way to compare browsers directly to see which one is the fastest. Chrome has long held the title of fastest browser on Windows based PCs, but Opera is steadily closing the gap, and It may surprise you to see that IE9 outperforms Firefox 7.

Browsers ranked by performance on a Windows PC with Intel i7-2600K processor

(higher scores are better)

1. Chrome 14.0.835.202 - Peacekeeper score 4382
2. Opera 11.51 - Peacekeeper score 4190
3. Internet Explorer 9.0 - Peacekeeper score 2503
4. Firefox 7.0.1 - Peacekeeper score 2456
5. Safari 5.0.5 - Peacekeeper score 1744

For devices where the user cannot change the browser, for example some smartphones and tablets, Peacekeeper offers a straightforward way to compare the performance between competing devices.

Popular devices ranked by browser performance

(higher scores are better)

1. Apple iPad 2 (iOS 5) - Peacekeeper score 372
2. Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 - Peacekeeper score 350
3. Acer Iconia W500 - Peacekeeper score 345
4. Samsung Galaxy S - Peacekeeper score 275
5. Apple iPhone 4 (iOS 5) - Peacekeeper score 197

Peacekeeper scores are in operations per second or rendered frames per second depending on the test. When browser X scores twice as much as browser Y it means that for a given test either:

- X ran twice as many operations as Y in the same time period
- Or X ran the test in half the time as Y
- Or X rendered the test with twice the frame rate of Y

In plain language, by choosing a browser or device with a high Peacekeeper score you are ensuring a faster and smoother Web experience within the limits of your Internet connection speed.

A Rave for RAGE: A Great Game for Busy Gamers

Like a lot of you, my life is insanely busy. I have more day to day writing gigs than I can handle in addition to legal and personal commitments for upcoming projects. Perhaps also like you, as much as I wish I did, I simply don't have time to devote 100-200 or more hours to a deep Role Playing Game like The Witcher 2, Grand Theft Auto, or The Elder Scrolls: Oblivion. Ah, simpler times!



That's why, when I fire up a video game these days, it has to really grab me and pull me in. For me, the new first person shooter, RAGE, is such a game.

RAGE (www.rage.com), from iD Software (PC, about \$50)—the geniuses who gave us Doom and Quake—is set in a dystopian future on an Earth which has been impacted by an enormous asteroid. Renegade gangs. Cyberpunk outfits. Save the world. Or else.

OK, not a bunch of points there for originality, but other aspects of the game more than make up for it.



First, RAGE has superb graphics and—even better—fantastic locales and situations. Places I'll never visit (principally because they don't exist) but can do the next best thing thanks to a quad core processor, a fast graphics card, and a 30" monitor.

RAGE also has masterful level design. Lots to look at, do, and—the mark of true maturity in level design—it lets you out of an area quickly once you've done your chore without having to backtrack the last hour of progress.

Also, RAGE has quick save. Any game that incorporates a quick save feature is a real asset to humanity, in my book. Much better than the increasingly omnipresent checkpoint system that forces endless replay of small sections before you're allowed to progress. RAGE's quick save is fast and it works just about anywhere—including when a grenade is fixing to explode two inches from your face—so be careful how you use it. Use the regular save game feature so you don't, er, lose face.



Finally, RAGE is not overly long. I can afford 50 bucks for 10-15 hours of game play so long as it's an engaging experience. If money's a little tight, players can wait a couple of months and get it on Steam or eBay for half price or less.

That said, another great aspect of RAGE's design is that it basically allows players to play a long or short version of the game. iD makes it very easy to tell which missions are essential to advancing the storyline and which are so-called side quests. Ancillary stories and tasks can provide more depth and can dramatically extend the time to completion.

Finally, some players have reported issues with RAGE's graphics. If you're having problems or just want to ring every drop of pixel goodness out of your GPU, check out this excellent post (www.dsogaming.com/editorial/rage-pc-how-to-adjust-some-graphical-settings) by Guru3D user JonasBeckman to learn how to fine tune the game. For me, the game has played perfectly right out of the box, no special tuning required. Smooth as silk. It has not once crashed or locked up my computer.

I need more games like RAGE. Maybe you do, too.



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.

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EdgeWord: A Note from the Publisher

“A look back with no regrets” by Jack Dunning



Jack takes a look at how the world has become tech cannibalizing tech. In spite of all the change, it is no time to quit.

"The only thing constant is change." —Heraclitus, 5th Century B.C. Greek historian

This centuries old quote has never been more true than today—especially when applied to technology and how it affects all manner of life as we know it. During the past couple of decades we have seen businesses grow exponentially only to collapse—seemingly overnight. What tech giveth, tech taketh away. Today we see once powerful cell phone manufacturers struggling to deal with the impact of the iPhone and Android smart phones. The iPad is leaving computer manufacturers to wonder how they will ever compete in this previously unexploited niche. For most people AOL is a relic of the past. Do we remember Kodak and Polaroid? Companies that once could lead a market for decades are now wondering if they will be able to innovate enough to stay alive next year. Out the window is any kind of security—job or otherwise.

We have changed the way that we buy computers. They are now a commodity which can be bought online, at the local Costco, or an electronics store. We pick out a box, take it home, and plug it in, much as we would a toaster. This market change is responsible for the near disappearance of the once ubiquitous computer store. Sadly, change always has its casualties—among them the paper version of *ComputerEdge*. December of 2007 saw the last paper printed copy of this magazine.

The Byte Buyer (original name of *ComputerEdge*) made its debut May 16, 1983 distributing, 20,000 free copies in the San Diego area. In those days, there was no Mac, although the IBM PC, Commodore PET, Atari 8-bit family, Apple II, Tandy Corporation's TRS-80s, and various CP/M machines were in existence. In the early '80s, when I explained to a group of computer consultants that the new magazine would be dedicated to "micro" computers, they complained about the omission of "mini" computers. The "mini" was soon gone, swallowed up by the "micro." The following couple of decades were a pretty good run for computer stores and *ComputerEdge*. Ironically, the technology that *ComputerEdge* was espousing was also the source of the market changes which made printing and distributing the magazine on paper no longer feasible.

For the past few years, I've continued with *ComputerEdge* on the Web mostly because I can't seem to stop. The few computer stores who had managed to survive the first couple of years have fallen on even tougher times. There are not enough revenues to justify the continuation of this magazine—yet I can't seem to stop. There are thousands of people who regularly visit *ComputerEdge* each week hoping to pick up a tidbit of news or some tips which will make their computing life a little easier or more interesting. Digital Dave continues to top the list for popularity, probably because he tries to make his answers as simple as possible for everyone. For me to stop would mean the abandonment of those people who are looking for some help or just want a little more information. I'm not going to stop.

A number of months back, a reader suggested that I add a link to the site so people, such as himself, could make a contribution. After all, this has become a common way for many Web sites and software developers (shareware) to bring in enough to keep things going. This concept tends to rub me the wrong way because I've always been a blatant capitalist. (I would be thrown out of the crowd now occupying Wall Street.) Even when times are tough, it is up to me to do something about it. I don't feel sorry for myself, it's just what happens. I wouldn't want to take anyone's money unless they are getting value in return. So, as I implement a system for people to contribute to *ComputerEdge*, I

need to warn people that it is not for everyone.

I've set up a link to the Shopping Cart for the emerging e-book business which will now accept contributions (www.computoredgebooks.com/Contribute-to-ComputerEdge-Magazine_c3.htm) to **ComputerEdge** via credit card. However, this is only to be used by people who either in the past have found or currently find **ComputerEdge** useful. In other words, if you have received value from our weekly editorial, then we will gladly accept whatever you feel it is worth to you. On the other hand, if either you are not in a position to contribute, or the magazine has not provided reasonable value to you, do not feel obligated to make any contribution. Regardless, please come back and peruse the articles.

I will probably be doing this magazine until I either become senile or die. (Some feel the former may have already arrived.) I see many of the same reader's names pop up in the comments attached to the articles. I'm not sure that the **ComputerEdge** readership isn't actually an exclusive club of old friends—many of whom go back for decades. One thing that they all have in common is an interest in what's happening with computers and on the Internet.

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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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Career Paths," "Wrong Drivers," "Apple Thoughts"

Career Paths

[Regarding the October 7 Digital Dave column:]

You are best served by balancing *on the job training* and *certification*. Find a position with an actual upgrade path, not a dead end McJob administering a small company's two (inventory & payroll) servers.

Many of the people who have the "certs" I have worked with come into the "IT shop" with an *arrogance* that speaks "I have a *cert. That makes me better than you uncertified people.*" These people get humbled and admit their arrogance was wrong or they don't last long in the IT support world.

Nothing beats real work experience. I repeat, nothing beats real world IT experience!

My experience was that working for an IT support company (we were sent out to do IT jobs based on contracts held by a company) as a contractor was your best bet to break into the IT field to get the *real world* experience you need for your resume. The certs can get you in the company and a willingness to start "on the bottom rung" will show that you want to take more responsibility on projects. Then you find that you have to decide: management career path (some big bucks possible) or hands on tech/engineer (also big bucks possible *if you are really good!*)

I chose the hands on path. No management for me, except for one time to verify my choice was the right one.

-Art Blackwell, Evergreen, CO

Wrong Drivers

[Regarding the October 7 Digital Dave column:]

On Dave's answer to Joe, Pinole, CA, one of the driver updates he may have downloaded could have been for his SCSI hard drive. Redmond has been known to send out the wrong driver if the hard drive is translated because of limitations in the O/S (XP).

Joe should do a restore to a point before he installed the updates and see if that fixes the problem. I have had problems and crashes, even in Win 7, because of incorrect drivers sent to me by MS update.

I feel the need to repeat my earlier warning "Never Install a Hardware Update from Microsoft Without Checking the Version Number of the Current Driver in System/hardware/Device Manager in the Control Panel." Doing a restore can't hurt anything and the new drivers can easily be reinstalled by simply going to MS update again.

If the restore fixed the error message. then reinstall all of the drivers except the one for the SCSI drive. In the slight chance that the new drivers did not include one for the SCSI drive, then it's a long slog to find out which one caused the error message. But at least you have ruled out a bad driver update.

-Buck Fadness

This has been a problem with Microsoft as well as with other vendor upgrades. Many times these upgrades have actually *broken* a stable system!

The first thing to do is *disable* the *automatic upgrade process* if you can. Some software vendors don't have this option, though. I avoid these vendors.

Next, *create a restore point* when you get the message " an upgrade is available, install it now? Finally, go through and check that *every* program still works after the upgrade! *Do not skip this step!*

I have found some of the weirdest problems have been cured by the restore point because of drivers and software upgrades affecting *other programs!*

-Art Blackwell, Evergreen, CO

Apple Thoughts

[Regarding the October 7 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Reply to Aaron, San Diego:

"And in the engineering or scientific communities, 99% of the software is PC based."

Even if 99% of the engineering and/or scientific software really is PC (presumably meaning Windows) based (although I suspect that more than 1% actually is UNIX based), at least some of that software probably runs properly on a Macintosh equipped with a Windows virtual machine and/or Boot Camp partition.

Macs are PCs; they contain the same Intel processors, etc. that are found in Windows PCs. The relevant difference with regard to Aaron's letter is that Macs run Mac OS X and other operating systems including Windows. Competing PC brands cannot run Mac OS X without a hack that violates Apple's end-user license agreement.

Reply to Ron Gosewisch, San Diego:

"The Mac price was nearly \$2000, the 23" touchscreen, all in one Gateway was \$655 out the door at Best Buy."

Ron's letter does not specify which Mac he priced at nearly \$2,000.

Lest readers over-generalize that all Macs cost nearly \$2,000, the entry-level Mac Mini retails for \$599, the entry-level iMac \$1,199, the entry-level MacBook Air \$999, and the entry-level MacBook Pro \$1,199.

-Barry Fass-Holmes, San Diego, CA

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