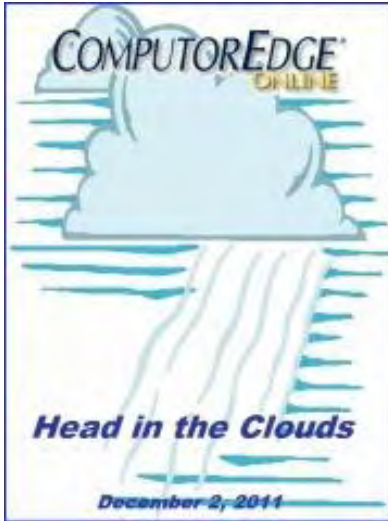


ComputerEdge™ Online — 12/02/11



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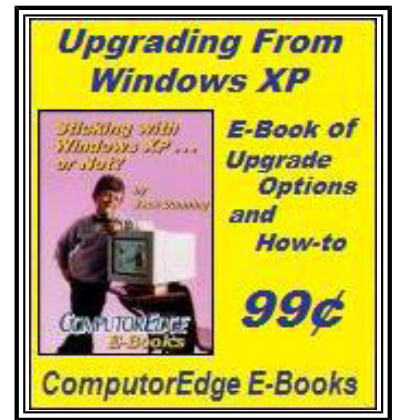
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Digital Dave

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

Removing Bing from Computer; A Trick for Removing Unwanted Text Formatting; No Computer Needed for Streaming Video.

Dear Digital Dave,

How do I remove Bing from my wife's computer? I don't know how it got installed and she wants it removed. I haven't had any luck in uninstalling it.

Thanks,

*Dave Vail
King George, VA*

Dear Dave,

Since Bing is a Microsoft Service, it tends to be installed in Internet Explorer as the default search service when you upgrade Internet Explorer. Rather than a separate program, Bing is installed as an add-on to the browser. I noted that Bing was the only search add-on installed when I upgraded. Naturally, Microsoft is trying to push Bing and not making it easy to change.

First you may need to install the search add-on you want to use. If you have a Tools menu ("Tools" or an icon which looks like a gear) in the upper right hand corner of the browser window you may be able to open "Manage Add-ons" directly. Otherwise you may need to open Internet Options in the Tools tab of the main menu bar. (In Windows, if you don't see a main menu bar ("File Edit View Favorites Tools Help"), hit the ALT key once and it should appear at the top of the window.) Select the Programs tab and click "Manage add-ons." Click on Search Providers.

If the search provider you want is listed, click it and set as the default. If not, click "Find more search providers..." at the bottom of the page. You may need to search the add-ons for the particular search engine you want to use. Add it and set as default.

You can then select Bing and "Remove" it, although once it is no longer the default, there should be not harm in leaving it installed.

If you are referring to the Microsoft Bing infiltration of Firefox Web browser, open "Add-ons" in the Tools menu and select "Extensions." Select "StartNow Toolbar" and disable it. The Bing toolbar should disappear and you should no longer get Bing when you open a new tab.

Digital Dave

Digital Dave's Tip

A Trick for Removing Unwanted Text Formatting

Sometimes when I'm working with various topics I may copy a section of a Web site as notes. I like to paste the notes into a word processing file for later reference. A problem I run into is that the word processor I use, the free OpenOffice.org Writer, inserts all the

formatting from the Web site into the document. From that point, it can be very difficult to work with the section since the attached fonts, links, etc. get in the way. I've found a method to quickly remove all the extraneous formatting prior to pasting the text into Writer.

First I open the Notepad text editor. (Any text editor will do since it will not accept anything other than standard ASCII characters.) I paste the section from the Web page into the blank Notepad page. Only the text will remain. Then I reselect all of the text and copy it. Now when I paste into the Writer document, only the text—without the formatting—will be inserted as if it were typed with the keyboard.

I don't know who else may have encounter this type of copy/paste problem or what other programs may save the copied formatting. I would be interested to hear how others are dealing with these situation.

* * *

No Computer Needed for Streaming Video

I've recently seen predictions that dedicated devices such as GPS units and digital cameras will be eliminated by multi-use equipment such as smart phones. That may very well be true at some point in the future, but for now, dedicated devices are thriving.

One area where dedicated equipment is growing is with the video streaming market. Even though Netflix and other video services can be streamed through computers and game boxes, one of the easiest ways to hook up is with a dedicated video streaming device, such as Roku (www.roku.com). For as little as \$49.99 (and up to \$99.99 for the Roku 2 XS 1080p video, fully loaded), you can be up and running with Netflix or other video streaming services.

Apple TV (www.apple.com/appletv/) (\$99) is a similar type of streaming box which connects directly to your television. One of the advantages to Apple TV over Roku is that it appears to offer YouTube which I couldn't find in the list of 350+ Roku video services. This could work for the reader who wanted to show YouTube videos to his relatives.

There are other video streaming boxes on the market—the latest being Boxee Box (www.boxee.tv) (\$179.99) which is supposed to stream video from already established Internet streaming sites as well as your computer to your television. If you have a favorite, please let us know.

The services offered by video streaming boxes vary and may change over time. Be cautious when contemplating a purchase since they do not all feature the services that you may want. Also be sure to check the fees for subscribing to various video services.

A friend was thinking about getting a Roku for Netflix and had heard that Roku also included Hulu which offers current network television shows free on your computer. He was planning to drop his cable television. I told him to check to see if it was actually Hulu Plus offered on Roku, which is the paid version of the free Hulu computer video service. Sure enough it was. (There have been a number of complaints about Hulu Plus on Roku. It contains advertising and apparently is more limited in content than the computer version of Hulu Plus. Who wants to pay \$7.99 per month to watch commercials?) He ended up mounting a television antenna with a digital converter box for the TV and now receives about 34 local stations, including the major networks.

Another way to go is get a DVD player which also streams video. This is a good compromise—at least until DVDs disappear.

If you don't want to mess with a separate box for video streaming, look for one of the new HDTVs which include the capability. Again, check to see which services are offered before you buy, although they virtually all offer Netflix.

One final caution: Regardless of any claims, you will still need a computer and an Internet connection—probably with Wi-Fi. This may seem obvious but streaming services are useless without the Internet, usually with a wireless network. The computer is generally needed to set up the various services.

Digital Dave

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Some Clouds Can Block the Sun!

“Cloud Computing” by D'Artagnan Fischer

Cloud Computing is destined to evolve into some fantastic forms of innovation for the future. However, enter the Cloud with caution—security is an issue that should not be ignored.

The latest buzz word that seems to be filling the media is Cloud Computing. The term has become more than just a buzz word as it has finally made it into several dictionaries. The Collins English Dictionary seems to have one of the shorter and simpler definitions where they define Cloud Computing as “a model of computer use in which services stored on the Internet are provided to users on a temporary basis” (Collins English Dictionary, 2009). This definition sounds a lot like someone having fun adding a new name to something that might have already been there before the name was popular.



“Why don't you clean up all this junk and store it in 'The Cloud' that you're always talking about?”

Although the concept of Cloud Computing is solidly entrenched in our blossoming world of technology, Cloud Computing is still evolving. The Cloud Computing concept itself is solid, but the aspects of how best to back up the data, how to keep the data secure, and even what the ultimate product offerings will be is still very much an on going process. Just because your favorite major vendor is advertising their move to “the cloud” does not mean that all of the issues have been **completely** addressed. I stress “completely,” because there are definitely still glitches inherent in the system that do require the refinement that only time tested usage can bring about.

The real intent of Cloud Computing is going beyond the Internet that we have all come to love and enjoy. The previous vision of the Internet was such that one could access it from anywhere, but the place where we kept all of our data was at home or in the office. The current vision of Cloud Computing is that one can access the Internet from anywhere, but now you can have your data wherever you are too! The idea is to make it more practical for portable hand-held devices to access important information without any real need to store the data on the device. The side benefit is that you can also travel without a computer, and simply use whatever is handy to access your data. Note: This is still a simplistic vision of Cloud Computing, there is still more to it. Whether that is important or not remains to be seen.

Evolution of Cloud Computing

Although the concept of Cloud Computing is solidly entrenched in our blossoming world of technology, Cloud Computing is still evolving. The Cloud Computing concept itself is solid, but the aspects of how best to back up the data, how to keep the data

Recommendation: Go ahead and use The Cloud, but do *not* depend on it completely just yet.

The Simple Things

Cloud Computing is certainly safe for the simple things. Meaning the simple access to data, saving files that can be accessed from anywhere, or even the syncing of data between numerous digital device. It all works really well! This does not mean that you should never back up your data again, or figure that since you backed up your data to The Cloud, that you will not lose it. Realize that Cloud Computing is a fantastic tool to use, and it works great, but one still needs to back up (and keep safe) the things that matter the most to you. I'm just playing devil's advocate here, but imagine if you put all of your faith into some Cloud Computing vendor, and that company has a catastrophic failure, or worse still, they go out of business, then what do you do?

Security

We all get the fact that being able to save one's data on the Internet does present some definite advantages, especially if one wishes to be truly mobile with any device of their choosing. However, one aspect of Cloud Computing that is definitely not a given (yet!) is the subject of security. Sure, one can encrypt their data before saving it to The Cloud—vendors are boasting that they will keep your data secure—but the question of the day is, "Is it enough?"

The following illustrates a couple of realistic scenarios for you:

You sign up for Cloud Computing services moving all of your data over to the vendor securely, and life is good. You have access to your data from anywhere and everywhere. You feel confident that you are as secure as can be. In a sense, you really are secure. However, a major business conglomerate from another country buys up the company that you have been doing business with. They keep things quiet, no real press to speak of, and during the off hours, your data is meticulously transferred to the server infrastructure in the new company's home country. All is fine and good, and as a customer, you are none the wiser that your data was ever moved. It all looks the same to you, and maybe access to the data is suddenly faster than ever. So, now the United States is suddenly at odds with the country where your data was moved to. Even worse still, maybe the U.S. is at war with that country. Do you still think your data is "safe?" Let's move on to the next scenario.

You happily migrate all of your data to your favorite Cloud Computing vendor. The vendor is reputable, has a proven track record, and life is good! The vendor keeps redundant copies of data across the globe to rule out losing data due to failures and such. In a sense, there really is no way the data could be "lost." A more common security model for a normal business network tends to be to increase security by blocking malicious networks, computers, or even entire countries, just to make sure that the riff raff cannot even access the data on the network. And, from your own personal perspective, your personal data would not have even been remotely accessible when your computer was turned off. However, now that you are on The Cloud, your data is accessible to more and more locations around the world. Furthermore, with a vendor offering redundancy around the globe this can be more and more locations that the bad guys can hack into to get at your data. Still feel safe?

Clarification

At this point, one might think this article is directed at keeping people away from Cloud Computing, and it truly is *not*! In fact, I am personally a big fan of Cloud Computing. I believe Cloud Computing is the wave of the future, and really where the world is supposed to be. However, the aspects of security, system redundancy, and even the contingencies associated with doing business across borders, is all still being refined as we speak. The controls and backup systems in place today, should give some peace of mind, but none of that should replace the basic need to proceed cautiously. Being the first person that you know to embrace Cloud Computing might not be the best choice, but this is definitely where the world is moving, so just be sure to move forward carefully!

Some Positive Scenarios

Since we have covered some of the possible horrors of Cloud Computing, it is only fair that we also talk about some positive scenarios:

A business is looking to put real time computing or order processing capability into the hands of a mobile work force. The latest tablet/pad computer includes cellular and Wi-Fi, so the user is always connected no matter where they are. (Yes, there still are places where one cannot get connected in the world, but that is another story.) Being "connected" means that data does not need to be

stored on the local device, and can be stored on a company site. In this case, the company site is a location in The Cloud. In this configuration, the company has just mobilized their work force with real time data access. A sales company would be able to process orders when they happen, or even to check stock precisely when needed. A doctor could pull up key patient data when and where needed. A researcher could access major research databases, and update them even, whilst sitting in the jungle (assuming that a connection can be made). And on and on.

Another scenario, as I eluded to earlier, is the fact that one could truly travel without a computer. We have all seen the weary traveler (or have been that traveler), that lugs around a heavy computer in order to get some work done while traveling. Fortunately, portable computers have become increasingly lighter! However, now they can be magnitudes smaller and lighter (such as a pad), because one does not need to store all of their data on the device, but instead can pull it from The Cloud. Personally, I get excited by the prospect of a connected world with connected devices, and even the prospect of not even needing to depend of a particular computing device. Now, because of The Cloud, the advent of being computer neutral is even more possible and practical than ever before.

Conclusion

This is by no means the end of the story. Cloud Computing is destined to evolve into some fantastic forms of innovation for the future. Security is always a concern when there are those in the world that are bent on abusing and misusing your data. Just make sure to never stop backing up your important data, be sure to be watchful of when and where you store your data, and simply be careful in everything you do! Never be the first to adopt any new technology, and if you are, just do not put all your eggs in one basket, at least until you *know* that all the bugs have been worked out.

D'Artagnan Fischer has been a Technology Manager for a major accounting firm, a senior systems administrator, an Enterprise Consultant, has worked for DHS, the Navy, and even San Diego City Schools. His main interests are computers, technology, and digital photography. He also enjoys writing Science Fiction stories, and dreams of one day having one of his stories made into a movie. He lives with a menagerie of animals, and is in the process of growing a family.

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Apple and Microsoft” by Wally Wang

Apple and Microsoft; The Clones of Lotus Improv; The Clones of Lotus Agenda; Natural Language Processing; Royal Caribbean Adopts the iPad; MathStudio on the iPad; Quick Look.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Here's an interesting statistic from the market intelligence people at Asymco (www.asymco.com/2011/11/24/apple-could-buy-the-mobile-phone-industry-updated/). According to their research, Apple's cash could theoretically let them buy the entire mobile industry (except for Samsung) and still have \$25 billion left over. Some notes of interest from this report include:

- RIM's share price collapsed and it's now also trading at an EV of about 7.3 billion.
- Nokia's price has also dropped and it now has an EV of about \$13 billion.
- HTC recently dropped significantly in price and is now worth about \$15 billion EV. (Note that pricing of its equities is subject to suspended trading due to drop limits).
- LG's phone business is still losing money and it's still difficult to value. In November it was revealed that the company was seeking to raise \$890 million in capital to fund new initiatives including smartphones. The share price fell by 14%.
- Apple's cash and cash equivalents and investments grew by about \$12 billion and were worth about \$82 billion as of October.

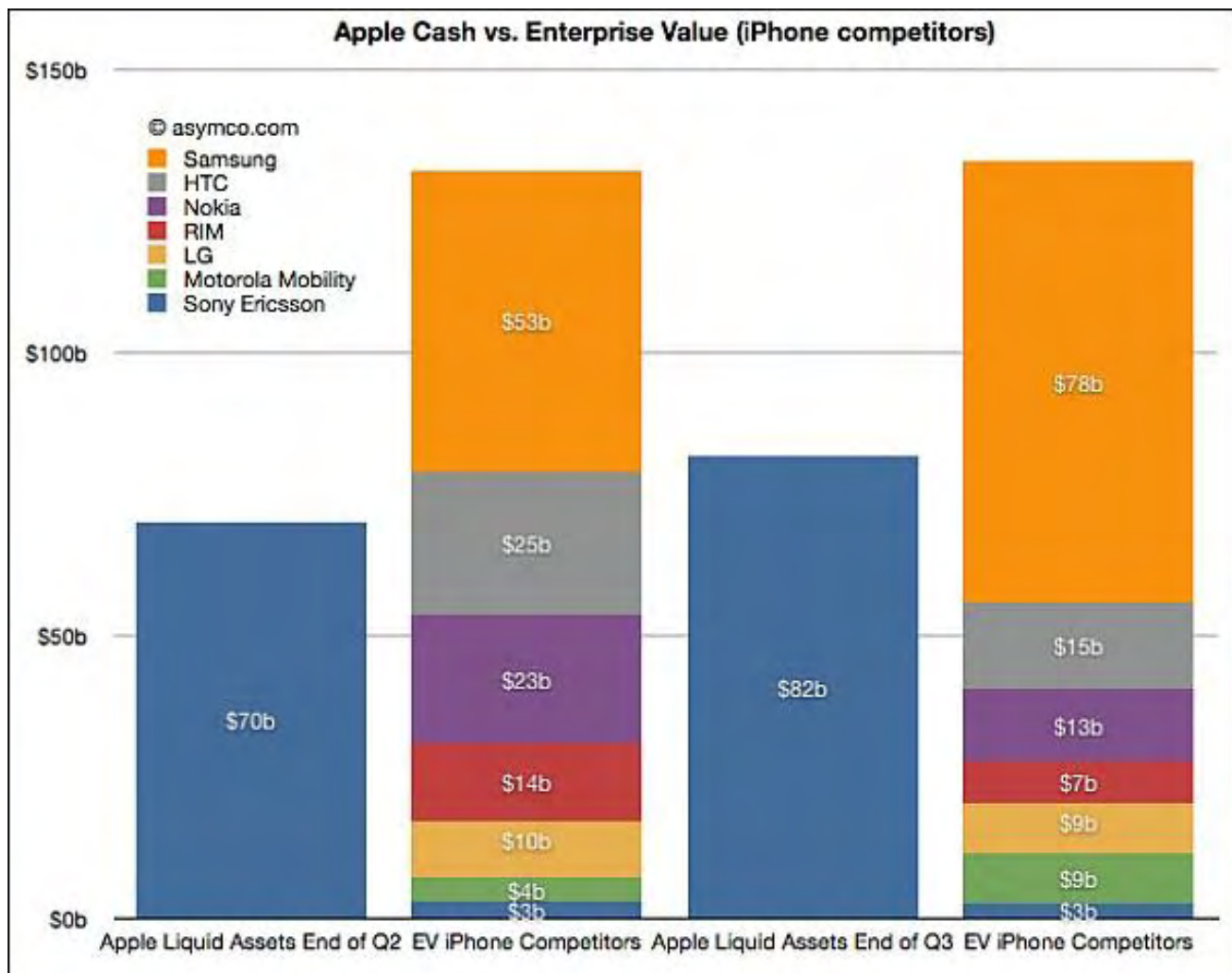


Figure 1. Apple's cash exceeds the value of most of the mobile phone industry.

Basically nearly every mobile phone manufacturer from Research in Motion and Nokia (two former leaders) along with LG and HTC have seen their value plummet. Surprisingly, sales of Android phones haven't made up the lost revenue. With Android dominating the smartphone market, manufacturers don't seem to be getting any increased profits in return for the larger market share.

Yet how did Apple make so much money while so many former mobile phone heavyweights struggle with shrinking profits? How did Apple go from zero market share in the smart phone industry in 2007 to a dominant position in less than four years? More importantly, how did all of these former smartphone leaders allow a company like Apple to appear out of nowhere and dominate their industry?

While articles appear on a regular basis, listing Apple's growing profits and cash hoard, articles about other companies are not so flattering. An increasing number of articles now focus on the potential danger Microsoft faces, which is a topic that nobody ever thought was possible during the '90s.

Business Insider lists several ways that Microsoft could stumble and fail (www.businessinsider.com/steve-ballmers-nightmare-how-microsofts-business-really-could-collapse-2011-11#), despite their current dominance. Microsoft's Windows and Office may seem secure now, but that's exactly how companies like Research in Motion and Nokia felt at the end of 2006 before the iPhone appeared the next year.

In hindsight, the collapse of the mobile phone industry occurred because the mobile phone leaders had stopped innovating and relied on incremental progress to maintain their profits. When the iPhone changed the market's perception of what a smartphone could do, companies like Research in Motion and Nokia wound up as flat-footed as slide ruler manufacturers looked when pocket calculators first appeared. When the market changes, the former leaders are at a bigger disadvantage because not only must they change, but they must drag along their entire reluctant bureaucracy along with them, which is geared towards continuing to pursue their now

obsolete market.

When you have to fight change from outside market conditions and also fight change from internal corporate inertia, you're practically doomed to failure. Dealing with outside change is actually fairly easy, but dealing with internal change involves changing people's minds and for some people, that's impossible even when confronted by an avalanche of evidence.

Few corporations last more than one hundred years. All the companies that were part of the original Dow Jones Industrial Average are now gone except for General Electric. Anyone still doing business with the U.S. Leather Company or the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company?

Practically every company will collapse one day no matter how much money they once had simply because their so-called corporate leaders refused to adapt to changing market conditions. Given a choice between Apple or Microsoft, it's a safer bet that when Apple eventually fails, Microsoft will have failed first.

The Clones of Lotus Improv

There's a myth that society continually progresses forward, accepting new and better ideas and marching onward. The truth is that society often violently opposes any new ideas no matter how much better they may be, and sometimes society forgets about great ideas altogether.

One interesting idea that will likely pop up again is Lotus Improv, a next generation spreadsheet that failed to dislodge Lotus 1-2-3 and eventually failed against Microsoft Excel as well.

If you look at a spreadsheet like Excel, it's still based on dividing a sheet into rows and columns, which is no different than the design of the original spreadsheet, VisiCalc, way back in 1979. Change the width of column B in an Excel spreadsheet and that column width affects the entire spreadsheet whether you like it or not.

Numbers, the spreadsheet in iWork, overcomes this limitation by letting you create multiple grids on the screen. That way you can have different size columns and rows on the same spreadsheet page. Yet Numbers also suffers from a flaw in the original spreadsheet design because the spreadsheet lets you store both formulas and data. Since formulas appear as numbers, it's impossible to tell your data from your formulas at first glance.

Most spreadsheets solve this problem by letting you display formulas in a cell, but Lotus Improv worked differently as explained by its Wikipedia entry (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lotus_Improv):

"The core of what would become Improv was to separate the concepts of data, views of the data, and formulas into three portions. The spreadsheet itself would contain only input data. Instead of referring to the data as, in effect, 'the data that happens to be in these cells', each set of data in the sheet was given a name, and could then be grouped into categories. Formulas were typed into a separate section, and referred to data through their range, not their physical position in the sheets. Views of the data, some which looked like spreadsheets, others like charts, could be created dynamically and were not limited in number.

"To illustrate the difference between Improv and other systems, consider the simple task of calculating the total sales for a product, given unit sales per month and unit prices. In a conventional spreadsheet the unit price would be typed into one set of cells, say the 'A' column, and the sales into another, say 'B'. The user would then type a formula into 'C' that said 'A1 times B1' (typically in a form such as $@times(A:1, B:1)$ or $=A1*B1$). Then that formula must be copied into all of the cells in column C, making sure to change the reference to A1 to a new reference for A2, etc. The sheet can automate this to some degree, but the real problem is that it simply has no idea what the formula means. Any changes to the layout of the spreadsheet will often make the entire sheet stop working properly.

"In Improv, one simply enters the data into columns called 'Unit Price' and 'Unit Sales.' A formula can then be created that says 'Total Sales = Unit Price times Unit Sales'. Then if 'Total Sales' view is added to the workbook, the totals would automatically appear there, because the sheet 'knows' that is what the formula is for.

"But the real power of Improv did not become clear until work had already started on the project. With the grouping system you could collect monthly sales into groups like '1995' and '1996,' and call the category 'years.' Then the unit prices could be grouped in terms of the product type, say 'clothing' and 'food.' Now by dragging these groups around (represented by small tabs) the view may be

quickly changed."

Excel and other spreadsheets soon mimicked this capability with pivot tables, but Lotus Improv advanced the idea of a spreadsheet far beyond VisiCalc's origins which are still plainly visible in Excel. When you use Excel, you're basically using a souped up version of 1979 technology from VisiCalc. When you used Lotus Improv, you were using a new spreadsheet model of the future.

Although Lotus Improv quietly faded away, despite some initial success in the financial modeling market, you can still get similar capabilities through a \$1,549 Lotus Improv clone called Quantrix (www.quantrix.com/). If this is too much, try an open source clone called FlexiSheet (sourceforge.net/projects/flexisheet/).

This open source project appears to be abandoned, but you can still download the program and even modify it if you desire. By toying with FlexiSheet, you can see the capabilities of what Lotus Improv offered and how today's spreadsheets are still woefully antiquated in comparison.

Eventually the world will likely tire of using a better VisiCalc clone and embrace the next generation spreadsheet that Lotus Improv once offered. Until then, you can try FlexiSheet, read what Business Intelligence had to say about Quantrix (businessintelligence.com/research/288), or compare Quantrix to a typical spreadsheet (www.quantrix.com/Quantrix_vs_Spreadsheets.htm). Then if someone tells you that Excel is the most advanced spreadsheet in the world, you can remember that Lotus Improv first appeared way back in 1991 and most people still aren't aware of its advantages.

The Clones of Lotus Agenda

Back when Lotus Development dominated the spreadsheet market with their 1-2-3 spreadsheet, they realized they couldn't afford to depend on 1-2-3 dominating the spreadsheet market forever. To avoid relying on a single product for the bulk of their income, Lotus actually innovated and created many interesting products that failed commercially. Their most interesting and useful product was Lotus Improv, but the creator of 1-2-3, Mitch Kapor, had another idea.

After creating Lotus 1-2-3, Mitch Kapor decided to create a "spreadsheet for words" and invented the first personal information manager called Lotus Agenda, which is still available for MS-DOS as freeware (www2.support.lotus.com/ftp/pub/desktop/Agenda/dos/2.0/misc/). The idea behind Agenda was that you could dump text into the program and Agenda would help you sort and organize this information.

Although the program worked as advertised, it proved cumbersome to use and difficult to understand. As a result, Lotus Agenda faded away. Mitch Kapor tried to revive the idea of Agenda in an open source project called Chandler (chandlerproject.org/) while another programmer started (and apparently abandoned) another Lotus Agenda clone called Beeswax (waxandwane.org/beeswax/installation.html).

If the idea of Lotus Agenda appeals to you, take a peek at Chandler or Beeswax. Back in the '90s, Lotus created some innovative products, but failed to focus as much time on making their products easy to use. Innovation can only get you so far but you still need to create something that ordinary people will want and use. Lotus was the innovator in their day, and now that IBM bought out Lotus, that innovation seems all but stamped out and dead.

For another perspective on innovation, you might be interested in this article "Why Good Ideas Fail (www.techuser.net/goodideas1.html)." The next time somebody tries to tell you that current technology is the best there can ever be for the rest of eternity, you can show them innovative products like Lotus Improv and Lotus Agenda that are still superior to many products in today's world.

Natural Language Processing

One problem with using a computer is that you have to know which commands to use and the proper order to choose them. To overcome this problem, computer scientists are working on natural language processing where the idea is that you type ordinary commands and the computer translates them into commands for a program to follow.

If this sounds like science fiction, surprise! Lotus once sold a natural language processing add-on for their 1-2-3 spreadsheet called Lotus HAL way back in 1986. The idea behind HAL was that you could type plain English commands and HAL would obey by

converting your English commands into 1-2-3 commands as described in this early review of HAL (articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-03-01/business/8701170021_1_menus-sick-days-loch-ness).

Although Lotus HAL proved useful, its fate was linked to Lotus 1-2-3, which was an MS-DOS program. When Windows arrived with a graphical user interface, Microsoft Excel took over the spreadsheet market while Lotus 1-2-3 languished on the declining MS-DOS market and skipped Windows to pursue the mythical OS/2 market.

The fate of Lotus Development hinged on the success (or failure) of Lotus 1-2-3 just like the fate of Microsoft hinges on the success of Windows. Take away 1-2-3 and Lotus collapsed. Take away Windows and guess how successful Microsoft will be?

If the idea of natural language processing intrigues you, download free Python source code for the Natural Language Toolkit (www.nltk.org) or free Java source code from the Stanford Natural Language Processing Group (nlp.stanford.edu/software). By using these natural language processing programs, you may be able to create the next Macintosh program that provides a natural language interface instead of cryptic program commands.

To see one example of both voice recognition and natural language processing, just try using Siri on an iPhone 4S. Although Microsoft's chief research and strategy officer, Craig Mundie, claimed that Windows 7 Phone had voice recognition (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2396872,00.asp) a year ago, this YouTube video compares how Siri and Microsoft's TellMe voice recognition works. Not surprisingly, Microsoft's technology fails while Siri works accurately each time although Microsoft's own promotional video (www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=PR74_TT8IN8) promises that their TellMe technology will eventually be just as intuitive to use.

Why Microsoft would claim that their TellMe technology is just as good as Siri when a simple comparison can prove otherwise is a mystery. Microsoft may be good at creating fictional videos of their future technology, but they need to start delivering and stop promising if they want to compete against technology that is available right now.

Royal Caribbean Adopts the iPad

The next time you book a cruise (www.travelagentcentral.com/newscred?guid=1f5e02f0fb184ce270460b0f5b6872df) on Royal Caribbean's 69,000 ton, 1,804 passenger Splendour of the Seas, you may find an iPad in your stateroom. Through the ship's Wi-Fi network, you can use the iPad to access the daily schedule of events and activities, check your personal daily itineraries, order room service, view restaurant menus, access the Internet, and watch movies.

The iPad's light weight and small size makes it perfect for various applications, such as a portable information kiosk for cruise ships. Maureen Dixon, a busy Melbourne latecomer to technology, says her iPhone and her iPad 2 (www.smh.com.au/digital-life/tablets/have-ipad-will-travel-20111123-1ntcr.html) have changed and enriched her life.

"Most members of our family have iPads and iPhones and many of them are Macintosh people, although I still use a PC," Dixon says. "I haven't installed many apps but those I have are wonderfully useful, like Pocket Weather, Free Dictionary, The Age iPad App, TuneIn Radio and Skype. I use Pages for documents, too. Oh, and my gym has its own app with a timetable so I know when to go."

With so many airlines replacing paper manuals (www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/aug/24/ipads-paper-manuals) with iPads, there's a good chance that the next time you travel, you'll gain the benefits of an iPad even if you don't own one yourself.

If you absolutely hate the iPad and anything made by Apple, you could show your disdain by taking a Greyhound bus instead of an airplane and booking a cruise through another cruise line that doesn't let guests use an iPad during their stay. Then again, the people managing your travel arrangements might be using an iPad to be more efficient, so if you don't like the benefits of any form of productivity, feel free to avoid the iPad completely in all aspects of your life.

MathStudio on the iPad

If you want a simple calculator for your iPad, you can download plenty of free ones. However, if you want to do more than addition, subtraction, division, or multiplication, you may want to take a peek at MathStudio (itunes.apple.com/us/app/mathstudio/id439121011?mt=8).

MathStudio crams a huge library of different mathematical functions that can turn your iPhone or iPad into the equivalent of a Texas Instruments graphing calculator to solve basic math problems all the way up to calculus and statistics.

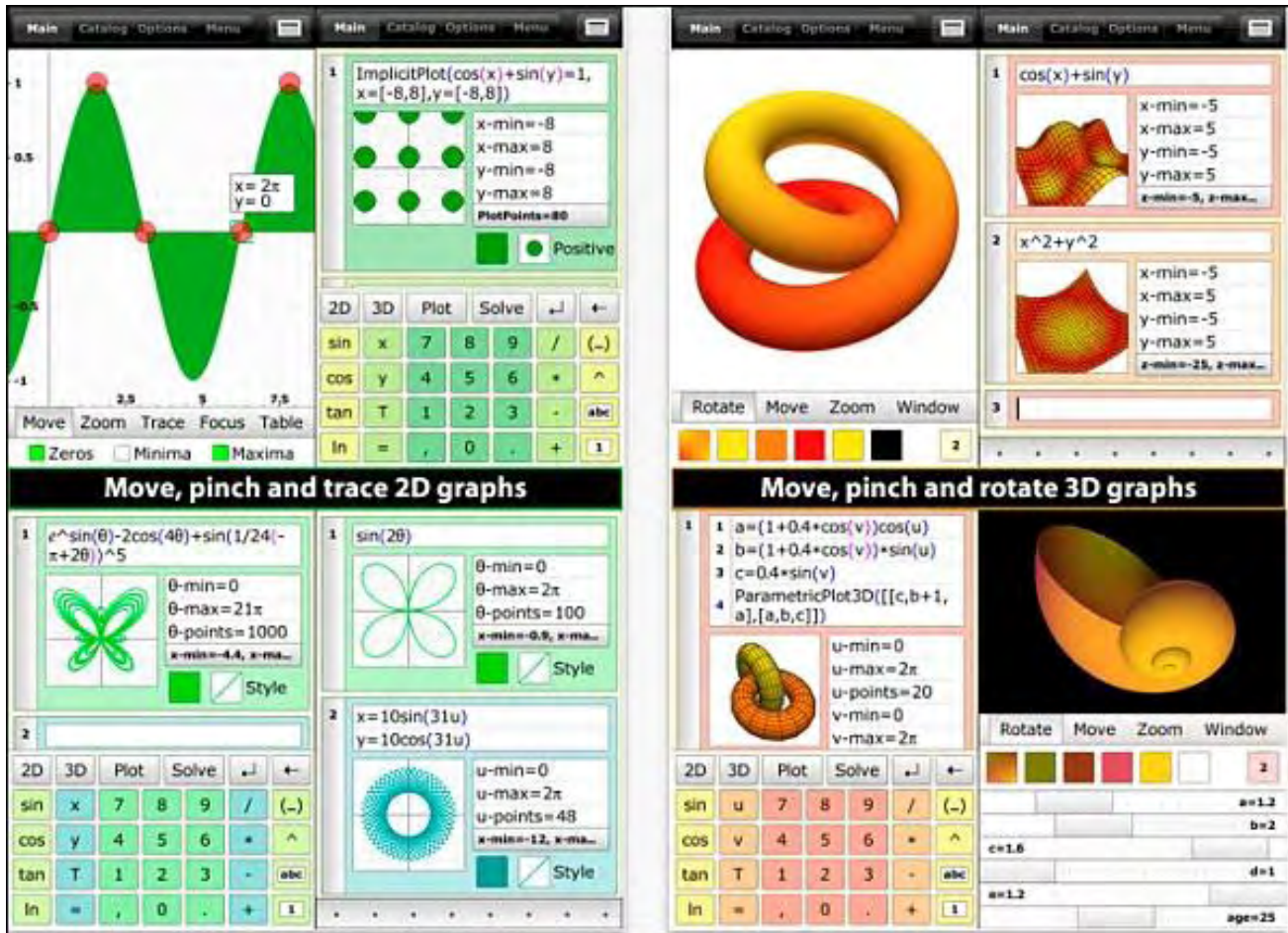


Figure 2. MathStudio can create a variety of graphs from numeric data.

By scrolling through its library of mathematical functions, you can view explanations of what each function does along with viewing examples of how to actually use them. Then plug in your own values and let MathStudio calculate the result. If you need to perform serious calculations, or just enjoy fiddling around with math, MathStudio can teach you as you learn to apply different functions.

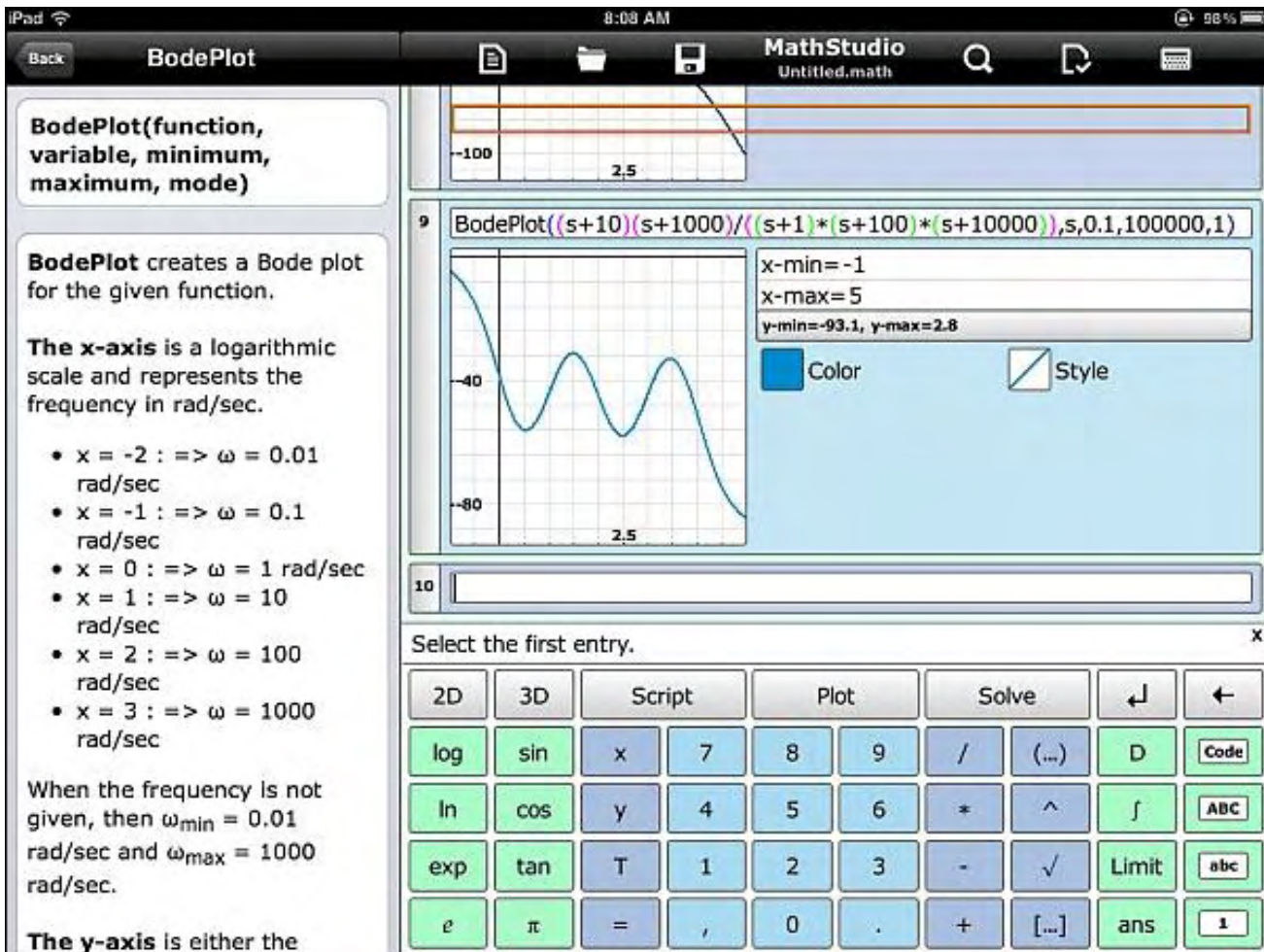


Figure 3. MathStudio can teach you what various mathematical functions do.

Since MathStudio packs so many features, it includes several tutorials that guide you step-by-step to performing different tasks. To show you which keys to press, MathStudio displays a red outline around each key. By going through each tutorial, you'll gradually learn how to use MathStudio since it's unlikely that you'll be able to take full advantage of all its features at first glance.

As you get comfortable with MathStudio, you'll likely find and use your favorite mathematical functions. To simplify using functions repetitively, MathStudio lets you create scripts to design your own mini-programs complete with variables, loops and recursion. MathStudio's simple scripting language can't access anything outside of MathStudio, but by using its scripting features, you can create programs to calculate your most frequently used functions and then save your scripts as files to load and run in the future.

MathStudio is best for high school and college students, or anyone needing the power of mathematical functions on the go with an iPhone or iPad. For younger kids interested in math, MathStudio can teach advanced math while letting them play at the same time.

In case you don't think younger kids can understand and appreciate advanced mathematics, read *In Code* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0046LUUEU/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399369&creativeASIN=B0046LUUEU) by Sarah Flannery, which tells the story of how a 16-year old girl won Ireland's Young Scientist of the Year in 1999 for her research into cryptography.

(By the way, Lotus once sold a word processor called Lotus Manuscript (books.google.com/books?id=HDwEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA43&lpg=PA43&dq=typing+formulas+into+lotus+manuscript&source=bl&ots=k0pwUI423&sig=rIbu3YQB1fc33YlqW7Kz4ry_9Eg&hl=en&ei=Ty7RTt6-CZT5sQL4IKi2Dg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CFQ6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=typing%20formulas%20into%20lotus%20manuscript&f=false) that specialized in letting you type mathematical formulas in a word processor document, which is a feature that's still cumbersome with today's word processors.)

MathStudio may not be for everyone, but for anyone who needs the power of math at their fingertips, MathStudio can turn your

iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad into a unique and flexible calculator for \$9.99, which is far less than the cost of a dedicated Texas Instruments graphing calculator (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00001N2QU/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B00001N2QU). If you already have an iPad, MathStudio can make it even more valuable. If you don't have an iPad, an app like MathStudio might make you wish you had one.

* * *

If you open the Finder and click on any file containing data, you can view the contents of that file without opening it by doing one of the following:

Press the spacebar.

Press Command+Y.

Click the Quick Look icon in the top middle of the Finder window

This ability to view the contents of files means you can quickly see which files might contain the information you need before wasting time opening it, only to close it again.

This feature, called Quick Look, has been available since 2007 in Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. Of course, Lotus Magellan, had this feature for MS-DOS way back in the late '80s while Windows 7 implements this feature (in a tiny window supporting a limited number of file formats) in Windows Explorer if you press Alt+P after highlighting a file.

When you look at all the innovative features that Lotus Development once offered so long ago through Lotus Improv, Lotus HAL, Lotus Agenda, Lotus Manuscript and Lotus Magellan, you have to realize that today's computer technology is not the best it could possibly be, but is actually twenty years behind the times.

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-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908](http://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-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271956?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271956)

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

My New iPad 2 ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X](http://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-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050)),

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon Fisher and Gerald Fisher ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894)),

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

The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M)

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M),
Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362),
The 15-Minute Movie Method ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8)
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

"The Volatile World of Start-Ups" by Marilyn K. Martin

Marilyn shares some amusing anecdotes about the volatile world of start-ups.

Since only one out of 500 start-up requests for Angel Investors or Venture Capital succeeds in getting funding, you'll probably start out working in others' start-ups, before (if/when) you get your own. But working in the enthusiastic jungle of start-ups can be fun, exhilarating, stoked in the hacker/rebel ethos—and nerve wracking uncertainty.

Innovation is encouraged, no one cares when you take a break, and you work those back breaking hours for a percentage of the company's gross/net rather than your miniscule paycheck. In six months you could be rich—or working for another start-up for an even smaller paycheck and smaller percentage.

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)

My Start-up Is So Lean ...

- 1)... that in order to hire a human resources person, I had to lay myself off.
- 2)... that my usability study consisted of my parents and the lawn care guy.
- 3)... that I'm seeking seed bankruptcy funding.

Brainstorming in Start-ups Produces:

- A) Idea-seeding others can play off of and extend.
- B) An argumentative debate with clashing egos and personal agendas.
- C) A crazy improv of idea generation with everyone in the cheering section.
- D) Quick barriers of "feasibility" thrown up by the anal retentive types.
- E) All of the above.

Murphy's Technology Laws

- 1) All great discoveries are made by mistake.
- 2) Tell a man there are 300 billion stars in the universe, and he'll believe you. Tell him a bench has wet paint on it, and he'll have to

touch it to be sure.

- 3) Nothing ever gets built on schedule or within budget.
- 4) A meeting is an event at which the minutes are kept, and the hours are lost.
- 5) A computer makes as many mistakes in three seconds, as thirty men working thirty years make.
- 6) Some people manage "by the book"—even though they don't know who wrote the book, or even what book is.

Rules of the Start-up Laboratory

- 1) If an experiment works, something has gone wrong.
- 2) When you don't know what you're doing, do it neatly.
- 3) Experiments must be reproducible, they should fail the same way each time.
- 4) First draw your curves, then plot your data.
- 5) Experience is directly proportional to equipment ruined.
- 6) Always keep a record of your data. It indicates that you have been working.
- 7) To do a lab really well, have your report done well in advance.
- 8) If you can't get the answer in the usual manner, start at the answer and derive the question.
- 9) In case of doubt, make it sound convincing.
- 10) Do not believe in miracles—rely on them.
- 11) Team work is essential, it allows you to blame someone else.
- 12) No experiment is a complete failure. At least it can serve as a "negative example."
- 13) Any delicate and expensive piece of glassware will break before any use can be made of it.

The Marriage Start-up Model

A very successful businessman had a meeting with his new son-in-law. "I love my daughter, and I welcome you to my family," began the smiling businessman. "To show how much I care about you, I'm willing to make you a 50-50 partner in my business. All you have to do is go to the factory every day and learn the operations."

The son-in-law interrupted, "Uh, Sir, I hate factories. I can't stand the noise and dust."

"I see," nodded the businessman. "Well, then you'll work in the office and take charge of some of the operations."

"Sorry," yawned the young son-in-law. "I hate office work. I can't stand being stuck behind a desk all day."

The father-in-law started fuming. "I just offered to make you half owner of a money making organization, but you don't like factories and won't work in an office. What am I going to do with you?"

"Easy," shrugged the son-in-law. "Buy me out."

How to Know You Are an Employee in a Successful Start-up

- 1) It's dark when you drive to and from work.

- 2) You see a good looking person outside your cubicle, and know it's a visitor.
- 3) You stay at the same desk for four years—and work for three different companies.
- 4) Your resume is on a disc in your pocket.
- 5) You learn about your layoff on CNN.
- 6) Your biggest loss from a system crash is that you lost your best jokes.
- 7) Your supervisor hasn't the ability to do your job assignment.
- 8) You sit in a cubicle smaller than your bedroom closet.
- 9) Salaries of the members on the Executive Board are higher than all the Third World countries' annual budgets combined.
- 10) Weekends are those days your spouse makes you stay home.
- 11) Being sick is defined as "can't walk" or you're "in a hospital."
- 12) All real work gets started after 5PM, or on weekends.
- 13) Only 10% of the people you work with (boss included) know what they are doing.
- 14) Vacation is something you roll over to next year.

Real Job Ads for Real Start-ups

Not sure where they get their job descriptions, but StartUpHire (www.startuphire.com) has jobs in start-ups ranging from a "stealth-mode start up," to a company "looking for a strong product manager to help us disrupt the Healthcare Industry!" Ads are looking for everyone from a "solutions engineer" to a "user interface designer." (I'm guessing that when the Occupy protesters stop "occupying," these may be the kinds of jobs they head to.)

Ten Signs Your Start-up is on the Skids

- 1) The company CEO has moved from the corner office to the ledge outside the corner office.
- 2) The manager informs you that the drinks in the company fridge are *not* free, and hands you a \$4,800 Snapple bill.
- 3) The company president asks if anyone has a problem giving out a little astrological advice over the phone while they work.
- 4) The head of R&D (research and development) is spending more and more time in the park across the street with a metal detector he refers to as his "search engine."
- 5) There's now 10-year-old Indonesian boys on either side of you assembling Nike running shoes.
- 6) Management is now using copies of the company prospectus exclusively for cigarette rolling papers.
- 7) Next time you see the company's founder, he is wearing a paper hat and telling you which soda is Diet.
- 8) The human resources manager informs you that (although it was never spelled out), giving conventioners body massages was indeed "implied" in your job description. And that it might involve a little "converging," if you get what he means.
- 9) You arrive at work to find that all the computers have been replaced with Etch-A-Sketches.
- 10) Your boss concedes that he might be out of his teens before he's able to retire.

When Start-up Lab Experiments Go Seriously Wrong

A couple of cows were in the field chatting over neighborly fences. The first cow said, "I tell you, this mad cow disease is really pretty scary. They say it is spreading fast, too. I heard it hit some cows down on the Johnson Farm."

The other cow replied, "Oh, I'm not worried. It doesn't affect us ducks."

(Many of these amusing anecdotes can be found at multiple sites on the Internet. But special thanks to *Thebesthilariousjokes.blogspot.com*, *Okcancel.com* and *Quora.com*.)

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

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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Computer Terms," "Netflix," "Comments about 'Forget Windows 7'," "USB Boot Hangs"

Computer Terms

[Regarding the November 18 Beyond Personal Computing column:]

Thanks, I needed a good laugh.

-DJ Robinsom, San Diego, CA

Thanks, DJR!

-Marilyn K. Martin, Conroe, TX

Netflix

[Regarding the November 11 Beyond Personal Computing column:]

Most informative article by Keith Taylor. Always enjoy his work.

-B. Jurus, San Diego, CA

Comments about "Forget Windows 7"

[Regarding Jack Dunning's November 18 article, "Forget Windows 7...I'm Sticking with XP!":]

The Great Windows Debate....

I use both operating systems, Windows 7 and Windows XP, on a daily basis. Both operating systems have their pros and cons. What I like about Windows XP is I know how to navigate through the GUI to perform tasks, and I am familiar with the directory structure. With Windows 7, it takes time to navigate through the GUI and directory structure because Microsoft (in their infinite wisdom) decided to move things around. What I like about Windows 7 is its improved functionality over XP. SMB 2.1 makes file transfers perform so much faster than SMB 1.0 (XP). The ability to burn ISO images to disc without third party software is convenient. Built-in automatic defragmentation is a nice feature (One less thing I need to worry about).

One gripe I have with Windows 7 is networking with other computers is a challenge when compared with XP. With XP, I could configure two systems with IP addresses within a subnet, connect both computers with a cross-over cable, place both systems in a workgroup if necessary, and transfer data across the wire. With Windows 7, the process is not as easy to perform (or at least I have not figured out how to perform this task yet).

I am sure I may appreciate Windows 7 more with a little training. But, that's just one more thing I have to learn. And I probably have to be trained again when Windows 8 is released.

-Joe Shelton, San Diego, CA

I am 75 years old so I didn't have a computer to cut my teeth on in school. I just got familiar with Windows XP and programs like "Word," etc. When my computer needed replacing, the new one came with Windows 7 and I thought I would end up in the booby

hatch trying to use it.

It took many, many trips to Best Buy and their Geeks, plus help from anywhere I could find it, to finally get the hang of it. Nobody could explain why they changed everything around when it wasn't broken!

I wished I had just bought an Apple like my daughter did. She was able to get lessons at the Apple Store. And, when it all came out in the wash, I paid as much as she did, because everything she had included in her price cost me extra.

-Wayne Ford, Huntington Beach, CA

With regards to Jack's cogent in depth discussion of Windows XP versus Windows 7, the bottom line for many ordinary folks is not Microsoft end-of-life support, but whether their PC is fit for the purpose for which they want to use it. I myself even keep a Windows 3.11 machine around for handling family finances. (I've migrated it to a virtual machine.) Excel 4 macro language provided all the tools I needed to organize them and compute federal and state taxes. Word 6 had all the features I've ever needed and it was straightforward to navigate and accomplish everyday tasks.

-Stewart Levin, Centennial, CO

USB Boot Hangs

[Regarding the November 11 Digital Dave column:]

What "Bob in Del Cero" is seeing is common in my experience. I think that the BIOS is trying to initialize the USB device, but that the legacy USB support in the BIOS isn't advanced enough to complete the initialization, so it hangs waiting for the drive to respond.

When I experience these hangs I have to unplug the USB device, and power cycle my PC to restart the device initialization. I've seen this with real USB drives (spinning drives) and with SD Cards mounted in USB based readers. The most promising way around this I've found is to disable the BIOS' legacy USB support, but the most reliable solution I have is to remove the USB device before I start the machine and the BIOS device identification cycle.

-Arch, San Diego

ComputerEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at ComputerEdge.com (webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook). Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceeditor@computoredge.com. If you would like to contribute to **ComputerEdge** endeavors, please visit ComputerEdge E-Books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Contribute-to-ComputerEdge-Magazine_c3.htm).

Send mail to ceeditor@computoredge.com with questions about editorial content.

Send mail to cwebmaster@computoredge.com with questions or comments about this Web site.

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