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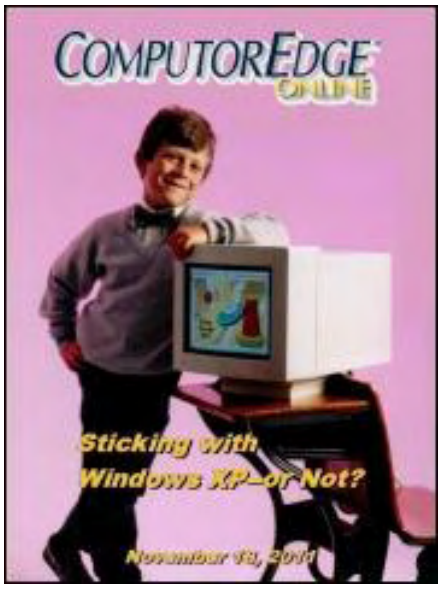

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Sticking with Windows XP—or Not?

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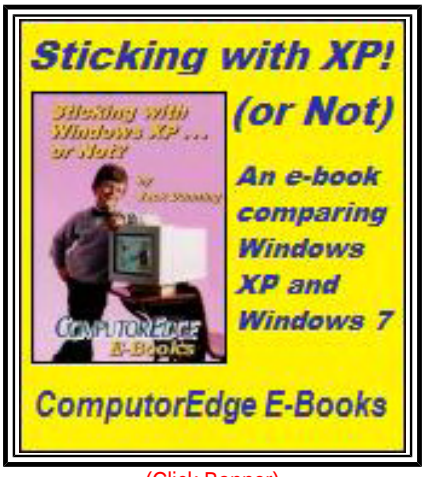

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Digital Dave

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

Annoying Google Chrome Ad in Internet Explorer; Keyboards Not Working (Code 10 Error); Building a Wi-Fi Hotspot for Kindle.

Dear Digital Dave,

I don't know if anyone has already asked this question.

I am using Google as a homepage and lately there has been a pop-up in the upper right corner that always promotes Google Chrome. I have read blogs that suggest to reinstall Google, but it keeps returning. You can "x" out the pop-up, but when you return there it is again. I know I can use Firefox, but I like Google as my homepage. I know I can just ignore it, but it's so annoying. If anyone has an answer I know you can help us.

Miguel Flores
San Diego, Ca

Dear Miguel,

I assume that you are using Internet Explorer when this pop-up occurs. Unfortunately Google has taken this road to marketing which often annoys users.

A Web site such as Google.com can recognize which browser you are using when you access their server and then deliver a tailored Web page to your browser. In this case, if you use Internet Explorer to access www.google.com, an ad for Google Chrome is embedded in the Web page. There is no way to stop this ad from appearing since it is not a pop-up, but actually part of the page (even though you can click it shut). This ad is part of Google's attempt to directly target users of Internet Explorer and get them to switch to Chrome. (I personally prefer Chrome over Internet Explorer.)

Until Google decides that these tactics are not worth the aggravation caused to users, the only solution is to switch to an alternative home page for Internet Explorer. The problem is that this campaign may be working for Google, in spite of the complaints—and there is very little Microsoft can do about it.

If you want to continue with a Google home page, you can use the Google news page (*www.google.com/nwshp*) or Google Images (*www.google.com/imghp*) then click "Everything" in the left hand menu after you do a search.

Another option is to add Google as your default search provider. (Click the down arrow next to the search bar and select "Manage Search Providers." If Google does not appear, click "Find more search providers..." at the bottom of

the window. Search for "Google" and then select Google Search as a search provider. In the next window click "Add to Internet Explorer." Set Google as your default search provider in the Manage Search Providers window.) Once you have Google as your default search engine, you will no longer need to deal with the Google Chrome ad in Internet Explorer. You can also change your homepage to something else such as *ComputorEdge (*www.computoredge.com*).* That's what I use.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a PC running Windows XP SP3. All of a sudden I couldn't input anything from my keyboard(s). I have one plugged in and another wireless. The mouse still works.

I tried unplugging and reinstalling and all the rest of the help Wizard. It's a "code 10" error. I tried going back to earlier date(s), before the problem, but that isn't working. Everything else seems to be working OK.

Thanks,

Bob McMahon
San Diego, CA

Dear Bob,

Generally when you get a Code 10 error there is a conflict between device drivers, corrupted driver files, or registry problems. The first step is to open the Device Manager via the Control Panel => System => Hardware tab => Device Manager and look for the problem devices. The problem devices should appear with a cautionary icon. I'm assuming that this is where you attempted to uninstall and reinstall the drivers. Try updating individual drivers. You are looking for a possible conflict between two devices.

If this doesn't help then there are a few Microsoft support pages which may offer assistance. This first support page (*support.microsoft.com/kb/943104*) offers information on Code 10 problems. There is an online Microsoft FixIt window which pops up. It could be worthwhile to run this application. You can also go directly to what appears to be the same FixIt page (*support.microsoft.com/mats/hardware_device_problems/en-us*).

You didn't say what brand of keyboard you're using, but at this
support page (*support.microsoft.com/kb/256233*) a known Logitech problem is addressed.

The next step is to attempt a system repair (*support.microsoft.com/kb/307545*) to fix damaged system files with your Windows XP system discs. There are programs which claim to fix these types of registry problems, but I can't comment on them. Perhaps another reader has experience with a program they know works.

The worse case—and last resort—is a clean install of Windows XP. If you do this, be sure to back up all of your files.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I've a Kindle that uses Wi-Fi. Is there an inexpensive USB device that will give Wi-Fi?

Bill Tiep
Toledo, Ohio

Dear Bill,

In order to use the Wi-Fi on your Kindle all you need is a Wi-Fi hotspot which will provide you the Internet. To create a Wi-Fi hotspot you need a wireless access point which would plug into your router. I have seen them listed for as little as $30.

However, for almost as little you can get a router which includes Wi-Fi capabilities. (You may want to check your current router/modem. Many ISPs are including modems which are also routers with Wi-Fi capabilities.) With either a wireless router or access point, all you need to do is go into the setup of the router, turn on the wireless features, add a name, set the security (not WEP), and add a pass code. Once the Wi-Fi is broadcasting you should be able to hook up the Kindle by selecting the automatically detected network name of your new hotspot and entering the code.

If you have a Wi-Fi capable computer that you can directly connect to your router or modem with an Ethernet cable, then you can use the computer to create a Wi-Fi hotspot. First you connect the computer with an Ethernet cable to the router. Make sure you have Internet service by loading your Web browser. Next you create an ad-hoc network which will share your Internet connection wirelessly with others. The steps vary depending upon your operating system, but I found this step-by-step video (*cnettv.cnet.com/make-your-laptop-hot-spot/9742-1_53-28619.html*) on CNET.

If you don't have Wi-Fi capabilities in your computer, there are inexpensive USB devices for adding wireless.

Digital Dave

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Forget Windows 7...I'm Sticking with XP!

“Windows XP Versus Windows 7” by Jack Dunning

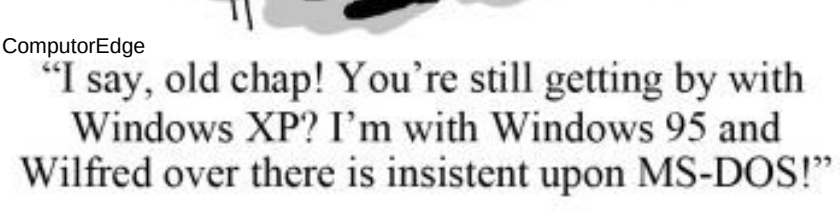
There are more Windows XP users than Windows 7 and Vista combined. Jack addresses the pros and cons of Windows XP and Windows 7 by summarizing a series of articles on the topic.

Much to Microsoft's chagrin, its ten year old Windows XP operating system is still going strong. There are more XP users (*www.netmarketshare.com/operating-system-market-share.aspx?qprid=11&qpcustomb=0*) than Windows 7 and Vista combined. While this is a credit to the durability of Windows XP, it certainly slows the sales of Windows 7 and alternative operating systems. Eventually Microsoft will end support for XP, but they have already extended it to 2014.

“I say, old chap! You’re still getting by with Windows XP? I’m with Windows 95 and Wilfred over there is insistent upon MS-DOS!”

There are good reasons for sticking with Windows XP, as well as compelling arguments for moving to Windows 7. Over the course of the last few years I've written various articles on Windows which highlight the advantages and disadvantages of Windows 7. If you're looking to make the switch or just want to confirm your decision to stay with XP (at least for now), then it could be worthwhile to review those articles.

For more convenience, I've updated the articles and combined them in an e-book in both EPUB format (for iPad, Nook, etc) (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Sticking-with-Windows-XP-or-Not-EPUB-for-iPad-*



NOOK-etc-Wintips0001-1.htm) and Amazon Kindle format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Sticking-with-Windows-XP-or-Not-MOBI-for-Amazon-Kindle-Wintips0001-2.htm*). They are available at our ComputorEdge E-books site (*www.computoredgebooks.com/*) for 99 cents. There is no Digital Rights Management (DRM) for these books, so you could purchase a copy and e-mail it to a friend who may still be using Windows XP.

The chapters in the book not only give you the pros and cons of both versions of Windows, but they also give tips for upgrading when and if you decide it's time. What follows is a summary of the e-book and links to the original articles.

Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? consists of six articles originally published in *ComputorEdge Magazine (*www.computoredge.com*).* These articles have been updated and revised for the many people who have decided that Windows XP is good enough for them. Maybe they will continue with their XP computer until 2014 (or later), when support is supposed to end for Service Pack 3. Possibly, they will wait until their computer dies to move to Windows 7. I expect that many years from now there will still be people who are proudly running XP on their computers.

The Windows community suffered through Windows Vista with many sticking with Windows XP. Whether it is necessary or desirable to move to Windows 7 continues to be a major question for the XP user. These articles address those concerns and give answers to the primary questions. Ultimately, once informed, the decision is yours to make.

Windows 7 Versus Windows XP

In the first article from October 2009, Bob from San Diego asks the question, "What's the difference between Windows 7 and XP? Forget Vista."

Millions of people just like Bob are continuing to use Windows XP. Laboratory testing has shown that while Windows 7 is faster than Windows Vista, in many situations Windows XP is actually speedier than Windows 7. When people upgrade to Windows 7 they are often buying a new computer. Most of the increased performance they see is from the newer computer hardware.

Yet there may still be reasons for moving to Windows 7. There are a few features that are particularly useful. The graphic effects of Windows Aero which appear in both Vista and Windows 7 may be a waste of resources, but the search capabilities in the Start Menu can quickly become indispensable. I also make extensive use of Favorites and Libraries in the new Windows Explorer.

While Windows 7 is very similar to Windows XP, the look and feel is different enough to create a little bit of a (possibly frustrating) learning curve. There are settings which will make Windows 7 look more like the "classic" XP, but in the long run it is probably better to take advantage of the changes.

Pining for Windows XP

In this August 2010 article, Rajhar from Denver writes that although he has a Windows 7 computer, he uses his Windows XP computer a majority of the time. If he were to buy another computer, he would insist on Windows XP. Maybe Rajhar should stick with XP, but there may not be as much missing from Windows 7 as he thinks.

One of his frustrations is the changing of key commands in Windows Explorer. While it appears that there are less commands in Windows 7, there are actually more available than in XP. Some of the changes in Windows 7 were

caused by the inclusion of Favorites and Libraries in the new Windows Explorer. Initially these features may appear to be trivial, or even annoying, but once understood they can be power tools for navigating files.

There are good reasons for continuing to work on an older computer even when you own a newer Windows 7 system. I do that myself. But when the time comes to make the switch permanent, you are more ready for the change than people who have never used Windows 7.

New Features and What's Missing from Windows 7

This June 2009 article shows that while there are many useful new features such as Libraries in Windows 7, there are some glaring omissions, such as an e-mail program. Some of the missing programs can be replaced with something as simple as a free download from Microsoft, but a number of them are gone for good (or bad).

However, the changes in Windows 7 are not random. When significant changes are made to features, it is usually to make computing easier. The new Windows 7 features are reviewed to show how they may benefit the user—or not.

Some of the useful Windows 7 features include a new way of opening tools with helpful statements, better taskbar organization, the new Start menu and Libraries. What's missing besides an e-mail program? Photo Gallery, Calendar, Gadget Sidebar (Vista) and some of the Windows XP Windows Explorer metadata. For some, the missing XP metadata is a glaring oversight.

Upgrade or New Computer?

In this May 2009 article I addressed the concern that when and if you decide it is time to upgrade or purchase a new computer, there are issues which you should take into consideration. (The article contains references to Windows 7 Release Candidate which is no longer available. The updating has removed these sections from the e-book.) If you are moving to Windows 7, then Microsoft has some tools which will help you evaluate whether your XP hardware is suitable for upgrade and which version of Windows 7 (Home Premium, Professional, etc.) may be best for you. If you are thinking about switching to Apple Macintosh (or a tablet computer, or Linux), then my thoughts are offered in Chapter Six.

Of particular importance is Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor. This Microsoft download will scan your computer hardware and the installed software to determine the feasibility of upgrading to Windows 7 with your current computer. One warning is that if you are upgrading from Window XP, you will be effectively be doing a clean install. You should back up all of your files before you start any upgrade.

The Windows XP install problems and the fact that any new computer will have much faster hardware may be enough of a reason for you to decide to buy a new Windows 7 computer rather than upgrade your old computer.

Do You Need Windows 7 Professional?

Unfortunately, there are different versions with varying features for both Windows XP and Windows 7. If you go to a computer or electronics store and buy a laptop off the shelf, it will most likely have Windows 7 Home Premium installed. The Home Premium is the version of Windows 7 which is has the most functionality without sacrificing too much. For the majority of computer users, Home Premium will be all that they will ever need. However, there are a few features offered only in the Professional level of Windows and above which could be very important to you.

In particular, Windows 7 Professional includes Remote Control, Windows XP compatibility mode, and network backup capabilities. If you need to access your Windows 7 machine remotely (without paying a GoToMyPC monthly fee), want to run legacy Windows XP software which won't run in Windows 7 directly, or have a network drive or computer that

you will be using to backup your Windows 7 computer, then you may want to invest in the Professional version.

Maybe, Just Buy a Mac

In September of this year I talked about switching to a Mac. If you're a Windows XP users, when it comes time to make a change Windows 7 is not the only option. Maniacal Apple users will tell you that you must go with Mac because any other move would be stupid. Perhaps they are right, but even switching to Mac from Windows XP is not necessarily a snap. If you had never used XP then maybe taking up the Mac would be easier than Windows 7. But a direct comparison is impossible because you can't unlearn all of your XP knowledge.

There are a number of issues to consider when you make a change to Apple Macintosh. First, is Mac really better than Windows? Do you have Windows software which won't run on the Mac without installing a Virtual Machine? Is the Mac learning curve really easier? What's your own computer IQ? Also, would an iPad be a good replacement for the XP?

The intention of the e-book *Sticking with Windows XP—or Not?* is to update all of the information in these six articles and combine them into one easy-to-use format. If you are not familiar with e-book formats or how to get non-protected e-books into your e-reader, please see "How to Download and Read Free E-Books."

Jack is the publisher of *ComputorEdge* 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*. If you would like to contribute to *ComputorEdge* endeavors, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Contribute-to-ComputorEdge-Magazine_c3.htm*).

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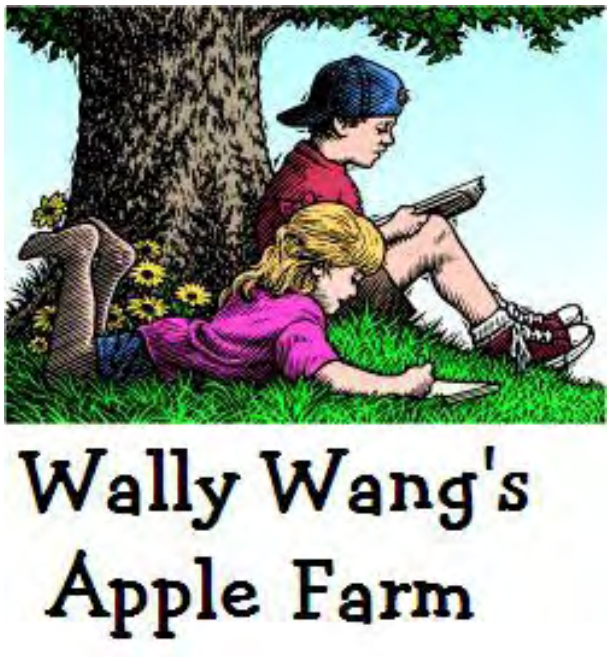

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"The Long Wait for Flash on Mobile Devices is Over" by Wally Wang

The Long Wait for Flash on Mobile Devices is Over; The Asus Zenbook MacBook Air Clone; History Repeats Itself with Tucker Automobiles; Coach's Eye for iOS; Useless Anti-Malware Android Apps; Prolog and the Fifth Generation Project; Moving Text From One Location to Another.

After long claiming that Flash had a future on mobile devices, Adobe has finally admitted that getting Flash to run on mobile devices is as unwieldy as trying to cram the features of a recreational vehicle into a motorcycle. From this point on, Adobe will no longer develop Flash for all mobile devices including Android tablets and smart phones.

For anyone who took the time to investigate the facts about Flash, Adobe's abandonment of Flash on mobile devices makes perfect sense and comes as no surprise. Why waste time pursuing the impossible? Flash was developed in an era of desktop computers with a constant power source, a keyboard and a mouse. Flash simply could not run efficiently on mobile devices with limited battery power and touch screen interfaces.

Go to a Verizon or Best Buy store where they have Research in Motion's Playbook tablet or Samsung's Galaxy Tab on display and visit any Web site that uses Flash. You'll find that Flash displays content acceptably. Now try running a Flash game that requires constant interaction to avoid missile firing enemies, and you'll suddenly see the main limitation of Flash as it can't accurately interpret touch screen gestures.

Yet, despite these known limitations of Flash, rivals have touted the ability to run Flash as a huge advantage over the iPhone and iPad. Of course, these rivals don't mention the limitations of running Flash (*www.zdnet.com/blog/mobile-news/killing-flash-for-mobile-is-best-thing-for-android/5395?tag=content;feature-roto*), as stated by James Kendrick at ZDNet:

"Flash on Android devices has been spotty during my extensive use of the platform. I have seen Web pages heavy with Flash content fail to work properly, devices slowed to a crawl as some Flash code takes over the system, and watched gadget battery level sucked dry due to some Flash content playing. Flash support has been inconsistent at best, and terrible at worst."

PC Magazine had this to say about Flash: "If you look for root causes of the Flash failure, I think they go back many years to a fundamental misreading of the mobile market, and to short term revenue goals that were more important than long term strategy at both Macromedia and Adobe."

What are the odds that the obsession with maximizing short term revenue would hurt the long term strategy of another company? Yet, this same shortsightedness will likely occur again and again despite numerous examples for other

companies to study and learn from.

The big question is with Flash's experience on rival devices so universally poor, why did any company promote Flash as an advantage over the iPhone and iPad, knowing full well that Flash didn't work reliably? More importantly, why did people promote the idea that Flash made rival devices better than the iPhone and iPad despite their own experience? This would be like a car dealer knowingly selling you a car with a rusted out engine and a faulty transmission, and then having the customer claim that a rusted out engine and a faulty transmission makes his car superior to a car that does not have a rusted out engine and a faulty transmission.

Legions of critics declared the iPhone and iPad useless because they couldn't play Flash. Now Microsoft's Windows 8 won't let Flash run on tablets and as Adobe has stopped supporting Flash on mobile devices, Flash eventually won't run on newer versions of Android and other mobile operating systems either. So now everyone who claimed that the iPhone and iPad were useless without Flash can now claim that Windows 8 on tablets and Android is equally useless without Flash.

Yet if these critics had simply studied the limitations of Flash before proclaiming that Flash was so vitally important, they would have been able to see the inherent technical limitations of Flash that had nothing to do with Apple. Even more puzzling is how critics claim they don't want to be restricted by technology that's controlled by one company like Apple, but they have no problems embracing technology like Flash that's also controlled by one company like Adobe.

Despite this obvious example of Flash's failings that were readily apparent to anyone who took the time to research the facts, these same people will likely rush to embrace another excuse to halt progress, criticize new technology based on myths, and proudly embrace mediocrity as superiority. And then the cycle of misinformation and illogical thinking will continue once again for the masses who prefer the illusion of pretending to be right rather than taking the time and effort to actually make the right decisions based on facts instead of fantasy.

The Asus Zenbook MacBook Air Clone

The Asus Zenbook is the latest example of the illogical thinking process of the anti-Apple world. First, anti-Apple critics claim that PCs are superior because the Macintosh costs too much. Yet the Asus Zenbook costs the same as the MacBook Air ($999) and looks nearly the same as the MacBook Air as well. If the Macintosh is so inferior, why do so many PC manufacturers keep making their PCs look like Macs?

Figure 1. The Asus Zenbook bears a strong resemblance to Apple's MacBook Air.

Secondly, as the Ars Technica site discovered about the Asus Zenbook (*arstechnica.com/gadgets/reviews/2011/11/the-asus-zenbook-a-steely-marvel-with-an-appalling-trackpad.ars?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss*), "the trackpad is fickle and barely functional, to the point that using the Zenbook as a primary traveling work machine caused us a good deal of frustration."

So for the same price as a MacBook Air, you can get an Asus ZenBook that looks like the MacBook Air, but has a clumsy trackpad that makes it harder and more frustrating to use than the MacBook Air.

Most likely the people rushing to buy the Asus Zenbook will proudly proclaim that the Zenbook is still superior to the MacBook Air despite identical price tags (disputing the popular myth that Macs always cost more than PCs), identical appearances, and a nearly unusable trackpad. Then as they struggle to keep their disk drive defragmented on a regular basis and optimize their Windows registry to keep their PC from slowing down over time using a trackpad that barely works, they can congratulate themselves for having the foresight to avoid anything influenced by Apple.

History Repeats Itself with Tucker Automobiles

In 1988, Francis Ford Coppola released a movie called "Tucker (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00004Y62V/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B00004Y62V*)," which was about a man named Preston Tucker who was ahead of his time.

Despite not going to college, Tucker worked in a car company and learned all aspects about building a car to the point where he became a knowledgeable automobile engineer. As World War Two approached, Tucker developed an armored car that could hit speeds up to 100 miles per hour. However, the War Department believed that armored cars should only go up to 35 miles per hour, so they weren't interested in a vehicle that actually exceeded their specifications.

One part of Tucker's armored car included a turret that housed a machine gun. Tucker patented this turret design, which was later used for anti-aircraft guns on Navy ships along with gun turrets in B-17 and B-24 bombers. Despite his patents, rivals copied his technology, forcing Tucker to spend time in court protecting his ideas.

After the war, Tucker developed his car of the future, which included seat belts, a foam padded dashboard to protect the driver and passenger, and shatter proof glass that would pop out in a crash. All the other major car companies in Detroit criticized Tucker's safety features as unnecessary and pointless.

The major auto makers even conspired against Tucker to bankrupt his company so they could continue selling their own cars that lacked safety features because they were focused more on making money than doing what was best for their customers. Later, of course, all these same Detroit auto makers would adopt these same safety features and promote them to help sell their own cars.

Does this sound familiar? Superior technology dismissed because people can't see the benefits? Patented technology ripped off because it's easier to make money stealing someone else's ideas rather than trying to innovate yourself? Large companies working against the customers' best interests so they can make money while the customer not only suffers, but actively supports these companies that are working against their own best interests? Rivals dismissing technology that they later adopt for themselves despite initially fighting against it?

Fortunately, the story of Tucker happened decades ago and people aren't like that any more. After all, if people thought that way today, that means they would have been cheering the villain in the "Tucker" movie and actively working to destroy the hero to keep him from doing what's best for people.

Certainly nobody could possibly think like that in today's more enlightened environment. If a visionary like Tucker were to emerge today, everyone would unanimously embrace his ideas and support him so he could continue advancing the state of technology for the betterment of everyone.

Coach's Eye for iOS

If you've ever watched a sports game on TV, the commentators often show replays of an exciting scene and then draw video chalk lines to help you understand exactly what happened and why. Just watching raw video alone can be useful, but when combined with the seasoned eye of a coach highlighting action with video chalk lines, anyone can clearly see what someone might have done right or wrong.

If you have an iOS device such as an iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad, you can now duplicate this video chalkboard effect using an app from TechSmith called Coach's Eye (*www.coachseye.com/*) .

Figure 2. Coach's Eye turns your iOS device into a video chalkboard.

With the Coach's Eye app, you can either capture video directly using your iOS device or import existing video through Dropbox or e-mail. Once you have video stored on your iOS device, you can draw video chalk lines or circles to highlight specific motions of an athlete or group of athletes.

Besides letting you add video chalk lines directly over a video, Coach's Eye also lets you add audio commentary so you can explain exactly what your video chalk lines are highlighting. To make adding video chalk lines easy, Coach's Eye lets you slow down the video and play it one frame at a time so you can capture the exact moment you want to highlight.

Once you've finished drawing video chalk lines and adding audio commentary, you can replay your marked up video directly on your iOS device to show people, send the modified video by e-mail or Dropbox, or send it to YouTube. Sync your iOS device to your computer and you can use your computer to burn a DVD of the video so you can make multiple copies.

Whether you're a professional coach or just someone coaching a Little League or high school game, Coach's Eye can help improve any athlete's performance by capturing them in action, highlighting problems or perfect behavior, and then show that video as many times as necessary to correct that particular athlete or to demonstrate general principles to other athletes.

Figure 3. Video chalk lines can highlight an athlete's performance.

Even if you're not a coach or directly involved in sports, you can use Coach's Eye as a fun video editing app for your own amusement. Capture a video of a birthday party and then draw video chalk lines to show the correct way to blow out birthday cake candles. Capture a picture of a dog chasing a frisbee and send this silly video to your friends for fun.

Coach's Eye has a definite and useful purpose for athletes, but it can be a fun video editing app as well. If you're involved in sports, Coach's Eye may be the one app that will convince you to buy an iOS device just to use the program. However you use Coach's Eye, you'll find that it makes your iOS device more versatile so you'll never want to be without your iOS device and the Coach's Eye app again.

Useless Anti-Malware Android Apps

One advantage of Android is that you can install apps from anywhere, which is also one drawback of Android as well. Because of Android's open nature, malware authors can easily create and spread malware for Android, so make sure you take the time to install apps only from trusted sites. Even then, since nobody is examining them, malware apps can still sneak on to a trusted site until someone spots and removes it.

To combat this spread of Android malware, people can install anti-malware apps for Android. The problem is that as ZDNet discovered, many of these free anti-malware apps are absolutely useless (*www.zdnet.com/blog/hardware/most-free-android-anti-malware-scanners-near-to-useless/16224?tag=mantle_skin;content*). In tests, ZDNet found that most failed to detect 100 percent of all known malware.

If you use Android, you'll have to watch out for security threats like malware. Then you'll have to worry about installing

a useless anti-malware app that will give you a false sense of security.

While there are plenty of commercial and free anti-malware apps that are effective in spotting and removing Android malware, this is just one more problem that's completely avoidable by simply using a different phone such as an iPhone or even a Windows Phone 7 phone where the threat of malware is far less than through the open nature of Android.

If you're going to use Android, keep this malware threat in mind as just one additional problem to worry about. This doesn't make Android inferior; it just makes Android a little more troublesome to use. If spending your time maintaining your smart phone appeals to you, then at least purchase an Android phone with your eyes wide open.

Prolog and the Fifth Generation Project

Back in 1981, Japan announced an ambitious Fifth Generation Project (*www.atarimagazines.com/creative/v10n8/103_The_fifth_generation_Jap.php*) where the goal was to create the next generation of artificially intelligent machines. To do this, Japan planned to pour resources into a national project that relied on parallel computing and an artificial intelligent programming language called Prolog.

The Fifth Generation Project eventually withered away when ordinary computers surpassed the specialized hardware the Fifth Generation Project was trying to produce. However, the Fifth Generation Project did make the Prolog programming language popular momentarily.

Unlike programming languages like C++ or Java, Prolog is a declarative language where you state facts and rules for manipulating those facts. Then based on its database of facts and rules, a Prolog program can accept unknown data and (theoretically) handle it intelligently.

```
witch(X)  <= burns(X) and female(X).
burns(X)  <= wooden(X).
wooden(X) <= floats(X).
floats(X) <= sameweight(duck, X).
female(girl).          {by observation}
sameweight(duck,girl). {by experiment }
? witch(girl).
```

In this example, Prolog defines its rules as a witch is a female who burns, anything wood also burns, anything that floats is wood, and anything that weighs the same as a duck must float. Then by stating facts that a girl is female and weighs the same as a duck, this Prolog program can determine that a girl must also be a witch.

Such a declarative way of writing a program can teach traditionally trained programmers another way to think about solving problems and writing computer programs. If you want to try writing your own Prolog programs on a Macintosh, download the free XGP program (*xgp.sourceforge.net/*).

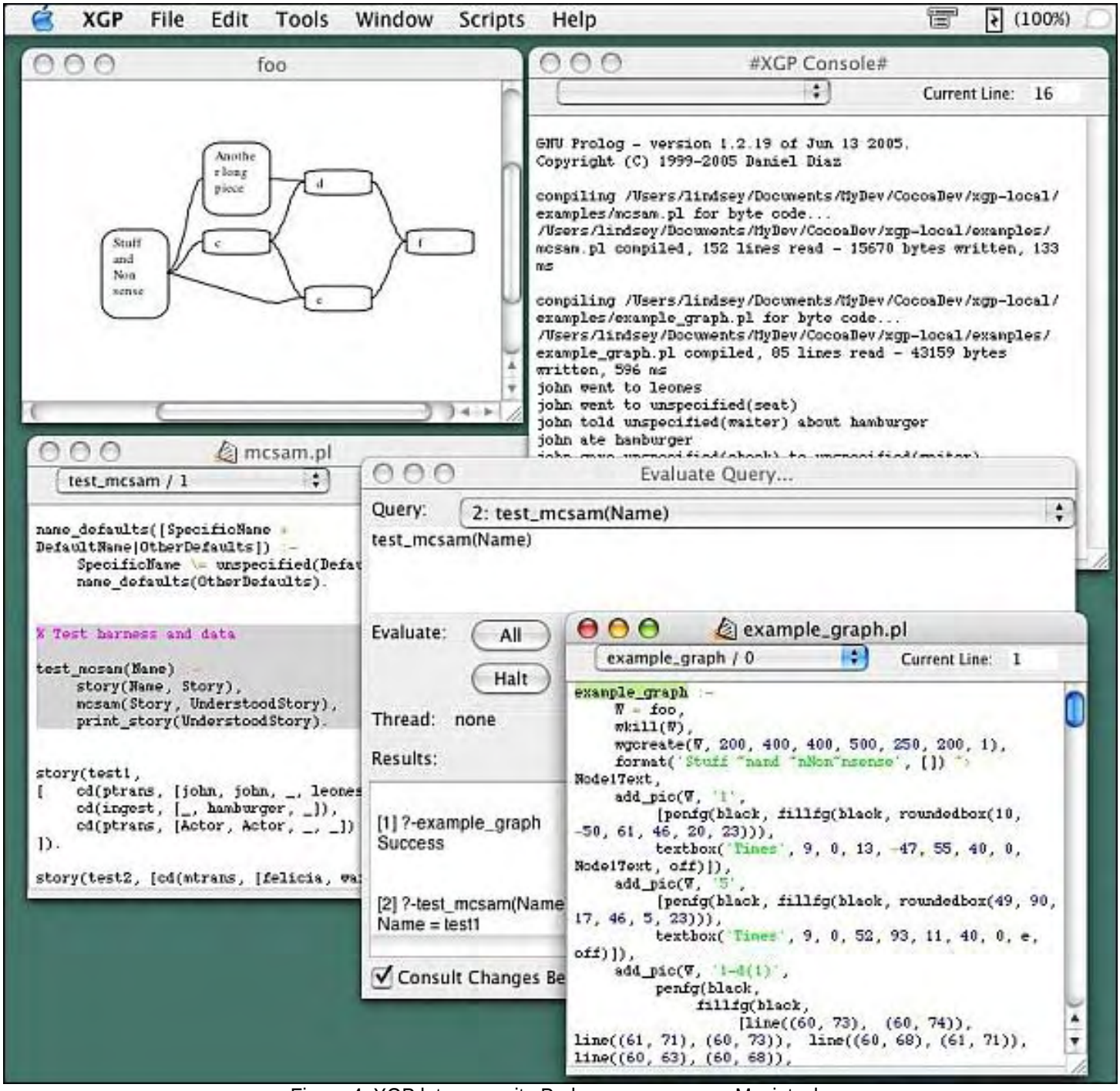

Figure 4. XGP lets you write Prolog programs on a Macintosh.

By experimenting with Prolog, you can learn a new way to think about programming. While you can create commercial applications in Prolog, chances are good you'll just use Prolog to play with a unique programming language that Japan once thought would revolutionize the computer industry. More importantly, you can see how an incorrect database of facts and poorly implemented rules can lead a Prolog program to come up with completely illogical conclusions, which is no different than many people on this planet.

* * *

The two traditional ways of moving text from one location to another in a word processor is to highlight the text, click the Edit menu and choose Cut (or press Command+X), click in a new location in your document, and then choose Edit and Paste (or press Command+V).

A faster method is to highlight text and then drag that highlighted text to a new location in your document. A cursor appears to show you where your selected text will appear and as you drag the selected text, it appears as a "ghost image." When the cursor appears in the spot where you want the selected text to appear, just let go of the mouse (or trackpad) and your selected text will move to the location of the cursor.

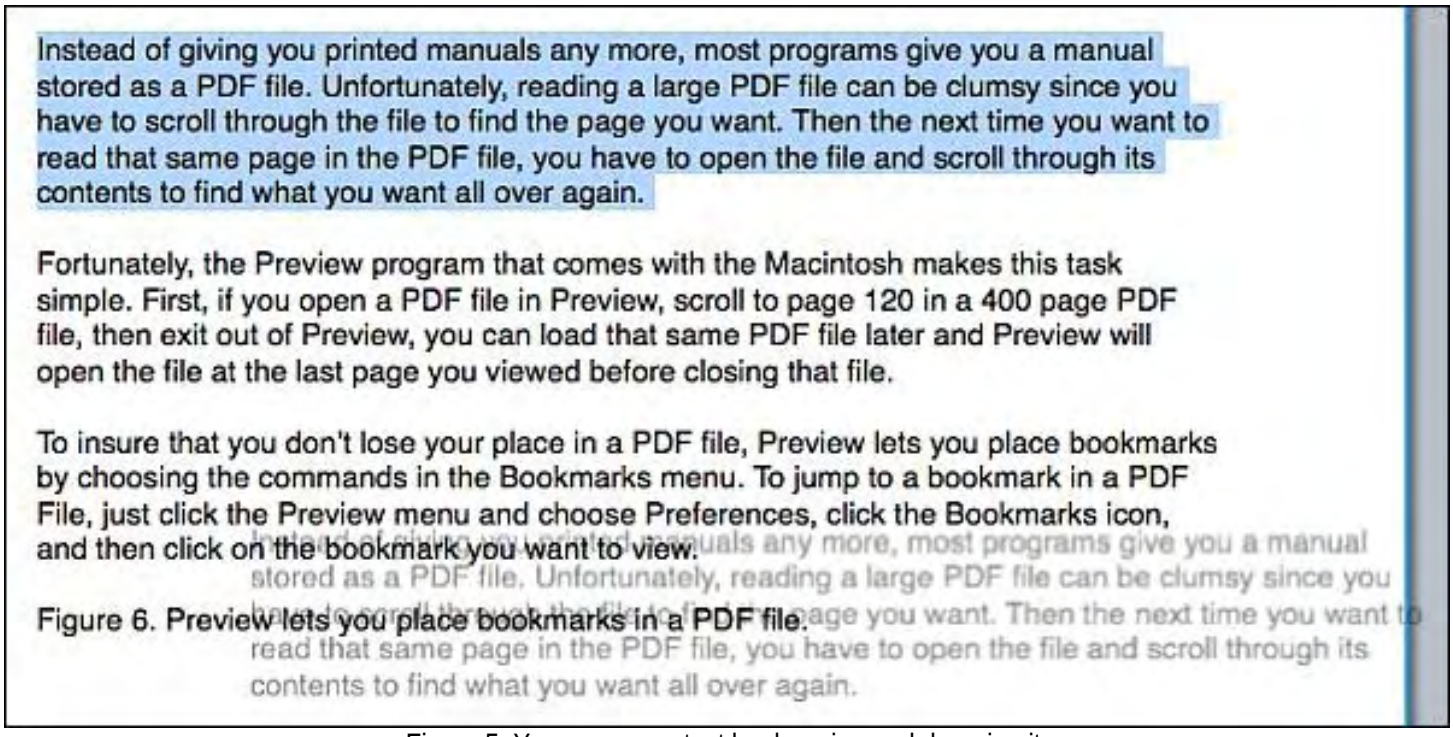

Figure 5. You can move text by dragging and dropping it.

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, Lion Edition (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908*),
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 2 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X*),
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*),
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/*) Wally can be reached at *wally@computoredge.com*.

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Beyond Personal Computing

“It Takes All Kinds: Unique Interpretations of Computer Terms and Users**”** by Marilyn K. Martin

> Marilyn shares some interesting interpretations of exactly what certain computer terms mean.

Computers and the Internet are great democratizing marvels. Yet, some non-techies have their own, shall we say, interesting interpretations of exactly what certain computer terms mean. While Techs keep their own lists of...highly unique users.

John Q. Public's Understanding of Computer Terms

BOOT - What your friends give you, because you spend too much time bragging about your computer skills.

BUG - What your eyes do after you've been on your computer non-stop for 48 hours.

CHIPS - The fattening, non-nutritional food computer users eat to avoid having to leave their keyboards for meals.

CURSOR - What you turn into when you can't get your computer to do what you want, as in "You %@#* computer!"

DISK - What goes out in your back after carrying all your desktop PC components upstairs in one trip.

DUMP - Where all your former hobbies wind up once you've installed games on your computer.

ERROR - What you made when you first walked into a computer showroom to "just have a look around."

EXPANSION UNIT - The new room you have to build onto your home, to house your computer, your mega-speakers, the other must have peripherals, and bookcases to store your games and CDs.

FLOPPY - The condition of your stomach due to a steady diet of junk food and no exercise.

IBM - The kind of missile your family and friends want to drop on your computer so you'll pay attention to them again.

MENU - What you'll only see on your computer since you spent all your money upgrading and now have nothing left with which to go to a restaurant.

PROGRAMS - Those things you used to look at on TV before you hooked up your computer and joined three hundred gaming sites.

TAB - What your friends pick up when they meet you for lunch because you spent all your money on the latest software and games.

TERMINAL - A place where you can find buses, trains and really good deals on hot computers.

WINDOW - What you heave your computer out of after you accidentally erase a program that took you a month to set up.

Redneck Computer Terms

BAR CODE - The fightin' rules down at da local tavern.

BYTE - What your pit bull done to cousin Jethro.

CHIP - Cattle pasture muffins you try not to step in.

CACHE - Needed when you go to da store.

DIGITAL - Countin' on yer fingers.

TERMINAL - Time to call da undertaker.

FAX - What you lie to the IRS about.

HACKER - Uncle Leroy after smoking for 60 years.

HARD COPY - Picture you look at when choosin' a tattoo.

INTERNET - Where cafeteria workers put der hair.

KEYBOARD - Where you hang da keys to da John Deere.

MEGAHERTZ - How your head feels after 19 beers.

MODEM - What you did when the grass and weeds got too tall.

NETWORK - Scoopin' up a big fish before it breaks the line.

ONLINE - What you walk on when taking a sobriety test.

ROM - Where da Pope lives.

SERIAL PORT - A red wine you drink with breakfast.

Signs a Redneck Has Been Working on Your Computer

The monitor is up on blocks.

Outgoing faxes have tobacco stains on them.

The six front keys have rotted out.

The extra RAM slots have truck parts installed in them.

The numeric keypad only goes up to six.

The password is "Huntin."

The tower has a gun rack mount.

There is a Skoal can in the disc drive.

The keyboard is covered in camouflage.

The mouse is referred to as the "critter."

Techs Define Nine Types of Difficult Users

El EXPLICITO: "I tried the thing, ya know, and it worked, ya know, but now it doesn't, ya know?" Advantages: Makes for interesting communication challenges. Disadvantages: Incapable of using proper nouns, or explaining the problem. Ya know?

MAD BOMBER: "Well, I hit ALT-f6, shift-f8, CNTRL-f10, f4 and f9, and now it looks all weird." Advantages: Will try to find own solution to problems. Disadvantages: May translate a document into Navajo without meaning to.

FRYING PAN/INTO FIRE TACTICIAN: "It didn't work with the data set we had. So I fed in my aunt's recipe for Key Lime Pie and a few leftover sync codes. And then it worked like a charm!" Advantages: Will usually fix errors. Somehow. Disadvantages: Tends to delete lines that get errors instead of fixing them.

SHAMAN: "When the moon was full, the clouds were thick, and the spirit of Steve Jobs was above the horizon, I typed f77, and lo, it did compile." Advantages: Gives insight into primitive mythology. Disadvantages: Anthropology majors switching to computer technology may not be a good mix.

X-USER: "Will you look at those... um, that resolution, quite impressive, really." Advantages: Using cutting edge graphics technology. Disadvantages: Has no real idea how cutting edge graphics actually work.

MIRACLE WORKER: "That couldn't have been a bad disc since I read a file from it just yesterday!" Advantages: Seems to have remarkable luck when Tech isn't around. Disadvantages: People nearby seem offended when Tech responds with "That's Bull-puckey!"

TASKMASTER: "This is a file from MasterWrite. Do you know how I can upload it to MUSIC, transfer it over to UNIX, download it onto an IBM, convert it to WordPerfect, and then put it in a 3 column format?" Advantages: Likes bold new challenges. Disadvantages: Makes the Tech long for a simpler career, like a garbage collector.

MAESTRO: "First I sat down, like this. Then I logged on, like that, and then I typed in my password, like this. Then I edited my file, like that, and then I picked my nose ..." Advantages: Eager to show Tech exactly what they did to get an error. Disadvantages: This 'show-and-tell' can last for six hours. When Tech tries to speed up the telling, Maestro responds with "Hold on, I'm getting to that." Repeated over seventy times.

PRIMA DONNAS: "I need a Mac, and I like that one over there by the window. Can you find an excuse to get rid of that

creep over there on MY computer?" Advantages: Flatters the Tech for their high standards of service. Disadvantages: Can only communicate by complaining, and seems oblivious to other people on the planet.

Minnesota Computer Terms

LOG ON - Making da vood stove hotter.

LOG OFF - Don't add no more vood.

MONITOR - Keep an eye on da vood stove.

MEGAHERTZ - Ven da big log drops on yur bare foot in da morning.

FLOPPY DISK - Vhat you get from piling up too much vood.

HARD DRIVE - Getting home during most of da vinter.

CHIP - Vhat ya munch during Vikings games.

MICROCHIP - Vhat's left in da bag vhen da chips are gone.

MODEM - Vhat ya did to da hay fields last Yuly.

LAPTOP - Vhere da grandkids sit.

SOFTWARE - Da plastic picnic utensils.

MOUSE - Vhat leaves dem little turds in da cupboard.

MAINFRAME - Da part of da sauna dat holds up da roof.

PORT - Vhere da commercial fishin' guys tie up der boats.

RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY - Vhen ya can't remember how much ya spent on da new deer rifle, vhen da wife asks about it.

How to Teach Baby boomers - Use a Dr. Seuss Training Manual

Here's an easy game to play / Here's an easy thing to say:

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,

And the bus is interrupted as a very last resort,

And the address of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,

Then the socket packet pocket has an error to report!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house,

Says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,

But your packets want to tunnel on another protocol,

That's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall,

And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss

So your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse,

Then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,

'Cause as sure as I'm a poet / The sucker's gonna hang!

(Most of these amusing stories can be found on multiple computer joke sites. But special thanks to *ComputerJokes.net* and *AhaJokes.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 ComputorEdge Staff

"Creating DVDs from YouTube Videos," "Photo Recovery Successful," "Directed to Wally Wang," "Thanks, Wally!" "Playing Games"

Creating DVDs from YouTube Videos

[Regarding the October 28 Digital Dave column:]

I also download videos from YouTube and burn them to a DVD to share with my aunt and uncle when my wife and I visit. They do not have Internet.

Unfortunately, Windows DVD Maker does not seem to handle mp4 files. I use a free program DVDFlick (*www.dvdflick.net*) to create a DVD from YouTube videos.

I also might mention that my Samsung TV is DLNA compliant and mp4 videos stored on my computer can be viewed directly on the TV.

-Harry, Loveland, Co

Photo Recovery Successful

[Regarding the October 28 Digital Dave column:]

Dear Digital Dave,

I downloaded PhotoRec, as you suggested in your article, and was extremely pleased that all my "lost" photos were recovered! I ran through the software twice (after a first unsuccessful attempt), but the second time I selected the option to recover all the files from the Smart Card. I'm anxious to get them on a CD. Thank you again for your help in saving my vacation photos!

-Jerry Hughes, San Diego, CA

Directed to Wally Wang

[Regarding the October 14 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Wow.

Very clever and crafty... your response to Dan Schmitt of Denver. Your response could have been copied and pasted from any "Pro" Apple blog.

Do you think that if Apple had 95% of the (personal) PC market that they would still be 'virus' free? So, you are saying

that the Apple OS is impenetrable? Bullet-proof? I dare you to put that challenge out there publicly.

It is a well known fact that malware proliferators only target what will make the most "impact." It's called bragging rights. Do you think that they would still target Microsoft Windows PCs? I think—no wait—I know they would not. It wouldn't be worth it. Yes, with Windows enjoying the lions share of the PC market, they are an easy target. Turn loose that same army on the Apple OS and we will see just how full of holes the (Apple) OS is.

Also, you said it yourself with regard to viruses; they are obsolete malware technology. So with that, you cannot accurately state that PCs would be affected either. You are correct with regard to the method(s) in which Trojan horses and worms are spread. Unfortunately this happens through bad, ignorance and *sloppy* use of Internet surfing and e-mail.

The biggest reason that I have seen why (some) people (young people at that) use Apple products is the "eye-candy" look of those products. And when they don't have to worry about malware upsetting their system, they buy into the Apple brands. However, when the Apple (PCs) break (and they will!) the reality sets in; pay an exorbitant repair bill or trade it in on another Apple.

You are right, the OS is so easy that even a caveman could use it! I tried to get my father (he's eighty-one years old) to switch to Apple, but he refuses. I know that it would be easier for him to use. However, he has several friends that use Apple PCs and they constantly complain about the tech support (costs) and difficulty with "variety" in programs and hardware. Especially upgrades.

Upgrading an Apple PC means buying a new one. Either way, they are out $$$. Almost all of the Apple users that I have come into contact with are what I call *limited* users; they only work with one or two *select* applications. You (Wally) my friend, are in the minority group of Apple users that try to take it beyond downloading pictures, reading e-mail, surfing the Internet, etc. Most Apple PC users are not the type to explore and try out many other applications.

Besides, it is common knowledge about the attitude of Apple developers; "...we don't have an application that will do that. That is not what Apple does. If you want that, then go buy a Windoze PC." There aren't enough applications out there (for the Apple PC) to allow this. Oh, and most of these Apple users were (and are) very careless and ignorant users. They want to just surf the Internet and download stuff. I tell them that this is dangerous and reckless. Just because the (Apple) OS is functioning fine does not mean that they were not penetrated by a Trojan horse...and their personal information mined from their computer.

Bottom line, Apple PC or Windows PC; you have to educate yourself and be very protective of your private information.

Frankly, I would love to buy an Apple PC. They look beautiful. But since all I would do with it is surf the Internet and read e-mail, I may as well save myself 2k dollars and install Linux Mint or Ubuntu on my PC. They are free and there are hundreds of apps that I can get. Buying an Apple PC is something I would do only to become more familiar with the OS and its capabilities so I could help other Apple users. Yeah, I get a lot of questions from the Mac users at work and in my personal life. I doubt that I could ever settle on an Apple PC as my main computer. Personally, I really like the Linux distros. Ubuntu in particular, but I have been exploring Linux Min.

Best Regards,

-Al

Thanks, Wally!

[Regarding the November 11 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Thanks for the excellent articles the last few weeks.

For many years, I tended to occasionally skip your articles since I was a PC person. But times have changed me. I now own a iPhone3 and since my two year contract will be up on Jan. 1st, I will wait and get the newer version whenever it comes out. Now there are only two of us in the six person extended family (my 92 year old father, myself and four grown children) that doesn't have a Mac Pro.

In fact my new son-in-law has made sure my 92 year old father now has an iPad (Christmas gift last year), Mac Pro and more recently an iPhone4. My father was responsible for getting my son into computers in the late 80s and he is now has a BS in computer sciences, is working for MS in the same area, and is a senior networking engineer for a Silicon Valley company he helped start. (He was the first to go Mac). So as soon as the iPad 3 and possibly newer features of the Mac Pro come out, possibly in the Spring as you mentioned in one article, I will go Apple. Plus, I am awaiting to see if Adobe will be coming out with CS6 this next year and when it does it will be the Mac version. I fortunately have been cross trained through San Diego Continuing Education with Adobe Products.

I have appreciated some of the resources you have mentioned such as Live Code and also encouraging people to go beyond the idea of just settling for the comfortable and money aspect (CEOs etc.). At 68 years of age, I am now tending to buck the norm and think creatively in whatever time I have left on this planet. So I thank you again for your futuristic thinking and thought provoking articles.

-Susan McClure, MS, OTR/L

Playing Games

RAGE plays great, looks great, but the fall down for OC users is that many have a hard time doing the racing part, most players can't make the time trials. I rate this game a 2.0, not a real FPS or RPG, more like a racing game. I don't play them or buy them. Try playing it one-handed like this vet who has played Quake, Doom, Witcher, Oblivion, etc.

-M. J. Bowker, San Diego, CA

Excellent points, M. J., thanks. Also, I should have noted my review of RAGE covers only single player—the way I experienced it. We'd be very interested in hearing any of your comments re: the multiplayer portion of the game. Thanks.

-Charles Carr, Valley Center, CA

ComputorEdge 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 ComputorEdge.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 "ComputorQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at *ceeditor@computoredge.com*. If you would like to contribute to *ComputorEdge* endeavors, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Contribute-to-ComputorEdge-Magazine_c3.htm*).

Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *cewebmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
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