# *ComputorEdge™ Online — 12/30/11*



## This issue:
## Kindle Fire Versus Apple iPad

**Digital Dave and articles based upon the whims of the writers.**
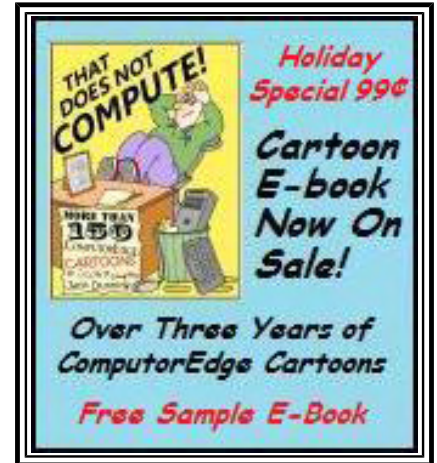
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**Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.**
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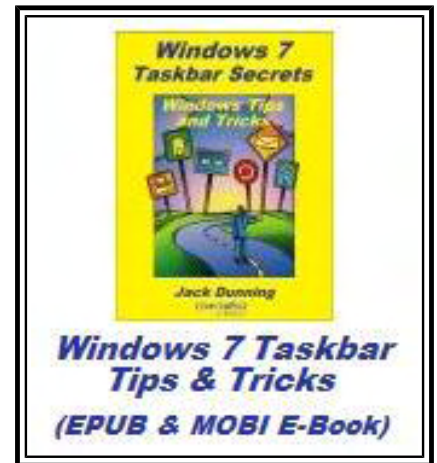
## Digital Dave

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

Problem Installing Service Pack 1 for Windows 7; USB Tips—Possible Unrecognized USB Fix?; Speeding Up Web Research.

*I've tried three times to download the Windows 7 Service Pack 1 update to my Lenovo laptop. The download process seems to occur normally, but fails to complete giving me an error message 800B0100 code 80070308. I've tried turning off my antivirus software with the same result. A Staples tech told me that SP 1 checks my entire laptop system and could refuse to complete a download if it finds an error with hard or software. Please suggest a fix to allow me to complete the SP 1 update.*

*Thanks!*

*Mike*
*Cardiff, CA*

Dear Mike,

There are a number of things which could be causing this problem. I will list a few of the solutions which I found in the order that I would try them. Hopefully one of them will work for you.

First, I would directly download Service Pack 1 (*www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=5842*) to my computer without using the Windows Update program. Then I would manually install the program. For 64-bit download the "windows6.1-KB976932-X64.exe" file. For 32-bit download the "windows6.1-KB976932-X86.exe" file. Then install the Service Pack manually by launching the file.

If that doesn't work, go to the Microsoft SP1 trouble shooting site (*windows.microsoft.com/troubleshootwindows7sp1*) and follow some of those recommendations. One recommendation is the System Update Readiness Tool (*support.microsoft.com/kb/947821/en-us*), which is designed to find conflicts that may be causing updates to fail.

Some people have been successful through repeated tries. The update would take up where it left off and eventually work. However, this has not always been the case.

If you have installed language packs, remove them all and then download the Service Pack file from the Web site and install it. For some people the previous installation of additional language packs has caused SP1 update to fail.

There is also free Microsoft support (*support.microsoft.com/oas/default.aspx? &gprid=14496&&st=1&wfxredirect=1&sd=gn*) for Windows 7 Service Pack 1. Select "Service Pack" and "Download issue" from the respective menus. "Installation Issue" is another option. You can get free e-mail, forum, or Microsoft answers support.

Hopefully one of these paths will help.

Digital Dave

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### *USB Tips—Possible Unrecognized USB Flash Drive Fix?*

*1. Always use Safe USB Removal. I have to repeatedly reformatted my PQI i221 8GB USB flash drive whenever not Safely Removed. Reformat using Dr.UFDv1.0.408 (*www.filestube.com/d/dr +ufdv1+0+2+24*) (updated from older Dr.UFDc.1.0.2.35)*
*VistaWin7 user need Fixer1002(3).zip*

*2. You can release some pending USB transfers which are blocking by using Unlocker (*download.cnet.com/Unlocker/3000-2248_4-10493998.html?tag=dropDownForm;productListing*) safe removal.*

*3. In case tray loses Safe USB Removal icon, create a new desktop icon to Safely Remove Hardware by adding %windir%\*bckslsh\*system32\*bckslsh\*RunDll32.exe shell32.dll, Control_RunDLL hotplug.dll to run from desktop icon instead.*

*4. Cause: USB May Not Work After You Unplug a Downstream USB Hub from the Host Controller (*www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=22167*) is Q810400_WXP_SP2_x86_ENU.exe. Possible fix if MS XP-SP2 and unrecognized USB.*

*5. Cause: Windows XP SP1, PocketPC, USB2.0 hub turned off and on (*www.microsoft.com/ download/en/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=3857*), or still have pending transfers, maybe not recognized.*
*Update XP to SP3, or download windowsxp-kbB838989-X86-ENU.exe patch.*

*6. You can diagnose some unfinished USB transfers by using Microsoft Process Explorer (*technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896653*) if Cannot Be Stopped Right Now.*

*Hope some of these help.*

*Jim Lipke*
*Menifee, CA*

Thanks, Jim,

It always helps to have multiple options when running into problems.

Digital Dave

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## Digital Dave's Tip

Everybody probably knows about this tip for more efficient Web browsing, but I've found that there is often someone who could really use a particular feature or trick which they don't know already exists. I do a great deal of searching the Internet for answers and links. As it turns out, I don't always know all the answers off the top of my head. Therefore, I continually look for ways to speed up my research.

One of the best ways to follow a path of clues found on the Web is to immediately do a new search every time you find a relevant term in a Web page. In the old days, I would copy and paste the search term in the search field. That works quite well, but most Web browser include a right-click search feature. All you need to do is select the desired term(s) and right click on the selected area. A menu will pop up (see Figure 1).
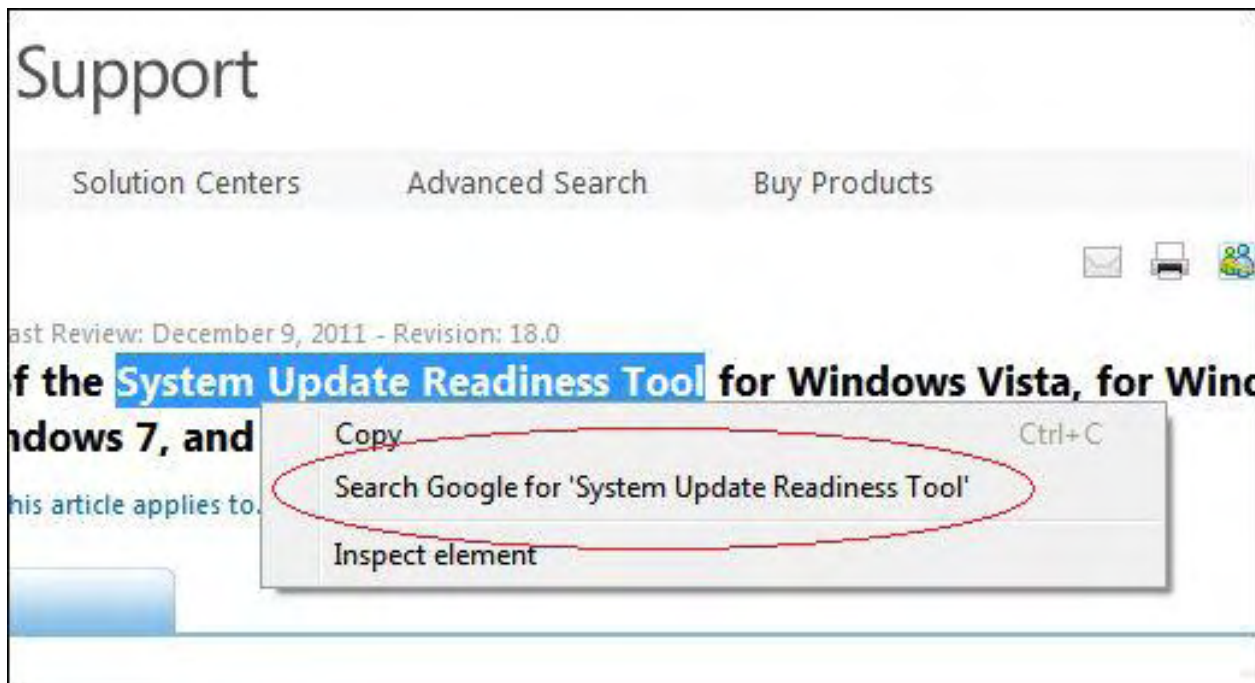

Figure 1. Right-click to do a quick Web search.

Select the search items and a new tab or window will open in your browser using the default search engine the highlighted terms.

This may seem minor, but for those of us who are trying to economize on keystrokes and mouse clicks, this is a time saver.

Digital

# Amazon's Tablet Takes on Heavy Weight Apple
## "The Kindle Fire VS. The Apple iPad" by Jack Dunning

Jack has done a side by side comparison of the Kindle Fire and the Apple iPad. He explains the differences as well as the pros and cons of each tablet.

I've finally had a chance to do a showdown between the Kindle Fire and Apple iPad. My father was visiting for Christmas and my brother had sent him a new Kindle Fire for Christmas. This gave me the opportunity to set up and test the various capabilities before my dad flew away with it. This is his first experience with either an eReader or a tablet computer. My father is hard of hearing and a little forgetful, so it is a bit of a challenge, although once it is in the proper mode, he really seems to be enjoying it. He has always been an avid reader and lover of poetry (still recites Milton's Sonnet "On His Blindness" every night at the dinner table), plus he is fond of a good western.



Note: In October I wrote a review of the features of the Kindle Fire (sight unseen). However, until I got my hands on one it was impossible to properly compare it to the iPad. Now, I need a NOOK tablet to throw into the mix.

While all-in-all the two tablets are functionally the same, there are some seemingly odd differences between Amazon and Apple products. This can be put down to the fact that Amazon is at heart a book selling company while Apple is a hardware company. At $199 the Amazon Kindle Fire is one of the most reasonably priced tablets on the

market. It's likely that Amazon is selling it very close to cost, if not losing a little money on each unit. Amazon sees the Kindle Fire as a platform for selling everything else they do—e-books, streaming video, and all their other retail operations. The Kindle attempts to keep you within the Amazon fold by making it a little more difficult to operate with non-Amazon concerns. In spite of this tendency to isolate the user, the Kindle Fire offers enough flexibility that straying outside is not impossible.

Through iTunes Apple iPad (starting at $499) creates a very similar closed collective atmosphere, but there seems to be more opportunities to break free. A huge difference from my perspective is that you can directly download e-books to the iBooks, Kindle and Kobo apps from Web sites such as *ComputorEdge* (links at the top of the Web page for e-books of this magazine) or our site for e-book compilations (*www.computoredgebooks.com*). The Kindle does not allow direct downloading of e-books from anywhere other than Amazon. There are techniques for adding outside e-books to the Kindle, but it requires a computer connection. (There is also an e-mail technique for loading content onto the Kindle Fire—more on that later.)

## Size and Weight

A major part of the difference in price between the Kindle Fire and Apple iPad can be seen in the size of the tablet. The size discrepancy (7" screen for Kindle versus 9.7" for iPad) doesn't strike home until you see them side by side (see Figure 1). The actual viewing area of the iPad is approximate twice that of the Kindle Fire. This is significant—especially if more than one person is simultaneously viewing a Netflix video on the tablet.
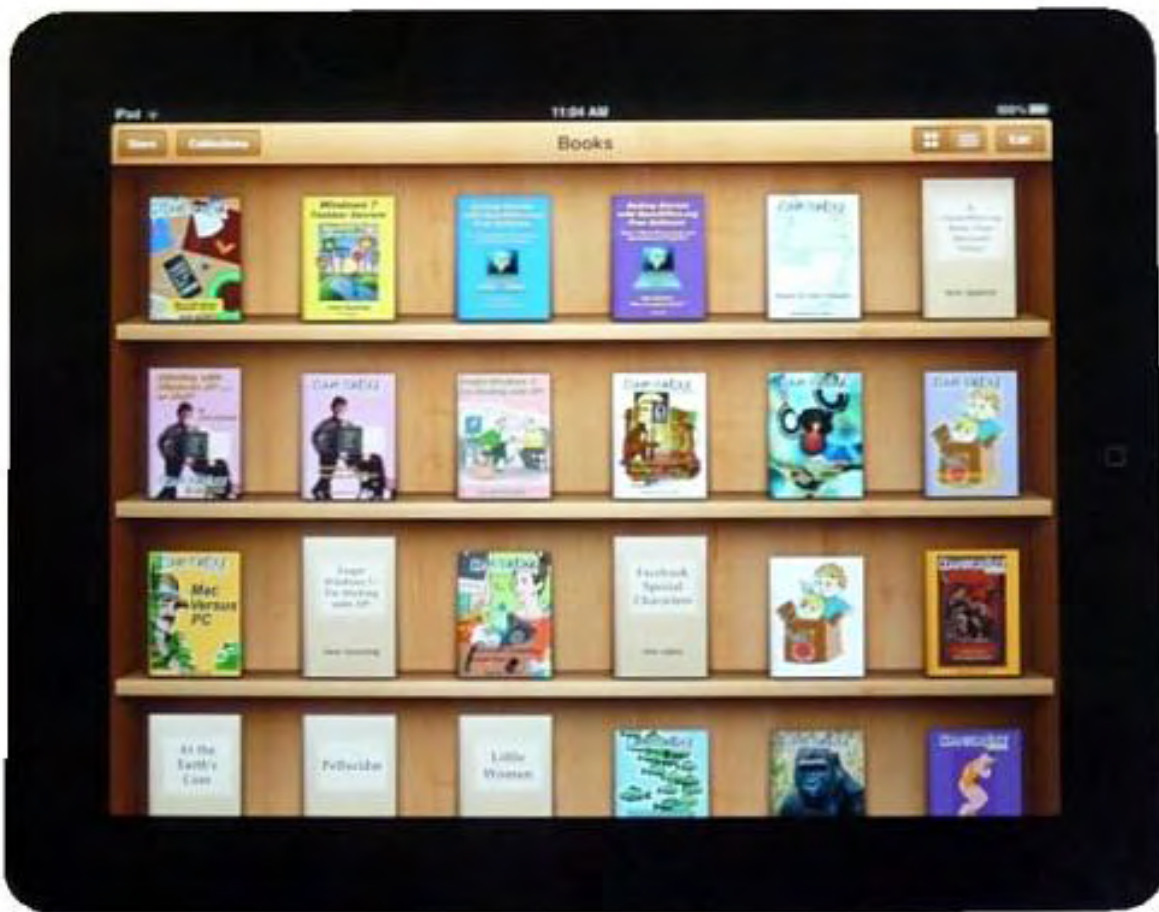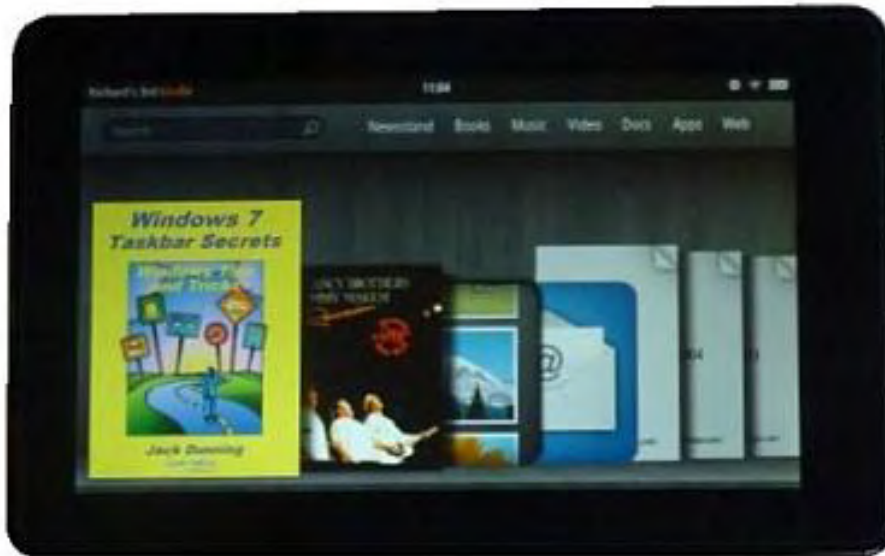
Figure 1. The iPad (bottom) has twice the viewing area of the Kindle Fire (top).

While the Kindle Fire weighs much less than the iPad, it still feels heavy for its size. It is sturdy, but does not compare to the light easy feel of other Kindle eReader models. Being smaller is not necessarily a negative for the Kindle Fire. There are numerous advantages to its size when traveling or just sitting in a chair while watching a video. However, the Kindle Fire is definitely a one-person tablet, while the iPad is easier to share. The smaller Kindle Fire also offers more problems for people with fat fingers. Tapping Web links can be difficult unless the screen view is

expanded.

The screen resolution for the Kindle Fire (1024 X 600) is competitive with the iPad (1024 X 768) especially considering its size. Size does matter. For many people, the Kindle Fire will be their pick because of its smaller size. For others the larger viewing area will push them toward the iPad.

## Web Browsing

Both the Kindle Fire and iPad use the same gestures for scrolling, zoom in and zoom out, so Web browsing is pretty much the same experience. Yet, using the Kindle Fire was less comfortable. This was primarily due to the shape of the screen and its smaller size. When the Kindle Fire is oriented vertically, the screen was too narrow. When horizontal, the screen was too short for relaxed Web browsing. The shape of the less panoramic iPad screen seems better for viewing most Web pages regardless of the tablet orientation (vertical or horizontal). Also as mentioned above, the links on Web pages on the Kindle Fire were more difficult to activate due to the same small size. I often needed to expand (zoom in) the page to make tapping the link easier.

## Downloading E-Books

As I previously stated, the Kindle Fire browser does not allow direct downloading from a Web site. To get outside content on your Kindle Fire you need to attach the tablet to a computer (with the previously downloaded the target files) via the USB port. This is easy enough to do, but out of the box the Kindle Fire does not include a USB cable—only a power adapter which uses the same USB port on the tablet. (This might not be a problem, since many cell phones and GPS devices use the same micro USB connector for recharging. You may already own the proper cable. You can get at Universal Mini-USB to Micro-USB Adapter (*www.amazon.com/Universal-Mini-USB-Micro-USB-Adapter-Black/dp/B002HGVV4O*) at Amazon for 38 cents—50 cents shipping—or a six foot micro USB cable for $1.59.) It seems that Amazon does not want to make it too easy to load outside content onto a Kindle—although it is cheap to remedy.

Amazon has an e-mail system called Kindle Personal Documents Service which allows you to e-mail files to your Kindle Fire. You are given an e-mail address in the form [name]@kindle.com. When you send a compatible file (e-books, documents, photos, etc.) as an attachment to that address, it will be converted to Amazon format and send to your Kindle the next time it is available. All of these files are placed in the Docs folder on the Kindle Fire and can be viewed directly from there. As far as I could tell, these files could not be moved to the Books folder or the photo application—even with the aid of a USB connected computer—although there does appear to be a method to first download the document to your computer, then do a USB transfer to the Kindle Fire.

Five gigabytes of Personal Document Archiving space is included with the Kindle Fire. Any documents that you send to the Kindle via the Personal Documents Service is automatically added to the archive.

While there are plenty of ways to add content to the Kindle Fire, the iPad seems to be much more flexible in both the area of Web downloading and computer connected file movement. If you like to obtain e-books and other documents from multiple sources then direct downloading of

Web content to the iPad is a significant advantage over the Kindle Fire.

## Amazon and iTunes

Both the Kindle Fire and iPad have easy access to their online stores for downloading e-books and apps. Since the Kindle Fire is new, the number of apps on Amazon is a sparse by comparison to Apple iTunes. No doubt, if the Kindle Fire catches on (and it appears to be doing just that) then there will be plenty of apps available soon.

The one caution I would inject about Amazon is that if either children (or certain people of more mature years) are using the Kindle Fire, you may find that they are unknowingly using "One-click ordering" to buy e-books, videos, or apps. Unlike iTunes, Amazon does not require password confirmation to buy with the Kindle Fire. As far as I could tell, you can turn "One-click" off in your Amazon account, but that does not disable the feature on the Kindle Fire. It seems that the best bet for avoiding accidental purchases would be to remove all credit card information from your Amazon account.

## Watching Videos

The high resolution screen on the Kindle Fire was excellent for viewing streaming video. The quality is certainly comparable to the iPad, although the larger iPad is better for sharing the experience with another person. If viewing a video in the widescreen format, iPad loses some of its size advantage since it requires a black bar on the top and bottom of the screen (see Figure 2). Both tablets have a audio out connection for headphones.

Figure 2. Netflix playing on the Kindle Fire (top) and the iPad. Notice the black bars at the top and bottom

of the iPad screen when showing a widescreen video.

A new Kindle Fire includes one month of Amazon Prime which offers free two-day shipping and thousands of free movies and television shows for streaming. For my father, the main drawback to Amazon Prime videos was the lack of closed captions. He depends upon subtitles when watching television. Headphones don't do the job for him.

There is a Netflix app available in the Amazon store. The app is free and is easily downloaded. If you are using Netflix for the first time, sign up with your computer and get one month free. One of the best features for my father is that Netflix offers closed captions on the Kindle Fire. This was unexpected since many Netflix capable devices do not support subtitles. It certainly pleased my father.

## Support for Kindle Format 8

Kindle Format 8 (KF8) will be the new format for e-books on the Kindle Fire. It will eventually replace the current MOBI format, although Kindle continues to support MOBI files. KF8 is based upon HTML5 and will offer enhance capabilities such as multimedia. The tools for building KF8 e-books have not yet been generally released by Amazon, but it seems that conversion from other formats such as EPUB may be much easier.

## Photos—Gallery

There is an app called Gallery pre-installed on the Kindle Fire which offers a photo viewing experience very similar to that of the iPad. To load your photos you need to plug the Kindle Fire into the USB port on your computer and drag the folders containing photos into the appropriate pictures folder on the Kindle Fire. When you move a copy of a folder into the tablet it creates an album in the Gallery app.

You can e-mail photos to your Kindle Fire via the Kindle Personal Documents Service, but they will be put in the Docs folder and can only be viewed with the eReader. You will not be able to move those e-mailed (and converted) photos into the pictures folder for use with Gallery—even if connected to a computer via USB. Possibly you can download them from the archive, but you will still need to hook your Kindle Fire up to the computer to load them—which defeats the purpose of the e-mailing in the first place.

## Device Storage

The least expensive iPad comes with 16 Gigabytes of on-board storage. The Kindle Fire only include eight Gigabytes which leaves about five Gigabytes available for photos, music, video and apps. Amazon says that eight is all that's needed since Amazon content will be stored in the Cloud. However, anything that is non-Amazon will need to reside on the device. Depending upon how you use the Kindle Fire, you could quickly find that you're are out of space—and there is no way to expand the memory. (It is noted that the competing NOOK tablet has an expansion slot for plugging in additional memory cards. The iPad is not expandable either, but it starts with a higher amount of memory and increases the memory with more expensive models.)

It is possible that you can use the Personal Document Archiving space for storing third-party e-books, photos, music, documents on a Kindle Fire, but I didn't get a chance to test this. If so,

then there will be an additional five gigabytes of storage available. Apple has implemented iCloud which can now be used for storage, backup and syncing for your iPad and other Apple devices. iCloud also comes with five gigabyte of free storage.

## Pre-installed Apps

The Kindle Fire has a number of pre-installed apps: "Pulse for music, Audible for audio books, IMBD for information about movies and actors, Quickoffice for working with Microsoft Documents, Facebook for social networking, as well as an app for e-mail and one called Gallery that shows a gallery of videos and pictures on the device." The list of installed apps on the Kindle Fire and Apple iPad look very similar, although some of the Kindle Fire apps (Books, Music, Web) actually appear on the main taskbar at the top of the home page.

For e-books and music you will find a button on the main taskbar at the top of the screen. For photos you will need to use the pre-installed app, Gallery. There are some game apps, Facebook (even more non-intuitive than the regular Facebook setup), and a few others on the Kindle Fire in the App section. Some people have complained about the fact that you can't remove (or even hide) Facebook—or other pre-installed apps. Apparently, Facebook is the new scourge for parents trying to raise kids.

## No Camera for Kindle Fire

I'm not sure how many people really care, but the iPad 2 sports cameras (front and back). The Kindle Fire has no camera. How much do iPad 2 owners actually use their cameras? I would be interested to hear.

## Impulse Item?

Some people have suggested that the Kindle Fire is not really a tablet computer as define by the market ignited by the Apple iPad. They are wrong. In every sense, the Kindle Fire is a one-handed computing device capable of doing almost everything we've come to expect from a tablet. It is not as big as the iPad (which in many cases may be a plus) and lacks some capabilities (camera), but it will do 99 percent of the things that we want a tablet to do. As time goes by, there will be more apps available for the Kindle Fire and at $199 it is a killer deal. The price is low enough to almost be considered an impulse item. Is the Kindle Fire a threat to the iPad market? You bet!

It's interesting to note that the real threat to Apple's iPad market is not coming from the other computer companies, who can't build an inexpensive tablet, but rather the e-book readers such as Amazon's Kindle and Barnes and Noble's NOOK who offer a different view of the tablet computer in the Kindle Fire and NOOK Tablet. Other than being smaller than the iPad in size and price, these new tablets are more similar than unlike Apple's market leader, the iPad.

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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*. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

*Windows 7 Taskbar Secrets (EPUB for iPad, NOOK, etc.) (*www.computoredgebooks.com/
Windows-7-Taskbar-Secrets-EPUB-for-iPad-NOOK-etc-Wintips0002-1.htm*)*
*Windows 7 Taskbar Secrets (MOBI for Amazon Kindle) (*www.computoredgebooks.com/
Windows-7-Taskbar-Secrets-MOBI-for-Amazon-Kindle-Wintips0002-2.htm*)*
*Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? (EPUB for iPad, NOOK, etc.) (*www.computoredgebooks.
com/Sticking-with-Windows-XP-or-Not-EPUB-for-iPad-NOOK-etc-Wintips0001-1.htm*)*
*Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? (MOBI for Amazon Kindle) (*www.computoredgebooks.com/
Sticking-with-Windows-XP-or-Not-MOBI-for-Amazon-Kindle-Wintips0001-2.htm*)*

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# Wally Wang's Apple Farm
## "Why Companies Fail" by Wally Wang

Why Companies Fail; Late to the Party Award for Intuit; Microsoft and Nokia Caught Astroturfing; Creating Interactive Fiction; Online Sales Growth; Filling a Document with Text.

Big, established companies eventually fail while tiny start-ups often grow and become big companies. While most start-ups also fail, a surprisingly large number manage to surpass the big companies as the big companies stand still and wait to die.

Robert Cringely, who used to write for InfoWorld, recently wrote about why big companies can't change (*www.cringely.com/2011/12/why-big-companies-cant-change/*). Robert believes that "Nearly every good start-up begins with why? and that why? is traditionally quite simple— because the founders want one for themselves. A hardware device or software application doesn't exist and they'd really like one, so they invent it. For start-ups, why is easy. If it isn't easy then you probably don't have a good start-up. If as a founder your answer to why? is 'to get rich' you are in the wrong job."

Start-ups create something that they want and find useful, while big companies focus on profits first and protecting their current business. Theoretically, big companies have the resources to constantly innovate and stay miles ahead of any potential start-up created by a handful of people in a garage. Yet time after time, such big companies fail simply because they're in business for the wrong reason, which is to get rich instead of creating the best products possible.

The most successful start-ups didn't begin just to get rich, but to fill a need that the founder wanted. In the process, they got rich. The biggest companies that fail simply focused on making money the only way they know how, which blinds them to new opportunities because those new opportunities don't offer them a chance to make a lot of money right away, right now. As a result, they ignore these new opportunities until they pass them by, and then they jump on these new opportunities when it's too late.

Montgomery Wards started as a mail-order company with their huge catalogs to reach and sell products to people no matter where they might live. Today, Montgomery Wards' idea still thrives on the Internet, but Montgomery Wards failed back in 2001. All the company had to do was focus on selling products by reaching customers who couldn't get to a store, and they could have thrived. Yet they remained focused on mail-order catalogs as the only way to reach customers.

By embracing the Internet, a small start-up like Amazon took over the long-distance retailing business while a giant like Montgomery Wards collapsed under its own weight.

Montgomery Wards failed because they didn't see the Internet as a profitable business until it was too late. When you seek the maximum amount of profits in the short-term, you'll risk missing the much larger potential profits in the long-term. Just ask Kodak what happened to their film processing business and why they ignored digital photography for so long as they sought to milk the film processing business for maximum profits in the short-term while ignoring the long-term potential profits of digital photography.

Kodak actually split into two companies: one to develop film and one to develop chemicals. Not surprisingly, their film business is now failing and their chemical business is thriving (*finance. yahoo.com/news/kodak-struggles-eastman-chemical-thrives-131648343.html?l=1*), but it has more to do with the corporate culture of each company.

Where the CEO for Eastman Chemicals rarely uses the corporate jet at less than $10,000 a year, the CEO for Eastman Kodak racked up corporate jet charges over $300,000 that included flying to the Super Bowl in 2010. To avoid layoffs, the CEO of Eastman Chemicals ordered a 5 percent pay cut among all employees. Despite declining profits, the CEO of Eastman Kodak gave out lavish severance packages. Eastman Chemicals is looking to survive in the long-term. Eastman Kodak is looking to exploit the short-term regardless of the long-term effects. Yet many individuals do this as well, and then wonder why they're not successful.

In the computer world, the largest market right now revolves around Windows, yet the Macintosh and other Apple products are rapidly gaining popularity. Here are three likely possibilities:

1. Windows rules the computer market for the rest of eternity and all Apple products remain irrelevant.

2. Windows controls a major share of the market but the Macintosh, along with Android and the iPhone and iPad, co-exist with a large minor share of the market.

3. Windows fades away to a minor share of the market and the Macintosh, Android, and the iPhone and iPad dominate the major share.

Here's how to think in the short-term. Since Windows currently dominates the market right now, focus exclusively on Windows and ignore everything else. This strategy will only work if Windows continues to dominate. If Windows should slip or disappear altogether, this strategy will eventually fail completely. With this strategy, you have a one in three chance of success or 33%.

Here's how to think in the long-term. Maintain your skill and knowledge about Windows, but expand your skills and knowledge to cover Apple products and Android. Now if Windows dominates, you'll still have your skills to survive, but if Windows fades away or shrinks slightly, your new skills about Apple products and Android will carry you to the future.

With the short-term, focus only on Windows strategy because that's the largest market right now to make money, you have a 33% chance of success and a 67% chance of failure. With a long-term, maintain Windows but learn about Apple and Android as well strategy, you have a 100%

chance of success no matter what happens.

If someone gave you a 100% chance of winning the lottery or a 33% chance, why would you deliberately choose the 33% chance? Yet many anti-Apple critics are deliberately choosing the 33% strategy simply because they don't like Apple, thereby increasing their chance of failure in the long-term.

Obviously this isn't logical, but logic never enters in the minds of people who focus exclusively on the short-term because otherwise they would realize that their short-term focus will eventually doom them to failure. Even more surprising is how short-term focused people would rather manufacture ludicrous reasons to support their illogical strategy rather than simply taking the time to evaluate if they're following the wrong strategy in the first place.

The fate of Research in Motion's steady decline (*mobileopportunity.blogspot.com/2010/10/whats-really-wrong-with-blackberry-and.html*) from smart phone leader to washed up has-been clearly shows that no leader in any market can stay on top forever. Michael Mace describes how a computing platform dies once it saturates the market where sales suddenly plunge for apparently no reason.
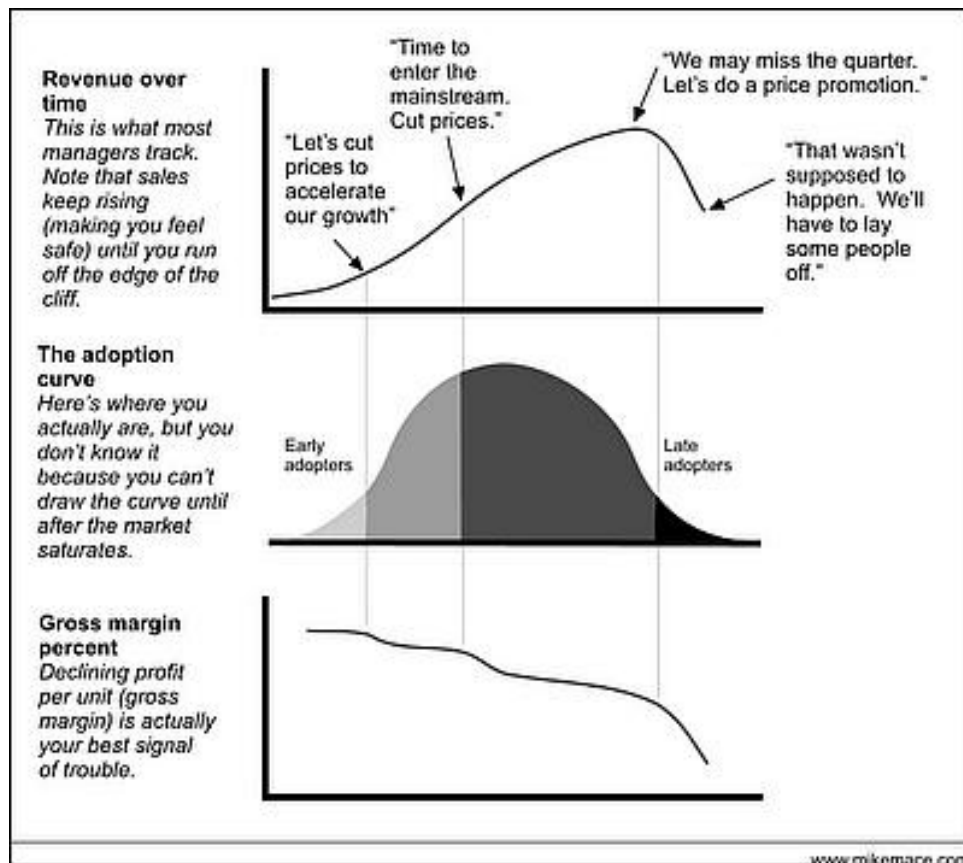


Figure 1. The predictable decline of any computing platform.

The problem is that no computing platform can continue growing forever. This is like riding a roller coaster up to the top of the first hill and fooling yourself that since you're currently rising in the short-term, you'll continue rising forever in the long-term as well. For the new year, decide if you want to succeed or fail. If you want to fail, the formula is simple: just stop thinking.

In his book *Focal Point (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0814472788/ref=as_li_tf_tl?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0814472788*). Brian Tracy says "flexibility is the most important single quality you can develop to survive and thrive in the twenty-first century. Flexibility entails openness, receptivity, and the willingness to try new methods and techniques...One way to become more flexible is to get your ego out of the way. Detach yourself from the situation. Be more concerned with what's right rather than with who's right. Your only question should be, 'Does it work?'"

The next time you form a strong opinion about anything, ask yourself if your opinion will lead to the results you want. If not, then it doesn't really matter what your opinion might be if you're ultimately losing in the end.

## Late to the Party Award for Intuit

If you thought Microsoft's Windows 8 tablet strategy was late to react to the success of the iPad, then you might be interested in hearing that Intuit has announced that they'll finally make Quicken 2007 (*quicken.intuit.com/support/help/lion-compatible-quicken-for-mac-2007/GEN83769.html*) compatible with Mac OS X 10.7 Lion by 2012.

If holding your breath for Intuit to create a Macintosh compatible version of Quicken isn't your idea of fun, look at alternatives like iBank 4 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B003WT1KAK/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B003WT1KAK*), which offers a setup assistant to help transfer data from other money management programs such as Quicken for Windows and Microsoft Money.

For another Quicken alternative for the Mac, look at GnuCash (*www.gnucash.org/*), a free money management program that runs on Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. Since GnuCash isn't a native Mac OS X program, it might look a bit clunky and ugly so consider a Mac OS X program called Finance 7 (*www.yenco.com/finance/*), which only costs $14.99.

Finance 7 previously cost $40, but with the availability of the Mac App Store, the developer could cut costs by not worrying about generating serial codes or paying costs associated with accepting credit cards online. Even though the software now costs less and needs to share profits with Apple, the developer claims he'll actually make more money distributing his software through the Mac App Store than doing it himself.

Visit the Mac App Store, search for "finance," and you'll find plenty of other money management solutions that you can evaluate. Without the Mac App Store, many of these programs would struggle to reach an audience.

Figure 2. The Mac App Store offers plenty of money management alternatives to Quicken.

If you're interested in developing software, you can struggle with the hassles of generating serial codes to reduce piracy and pay for the ability to accept online credit card purchases while allowing secure downloads to customers. Or you can just let the Mac App Store worry about all of these problems while you focus on creating better software and still make more money.

There's a reason why other companies are mimicking the App Store, because it attracts developers and more software ultimately attracts more customers. If you can make money easily by submitting your software to the App Store rather than marketing your software on your own, you'll likely continue supporting the platform that's making more money for you at less cost and hassle.

Given a choice between spending money and time marketing your software yourself or letting the

App Store do it for you while making more money at the same time, it's easy to see where the smart developers will go. Where the developers go, that's where the customers will eventually go.

## Microsoft and Nokia Caught Astroturfing

When people support an idea, it's called a grassroots movement. When people and corporations fake a grassroots movement, it's called astroturfing. The idea behind astroturfing is to convince others that a grassroots movement is occurring so they'll become part of it and turn it into a real grassroots movement.

When many people read positive statements about Apple, they immediately jump to the conclusion that the writer must be paid by Apple with the assumption that nobody would ever write anything positive about Apple unless they were getting paid to do so. Yet when these same people read anything positive about any other companies, they don't immediately jump to the conclusion that these other writers must have been paid off as well.

When an Indian Web site criticized the technical features of Nokia's latest Windows Phone 7 phone, comments from enraged readers flooded the site. The site owner tracked the source of those comments and discovered that they led straight back to Microsoft and Nokia (*news.cnet. com/8301-1035_3-57345892-94/microsoft-nokia-linked-to-comments-on-negative-lumia-review/? tag=mncol;editorPicks*). Rather than let happy customers defend their products, someone at Microsoft and Nokia decided to defend their products themselves without revealing their ulterior motive for doing so.

So the next time someone complains about positive information about Apple, we can all assume that the person complaining about Apple must be either working for Microsoft or getting paid by Microsoft. After all, if nobody would ever write anything positive about Apple without getting paid to do so, then this same logic means that nobody would ever complain about Apple unless they were getting paid to do so by competitors as well.

## Creating Interactive Fiction

Before computers could display graphics to play games, many game companies produced text-adventure games where the game would describe a situation and you could type a limited number of commands to pick up or drop a weapon, look around the room, or head through an open door into another corridor or room.

While such text adventure games are antiquated now, they can still be a lot of fun to play and even more fun to create. If you like the idea of playing or making text adventure games, download a copy of Inform (*inform7.com/*).
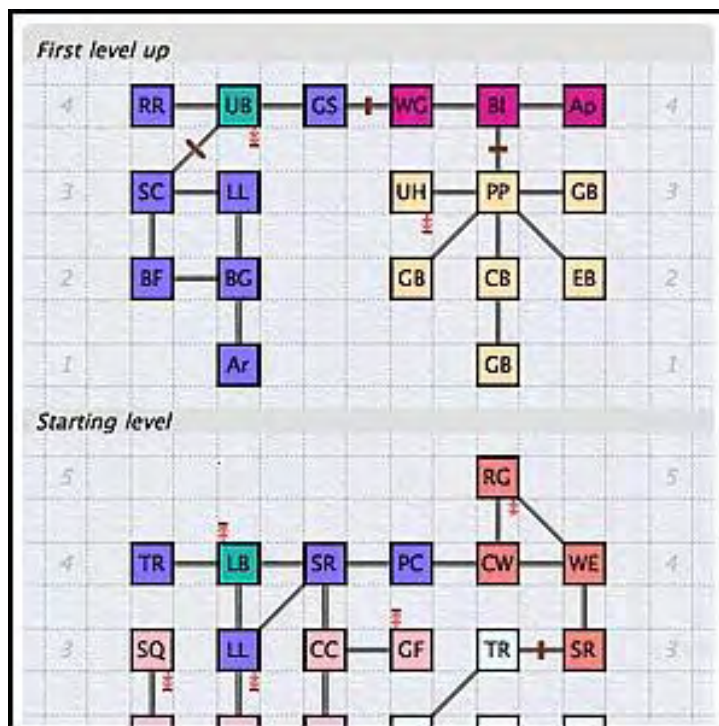
Figure 3. Inform lets you design and create interactive fiction.

Besides letting you create text adventure games, Inform also lets you create those Choose Your Own Adventure interactive fiction books that were popular back in the 80's where you flip through different pages and based on your decisions, get routed to another page where you face a different situation based on your choice.

Inform uses code that closely resembles English so you don't have to be a programmer to create your own interactive fiction (*inform7.com/learn/movies/*). By creating your own text adventures, you can create interesting games that you can share with others. They may not rival the graphic capabilities of the latest video games, but they can be a lot more intellectually challenging rather than relying on eye-hand coordination.

Best of all, Inform runs on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux so you can create and play games on your favorite operating system. Many teachers are even using Inform to teach children the principles of writing and programming. To read more, read Deborah Kozdras's paper "Interactive Fiction: 'New Literacy' Learning Opportunities for Children (*www.wwwords.co.uk/rss/abstract.asp?j=elea&aid=2916&doi=1*)".

Create your own text adventures or Choose Your Own Adventure stories or use Inform to teach a foreign language or writing. With Inform, you can focus on being creative and forget about the complexity of programming so your game is only limited by your imagination.

## Online Sales Growth

If you're not selling something online, you're missing a growing market. IBM's research indicates that online sales jumped this past Christmas with iOS devices (*www.forbes.com/sites/erikamorphy/2011/12/26/ios-took-13-4-of-online-sales-on-christmas-day/*) taking a 13.4 percent share of e-commerce, presumably from people getting a new iOS device and buying stuff on it right away.

The iPad led with a 7 percent share with the iPhone second with a 6.4 percent share. Android devices followed in third with a 5 percent share. Whether those Android sales came through Kindle Fire or Barnes & Noble Nook tablets or through regular Android phones isn't yet clear.

What is clear is that people are buying through mobile devices and this trend shows no signs of dropping any time soon. Whether you're selling apps or e-books, or just regular products that people might want to buy through their phone or tablet, you want to target the growing market of mobile users.

*          *          *

If you have Microsoft Word 2011 for the Mac, there's an odd command you can use to fill a document with text. Just type the following and press Return:

=rand(x,y)

Substitute numbers for both x and y and if you type "=rand(3,5)", Word will create 3 paragraphs consisting of 5 sentences each.

This odd command also works in Word for Windows, so any time you need to fill a Word document with meaningless text just to play with different features without typing anything yourself, use this strange command.

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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 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 (*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 and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/
product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*
*How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/
B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70*)*
*The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/
ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M*)*
*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362*)*
*99% Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) (*www.amazon.com/gp/
product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A*)*
*The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/
ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI*)*
*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*.

**Beyond Personal Computing**
**"Working in a High Tech Office"** by Marilyn K. Martin

Marilyn shares some amusing anecdotes about working in a high tech office.

Working at a computer in a high tech corporate office environment has its own set of challenges and rewards. You can't sit at your computer in your pajamas and jump up for a break whenever you want, like at home. But you do have a regular paycheck, and daily challenges that don't involve children and pets.

## Major Drawbacks to Working in a Cubicle

1. Being told to think outside the box—when you're *in* a box all day.

2. Not being able to check e-mail attachments without turning around to see who's behind you watching.

3. Fabric cubicle walls do not offer much protection from gunfire.

4. Always have a nagging sensation that if you press the right button you'll get a piece of cheese.

5. There are 23 power cords but only *one* outlet.

6. Prison cells are not only bigger, they also have beds.

7. If you talk to yourself, heads pop up over the cubicle walls saying "What? I didn't hear you."

8. You always have the feeling someone is watching you, but when you look they're gone.

9. If the boss asks you to come to his office, everyone knows about it. As you walk to the boss' office, everyone hands you tissues while refusing to make eye contact.

10. You have no door to slam when you quit and walk out.

## Computer Related Office Buzzwords

1. Treeware - Hacker slang for documentation or other printed material.

2. Chips & Salsa - Chips=Hardware, Salsa=Software. ("Gotta figure out if your problem's in your chips or salsa.")

3. Percussive Maintenance - The fine art of whacking the heck out of an electronic device (without denting the case) to get it working again.

4. CLM - (Career Limiting Move) Acronym used among micro-serfs to describe ill-advised activities. Trashing your boss verbally when he/she is within earshot is a serious CLM.

5. 404 - Internet error message ("404 - Document Not Found") describing someone totally clueless. ("Don't bother asking him - he's 404, man.")

6. Mouse Potato - The online, wired generation's answer to the couch potato.

## Top Signs That You're Bored at Work

1. You've already read the entire Dilbert page-a-day calendar for the current year.

2. You've figured a way to get Gilligan off the island, and wrote a proposal for a new reality show.

3. People come into your cubicle only to borrow pencils from your ceiling.

4. You've called the local Ghost Hunters since when you stare at your cubicle wall long enough, you swear you see faces of the dead.

5. You now require only a single can of cola to belch the names of all the Transformers.

6. The 4th Division of Paperclips has overrun the Pushpin Infantry, and General White-Out has called for reinforcements.

7. The polite requests and petitions didn't work. Your cell phone is kidnapped to eliminate the Air-Horn, Loud Bang and Ear-Splitting Scream apps.

## How to Tell That The New Employee Isn't Tech-Savvy

New Employee: "What's this thing beside the monitor?"

Old Employee: "The computer."

New Employee: "Oh. And what's this boxy thing here?"

Old Employee: "The electric pencil sharpener."

New Employee: "Oh. And what's this big thingy that says 'Ready' beside the Fax Machine?"

Old Employee: "Our section's printer."

New Employee: "Oh. And do you have Tech Support to call when the printer jams or needs new

toner?"

Old Employee: "Uh, yes and no."

## Universal Laws of the Office

1. Rome did not create a great empire by having meetings. They did it by killing all those who opposed them.

2. Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.

3. A person who smiles in the face of adversity probably has a scapegoat.

4. When the going gets tough, the tough take a coffee break.

5. Never put off until tomorrow what you can avoid altogether.

6. Indecision is the key to flexibility.

## Top Things to Say If You Get Caught Sleeping at Your Desk

1. They told me at the blood bank this might happen.

2. Phew! Guess I left the top off the White-Out. You probably got to me just in time. Thanks!

3. Someone must have put decaf in the wrong pot.

4. I was just taking a 15-minute power nap, like they raved about in that time management course you sent me to.

5. I was testing my keyboard for drool resistance.

6. I was meditating on our Mission Statement, and envisioning a new paradigm.

7. Are you discriminating against people who practice Yoga relaxation techniques to relieve stress?

8. ...in Jesus' name, Amen.

## Office Computer Wisdom

1. There is always a faster computer, even elsewhere in the company. But it probably doesn't have a hard drive 90% full, with dozens of kitchen magnets on its casing.

2. There are at least four different ways of doing any single thing in Windows. Use whatever works for you.

3. Spell-checking dos knot replace common cents.

4. If you password-protect every single operation on your computer, you will never get anything done. And IT may have to resort to a Password Reset program for you.

5. If your hard drive is over 50% full, it's time to start managing excess files. If it is over 75% full, it's time to start looking for additional drive space. Do *not* wait until you are out of drive space to attempt a resolution.

6. Never squat over a power strip.

## When the Sky Is Really Not the Limit

A man flying in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a man below. He lowered the balloon even more and shouted, "Excuse me, Sir. Can you tell me where I am?"

The man below replied, "Yes I can. You're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field."

"Ah ... You must work in information technology," said the balloonist.

"I do indeed!" answered the man on the ground. "How did you know?"

"Well," said the balloonist, "Everything you told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to anyone."

The man below said, "And you must work in business management."

"I do," replied the balloonist, "But how did you know?"

"Well," answered the man on the ground, "You don't know where you are, or where you're going. But you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were in before we met, but now it's my fault."

## Reasons Why Alcohol Should Be Served at Work

1. It's a great incentive to just show up.

2. It leads to more honest communications.

3. Employees tell management what they think, not what they want to hear.

4. It encourages car pooling.

5. It increases job satisfaction because if you have a bad job, you don't care.

6. Employees are happy to work late, because there is no longer a reason to hit a bar before going home.

7. Sitting bare-bottom on the copier will no longer be seen as gross.

## Is Santa Claus Really a System Administrator?

1. Santa is bearded, corpulent and dresses funny.

2. When you ask Santa for something, the odds of receiving what you want are infinitesimal.

3. Santa seldom answers your mail.

4. When you ask Santa where he gets all the stuff he's got, he says "Elves make it for me."

5. Santa doesn't care about your deadlines.

6. Your parents claimed Santa had supernatural powers—but really did all the work themselves.

7. Nobody knows who Santa has to answer to for his actions.

8. Santa laughs entirely too much.

9. Santa thinks nothing of breaking into your home.

10. Only a lunatic says bad things about Santa in his presence.

(Many of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple Internet sites. But special thanks to *Computerjokes.net*, *Computer-jokes.net*, *Wuzzysweb.com*, *Joke-of-the-day.com*, *Ttgservices.com*)

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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

"External Drive Backup Not Enough," "Internet Explorer Support Lifecycle," "Unformat a Hard Drive," "Annoying Chrome," "More Holiday Gift Ideas"

## External Drive Backup Not Enough

[Regarding the December 9 Digital Dave column:]

I agree that it is good to have a local backup, and I too use an USB external drive. But I also use Carbonite Internet backup as an extra precaution.

That way I have both an on-site backup for speed and convenience, and an off-site copy of my data in case something happens to my external drive.

On my local USB external drive, I have a full image backup of my hard drive in case I need to do a full restore. To offset Dave's concerns of using the Internet backup, I only store data and items that I'm not as concerned about their security.

But as I'm sure that Dave would agree…the most important thing is to use a backup solution that will insure that you use it on a regular basis.

Good luck.

-David, Westminster, CO

Hi Dave,

While I certainly agree with your position on off-site backup companies, I feel critical data should be backed up both off-site and on an external hard drive. My question of anyone who only uses an external hard drive (or, worse yet, CDs) to back up files, is "Where do you keep this backup?" Invariably, it's in the office near the computer. My next question is, "Where is your data when you come home and your house is under water, nothing but ashes, or the object of a burglary?" I think a combination of both is worthwhile for critical data, particularly for businesses. The only caveat would be to use an established, trustworthy service, such as Carbonite or Mozy.

-Doug Clements, Poway, CA

## Internet Explorer Support Lifecycle

[Regarding the December 9 Digital Dave column:]

Regarding support for Internet Explorer versions (*blogs.technet.com/b/lifecycle/*

*archive/2009/06/27/the-support-lifecycle-for-internet-explorer.aspx*): "Support for older versions of IE will not end unless we ship a replacement version of IE in a future OS service pack." I'm using Win 7 SP1 and Vista SP2 with IE8 as the browser and they continue to receive IE8 updates on the usual monthly basis.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego

## Unformat a Hard Drive

[Regarding the December 9 Digital Dave column:]

DFSee (*www.dfsee.com*) has unformat capability. It is the most robust hard drive utility I've ever found. Free to use for something like 30 days, then they want you to buy it. I've used it for years. The one problem is that it has a big learning curve, but there is a mailing list where I've always gotten instant answers with any questions I had.

Download it, then call up your nerdiest friend to come help you run it and unformat your drive. Suggestion: Buy another drive and do a partition copy (DFSee can do that too) from the old drive to the new one, then unformat the new drive. That safeguards the old drive in case you push the wrong key somewhere during the unformat.

-Peter Skye, Los Angeles

## Annoying Chrome

[Regarding the December 9 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

I never knowingly downloaded Chrome in any form, yet I continue to get a warning window that interrupts almost any new page from coming up. Something about script not initializing or some such. I have to go and disable all my FireFox extensions, close down all my tool bars (which I never knowingly loaded anyway) and anything else I can think of before any of my Yahoo Mail will even load. I am using a ThinkPad T43p with Windows XP Pro.

-David F. Lanphere Sr., Guam

## More Holiday Gift Ideas

[Regarding the December 16 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

I would rather see a small power inverter plugged into a power port in a car. It is a 110/120 volt source of AC power from the car battery and offers the same convenience of a wall outlet found in your office or home. Most also come with a USB port. They also now come with internal sensing that shuts them off if your car battery voltage starts getting below a given level, which will prevent any plugged in devices draining your car battery. I have seen them at Target, Sears, Walmart, Harbor Freight and online at reasonable prices. Just don't plug in more wattage demand than the unit is designed to deliver.

-Bill B., San Marcos, 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*).