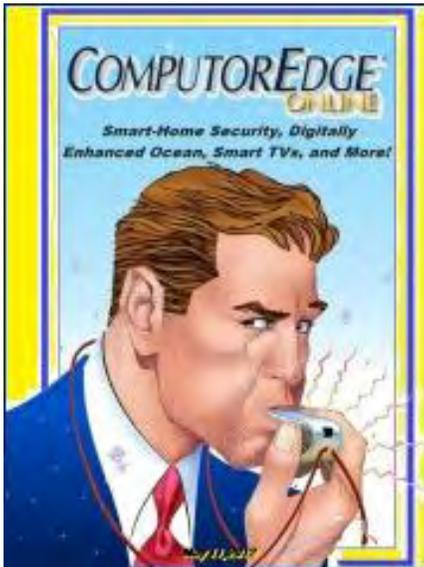# *ComputorEdge™ Online — 05/11/12*

This issue: Smart-Home Security, Digitally Enhanced Ocean, Smart TVs, and More!

More little known computer and Internet stories.

Table of Contents:

ZoneAlarm Bug
A reader updated to ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus Firewall. It has a bug and he is unable to report it.

DEPARTMENTS:

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers by ComputorEdge Staff

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.
"E-mail Lists," "Why not Low Level format the drive?" "Microsoft Devolution and Windows 7/8"

Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *cewebmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2012 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

ComputorEdge Magazine, P.O. Box 83086, San Diego, CA 92138. (858) 573-0315

Digital Dave

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

Jack the Boss and Paint.NET; Travel Connections for Two Computers; What is MSShield?

Dear Digital Dave,

Jack (your boss) recommended Paint.NET in his last column, with a glowing review and a link to the download site. So I installed it. Into a test directory. And it worked fine.

"Ha," says I. "I'd like to keep this Paint.NET thing, so I'll reinstall it into its own directory."

There wasn't any README or UNINSTALL.txt so I figured everything was gonna be easy. I deleted the files in the test directory, created a Paint.NET directory, and reran the installer (Paint. NET.3.5.10.Install.exe).

Wham! It failed, with the enlightening message "Fatal error during installation." Up at the top where you don't notice it, there was an additional message "There was an error while installing Paint.NET. (1603)".

Wham! Wham! Wham! Wham! I tried four more times. It failed four more times.

So I'm Paint.NET-less and it's all Jack's fault for not telling me to install to a non-test directory. What should I do next?

I'm running Windows XP SP3. Chkdsk says the disk is fine.

Peter
Los Angeles

Dear Peter,

While there is some software which can be removed by simply deleting the files, most programs should to be removed with either an uninstall program or through "Add and Remove Programs" in the Control Panel ("Programs and Features" in Windows 7 and Vista). This way the special entries in the Registry will also be removed. Most likely it is one those entries which is causing your problem.

The first thing I would try is uninstalling via "Add or Remove Programs" even though the files have already been deleted. To find the tool in XP for uninstall (when you don't have a separate uninstall program) go to Control Panel => Add or Remove Programs. If Paint.NET does not appear or won't properly uninstall, then you may need to restore to an earlier point.

One of the problems I have with Windows XP is that sometimes the only way to find something seems to be through Windows Help. System Restore Wizard can be found in Window Help. Start => Help and Support => Performance and Maintenance => Using System Restore to undo changes => Run the System Restore Wizard => Restore my computer to an earlier time. Pick a point prior to installing Paint.NET. That should give you a fresh start.

The last resort (and not for everyone) is to search the Registry with regedit.exe for references to Paint.Net and deleting those entries. The problem with this approach is that if you're not careful you could delete entries required for other services or programs.

Once you have cleaned out the remnants of the old Paint.NET installation, you should be able to reinstall the program.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have been a long time reader of your column (on paper and digital). Thank you for exploring and helping all of us with your knowledge and insight.

The issue:

My wife and I travel a great deal to all parts of the world. While traveling, we need to use two computers (Windows 7) everyday for our journal (blog) and teaching online college classes. We are constantly faced with two problems:

1. Our room has one cable (Cat 5) connection—only one computer can be connected at a time.

2. There is a Wi-Fi connection but a significant charge for any computer to sign on.

While in Moscow we had to pay $30 dollars per 24 hours. In Europe the charge is anywhere from $20-30 per night. It's the same for Australia and New Zealand.

We just got back from Vietnam and China and we were lucky in not having to pay for Internet, but had problems with the single cable connection. One hotel was so nice as to put a Wi-Fi router attached to the cable and we had Wi-Fi for both of our computers.

The Question:

What would be the most practical solution for our need to be connected every day with two computers?

I do not have a problem paying for one connection while using Wi-Fi. Is there a way to connect one computer, pay the connection fee and have the second computer get the Wi-Fi/cable signal through the initial computer?

*I have heard that there is a process to do this with Microsoft, but have had no luck achieving this connection. Someone also told me that I should think about MiFi (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MiFi*). Is there a small router that I could carry that in connecting to a cable, I could also use it to log in, sign up and pay the fee and then both our computers would have Wi-Fi connect through the router?*

If I would need to have the two computers configured, would you be able to tell me where I could

get it done? I have asked several service centers with little help.

I appreciate any help you can give us (and also other readers and their input).

Vic Garcia

Vic Garcia
Monument, Colorado

Dear Vic,

There is certainly a solution to your problem. Probably the best solution is for you to turn one of your computers into a router by sharing one connection with the other computer. The primary requirement is that you have two network cards in one of the computers, either hardwired (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000GB0N14/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*) or wireless (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000WMK8TE/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*). Fortunately, most laptops include both a wired network port and a Wi-Fi capability.

Windows has a network feature for sharing Internet connections called Internet Connection Sharing (*windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-vista/Using-ICS-Internet-Connection-Sharing*) (ICS). The idea is to turn your second network card into an Internet access point. The advantage to using a hard-wired connection is that your new network will be as secure as the first computer connection. (You will need to bring a cable to connect the second computer.) If you use wireless to share, then be sure to implement security on your new access point or you will be sharing your connection with other people in the hotel.

Whether you're using a hardwired or wireless connection to the second computer depends upon what's available in the hotel. If you get a cable connections then you will need to share the Wi-Fi in your laptop with the other computer. If the hotel has wireless, then you will connect computers with a cable. You will need to set up the ICS as necessary making sure that you share the open network connection either Wi-Fi or direct. If you want more options, then you can add another network card to one of the computers leaving the original two connections (hardwired and Wi-Fi) available for the hotels service.

The second option is to bring a travel router (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002G1CLS0/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*) with you. The only problem with this is that the travel routers I've seen depend upon a hardwired connections at the hotel to then set up a Wi-Fi network. If the hotel only offers Wi-Fi then you will still need to convert one of the computers into a hardwired router for either the router or the other computer.

The problem with a MiFi (My Wi-Fi) router (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0039ZLMK0/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*) is that it is dependent upon cellular service. You will be limited by the speed of the cellular service, plus when traveling all over the world the available access may severely limited.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

What is MSShield and why does it take up so much CPU time? It's usually running at 80% or more. Also, sometimes when I check the Windows Task Manager I see two iexplore.exe running. This is on a Compaq desktop running Windows XP.

Mike

Spring Valley, CA

Dear Mike,

MSShield.exe is a variant of the Backdoor.Sdbot family of worms and IRC (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Internet_Relay_Chat*) backdoor Trojans. The file is located in the C:/windows directory. You should delete the file then run your antivirus software to ensure that it is removed completely. This could certainly be why you are seeing so much of your CPU time being consumed.

The program iexplore.exe is the executable file for Internet Explorer. It is integral to Windows. It is also used by other applications to access the Internet. This is one reason why you may be seeing multiple instances of the process. It is also possible that there is malware using the process. Hopefully, your antivirus software will find and resolve any problems.

Digital Dave

More Little Known High Tech Stories

"Facebook Bootcamp, Smartphone Apps For The Illiterate, Paintball Sentrys And Thumb-Sized Mobile Joys" by Marilyn K. Martin

Super-Smart Game Tech!; Start-Up to Specialize in Facts; Organic Electronics; Third World Tech; College Students Connect with Jobs; What to Do with Dead Electronics; Facebook Values; Landing Airliners by Satellite?; Smart-Home Security; Digitally Enhanced Ocean; Smart TVs.

Smart-Home Security

Like wishing for autonomous, self-driving cars, we're learning to settle for "semi" bits and pieces of technology ambling more or less in the direction toward "total" whatever. The same with smart-homes. Wired-homes do exist, but we're yet to have one talking to us and running our bath while cooking dinner. In the Bay Area of Northern California, however, broadband provider Comcast will start offering security and home monitoring (*www.siliconvalley.com/ ci_20283661/comcast-smart-home-security-alarm-thermostat*) services to its Internet service patrons.

Consumers who sign up for the additional service, can remotely adjust their home thermostat, turn lights off and on, and remotely view video taken from surveillance cameras placed around their home. Options include being able to automatically set the security alarm, or set up a front-door camera to record video whenever someone opens the door. Comcast already offers these services in almost half its markets nationwide, and charges about $40 a month extra for the service.
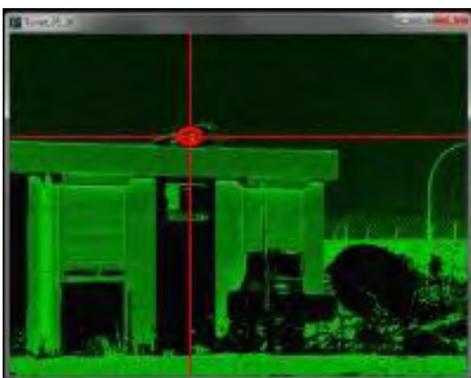
If you are a plucky individualist who likes to think outside the box, however, how about building your own Paintball Sentry (*gizmodo.com/5897982/is-this-open-source-paintball-sentry-the-future-of-home-security-i-hope-so?popular=true*)? Project Sentry Gun (*projectsentrygun.rudolphlabs. com*) offers open source instructions for its Airsoft Sentry Gun. Gizmodo offers the Sentry's R&D video, and sagely opines "Just add some heat-seeking capabilities, and the squirrels will never know what hit them."

Into The Digitally Enhanced Ocean...

I've already written about how museums are slowly embracing the Digital Age. Now comes word that the famous Monterey Bay Aquarium in California, has opened a new digitally-enhanced jellyfish exhibit (*www.contracostatimes. com/business/ci_20292491/cassidy-monterey-bay-aquarium-jellyfish-confront-iphone-era*) in April 2012. Trying to not get in the way of the animals, or adding such engrossing technology that the patrons ignore the animals, the museum came up with a tempting mix of education and participation. Watching the jellyfish is mesmerizing, so the new exhibit incorporates touchscreens, computerized simulations and interactive displays to enhance but not overwhelm observing the gentle sea creatures.

"There must be a bug in my Great White Whale app!"

Whales are the world's largest mammals, but their size and weight make them unable to get out of the way of huge ships chugging toward them—with too many fatal accidents. Now comes a new Whale Alert app (*itunes.apple.com/us/app/whale-alert-ship-strike-reduction/id511707112?mt=8*), to warn ships when a North American right whale is nearby. Gathering information from underwater microphones to locate the rare whales in real time, the app uses GPS to "alert mariners if they're entering areas where right whales were spotted, or are known to frequent," including their migratory routes from Florida to Maine.

Start-Up to Specialize in Facts— All of Them

Everyone has a dream or a unique interest, and with luck they can create a company to market that passion to the public. At seven years old, Gilad Elbaz wrote "I want to be a rich mathematician and very smart." Well, he grew up to build Web-traversing software robots (*www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/business/factuals-gil-elbaz-wants-to-gather-the-data-universe.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120325*), and answered some very big questions for Google. Now nearly a billionaire, he has time to work on his dream.

It's a start-up called Factual (*www.factual.com*), with which Elbaz wants to identify every fact in the world. In the booming world of Big Data, Mr. Elbaz has interest in 30 start-ups, besides Factual, including a San Francisco incubator dedicated to Big Data. "What if you could spot any error, as soon as you made it?" he asks—which also explains Factual. "If all data was clear, a lot fewer people would subtract value from the world. And a lot more people could add value."

Organic Electronics Are Hot!

In December 2011, the editors of *EETimes* projected the 20 hottest technologies (*www.eetimes.com/General/PrintView/4231126*) for 2012. MEMS (microelectromechanical systems) and wireless sensor networks grab the top spots on their list. Number four on their list is plastic (or organic) electronics. Plagued by low performance at present, organic electronics holds out the possibility of "low-cost and biodegradable circuits." Read on.

Organic Electronics (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organic_electronics*) deals with conductive polymers, plastics or small molecules—all carbon-based. Traditional electronics deal with inorganic materials such as copper and silicon. It was discovered in the 1950s that organic compounds could carry a current. But it took until the Nobel Prize in Chemistry

in 2000 was awarded to three scientists for their 1977 report of similarly-oxidized and iodine-doped polyacetylene.

A March 2012 article about healthcare technology on the horizon, predicted that the market for printed and thin film electronics is expected to grow to almost $10 billion in 2012. With 42.5% of that market "predominately organic electronics."

Super-Smart Game Tech!

*The Boston Globe (*www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/brainiac/2012/03/amazing_minecra.html*)* reported in March 2012, about an amazing and popular sandbox game, Minecraft (*www.minecraft.net/*), in which "players wander around in a huge computer-generated world and build things." In the Creative Mode, players can mess around constructing things, from Notre Dame to the Starship Enterprise. In this mode, there is an amazing Graphing Calculator that actually works. YouTube commenters are predicting that it's only a matter of time before someone builds a computer in Minecraft capable of running...Minecraft.

Also in March 2012, Gizmodo reported on a thumb-sized joystick (*gizmodo.com/5898009/elastic-joystick-uses-your-phones-camera-to-make-mobile-gaming-less-crappy?popular=true*) which sits over a smartphone or tablet's front-facing camera, for a better mobile gaming experience. Developed by researchers at Keiko University in Japan, the mini-controller doesn't need batteries or even a connection to your device. The soft rubbery joystick has markers on its underside that are tracked by the camera as they move around on screen.

Third World Tech—Digital Solutions for the Poor and Illiterate

How do you design a text-messaging app for a smartphone for the global poor who can't read or write? In 2007, Swiss computer scientists and Indian agricultural scientists wanted to help poor Indian farmers improve their fields and yields. But the farmers could neither read nor write. Now the farmers are testing smartphone software (*www.technologyreview.com/communications/39974/?p1=A1*) for illiterate users that could even let them send and receive text messages. Called EasySMS (*wiki.epfl.ch/easysms*), the app allows illiterate people to compose and send text messages on a touchscreen facilitated by pictograms/icons, with searchable avatars for contact identification.

In April 2012, Bloomberg reported on a new program in India (*www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-04-11/farmers-foil-utilities-using-cell-phones-to-access-solar.html*) to supply electric power through solar panels to poor villages on a pay-as-you-go basis. Gone are the days of buying overpriced kerosene on the black market, and trudging to a nearby town twenty miles away just to recharge a smartphone. Simpa Networks (*simpanetworks.com/*) is the force behind this Electric Revolution in India. "Across India and Africa, start-ups and mobile phone companies are developing so-called microgrids, in which stand-alone generators power clusters of homes and businesses in places where electric utilities have never operated."

For ordinary citizens who want to help the world's poor help themselves, Kiva (*www.kiva.org/*) is a company that accepts $25 microloans for borrowers of your choice. Clicking on a borrower's photo on the Web site opens up their profile, with the money they are asking for and what they need it for. Charity Navigator (*www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.summary&orgid=12978*) has awarded this microloan charity their highest rating, with four stars out of four stars. At the bottom of this CN page is a short list of "Charities Performing Similar Types of Work."

Innovation to Help College Students Connect with Jobs

College teachers are acutely aware that their students still need to find meaningful jobs (*www.boston.com/business/blogs/global-business-hub/2012/03/bostons_young_t.html*), internships and co-ops. Thankfully,

in Boston, a March 2012 conference brought together high powered Boston businesses, government and even MITX (Massachusetts Innovation and Technology Exchange) to help students connect to area internships and other business opportunities.

Personal Branding (*www.boston.com/business/blogs/global-business-hub/2012/02/personal_brandi. html*) is a new marketing strategy to help the career-minded identify and market their talents. The 3P's of Marketing are analyzed (Preparation, Packaging and Presentation), to help people realize, enhance and market their skills and value.

Parts and More Parts—What to Do with Dead Electronics

On January 1, 2012, Illinois' new and improved Electronic Recycling and Reuse Act (*www.suntimes.com/ technology/9658150-478/dont-throw-out-that-outdated-electronic-gear-new-law-against-it.html*) went into effect. It is now illegal for residents to just throw out old electronics, and illegal for landfills to accept them. Both consumers and manufacturers are now required to recycle TVs, computers, video games and so on. As electronic items have increasingly short life spans, they are the fastest growing category of waste—from toxic waste (lead, mercury, arsenic) to still-valuable parts (copper, gold, etc.). Besides drop-off sites, some counties in Illinois are experimenting with free pick-up services at residents' front door.

According to Wired.com in March 2012, the Pentagon's mad-scientist division, DARPA (*www.darpa.mil*), has launched a plan to harvest dead satellites (*www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/03/darpa-galileo/*) for useful parts. The Agency wants to design an entire array of earth-bound telescopes that move at multiple angles, in order to track orbital satellites and find the dead ones for cannibalizing. This is also part of a larger DARPA program to replace ground-based satellite launchpads with subsonic airlines. (I assume that if the subsonic planes can put new satellites in orbit, they can also repair them.)

Facebook Values—"Move Fast And Break Things"

When Facebook hires new engineers (and they've hired a third of their roughly 3,200 employees since early 2011), its 6-week Bootcamp (*www.contracostatimes.com/business/ci_20399127/facebook-bootcamp-software-code-engineers-employe*) is refreshingly positive, encouraging and non-judgmental—even if a Bootcamper occasionally crashes part of Facebook in the process.

On their first day at Bootcamp, new engineers are assigned to work independently on real Facebook software bugs and problems, amid lectures and other orientation activities. At the end of the 6-weeks, the new hires can choose what division of Facebook they want to work in. Taking big chances while experimenting and learning is central to CEO Zuckerberg's "Hacker Way" culture. To keep their company competitive and dynamic, all employees are expected to write code, with failure expected, rallied around and learned from.

On April 2, 2012, Facebook's Seattle Engineering Office (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/ technologybrierdudleysblog/2017969428_inside_facebooks_new_seattle_o.html*) relocated to new digs with a great view. With that half-finished hipness, the new office space even offers a bike pumping station and a vending machine for keyboards, flash drives, etc.

Helping Start-Ups—Money, Guidance and Support

FounderDating (*founderdating.com/*), is a service to help entrepreneurs meet their ideal start-up partner. With each co-founder bringing different skills, but with a meeting-of-the-minds on what they hope to accomplish, the chances of a start-up succeeding (*www.technologyreview.com/web/39961/?p1=MstRcnt*) increases. The idea started with

Jessica Alter, CEO of social-gaming start-up Formative Labs, who was frustrated with the difficulties finding a start-up partner who possessed different but crucial skills. "Finding the right co-founder can drastically change the value and outcome of your company," she says. The meet-events are typically held in bars, with both group discussions and open mingling.

In December 2011, a new kind of event debuted in San Jose (*www.contracostatimes.com/business/ci_20225159/pitchcrawl-brings-dozens-startups-investors-together-downtown-san*), California, to bring start-ups and potential investors together into the same space. Tracy Lee, inventor of Dishcrawl (restaurant-roving parties) came up with the idea for Pitchcrawl (*www.dishcrawl.com/pitchcrawl/*). The room was divided, with potential investors on one side, and twice as many aspiring start-uppers on the other side. The investors gave a quick talk on what they were looking for, then were given kitchen timers. Each entrepreneur then got three minutes to pitch to each investor who might be interested in their start-up.

In Bellevue, Washington, near Seattle, a company called Ignition Partners (*www.ignitionpartners.com/*) is helping Northwest start-ups (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/businesstechnology/2017827929_btopscode26.html*) "build innovative, category-defining businesses". At the end of March 2012, Ignition Partners led the way investing almost $20 million in software start-up Opscope (*www.opscode.com/*), "a leader in cloud infrastructure automation."

Another helpful company in Los Angeles, California, is StartEngine (*www.startengine.com*), who guarantees (*www.startengine.com/?p=1653*) "We help start-ups succeed in 90 days". Their first Demo Day in mid-March 2012 brought together StartEngine's inaugural class of ten technology start-ups, with over one hundred "by invitation only" investors from San Francisco and Los Angeles.

And lastly, an Ann Arbor, Michigan, outfit called EntreSLAM (*www.knowledgecrush.com/index.php/entreslam*), offers informal networking events where small business entrepreneurs can mingle and even entertain with five minute stories of their own tales of tears and triumph. Stories-at-the-mic are graded and then rewarded. While everyone attending can learn from mistakes made, big chances rewarded, and the joy and enthusiasm of being your own boss.

Landing Airliners By Satellite?

In June 2012, Alaska Airlines will begin testing the use of satellite technology (via GPS and the FAA) to land their airliners (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2017901998_airtrafficcontrol04.html*) at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Alaska Airlines has already adopted technology "that allows its planes to navigate Alaska's hazardous terrain, weave through narrow valleys and mountain peaks, and land at remote airports in some of the worst imaginable weather." The airline now wants to try out the technology to land at big, busy airports, and hopefully save fuel and reduce delays in the process.

Smart TVs—Only as Good as a Smart Remote

The Consumer Electronics Show in January 2012 introduced high-end flat panel TVs that contain microphones (*www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/gadgets/article2790225.ece*). Users can speak into the microphones to enter text on the TV for Twitter updates and Web searches. But you won't be able to use the microphone to change the channel or control the volume. So you'll still need a TV remote.

But as remotes keep adding more buttons to keep up with all the new smart-TV functions, a better remote design is clearly called for. Remote Central (*www.remotecentral.com/*) reviews various universal remotes, and collects user reviews as well. Some of the highest rated remotes by users are the ATI Remote Wonder II, the touchscreen UCommand 515 remote from Crisp Solutions, and the colorful and simple Weemote for Kids from Fobis Technologies.

Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. A SF Horror story appeared in July 2011 in Deadman's Tome (*www.demonictome.com/*). And in January 2012 she had a SF Police Procedural appearing in *Cosmic Crime* magazine, and a SF Dystopian Romance appearing in the *Strange Valentines* anthology. She also has almost seventy articles on Helium.com (*www.helium.com/users/573405/show_articles*), and is writing a humorous Young Adult SF series, *Chronicles of Mathias (*www.amazon.com/Chronicles-Mathias-One-Reptilian-Rebirth/dp/1598249002*).* 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.

ComputorEdge E-Books has converted many of Marilyn's computer humor columns into four e-books.

* *Computer Confusion in Paradise: Lo! And in the Beginning There Was Total Befuddlement!*, in both EPUB format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Confusion-in-Paradise-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0001-1.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Confusion-in-Paradise-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0001-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

* *Computer Hardware: "Parts Is Parts"*, in both EPUB format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Hardware-Parts-Is-Parts-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0002-1.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Hardware-Parts-Is-Parts-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0002-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

* *Computerholics Anonymous: PC Users, Abusers and Confusioners*, in both EPUB format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computerholics-Anonymous-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0003-1.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Computerholics-Anonymous-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0003-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

* *My Computer, My Nemesis: Bravely into the Smiley-Face Virtual Void!*, in both EPUB format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/My-Computer-My-Nemesis-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0004-1.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/My-Computer-My-Nemesis-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0004-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

* All four e-books can be found at our E-Book Store (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Humor-Computer-and-Internet-Anecdotes-and-Jokes_c16.htm?sourceCode=writer*).

Wally Wang's Apple Farm
"The Growing Tablet Market" by Wally Wang

The Growing Tablet Market; More Confusion From Microsoft; Learning JavaScript; The Avengers; What Makes Apple Successful; The Dying PC Magazine Market; Odd Statistic of Smartphone Users; Selecting Multiple Files.

NPD DisplaySearch expects a massive surge (*www.myfoxphoenix.com/dpps/news/sci_tech/tablets-rapidly-becoming-portable-computer-of-choice-dpgonc-20120504-fc_19678124*) in tablet adoption over the next few years to the point where people may actually buy more tablets than ordinary personal computers. The company estimates that tablet shipments will grow from 81.6 million units in 2011 to 184.2 million in 2013.

Of course, when anyone talks about the tablet market, they're really talking about the iPad market (*arstechnica.com/apple/news/2012/05/apple-grabs-tablet-market-share-while-market-falls-off-a-cliff-for-first-quarter.ars?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss*) as the iPad continues grabbing the majority of the market and the profits that go along with it. In the meantime, Amazon's Kindle Fire, the only Android tablet offering any kind of a challenge to the iPad, has seen recent sales plummet (*www.geekosystem.com/kindle-fire-2012/*).

The Kindle Fire's main attraction is its low price ($199) where Amazon loses money selling them in hopes of making up the loss through sales of digital content to Kindle Fire owners. Often people buy a Kindle Fire, hoping to get the advantages of an iPad, and then wind up disappointed with the results. Since Amazon doesn't release actual sales figures of any of their Kindle devices, it's hard to say exactly what's happening other than the fact that few people believe that the Kindle Fire is superior to the iPad beyond its smaller size and lower price. If you just want an e-reader that can happen to perform other tasks, the Kindle Fire is fine. If you want a more versatile device, then the iPad is the better choice.

The only other challenge to the iPad were netbooks, and sales of netbooks (*www.pcworld.com/article/250055/are_netbooks_dead_the_prognosis_is_grim.html*) keep plummeting. With the iPad and other tablets squeezing netbooks on one end and ultrabooks like the MacBook Air squeezing netbooks from the other end, netbooks simply can't compete any more. If you just want a small, lightweight computer, you might as well get an ultrabook or a tablet.
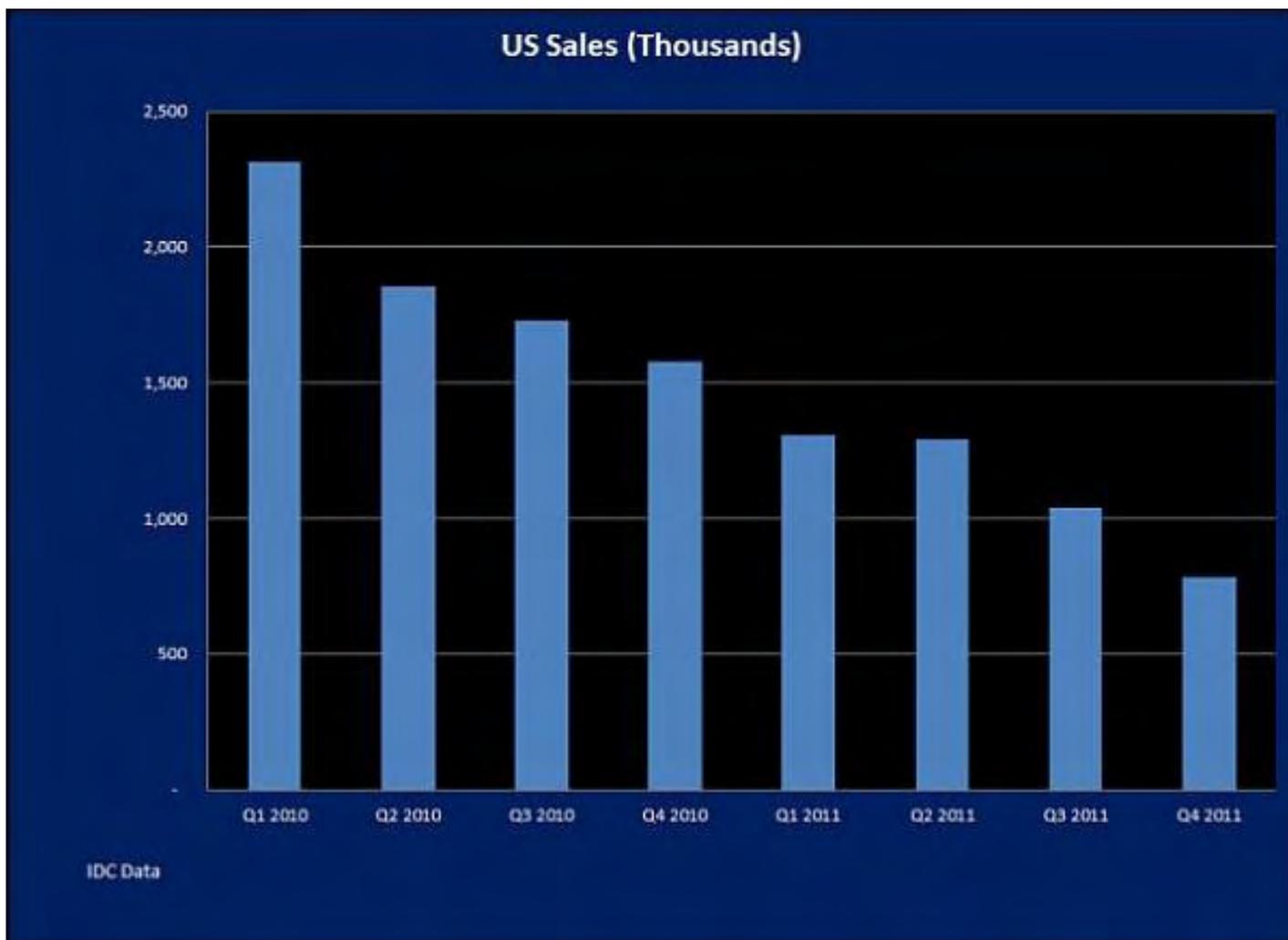
Figure 1. Sales of netbooks in the United States continues to fall.

Ironically, many people were buying laptops instead of desktop computers. With tablets like the iPad, people are finding that they don't need to lug their bulky laptops around any more when they can just use an iPad instead (*www.wired. com/gadgetlab/2010/02/could-the-ipad-save-the-desktop-computer/*). Rather than buy a laptop for more money and compromise on a fixed keyboard attached to a small screen, people are buying less expensive and more feature filled desktop computers with much larger screens (or even multiple screens) and supplementing their mobile needs with an iPad.

The iPad is lighter and simpler to use on the go while performing the bulk of the tasks most people need. While some people need a full-featured computer they can take with them, most people don't. The end result may be a resurgence in desktop computers and a decline of laptop computers.

Whatever happens next, it's certain that iPads and other tablets are not going to disappear with everyone returning back to laptops and desktop computers all over again. The future belongs to tablets, and if you want to use the most versatile tablet on the market, you're going to have to use an iPad, which Chitika estimates represents 94.64 percent (*insights. chitika.com/2012/study-apple-ipad-accounts-for-94-64-of-all-tablet-web-traffic/*) of all tablets on the Internet.
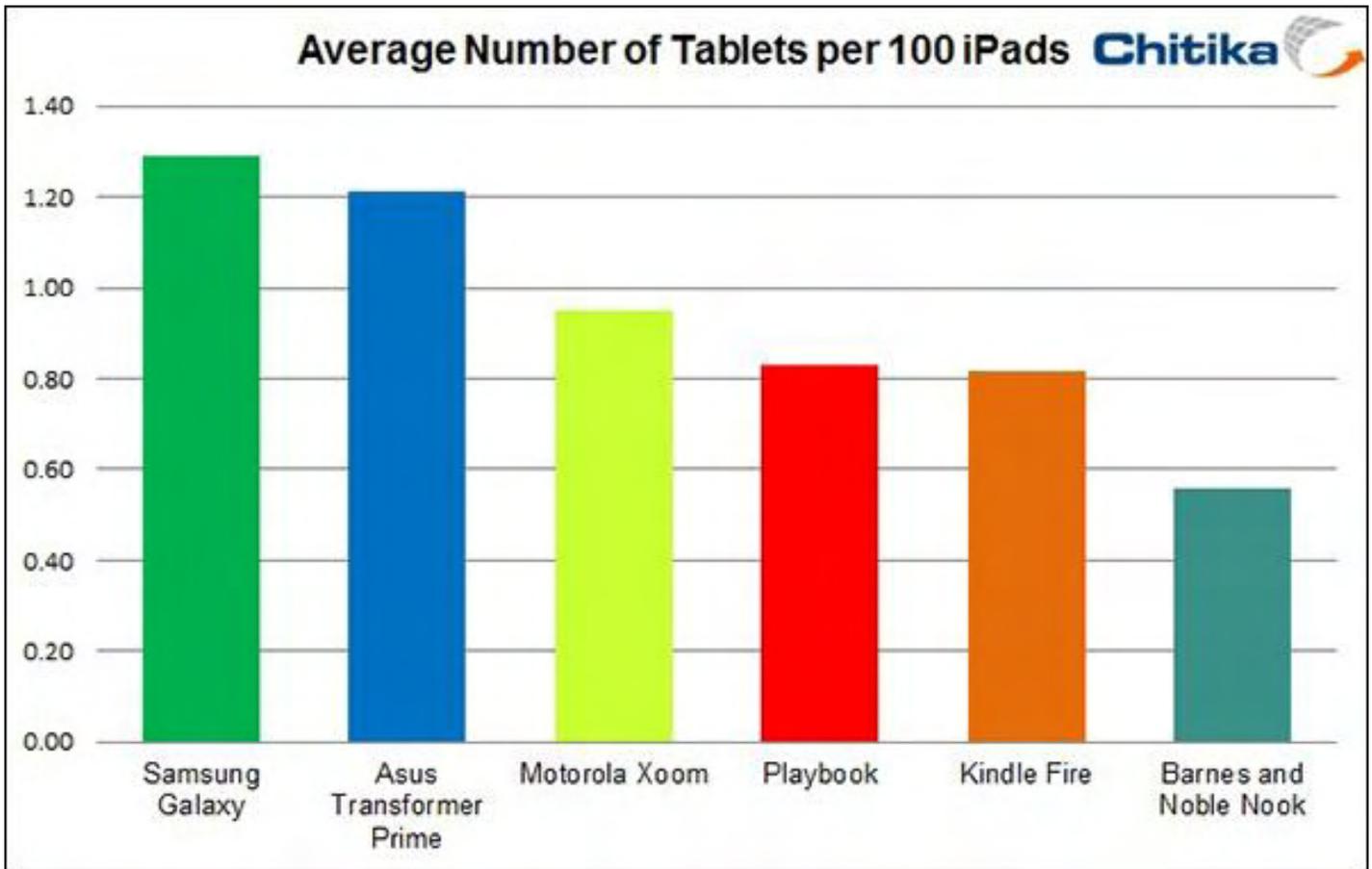
Figure 2. Rivals to the iPad are still selling far fewer tablets than Apple.

Given a choice between the higher resolution screen of the latest iPad or the less expensive price of the previous generation iPad 2, you might be tempted either way. One new compelling reason to go with the iPad 2 is that Apple recently switched to a new processor (*www.anandtech.com/show/5789/the-ipad-24-review-32nm-a5-tested/1*) that uses less power, thereby increasing battery life by up to 30 percent. If price and long battery life appeal to you (and you can be sure of getting the latest iPad 2 instead of an earlier iPad 2 model), get the iPad 2. If a faster processor and better screen are more appealing, get the latest iPad instead.
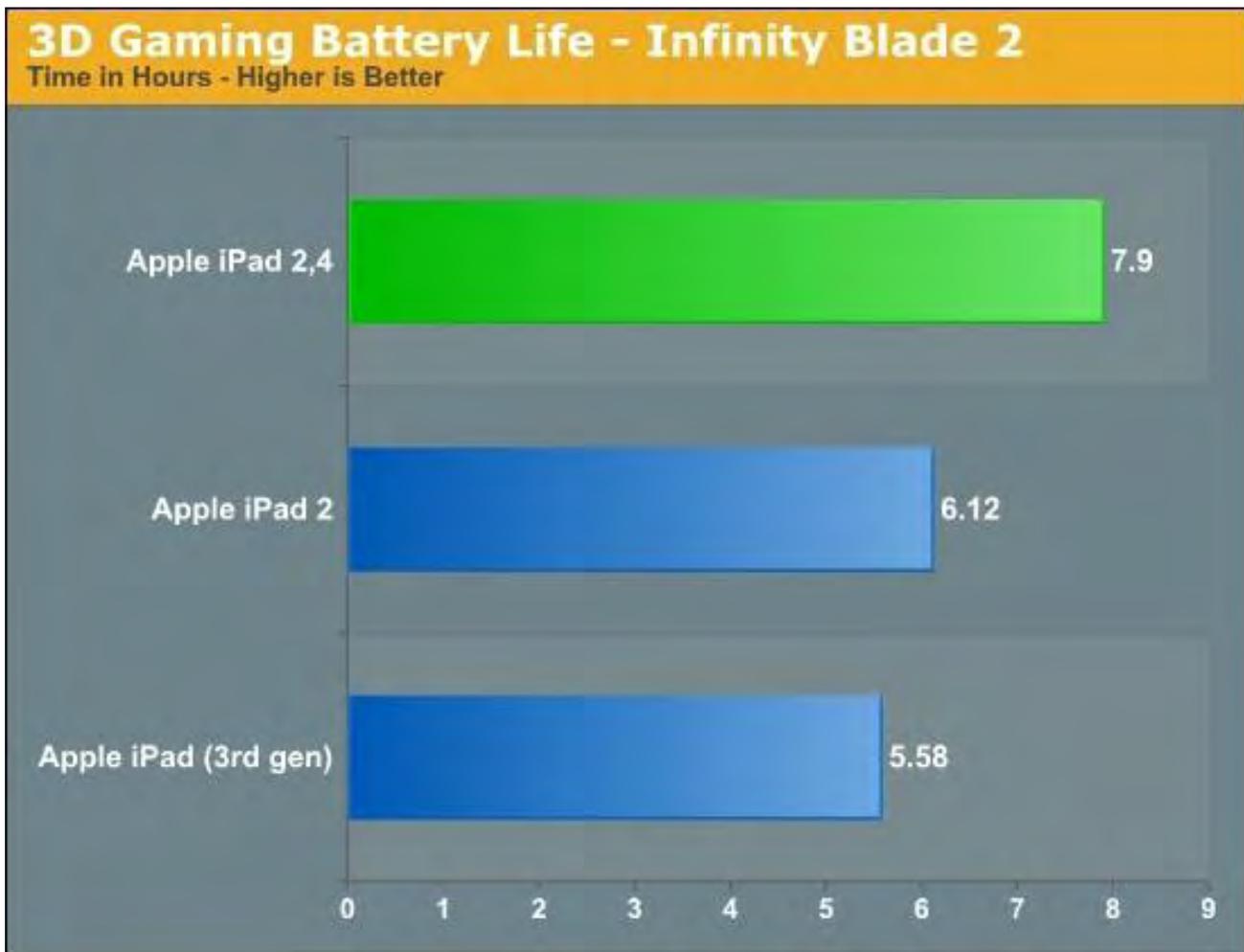
Figure 3. The battery life of different iPad models.

More Confusion From Microsoft

Microsoft never seems to run out of ways to keep confusing customers. Initially, Microsoft claimed that Media Center would be part of Windows 8. Now Microsoft has changed their mind and said that Media Center will be a separate item (*news.cnet.com/8301-10805_3-57427979-75/microsoft-angers-users-by-cutting-media-center-out-of-windows-8/?tag=mncol;editorPicks*) that people will need to buy if they want to play DVDs on a Windows 8 computer.

Why Microsoft felt that eliminating the ability to play DVDs in Windows 8 will keep their customers happy is puzzling. If this is true, then it appears that Windows 7 can play DVDs but if people upgrade to Windows 8, then they won't be able to play DVDs on the exact same computer. Obviously, this doesn't make sense, yet these question marks surrounding Windows 8 simply highlights Microsoft's problem in staying focused and delivering a consistent message to the public.

There's a reason why people trust brand names like Federal Express and Starbucks, it's because they know what to expect. When you throw customers' expectations out the window, you also risk driving your customers to competitors, which is the only consistent message Microsoft seems capable of delivering these days as highlighted by this ZDNet article (*www.zdnet.com/blog/diy-it/8-things-microsoft-needs-to-do-to-save-windows-8/521?tag=content;feature-roto*).

Perhaps someone at Microsoft should read *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0060007737/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0060007737*)* by Al Ries and Laura Ries. "Marketing is building a brand in the mind of the prospect," the authors write. "If you can build a powerful brand you will have a powerful marketing program. If you can't, then all the advertising, fancy packaging, sales promotion and public relations in the world won't help you achieve your objective."

Does Microsoft have a powerful brand in the mind of the public? Or are they relying on fancy packaging and advertising to make up for their lack of compelling products? Think back to Microsoft's consistent advertising missteps including the Bill Gates/Jerry Seinfeld ads (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImyK29QLs_A*), the Internet Explorer vomit ad (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezWSEPSq-NY*), and the Microsoft Kin sexting (*www.itwire.com/your-it-news/mobility/38393-microsoft-goes-too-far-kin-sexting-scandal-erupts*) ad controversy. With so many problems trying to define themselves, you have to wonder if anyone at Microsoft even cares about the company any more. Apparently Microsoft executives feel that running bizarre ads is the way to sell more products, rather than creating products that solve useful problems and meet people's needs in the first place.

Learning JavaScript

If you plan on developing Windows 8 Metro apps or creating interactive widgets for iBooks Author, you'll need to learn HTML5 and JavaScript. Unfortunately, JavaScript mimics the cryptic syntax of the C programming language with lots of curly brackets and symbols that look like a cat walked across a keyboard.

As an alternative, take a look at CoffeeScript (*coffeescript.org/*), which basically simplifies the convoluted JavaScript language and makes it shorter and easier to read. Best of all, CoffeeScript creates equivalent JavaScript code so CoffeeScript actually is JavaScript in a roundabout way.

Overview

Figure 4. CoffeeScript (on the left) lets you create JavaScript (on the right) but without the complicated syntax.

To help you learn the nuances of CoffeeScript, pick up a book like *CoffeeScript: Accelerated JavaScript Development (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1934356786/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1934356786*).* By learning the basics of CoffeeScript, you can indirectly learn the basics behind JavaScript. Then you can choose to learn the specifics of JavaScript or just stick with CoffeeScript and let CoffeeScript turn your code into JavaScript. Whatever you decide, the ability to program in JavaScript will prove handy whether you're in the Windows or Macintosh world.

The Avengers

In case you haven't noticed it yet, Hollywood has discovered that the iPad can be a tremendous marketing medium in ways that netbooks could never match. If you watched the movie *The Avengers* currently packing movie theaters around the world, you might be interested in the free Marvel's The Avengers: Iron Man = Mark VII (*click.linksynergy. com/fs-bin/stat? id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F %252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fmarvels-avengers-iron-man%*

252Fid515559078%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)app.

Figure 5. The Avengers app about Iron Man.

Basically this app just displays the history behind Iron Man in a colorful comic book. The main idea is to get people excited about *The Avengers* movie so they'll want to buy more Marvel Comics related materials such as this 99 cent game Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat? id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F %252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fcaptain-america-sentinel-liberty% 252Fid434478300%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) or Thor: Son of Asgard (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat? id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F %252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fthor-son-of-asgard%252Fid433558156% 253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*).

Figure 6. You can read a short comic book detailing the basic story behind Iron Man.

If big companies have discovered the potential of the iPad, smaller businesses can certainly use their creativity to find ways to use the iPad to market their business as well. All it takes is a little bit of imagination to see the tremendous potential behind the iPad for both individuals and companies alike. For those who still insist that the iPad is useless or that rival tablets are far superior, Hollywood's marketing campaigns are already ignoring you and pretty soon much of the rest of the world will ignore you as well.

What Makes Apple Successful

Time Magazine recently listed six reasons why Apple succeeds (*techland.time.com/2012/05/07/six-reasons-why-apple-is-successful/*) while rivals not only stumble, but shoot themselves in the foot consistently with an Uzi submachine gun.

1. For any product that Apple creates, the people who create it have to want it themselves
2. The products have to be easy to use
3. Keep things simple
4. Offer great customer service and in-store experiences
5. Apple only makes a product if Apple can do it better
6. Apple stays at least two years ahead of its competitors

Do you think anyone at Microsoft really wants to use Windows on a computer that's already cluttered with trialware versions of antivirus programs that you'll have to remove and then take the time to optimize the Windows registry to get a clean system that you should have gotten right at the beginning?

Does anyone at Microsoft want to get help fixing their computer by calling a technical support hotline, talk to somebody reading a script on the other side of the world, and answering questions using technical terms you don't understand, to

perform technical tasks that you don't want to follow?

Oddly enough, Apple is the most successful American company in the world, yet so many Americans hate them. Then these same Americans turn around and cheerfully support companies that sell them computers loaded with multiple Windows registry errors from the start, which will only get worse over time without constant maintenance.

Obviously anti-Apple critics don't hate successful companies because otherwise they would hate Microsoft. Instead, their hatred of Apple must simply be irrational thinking on their part based on their resistance to anything different. If someone from Apple personally came to your house, punched you in the face, kicked your dog, burned down your house, and stole your car, then you might have a reason to hate Apple. But to hate Apple because they sell products that you don't want to buy simply proves that single cell amoebas often exhibit higher intelligence than many human beings on the planet.

The Dying PC Magazine Market

While strolling through a local Barnes & Noble bookstore, I glanced at the computer magazine section and found most magazines covered the Macintosh, iPhone, or iPad with even a few Android, Amazon Kindle, and Blackberry magazines thrown in there. Yet out of this entire computer magazine section, I only saw two PC related magazines.

Figure 7. Can you find the PC magazines on this magazine shelf?

At one time, nearly all computer magazines focused on Windows and the PC world. Nowadays, it seems that even

computer magazines are focusing more on mobile devices and less on the Windows computer world. The next time you visit one of the few remaining bookstores in your area, take a look at the computer magazine section and see how many magazines focus on Apple products compared to Microsoft products. Most likely the difference will be obvious, which indicates the trend that the world is going these days.

Odd Statistic of Smartphone Users

According to Nielsen, white people are in the minority when it comes to smartphone adoption (*www.examiner.com/ article/nielsen-minorities-more-likely-to-own-a-smartphone*). On the other hand, Asian-Americans tended to have higher smartphone usage followed by Hispanics and Blacks.
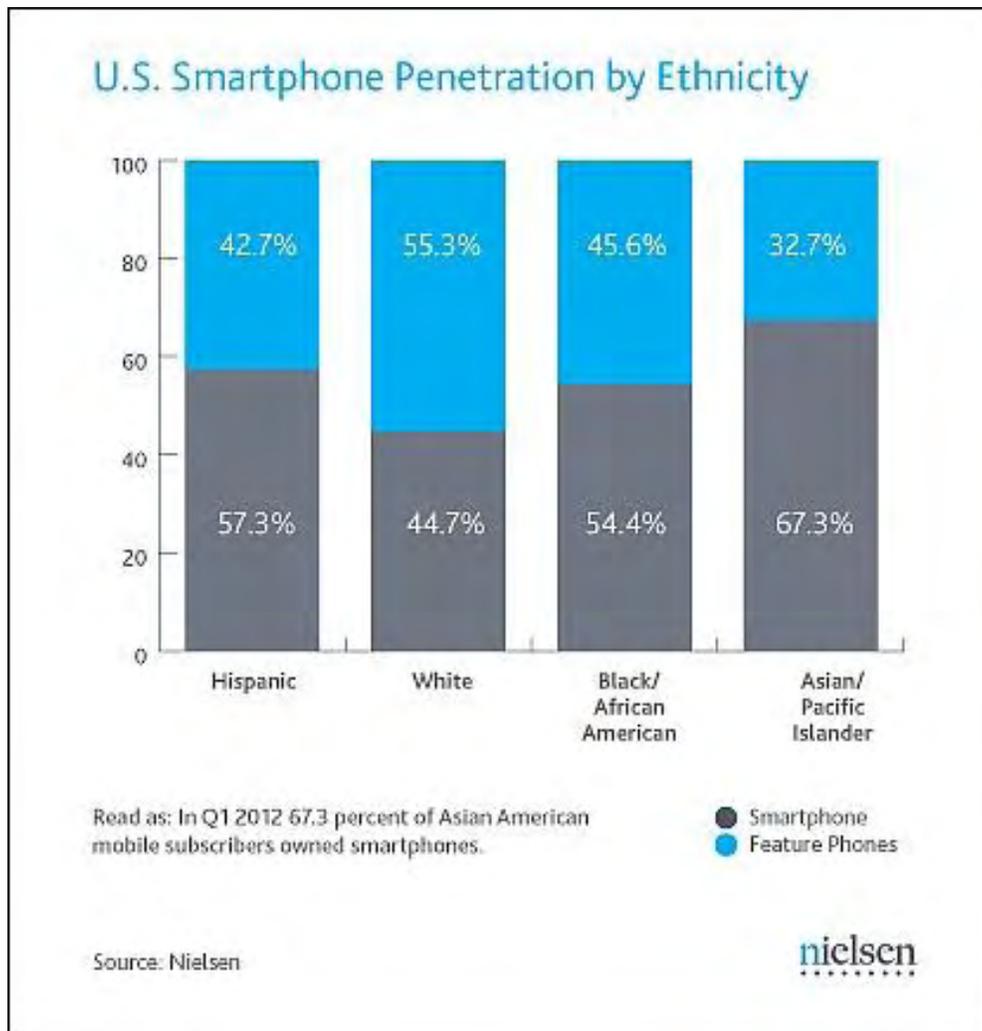
Figure 8. White people are least likely to use a smartphone.

One theory is that minorities are less likely to have high-speed Internet access at home so they're more likely to rely on smartphones to get on the Internet. Another reason might be that there are more older white men and women who are less likely to use a mobile phone at all.

Whatever the case, this latest statistic demonstrates that although white people tend to be more affluent than other groups, greater wealth doesn't always translate into buying the latest gadgets. Perhaps a more interesting study might be to determine the same demographics for Macintosh computer usage and then we can see if white people are also the slowest in adopting the Macintosh as well.

* * *

If you need to select multiple files in the Finder, you have two choices. First, you can hold down the Command key and click on each file that you want to select. Second, you can click on the first file you want to select, hold down the Shift key and then click on the last file you want to select. Now your Macintosh will select every file in between the first and last file you clicked on.

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*.

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

PC Optimization Tips; Top Five Resume Mistakes; Magnetically Manage Your Earphones' Cables; MadCatz Xbox 360 Controller; Good Vibrations: The Mighty Dwarf 5W Vibration Speaker.

PC Optimization Tips

In addition to regularly cleaning your registry, the pros at ZookaWare (*www.zookaware.com*) have assembled five pretty good tips every PC owner should know.

1. Avoid wallpapers. They slow the system down. If a wallpaper is in use, it should be a simple design.

2. Update drivers frequently.

3. When running multiple programs simultaneously, keep them minimized when not in use.

4. Delete unwanted fonts.

5. Decrease the resolution on the PC (if possible).

Clint Ethington, CEO of ZookaWare, said, "The most effective way to maximize both performance and speed of any PC is to keep the registry clean, but these tips are very helpful for those users who are willing to take the time to alter their computer using behavior slightly for an increase in PC speed."

Check out ZookaWare's online directory of articles as well as the 24/6 customer service and IT support call center.

Top Five Resume Mistakes

Jonathan Ciampi, president and founder of Preptel Corporation (*www.preptel.com*), points out that job seekers can greatly increase the likelihood their resume will land them an interview by understanding the role technology plays in the process:

Did You Know? At most companies:

• Computers read your resume first, not humans

• At least 75% of resumes are discarded for using the wrong words

• More than 20% of resumes don't make the list due to formatting issues

• Only 1% of total applicants get an interview
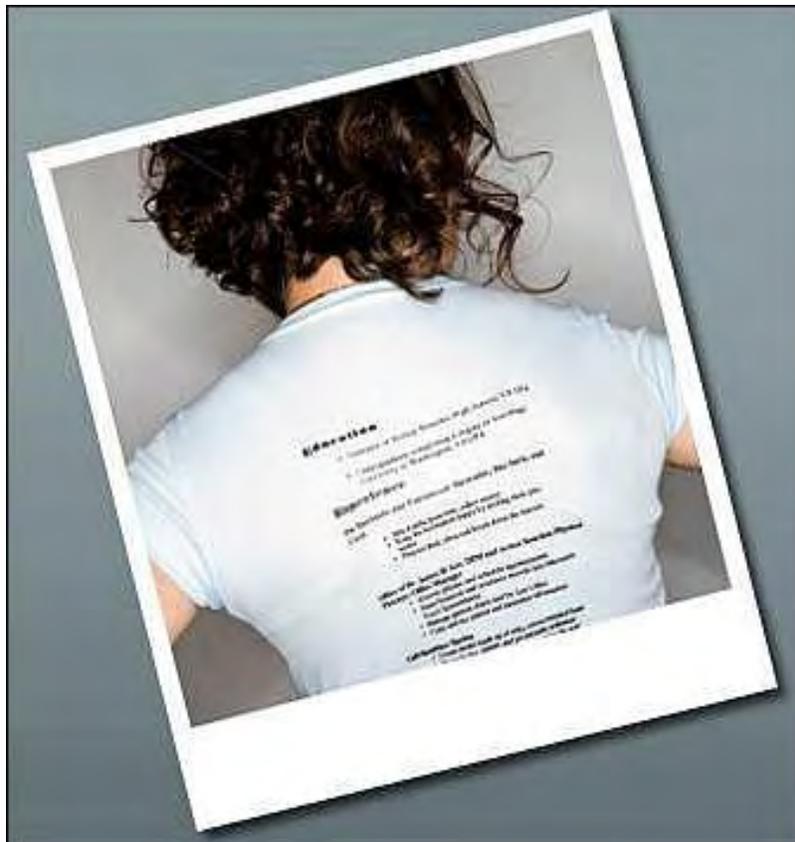
To combat this and drastically increase your odds, you should:

1. *Not* Get Overly Creative: Perhaps counter-intuitive, however, most large companies use software to filter resumes so your experience might be overlooked altogether if you try and get fancy and list your "Work Experience" as "Career Highlights."

2. *Not* PDF Your Resume: If you use PDF, you are missing job opportunities. Many people are using PDF as their preferred resume format, however PDF is far more error prone than MS Word, Text, or even HTML. If you are using PDF, you are likely missing out on many interviews because a hiring company is not seeing your whole resume.

3. Customize Your Resume for Each Position—It's a *Must*: Here is the hard truth: a single resume will not position you properly for every job. We analyzed thousands of candidates and found a single resume varies significantly from one job to another. We found, some candidates range from a job fit rating of nine percent to 73 percent. Since a resume is one of your best assets, it is surprising so many candidates fail to tailor their resume to each job. Regardless of how you get into a company, even networking, hiring companies will use your resume to determine if you are qualified and a general resume is a poor choice.

4. Always Format Your Electronic Resume for Automated Recruiting: A human will not read your resume until after it is read, parsed and classified by a computer. Even then, a human will only read it if it is a good match to the job description. It won't matter how pretty you formatted your resume or how well you write about your qualifications if the computer is unable to interpret the specifics.

5. Use Keywords: Hiring managers receive a summary report generated by Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software that removes bias-causing problems, tracks EEOC compliance and performance, and supposedly levels the playing field across the applicant pool. Regardless of how a resume gets in front of a company—friend, job board, recruiter, or online application—everyone goes through these ATS systems. Identifying keywords and knowing how you rank through ATS systems used to be guess work—but today technology tools are finally assisting job seekers in putting in the keywords that will help them get the job they want.

Magnetically Manage Your Earphones' Cables

I'm still on the lookout for a time-saving gadget that will keep my earphones' cables tidy and prevent them from interfering with my music listening experience. Earphone cables can become knotted up and require time for straightening out rather than enjoying tunes. If your earphones impact you likewise, one possible solution is Preggioni's clever Magneat accessory (*www.magneat.com*).

Magneat comes in a simple cardboard box roughly the size of two decks of playing cards stacked upon each other (4.75" x 3" x 1"). The interior of the box contains only a plastic insert holding the Magneat, the exterior has a list of essential information (designed in Iceland, made in China, and a multilingual warning that this accessory is not suitable for use with pacemakers/ICD) and a photo of a male jogger wearing a Magneat. On the back side of the box is a flap that, upon opening, reveals (on the flap's back side) a photo of a female modeling a Magneat. The revealed back side of the box has text describing (in five languages) how it works (details in a minute).

This cable-managing accessory, in essence, is a lightweight plastic spool (Figure 1) comprised of two parts—the front bit (1.5" in diameter) and the back bit (1.125"). The former has a magnet on its back face, the latter on its front. These magnets are remarkably powerful; pulling them apart is surprisingly difficult (hint: slide them apart instead). When placed near each other and released, the two bits make a clearly audible snapping noise upon coming together.
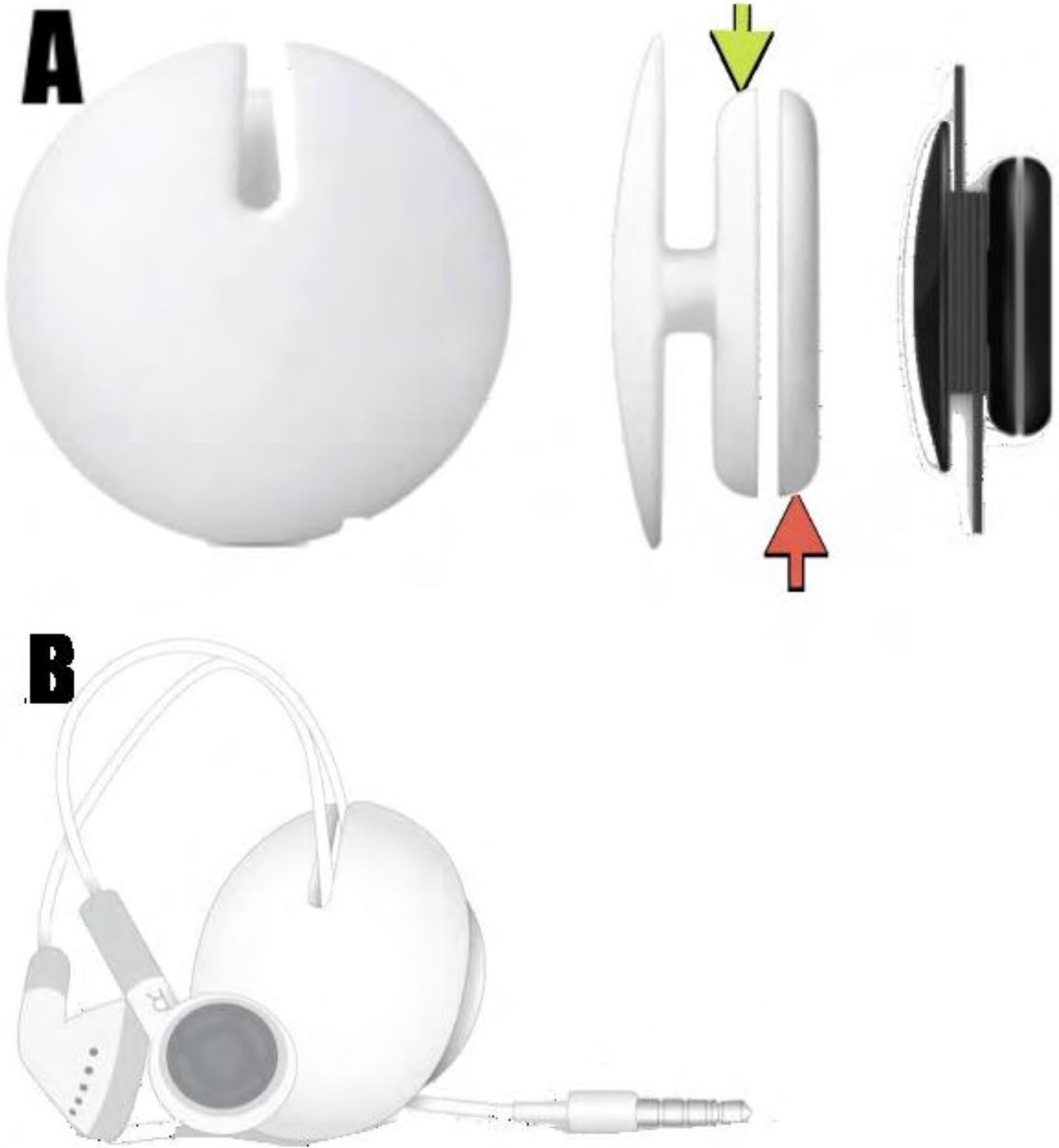
Figure 1. Magneat is a plastic spool (A) consisting of two parts—the front bit around which you wind your earphones' cables, and the back bit which resembles a large coin. One surface of the front bit (green arrow in A) is a powerful magnet that solidly holds the two bits together when positioned near the back bit's corresponding surface (red arrow in A). The cables of Apple's signature earbuds wind tidily around Magneat's spool (B).

To meet the needs of appearance conscious users, this accessory is available in various colors (*www.magneat.com/ clients/magneat.com/prestashop_1.2.4/category.php?id_category=6*) and designs. You can choose from white or black (Figure 1A) or brown for $12.90 each. Or you can choose from seven designs (*www.magneat.com/ clients/magneat.com/prestashop_1.2.4/category.php?id_category=11*)—Zebra, Plaid, Crazy Skull, Pixel

Skull, Red Heart, Kaleidostars, and "I Can't Hear You!"—for $14.90 each.

Magneat is ridiculously easy to use. After sliding the two bits apart, position the back bit on the inside of a garment you're wearing, then position the front bit on the outside of that garment close to the back bit until they come together. Wind your earphones' cables around Magneat's spool and...ta-da (Figure 2)! These simple steps are demonstrated by a model in a downloadable video (*www.magneat.com/upload/magneat.com/files/ZixcCH.mov*).

Figure 2. Using Magneat couldn't be easier; slide the two bits apart, position the back bit inside a garment you're wearing, then position the front bit on that garment's exterior until the magnets snap together. This accessory's magnets are powerful enough to hold it in place when used with a t-shirt, dress shirt, windbreaker, jacket, or pants.

In testing for this review, Magneat's magnets were sufficiently powerful to make this accessory compatible with a wide variety of garments including (but not limited to) t-shirt, dress shirt, windbreaker, jacket and pants. It definitely works best with Apple's default earbuds and third-party earphones that lack a splitter and remote/microphone unit (Figures 1B and 2).

My only substantive quibble with Magneat relates to its usage with third-party earphones that have a splitter and/or remote/microphone unit. In this case, the cables' length above the splitter or remote/microphone unit cannot wrap around Magneat's spool and thus is susceptible to untidiness and/or knotting (Figure 3) which defeats the whole purpose. A minor quibble is that the front bit's slot (leftmost image in Figure 1A) intended to hold the cable in place needs some sort of retainer mechanism to ensure that the cable stays in place rather than slipping out (which occasionally happened during testing for this review).

Figure 3. Magneat does not accommodate the length of third-party earphones' cables above a splitter or remote/microphone unit, which results in tangling.

Readers who may be concerned about using a magnetic product near a computer's or iPod classic's hard drive might be interested in Preggioni's disclaimer (*www.magneat.com/?action=faq*).

In summary, Magneat is a low-tech, low-cost solution (*www.amazon.com/mn/search/?_encoding=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20&linkCode=ur2&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=Magneat&url=search-alias%3Delectronics*) that keeps the cables of Apple's standard earbuds or third-party counterparts without an embedded splitter or remote control/microphone from tangling. Users of earphones that have a splitter or remote control/microphone also can benefit from Magneat, but to a lesser extent.

⊕⊕⊕ ⦇

Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

MadCatz Xbox 360 Controller

MadCatz's MLG Pro Circuit Controller (*www.madcatz.com/mlg/360_controller.htm*) packs every possible inch of customization into the Xbox 360 controller. Just a heads up, it's a wired controller with a shielded and braided cable, so no need to worry about faulty connections or breaking.

The controller features three options for customization: the joysticks and d-pad, the face plates, and the weight of the controller. With the controller, you receive PS3 joysticks and the PS3 d-pad, that you can put in any of the three socket

locations on the controller. It gives you the ability to locate the joysticks like the PS3, or just swap out the 360 sticks for the feel of the PS3 ones; it's your choice based on comfort.

The controller also features a removable weight system. It replaces the battery compartment (yes this is a wired controller) and it features two removable 35 gram weights. The last changeable aspects are the faceplates, you can select from a glossy black surface or a more rugged feeling one. The MLG Controller gives you all the necessary customizations to make a controller fully suited to your play style.

The only con I found with it, is that the start and back buttons are a little bit to high to feel natural. Besides that, the controller has a very sturdy feel to it, and is definitely worth the investment to serious gamers.

The MLG Pro Circuit Controller (*www.amazon.com/mn/search/?_encoding=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*) is available from Amazon and MadCatz for $100.

⊕⊕⊕⊕ ◖

Review contributed by Jeremy Halligan

Good Vibrations: The Mighty Dwarf 5W Vibration Speaker

This is about an item seen at CES last January, the Mighty Dwarf Vibration Speaker (*www.mightydwarf.com/product/5w-mighty-dwarf*). It transfers sound vibrations to whatever surface you place it on. My brother-in-law recently asked me what I wanted for my birthday and I asked for one of these. I love to get things I would like but do not want to spend the money for. Well, he ordered me one and I was delighted with it.

It is cylinder shaped and measures 2 1/2 inches high by 1 7/8 inches across. It has a gel pad on the bottom which is where you attach it to whatever surface you choose. This keeps it from giving it a vibration sound on low bass noted. The device can be used as an external speaker for an mp3 player, lap/netbook, or any other unit with a like output audio jack. You can also load up a Micro SD card with the music of your choice and slip it into the Micro SD slot on the device. When using the Micro SD card, the volume is controlled by the unit itself. When using it as an external speaker, the volume is controlled by the unit producing the sound. The connection to the player is made via a supplied cable which connects to a mini USB jack on the speaker and a USB and audio port on the player. It has a lithium-ion battery which can be recharged from a USB port on your computer or a USB AC adapter. There is a power light. It blinks red when the battery is low. When you charge it the light is red until it is fully charged when it turns green. There is a switch on one side which is used to select off/on or SD card. The final control switch is a slide switch used to control the SD card output. The neutral position is in the center. Pushing it momentarily to the left or right will play the next or previous track on the SD card. Pushing and holding it to the left or right controls the volume. If you press the switch in, it causes the music to pause or resume.

The Mighty Dwarf Vibration Speaker (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005QA4GB8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20*) includes the unit and the USB power/audio cable. There is also an accessory pack available which includes a Micro SD card and SD adapter, a USB AC adapter, a glass mount, and a porous surface mount. The device plus accessory pack sells for $65 from the company through Amazon.com. The accessory pack alone runs around $20.

Similar units can be found for less on Amazon. Almost all the reviews on Amazon were quite positive. You will find it quite interesting to try it on different surfaces. It really sounded great when placed on my microwave!

⊕⊕⊕⊕

Review contributed by Joe Nuvolini

In addition to being an editor and columnist for *ComputorEdge* and *ComputerScene* Magazines, where he has written hundreds of feature articles and cover stories over the past decade, Charles Carr has also penned well over 1,000 non-tech newspaper and magazine articles and columns for various publications, including two widely-read columns each week for San Diego's *North County Times* newspaper.

Carr has covered such diverse topics as pesticide use in area schools, invasive background checks for county volunteers, asthma awareness, the debate over standards-based grading, potential vulnerabilities in electronic voting machines, and Southern California's devastating 2003 and 2007 wildfires. He has also written many humorous pieces.

Carr has also edited dozens of stories and articles written by others which have appeared in major publications and web sites across the country.

He has been a contributor and technical advisor to *L.A. and San Diego Parent* magazines and receives dozens of requests a year to appear on Southern California television and radio stations to talk about important events in the tech world.

Carr has judged many writing competitions including San Diego Press Club and Time-Warner Communications contests

and was sole judge for the national NAPPA Tech Toys awards for five years (which his kids really appreciated). He was recently a judge for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition.

He has won many writing accolades, including Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Consumer Writing and Best Arts and Entertainment, and has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

Carr will soon publish his first book, *What a World*, a collection of his best writings.

Learn more at *www.charlescarr.com*.

ComputorQuick Reviews
"ZoneAlarm Bug"
by ComputorEdge Staff

A reader updated to ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus Firewall. It has a bug and he is unable to report it.

I updated to ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall version 10.2.047.000. It has a BUG:-(

I can't report this Bug to Check Point:-(

Their online "chat" has a Bug in it. There is *no* box to enter text to "send":-(

The first Bug is simple ms can't clear ms clipboard in copy/paste until I "exit" ZoneAlarm:-(

It is frustrating not be able to report "Stick out like a sore thumb" Bug to these software vendors:-(

-Walter

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 review our recent e-books, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/*).

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"E-mail Lists," "Why not Low Level format the drive?" "Microsoft Devolution and Windows 7/8"

E-mail Lists

[Regarding the April 27 Digital Dave column:]

I want to thank Digital Dave for explaining how to set up an e-mail list. I have 28 contacts that I send bits of business to almost everyday. For years I have been entering them on the send list from the contact list. Microsoft really drops the ball when it comes to including or making available documentation explaining software like Outlook Express.

Now thanks to Dave I can do the job with one click of the mouse.

-Robert Pozner, San Diego, CA

Why not Low Level format the drive?

[Regarding the April 27 Digital Dave column:]

Most manufacturers have a Low Level Diagnostic and Low Level Format utility you can download (from another computer) on their sites. Seatools is the common one for all the Seagate related hard drives. You have instructions on how to create a USB drive or CD that is bootable that will scrub the drive completely.

I've salvaged many a drive in this fashion; that goes back to the Seagate ST 225 20 MB hard drive.

-Art Blackwell, Evergreen, CO

Microsoft Devolution and Windows 7/8

[Regarding the April 27 Windows XP Is Still Here! (Plus Free E-Book) column:]

Please inform younger readers about the M$ campaign of FUD that it traditionally uses when bringing out a supposedly better (it usually isn't) O/S.

I have both Windows 7 and the RC 8 (both 32 & 64 bit flavors) and after some evaluation, I've made the decision to *remove* and *replace* with the XP editions. The only people who need them are people who have software that *demands* you use Windows 7 or you don't mind the resource hogging eye candy. It actually is *slower* even on a dual core system with the required memory (which is *double* the same amount for the XP O/S!).

XP will probably suffer the same fate as NT5 (aka Windows 2000) and all previous versions. If Microsoft has added a "kill switch" to XP, the "gray market" has solutions to that problem.

I still run 98se and NT5 systems. There are a *ton* of games out there that work best with DirectX 9c and the older O/S

on the computer.

And I'm not even talking about better Linux alternatives.

-Art Blackwell, Evergreen, CO

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 review our recent e-books, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/*).