

ComputerEdge™ Online — 07/06/12



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Microsoft Wants Everyone from Windows XP on to Have a Shot at Windows 8
There are many questions about Windows 8. Microsoft is hoping that inexpensive upgrades will



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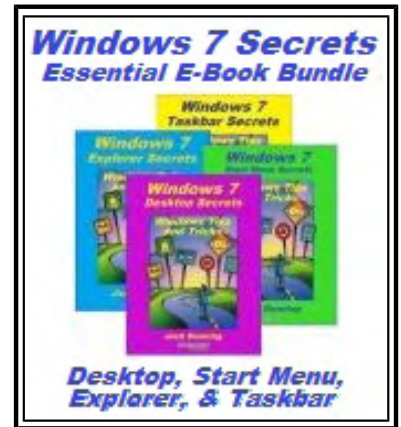
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help address those doubts.

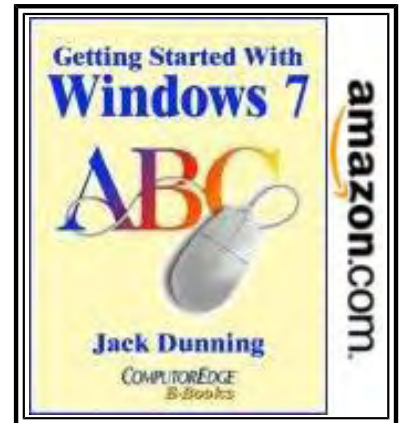
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Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.

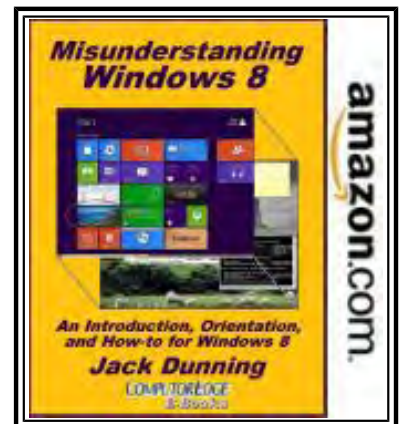
"Lotus Symphony," "Getting to the Desktop," "The Thunderbird Question," "Killing Brick & Mortar Universities"



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Digital Dave

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

No Mouse in Games; PC Won't Shut Down Normally; Thousands of the Letter "K".

Dear Digital Dave,

I'm using an Aspire 5250 with Windows 7. My mouse will not work in games on MP3 Rocket 6.2. It'll let me select options for the game. Once in the game, it won't select or start the game. (Family Feud, Sandlot, Baseball.)

Thank you,

*Terri
Lemon Grove, California*

Dear Terri,

While I didn't find anything specific to mouse problems with MP3 Rocket, there are things that you can try. The first is to open the Control Panel => Mouse. Make sure that Display Pointer Trails is not enabled (see Figure 1). This has been known to cause mouse problems with some games.

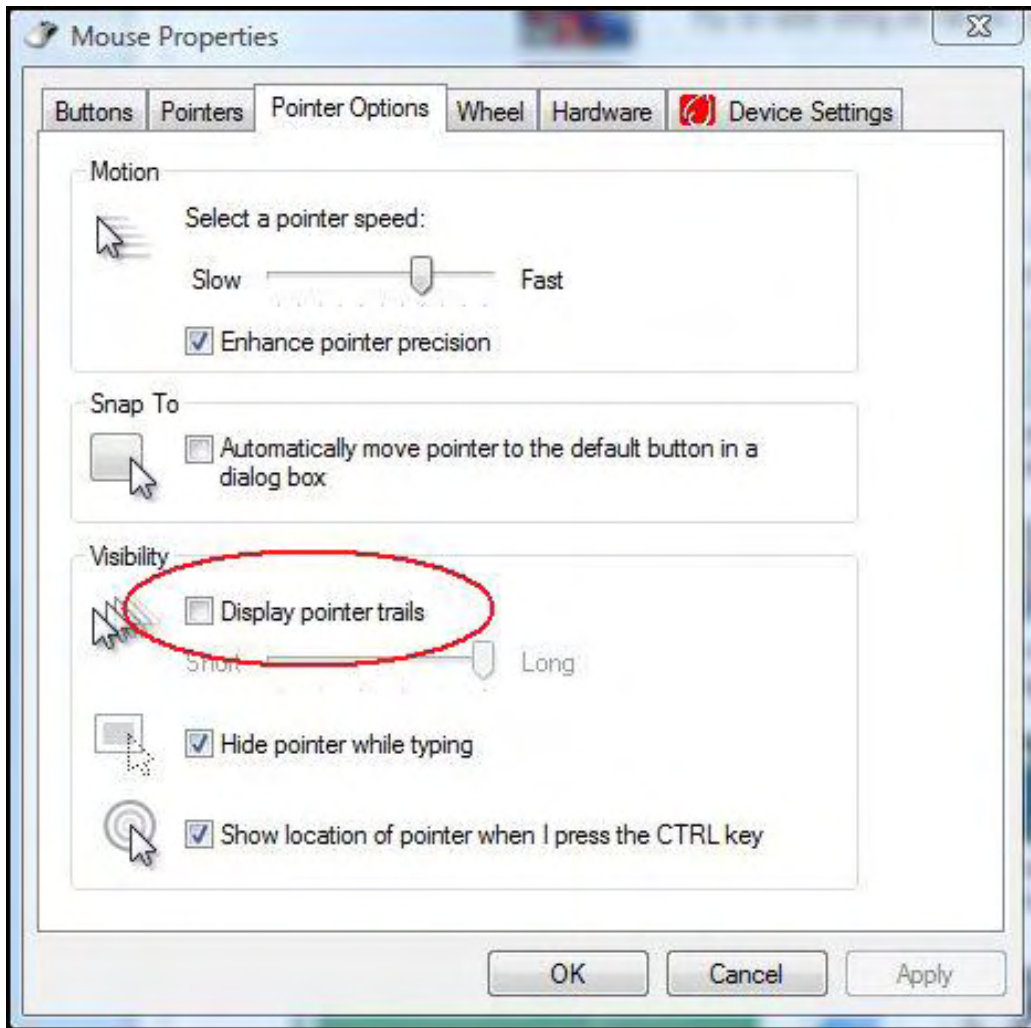


Figure 1. Make sure that display pointer trails is not selected

You might also try disabling "Hide pointer while typing."

Another possibility is that the Windows Aero themes setup may be interfering with the mouse in some games. If it is a downloaded and installed game, right-click on the executable file name (.EXE) and select properties. Under the Compatibility tab, check and apply "Disable visual themes" (see Figure 2).

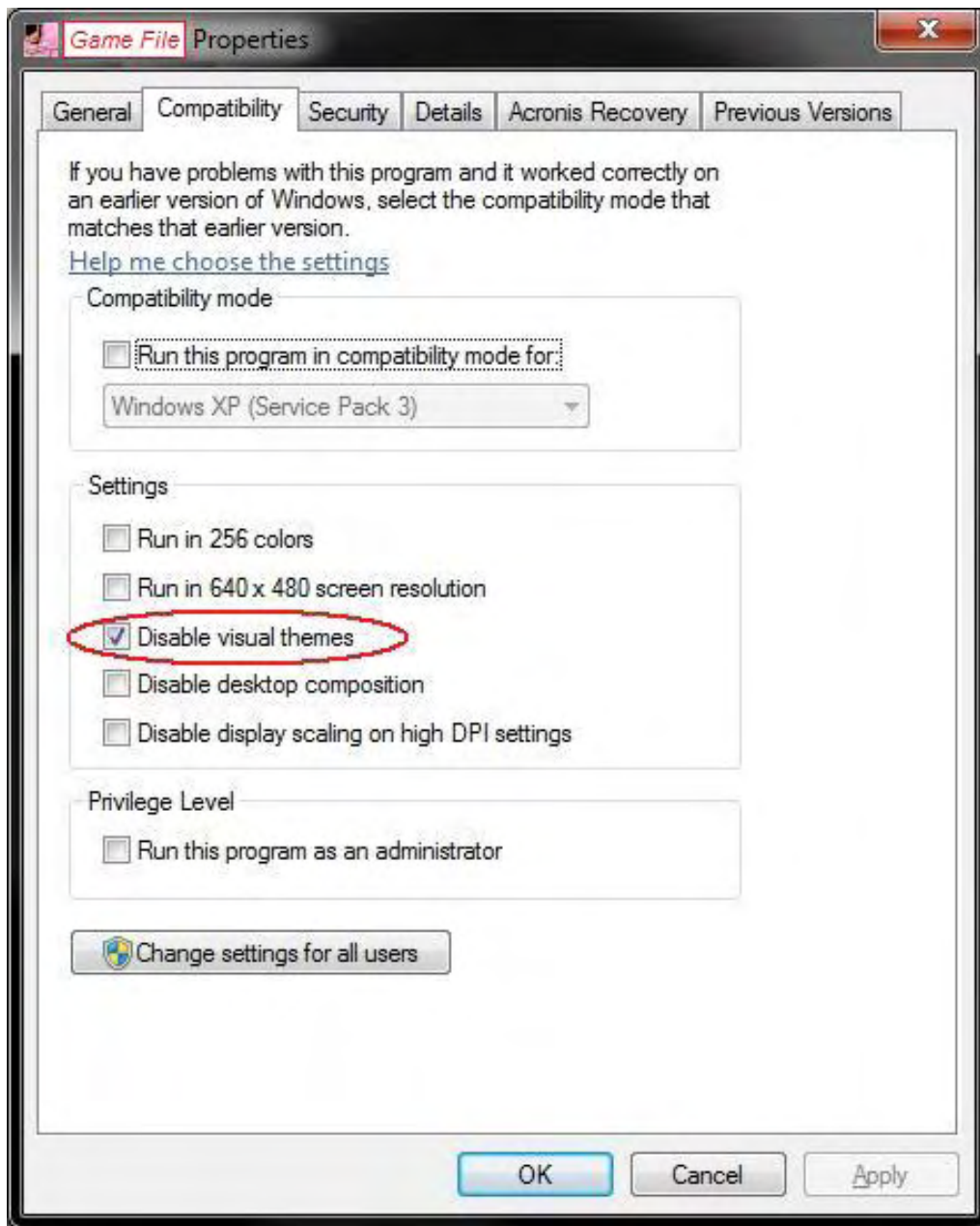


Figure 2. "Disable visual themes" for individual games in the Properties window of the executable file (.EXE).

It could also be that your mouse drivers need to be updated or another setting either in the operating system or the game itself needs to be changed. Perhaps someone who has experienced this problem will have an appropriate solution.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When using normal shutdown the computer says it's shutting down, but just whirls and whirls until it gives a blue screen and shuts off. Same with restart. Sleep works, but then shuts down some time later. How can I fix this? Everything else seem to work OK.

Thanks,

*Bob Morris
Escondido*

Dear Bob,

It sounds like the system files used during shutdown may be corrupted. You might try a System Repair, but you should probably run the CHKDSK program first in case the corruption is the result of a damaged hard drive. You can run the program by right clicking on the hard drive label in Windows Explorer and selecting Properties. Under the Tools tab, select "Error-checking."

Just in case it is a virus causing the problem, do all the usual scans. It might also be worthwhile to do a Restore to an earlier Restore Point.

If you are unable to fix the problem with a System Repair, then you may need to do a clean install which will give you a fresh start with the operating system files. But do all your virus scans first and backup your critical files. A clean install of the operating system is always a last resort.

Sometimes when everything else is working I will live with shutdown problems until I know the source of it. If the hard drive is starting to go bad, even a clean install may be only a temporary fix.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

All of a sudden, whenever I attempt to use a search box (anywhere) the box immediately fills up with the letter "k" and it is almost impossible to stop. This only happens on my laptop. I ran a full scan which did not uncover any problems. I tried to restore to an earlier date, and that did not work either. What should I try short of restoring the laptop to original condition??

You have been a wonderful help over the years and I thank you.

CAS
El Cajon, CA

Dear CAS,

While I can't be sure, I would strongly suspect that the keyboard is at fault. Possibly the "k" key is faulty or stuck. I would try another keyboard if you have one which will plug into a USB port. (Since the laptop has a built-in keyboard this is a little tricky. You may need to disable the built-in keyboard in the Device Manager to check this out.)

When you press a key on the keyboard, the keydown signal is sent to the computer causing the letter or symbol to appear. When the key is released, the keyup signal is sent and prevents input from continuing via the repeat process which engages if you continue to hold the key down. I've occasionally had a program miss the keyup. I've usually solved by pressing the key again.

Digital Dave

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Even More Little Known High Tech Stories

“Niche Search Browsers, Spy-Rocks, Tap-To-Toll on Interstates and Solar-Dyes” by Marilyn K. Martin

New Search Browsers; Tap-for-Toll; Women and Start-Ups; Diamond Farm; Military Tech; Connect Smartphones to Landlines; Commercial-Hopping; Gaming Update; Military Communications; Challenges to Wi-Fi; The Flame Virus; Solar Updates; Apple Updates; Gaming Hardware.

New Search Browsers—from Giants to Upstarts

With little innovation in the browser business for the past five years, it has seen as an area ripe for boosting sagging bottom lines at tech giants not known for hardware gadgets. As well as being viewed as an “unanswered need for updating” by start-ups.



Yahoo's new Axis browser app (www.eweek.com/c/a/Search-Engines/Yahoos-New-Axis-Browser-An-Early-Look-409630/) runs mainly as a plug-in for everything from Internet Explorer to Chrome to Mozilla Firefox. Most think Yahoo was driven to find a new product or service to rise above talk of irrelevancy and shareholder grumblings. Axis (axis.yahoo.com) is a play on the word access, and is a more visual browser, with “a small snapshot graphic of a corner of the actual Web page, with the article or graphic for which you are searching. And a little Axis widget follows you around on the Web, tucked in the lower left of your browser screen.” The Axis widget also allows you to open a second browser window on half the screen, anticipates your search with suggestions, and lets you move across devices with search results saved on Yahoo's servers.

Google is also unveiling their Knowledge Graph (www.google.com/insidesearch/features/search/knowledge.html), which they are calling the “first step in the next generation (searchenginewatch.com/article/2175783/Google-Launches-Knowledge-Graph-First-Step-in-Next-Generation-Search) of search”. It consists of a search results page with more graphics and information, from “results based on contextual meanings,” to topic summaries with sidebar key facts, to “information boxes” with additional information based on popular related queries. Knowledge Graph for mobiles and tablets will be released soon.

Meanwhile, a couple small start-up search engines (www.technologyreview.com/news/428066/as-google-tinkers-

[with-search-upstarts-gain/?p1=A1](#)) have exploded in popularity. Niche search engines Blekko and DuckDuckGo only have a tiny percentage of online searches, but are growing rapidly on the philosophy of simple design and protecting users' privacy—values some people claim the Giants have abandoned with their social efforts. Both niche sites have been on an impressive upward trajectory since January 2012.

Tap-for-Toll on Freeways, Florida to New Jersey

The Miami Herald reported in May 2012 that their upcoming electronic SunPass (www.sunpass.com/index) can already speed tourists through Florida toll booths and bridges, and is working on a tap-for-toll pass (www.miamiherald.com/2012/05/23/2814650/sunpass-to-work-in-more-states.html) all the way up to New York's Thruway. The SunPass is an innovative Prepaid Toll Program (www.ezpassnj.com/en/home/index.shtml) that saves tourists time and money, and is similar to New York and New Jersey's E-ZPass. Both companies are working on interoperability, to let both toll-passes work in each other's territory without having to purchase a new transponder.

Women and Start-Ups: Hide the Baby, and Don't Do Everything Yourself



"I'll need to run your proposal by Marketing, then get input from Production, and verify Shipping before I can give final approval."

of women business owners don't have employees—a major reason they can't increase revenue. The main reason is that women business owners see themselves as more of multi-tasking, do-everything types, like in their home, instead of CEOs. These overwhelmed lady business owners usually walk away from opportunities or more work, instead of growing their business by hiring people.

Silicon Valley's New Diamond Farm

By late May 2012, *Mercury News* reported that Element Six (www.e6.com/wps/wcm/connect/E6_Content_EN/Home), "a global leader in the development of synthetic diamonds—has opened its first U.S. production plant (www.contracostatimes.com/business/ci_20718344/silicon-valleys-new-diamond-farm-grows-synthetic-supermaterials) in Santa Clara, California." Synthetic diamonds, useful in the production of industrial lasers, computer chips and upcoming futuristic applications, are "grown" in E6's labs by nanoscientists. Synthetic supermaterials (like grown industrial diamonds) can be used in everything from "quantum encryption to create communication systems invulnerable to eavesdropping", to cancer medicines and "ozone water that's a more powerful cleanser than bleach yet completely green." E6 also made diamond tweeters for recording studios at Lucasfilm and London's Abbey Road.

According to the *New York Times* in June 2012, young wives and mothers are successfully launching high-growth technology companies (www.nytimes.com/2012/06/10/business/nurturing-a-baby-and-a-start-up-business.html), amid having babies. From online dress and accessories rental sites, to a publicly traded media company valued at \$300 million, women are founding and running high tech companies—at least in New York City—while balancing child care. Women only make up 10% of high tech founders right now, and only raise 70% of the investment money that male founders do. While venture capitalists look for enthusiasm and dedication to a start-up, some young mothers are even advised to hide a new baby until the business is up and running.

While women-owned businesses represent nearly 50% of private companies in the U.S., three-quarters of these businesses never grow beyond (www.thestreet.com/story/11534855/1/why-women-owned-businesses-dont-grow.html) \$50,000 in annual gross revenue. According to the non-profit Count Me In For Women's Economic Independence (www.count-me-in.org), 17%

Military Tech: Drone Data Overload and Spy-Rocks

Lockheed Martin has created an unattended ground sensor (www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/05/spy-rock/) (USG) disguised as a small rock that could let the U.S. military continue to track Afghans for years after the conflict is officially over. Whether buried or strewn across the Afghan landscape, they will detect "anyone who moves nearby and report their location back to a remote headquarters." Powered by solar-rechargeable batteries, the spy-rocks could theoretically operate for decades. "You use them to cover up your dead space, the areas you're concerned about but can't cover with other surveillance/reconnaissance assets," says Lt. Col. Matt Russell.

With all the military drones (www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/06/reality-tv-drone/) in use, especially in overseas conflict zones, the Air Force has admitted that they are buried in more to-be-analyzed sensor-data and drone footage than they can handle. So the RAND Corporation went looking for ways to better and more quickly analyze the glut of incoming data and ended up consulting...reality TV experts. Since reality TV shows also have to exploit voluminous raw data, RAND suggested that drone ground stations be rearranged to resemble TV control rooms, and improve personnel communications (fewer chat rooms and more headsets), among other suggestions.

Comcast Offering New Service to Connect Smartphones to Landlines

At the end of May 2012, Comcast announced a new service (www.siliconvalley.com/mobile/ci_20685135/comcast-service-would-connect-home-phone-line-smartphones) to "turn your smartphone into a cordless home phone with a very wide range." The company's new Voice 2Go (blog.comcast.com/2012/05/new-xfinity-voice-voice-2go-features-make-your-home-number-mobile.html) feature is now available to new Comcast Xfinity Voice customers, and will be available to existing customers this summer. It will let Comcast customers use their smartphones and tablets to make calls using their landline phone number, and avoid paying AT&T or Verizon Wireless for a monthly voice plan. Relying on a Skype-like app installed on an Apple or Android device, customers can also sign up to forward their landline calls to their smartphone.

Lawsuits over Dish Commercial-Hopping

Not too long after The Dish Network introduced its commercial-skipping Auto-Hop DVR feature (www.dish.com/redirects/promotion/offer2/?WT.srch=1&KBID=62283&WT.mc_id=GSBNAUTHOP_3194&gclid=CNP9uZrP07ACFUu4tgodhxzt1Q), the big television networks filed lawsuits (www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/business/media/lawsuits-are-filed-over-dishs-ad-skipping-technology.html). Auto-Hop is the essence of a true disruptive technology, and the networks—who derive much of their revenue from advertising—are hopping mad. The networks accuse Dish of copyright infringement, and that the Auto-Hop feature is unlawful, saying Dish "does not have the authority to tamper with the ads from broadcast replays...for its own economic and commercial advantage." Dish counters that their feature "preserves the ads within the recording, even though it hides them from sight," and has countersued.

Gaming Update—Online Play and Exclusive Content

Electronic Arts (www.ea.com/) announced in early June 2012, that they are introducing a new \$50/year subscription service (www.siliconvalley.com/personal-technology/ci_20778609/electronic-arts-will-charge-50-battlefield-3-online) for players of its online video game, Battlefield 3. ERTS is trying to boost its online sales and gain some ground against their principal rival, Activision Blizzard (www.activisionblizzard.com/corp/index.html) which sells the top-selling Call of Duty (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007XVTR3K/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8). "Charging for online play is becoming more popular as video game companies want to generate a steady revenue stream, separate from sales of \$60 discs after launching big games a few times a year."

Continuing its trend of paying for early downloadable and exclusive content, Microsoft/Xbox announced in June 2012 that they had signed a deal with game producer THQ (www.thq.com/us/) to offer South Park: The Stick of Truth bonus content as an exclusive pre-order item (www.gamezone.com/products/south-park-the-stick-of-truth/news/south-park-the-stick-of-truth-gets-xbox-360-exclusive-content). The Stick of Truth will be available on March 5, 2013 for Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and PC. But MS' Xbox 360 will also be offering additional pre-order bonus content of the Mysterion Superhero Pack. This Pack

will allow users to suit up as the famous South Park superhero, Mysterion, with the elusive power of Mysterion's Special Attack, and the Dagger of Cthulhu. Xbox will also offer three exclusive standalone adventures with South Park, and the game will also support Kinect voice command.

Military Communications—Beyond GPS

In early June 2012, an ex-Pentagon analyst charged that China could remotely shut down (www.businessinsider.com/military-sources-china-could-shut-down-all-the-telecommunications-technology-it-sold-to-america-2012-6) all the telecom gear it has sold to the U.S., or "disable a country's telecommunications infrastructure before a military engagement." Open source intelligence company Lignet (www.lignet.com/Home), says that the Chinese firm Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. (www.huawei.com/en) has direct links to the Chinese government and People's Liberation Army, and has built-in electronic backdoors to telecom equipment sold to the U.S. and other countries.

In light of the above, amid other concerns, *Wired* reported in June 2012 that the Pentagon's research arm, DARPA, is working on the second phase (www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/06/darpa-gps/) of their All Source Positioning and Navigation (ASPN) program. DARPA's not giving up on GPS, but looking for a fall-back navigational system with a plug-and-play capability, to move quickly between different combinations of devices. This new system would ideally be more flexible and adaptable to "mitigate GPS dependency."

Challenges to Wi-Fi

Although Internet access seems to be everywhere today, there are still pockets where we don't have access (www.technologyreview.com/news/428067/could-you-spare-some-internet-access/?p1=A2) to high-speed data or Wi-Fi. A new start-up called Open Garden (opengarden.com) has just started offering an app "that lets you connect to the Internet by piggybacking on the Web access of other Open Garden app users, using peer-to-peer connections that form a mesh network." Wireless carriers may protest, since they currently charge both for tethering services and for using wireless hotspots. Open Garden hopes they will relent, when OG shows how their app can relieve congestion on clogged data networks.

New Intel Ultrabooks (www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/sponsors-of-tomorrow/ultrabook.html), has struck a deal with Devicescape (devicescape.com/), to exploit the best islands of free, high-quality Wi-Fi (www.technologyreview.com/view/428062/intel-ultrabooks-will-mooch-free-wi-fi/) around us. Whether a clever way to get devices onto free Wi-Fi networks, or leaching off Wi-Fi for free, Devicescape "curates the network through crowdsourcing," and calls its service a "living, growing network...that is only limited by quality."

Cyber-Warfare Update—The Flame Virus

At the end of May 2012, a fast-spreading malware called Flame (or SkyWiper) (www.slashgear.com/flame-cyber-espionage-discovered-in-vast-infection-net-28230470/) was the latest example of sophisticated state-run cyber espionage targeting Iranian computers. Believed to have been active since March 2010, Flame is expected to become twenty times more prevalent than Stuxnet. Now spread across Middle Eastern computers, and getting wide press, it's said to be many times more complicated than Stuxnet. Flame's danger is how it can monitor network traffic, grabbing screenshots and audio recordings, to send the data back to its home servers.

It was quickly discovered that Flame's abilities could expand with Bluetooth (www.slashgear.com/flame-virus-abilities-expand-with-bluetooth-29230678/). One of the more advanced elements about this modular virus, is its ability to copy data from nearby Bluetooth-enabled smartphones (www.bluetooth.com/Pages/Bluetooth-Home.aspx).

By early June 2012, Microsoft reportedly fixed their Windows flaw (www.slashgear.com/microsoft-fixes-windows-flaw-exploited-by-flame-04231810/) exploited by Flame. MS issued a security warning and an emergency update. MS had discovered that the Flame attack exploited Window's Terminal Server Licensing Service, "which uses an older cryptography algorithm...which allowed parts of the malware to be signed by certificates that made them appear to be produced by Microsoft."

Also in early June 2012, it became apparent that there was a suicide code (www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/06/08/tech-flame-virus-removal.html?cmp=rss) also embedded in Flame. The Flame operators appeared to be leaving Flame

active on only the most interesting machines, and deleting it from those with little value. Computer security firm Symantec reported that "some of the command-and-control servers that control the virus had deployed a file designed to remove all traces of it from certain infected computers."

Solar Updates: "Solar Ready" Homes, and Capturing Light with Dyes

According to Silicon Valley at the end of May 2012, The California Energy Commission was expected to approve stringent energy efficient standards (www.siliconvalley.com/ci_20744057/california-poised-require-solar-ready-roofs-new-homes?source=most_viewed) for new residential and commercial buildings to take effect on January 1, 2014. Besides a lot of common-sense standards designed to save energy, the proposal would also require new buildings and homes to have "solar ready roofs," that could accommodate photovoltaic solar panels to generate electricity. Title 24 would not force building or home owners to install solar, but if and when they would wish to do so, the roof would be ready to accommodate a solar system.

According to MIT's *Technology Review*, also at the end of May 2012, "easy-to-make solar cells that capture light with dyes" have garnered awards—but have made little commercial impact since their invention in 1988. But a new design out of Northwestern University eliminates the solar-dyes' problems (www.technologyreview.com/news/428025/cheap-dye-sensitized-solar-cell-moves-toward/) with leaky, corrosive liquid electrolytes. Northwestern researchers Mercoun Kanatzidis and Robert Chang, and a couple grad students, have replaced the leaky electrolyte system with a solid iodine-based semiconductor—that actually boosts performance of the solar-dye cells.

Updates about Apple

The Seattle Times' Jeff Carlson recommends a \$5 utility called Moom (itunes.apple.com/us/app/moom/id419330170?mt=12) to create order (seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/business/201289785_ptmacc26.html) out of the chaos of a Mac OS X homepage. With the Mac's now overburdened Finder tool, Moom makes it a breeze to move and resize windows. It can even "define different areas of the Mac screen by specifying sections of a custom grid in Moom's preferences," and can remember the positioning as you change from laptop screen to external monitor.

According to rumors in May 2012, Apple is developing a 7-inch iPad (business-news.thestreet.com/denver-post-technology/story/apple-roundup-nvidia-chips-smaller-ipads/11536201), that would use "G/F2" thin-film, touch-technology. Apple's new MacBook Pro was released in mid-June, with some reports that Apple has replaced the AMD graphic chip with one from Nvidia.

By the end of May, 2012, a Forrester Research analyst joined other industry grumblers that Apple's iTV is probably going to fail (business-news.thestreet.com/denver-post-technology/story/why-apples-itv-or-whatever-it-will-be-will-fail/11554057). The idea is that, terrific hardware aside, TV content is controlled by monopolists who won't give Apple access to their content archives, or best producers/writers. Since most agree that new Apple CEO Tim Cook's biggest challenge is innovation, everyone is wondering if he has some tricks up his sleeve to find content for iTV that people will want to watch.

New Gaming Hardware

In early June 2012, Nintendo announced a Wii U Pro Controller (www.slashgear.com/nintendo-reveals-wii-u-pro-controller-and-tweaked-tablet-03231377/) and a slightly redesigned tablet. The new gamepad is better for classic titles, with analog sticks, D-pad and buttons, and shoulder triggers. The redesigned tablet controller has a wider slate and more prominent joysticks shifted out further to the edges, as well as a dedicated NFC trigger button added.

In early May 2012, Silicon Valley rated the Best Gaming Desktops (www.siliconvalley.com/personal-technology/ci_20552024/tech-test-drive-best-gaming-desktops). They rated the good/bad features of the new Alienware X51, Falcon Northwest Mach V and Origin Chronos. Main complaint? They needed more room for bigger or multiple graphics cards and upgrade paths.

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.

ComputerEdge 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).

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Looking Backwards” by Wally Wang

Looking Backwards; Playing with PDF Files; The Google Nexus 7 Tablet; The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover; Explore the World From Your iPad or iPhone; Growth vs. Market Share; Internet History.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Back when Apple first introduced the iPhone, a reporter asked Gary Krakow, the senior technology correspondent for TheStreet.com, what Apple would have to do to get the iPhone in the corporate world (www.thestreet.com/video/10419419/iphone-needs-to-up-its-game.html). Gary Krakow said, "Steve Jobs has to bite the bullet...He's either gotta get BlackBerry on there or Windows Mobile on there. It's the entire answer."

Five years later, Microsoft killed Windows Mobile because it couldn't compete and created a brand new mobile operating system called Windows Phone 7 (which Microsoft later made obsolete by creating Windows Phone 8, based on Windows 8). In the meantime, people keep abandoning Blackberry (www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/top-business-stories/rim-shares-plunge-its-a-matter-of-survival-now/article4379385/) phones as Research in Motion lays off people and delays releasing their next big phone upgrade dubbed Blackberry 10, which was supposed to be out by 2012, but has been delayed to 2013. The longer Research in Motion waits to get Blackberry 10 out, the more corporations will shift to Android and iPhones.

So why was Gary Krakow so wrong? The answer is easy. Gary Krakow, like too many people, only looks backwards at what works now but refuses to see how something new might have benefits over currently existing technology.

Instead of acknowledging that the iPhone offered unique advantages, Gary simply dismissed everything about the iPhone and assumed that Windows Mobile and Blackberry OS represented the pinnacle of technological achievement. This is no different from all the hordes of people angry and upset that Apple wouldn't allow Adobe's Flash to play on the iPhone and iPad. The reason had nothing to do with not wanting Flash but simply from Flash's inability to run well on mobile devices, which even Adobe finally admitted when they ceased development on Flash for mobile devices.

Although Adobe tried getting Flash to run on Android devices, the experience never proved as seamless as Flash running on regular computers. Now Adobe has finally abandoned Flash (mobilesyrup.com/2012/06/29/adobe-flash-will-not-be-supported-in-android-os-4-1/) running on the latest version of Android as well. Yet manufacturers of Android devices continue to promote Flash as a benefit even though these same manufacturers know that Flash would prove frustrating to users. This would be like a used car salesman deliberately selling you a defective car while touting its reliability.

Why did so many people promote Flash despite its inability to work on mobile devices, which anyone could plainly see for themselves by just trying to run Flash on a tablet or smartphone? Once again people kept looking backwards and believed that Flash was a necessary component for using the Internet. Rather than verify their beliefs with facts, most people prefer to just get mad with anyone who challenges their beliefs no matter how much evidence may be stacked against them.

The real answer is to keep an open mind. When anything new pops up, look for its advantages first before focusing solely on any perceived disadvantages. Sometimes an apparent disadvantage might actually be an advantage.

When Apple first introduced the iPhone, Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO, famously laughed (articles.businessinsider.com/2012-02-04/tech/31023911_1_steve-ballmer-iphone-microsoft-ceo) at it because it didn't have a keyboard. Yet by not taking up space displaying a physical keyboard, the iPhone's virtual keyboard left more room for the screen and offered the ability to switch keyboards to display multiple characters in ways that a physical keyboard could never do. By not seeing the advantage of virtual keyboards, other smartphone manufacturers like Research in Motion clung to physical keyboards for too long and got wiped out as a result. Now the iPhone alone generates more money than all of Microsoft's entire business combined.

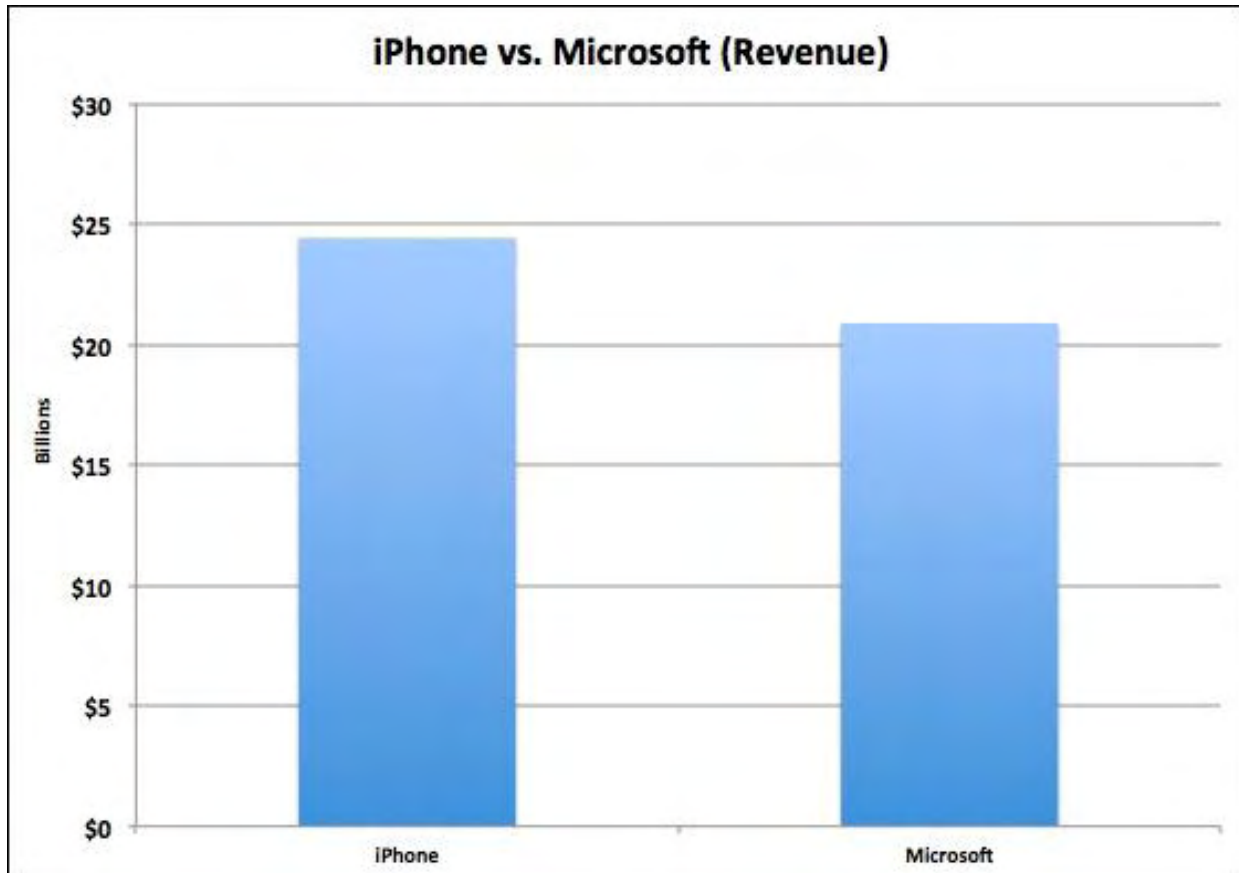


Figure 1. The iPhone is worth more than Microsoft's entire business.

To see how limited people's imaginations were about how Apple might design a mobile phone, browse through this gallery of iPhone mockups (reviews.cnet.com/2300-19512_7-10008420.html?tag=mncol;editorPicks) created by other people. Notice that each design contains some ancient aspect of the past such as a slide out keyboard or the click wheel interface made popular by the iPod. When too many people think forward, they can only see as far as the past, which is like trying to run backwards and hope you don't run into anything.



Figure 2. One of many designs for how people thought Apple would design the iPhone.

If you want to fail in life, just assume that there's absolutely no room for improvement and stubbornly resist anything new, especially if it comes from a company that you hate for no reason. By turning a blind eye to the possibility of anything better, you're guaranteed to miss out on future opportunities. Just ask Research in Motion how well they're doing these days by dismissing the iPhone back in 2007. While Apple keeps opening more stores, Research in Motion is limping along with just one retail outlet (www.detroitnews.com/article/20120702/TECHNOLOGY/207020324/It-s-lonely-nation-s-only-BlackBerry-retail-store?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|FRONTPAGE) that few people bother to visit.

Anyone clinging to the hope that Research in Motion's Blackberry 10 OS will magically save the company can keep dreaming. For the rest of us, there are plenty of opportunities in life if you're willing to look for them, especially if you stop looking backwards to find them.

Playing with PDF Files

PDF (Portable Document Format) files let you capture text and graphics on a page that you can share with others. Unfortunately, the biggest disadvantage of PDF files is that they're essentially frozen in place. If you want to edit text or graphics stored in a PDF file, you can't do it easily without buying a PDF editing program such as Adobe's Acrobat Pro.

That's why you might want to get the PDF Toolkit (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%252Fpdf-toolkit%252Fid405219581%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30), a simple utility program that lets you concatenate multiple PDF files into one, compress PDF files to reduce their size (at the expense of lower graphic resolution), extract or delete select pages, extract text, or extract graphics. By extracting text and graphics from a PDF file, you can then edit and modify that text and graphics in a word processor or graphics editor like Photoshop.

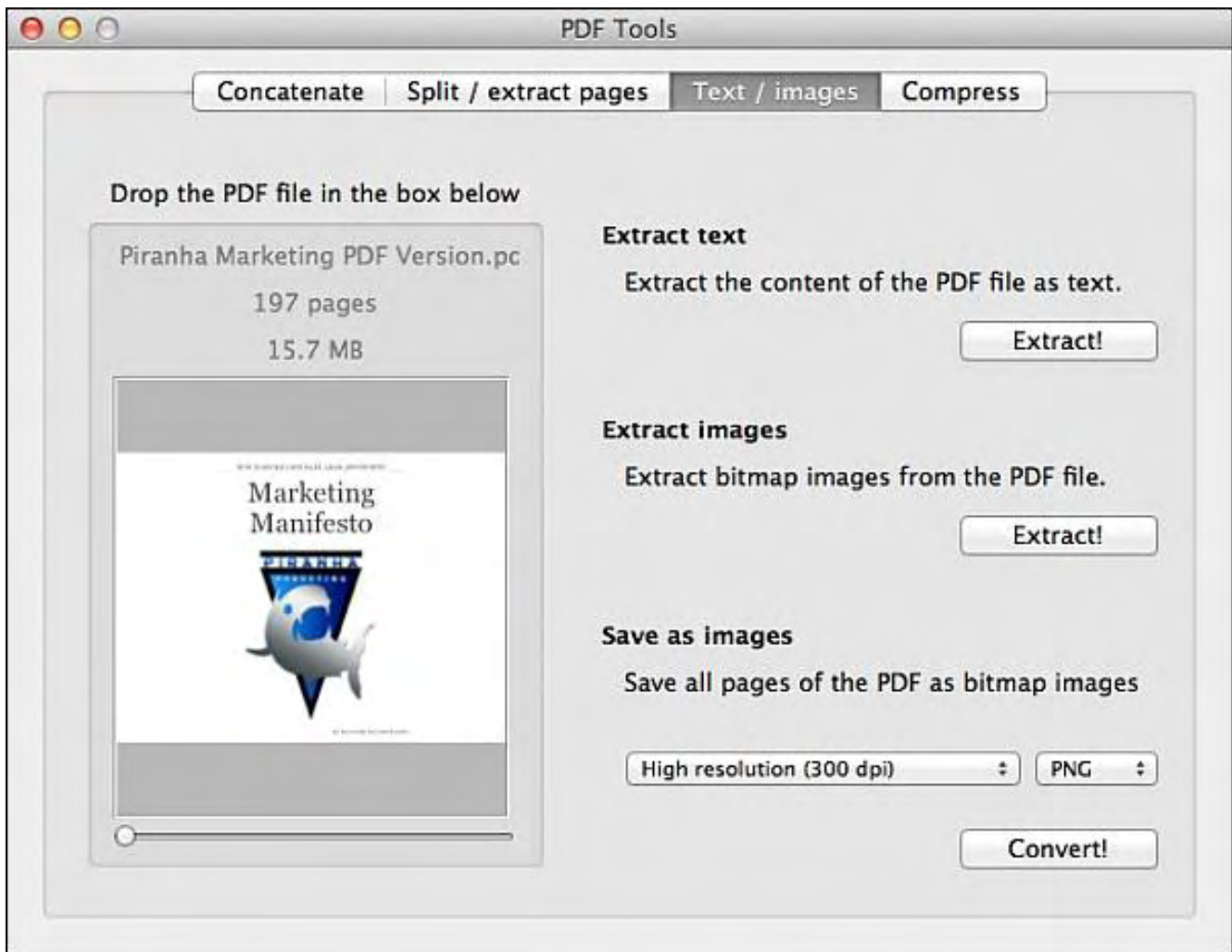


Figure 3. The PDF Toolkit offers options for manipulating a PDF file.

If you only use PDF files to look at information, you won't need a utility like the PDF Toolkit. However, if you regularly need to create, edit and modify PDF files, then a program like the PDF Toolkit can prove handy so you don't have to try to extract text and graphics out of a PDF file by copying information manually.

If you like the idea of digging into the guts of a program to study how PDF files really work, then download and examine the free Pdftk program (www.pdf-labs.com/docs/install-pdftk/) that runs on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux. By studying this open source code, you can sharpen your programming skills while also learning different ways to manipulate PDF files, which is based on the book *PDF Hacks* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0596006551/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0596006551&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20).

The Google Nexus 7 Tablet

Google recently announced a 7-inch tablet running Android starting at \$199. What's curious is that price point leaves little room for any profit. The big difference between Amazon's Kindle Fire (also a 7-inch Android tablet) and Google's Nexus tablet is that Amazon uses the Kindle Fire to get more people to buy music, movies and e-books through the Kindle Fire. Google needs to find a way to make money through their Google Play online store since they won't make much money on the actual unit itself.

In the meantime, you can buy the second generation iPad 2 for \$399. For those people on a budget, the \$199 Google Nexus 7 tablet may look appealing, but lacks the large app selection and third-party accessory choices that makes the iPad so popular. If your tablet needs are simple, then the Google Nexus 7 tablet might be useful if you don't like Amazon's Kindle Fire. If you want to do more than just browse the Internet or play games, then you'll probably be happier with the more expensive and more versatile iPad instead.

If you wait until the end of the year, hopefully Microsoft's Surface tablet will be available. If you want to run Metro apps through an ARM-based tablet, you should be able to get the Microsoft Surface tablet since many companies, such as Hewlett-Packard, have already abandoned plans (www.slashgear.com/hp-reportedly-first-to-ditch-windows-rt-tablet-plans-over-microsofts-surface-29236470) to release ARM-based Windows RT tablets of their own. With fewer companies making Windows RT tablets, chances are good you'll only be able to get a Windows RT tablet through Microsoft. If you want a Windows 8 tablet that can run all your current Windows programs, you'll have a choice between the Microsoft Surface and tablets from other companies.

Of course, other companies will still need to license Windows 8 from Microsoft while Microsoft won't have to pay that same licensing fee for their own Surface tablets, which means even the number of choices for a Windows 8 tablet may not be as large as you might expect. Then again, other companies make such feeble tablet designs that it seems as if they aren't even trying to make a decent product, which you can see in the Hewlett-Packard Slate PC demonstration (news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8444672.stm) by Steve Ballmer back in 2010. Given the lack of imagination from other companies, it's no wonder Microsoft decided to make the Surface tablet themselves.

Between Google's Nexus 7 tablet and Microsoft's Surface tablet, the rest of the world has finally caught up to the idea that tablets can actually be useful, which is something that iPad users have known for years. Maybe in another few years, rival tablet companies will suddenly realize more of the obvious that it's actually possible to create content on a tablet instead of just consuming it, but that insight might take some people another ten years to finally accept.

The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover

When Microsoft announced their Surface tablets, people got all excited about its built-in kickstand and integrated keyboard cover, as if these two features alone suddenly made tablets useful. Of course, if you want the ability to prop up your iPad while typing on a physical keyboard, Logitech offers their \$99 Ultrathin Keyboard Cover (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007PRHNHO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B007PRHNHO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20) for the iPad that not only duplicates Microsoft's Surface tablet keyboard cover, but exceeds it as well. (It's also available now so you don't have to wait until autumn when Microsoft plans to release their Surface tablets.)

Essentially the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover is nothing more than a physical keyboard that connects to an iPad 2 or the new iPad through magnetic connectors, just like the Microsoft Surface keyboard cover. Placing the unit over the iPad protects the screen. When you want to actually type on it, you pry the unit apart and drop the iPad into a groove designed to prop the iPad up at an angle.



Figure 4. The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover protects the screen when not in use.



Figure 5. You can prop the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover in the keyboard groove.

Where the Microsoft Surface tablet's kickstand and physical connector to its keyboard cover forces you to type only in landscape orientation, the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover connects to the iPad through a wireless Bluetooth connection. This gives you the freedom to use the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover in either portrait or landscape orientation.

Although the built-in groove of the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover can prop the iPad up, you don't have to use it. Place your iPad anywhere within comfortable viewing distance and the Bluetooth connection of the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover lets you place the keyboard wherever you want while still typing on the iPad. Such a range of choices is impossible with Microsoft's Surface keyboard cover that must remain attached to the tablet at all times like a regular laptop keyboard.

The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover runs on a built-in battery that can hold a charge for roughly six months, assuming you use it two hours a day. Recharging the unit requires a standard micro USB cable (included with the unit) that you can plug into any USB port to recharge your Ultrathin Keyboard Cover. While there's no convenient way to carry this micro USB cable with an iPad, chances are good you'll just leave this cable hooked up to your computer at home or at your office anyway. If you lose this cable, you should have little trouble buying any replacement micro USB cable.

(Logitech also sells a unique solar-powered iPad keyboard (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RNCLBY/)

ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?

ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B007RNCLBY&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20) for \$179. This solar-powered keyboard lets you forget about recharging the keyboard altogether unless you plan on using your iPad and its Logitech keyboard in total darkness.)

For those who still can't get used to typing on the iPad's virtual keyboard, the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover provides a regular keyboard crunched down to the fit the size of the iPad's width. Not only does this keyboard provide all the characters you may need to type, but it also includes cursor keys, volume control keys, cut/copy/paste shortcut keys, and even keys for displaying or hiding the virtual keyboard if you wish. One interesting addition is the typical Macintosh command key, which lets you select common Macintosh keystroke shortcuts such as Command+A to select all text in a document. If you're used to selecting text by holding down the Shift key and pressing a cursor key, the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover offers that feature too.



Figure 6. The Ultrathin Keyboard Cover provides a complete keyboard.

The Ultrathin Keyboard Cover lets you rest your fingers on the keys, which may be convenient for touch typists. The tactile feel of the keyboard is adequate so you can feel when you've pressed any key. For typing, the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover is fine, but for editing text or moving the cursor quickly in a document, the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover is far superior to the iPad's built-in virtual keyboard. If you do a lot of text editing, you'll be more productive with the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover rather than wrestling with the virtual keyboard.

If you were impressed by Microsoft's Surface keyboard cover, you'll find that the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover not only gives you more flexibility, but works with the iPad, which already dominates the tablet market. Best of all, you can start using the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover right now, and you won't have to fiddle with learning the Metro user interface with Windows 8 running on a Surface tablet.

The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover gives you all the advantages of Microsoft's Surface keyboard cover with none of the disadvantages. If you prefer a physical keyboard or need to edit text just as often as you need to create it, then you'll probably want the Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover for your iPad.

Explore the World From Your iPad or iPhone

The only time many Americans ever think about a foreign country is when the news media reports multiple reasons for why we need to bomb them. If you'd rather see pictures that help you appreciate the world as something other than countries containing natural resources that don't belong to us, then you might want to download the free Fotopedia Heritage app (*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%252Ffotopedia-heritage%252Fid383327395%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)* for the iPhone and iPad.

The pictures provided by this app let you browse the many World Heritage sites that have been deemed to provide universal value. By flipping through the different pictures, you can travel around the world, looking at interesting sites in other countries along with reading descriptions of the area. Whenever the pressures of your ordinary world start wearing you out, pop up this app and let your imagination take you to another world.



Figure 7. Fotopedia lets you view some of the best photography from around the world.

Growth vs. Market Share

There's an odd contradiction with Android. Android devices keep growing rapidly, yet Apple's iOS (running on iPhones, iPads and iPod touches) generates more revenue. Now according to Net Applications (<http://>), iOS commands a greater share (*tech. fortune.cnn.com/2012/07/02/net-applications-ios-web-share-hit-record-65-3-in-june/*) of Internet use compared to Android.

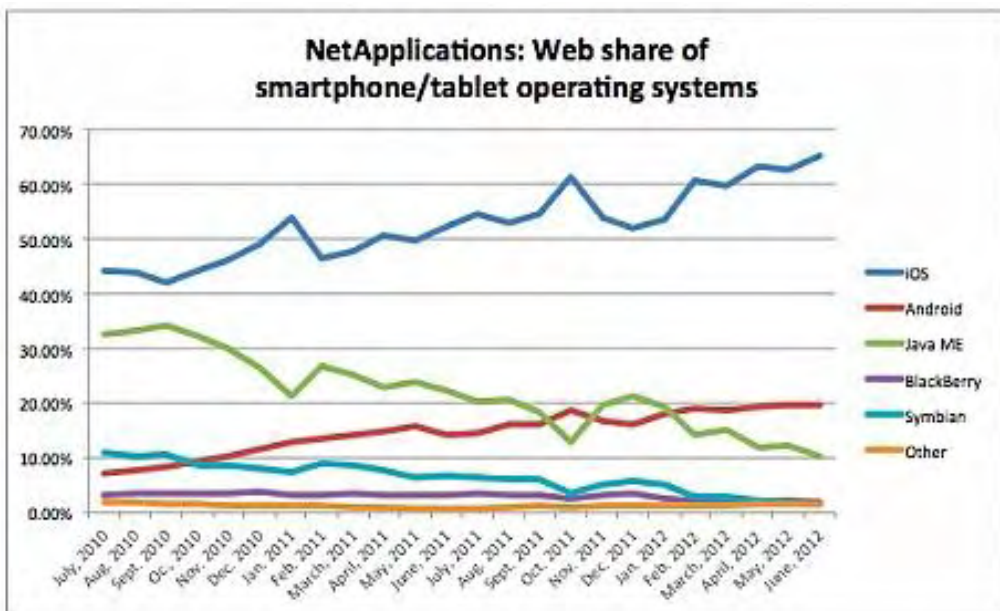


Figure 8. More mobile users connect to the Internet with iOS than any other operating system.

According to Net Applications, about 65 percent of mobile Web users rely on iOS while only 20 percent use Android. Yet Android's year over year growth was 38 percent compared to iOS's growth at 24 percent. Apparently more people are getting Android devices than iOS devices, but they are far less active in using the Internet.

What should be even more disturbing for rivals is that nobody else is even close to iOS or Android. Blackberry OS is on its way down and Windows Phone 7 doesn't even appear on Net Application's chart. In another year, we can see how much progress Windows 8 can make on tablets and smartphones, but until that happens, the mobile operating system market appears to be dominated by iOS and Android.

* * *

Every time you visit any site on the Internet, Safari keeps track of information such as the files you've downloaded or the history of all the sites you've visited. If you don't want other people to know what you've been doing on the Internet, you can periodically reset Safari to wipe out this data. Just choose Safari —> Reset Safari and when the Reset Safari dialog appears, choose the options you want to delete.



Figure 9. The Reset Safari dialog where you can choose which data to remove.

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 particples 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=1590791894)

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)

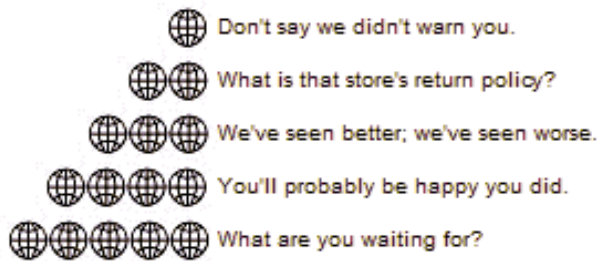
99% Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A)

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.

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Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

What Kids are Up To; What's App, Doc?; Mega Sales Spur Pico Demand; Optoma ML500 LED Projector.

What Kids are Up To

With kids out of school for the summer, mobile safety issues are on the rise. According to a new survey commissioned by AT&T, these issues include texting while driving, bullying, sending and receiving inappropriate messages and photos. Unfortunately, parents don't often discuss mobile safety with their kids. Some of the study's findings:

- The average age a child is given their first phone is 12.1; the average age for a child's first smartphone is 13.8, among those with a phone.
- 48 percent of children ages 12-14 have ridden in a vehicle with someone who was texting while driving. Among those ages 15-17, the percentage of teens who have ridden with a driver who was texting increases to 64 percent.
- One in four teens ages 15-17 have received mean or bullying text messages (compared to nearly one in five reported by both 8- to 11- and 12- to 14-year-olds).
- More than half of teens ages 15-17 know someone who has received a sexual message or picture over their phone (compared to 39 percent among those aged 12-14).
- 58 percent of parents say that their mobile phone provider offers tools or resources for parents to address issues like overages, safety, security and monitoring. One in seven is not sure whether they have access to these services.

"Mobile devices are becoming parents' and kids' preferred way to communicate on-the-go," said Janiece Evans-Page, assistant vice president community engagement, AT&T. "The Mobile Safety Web site is our way of helping families—providing them with educational resources and raising awareness about products to help manage safety issues. The fact is, there are a variety of free to low-cost tools that can give parents peace of mind, and we want 100 percent of the parents out there to know their options—not just 58 percent of them."

According to AT&T:

The study shows that there's an opportunity for parents and kids to have more discussions about the sometimes contentious topic of mobile phones. Surprisingly, 90 percent of the kids, ages 8-17, agree it's OK for their parents to set rules for their use of such devices; conversely, far fewer (66 percent) say their parents have actually set such rules.

The survey additionally learned that 39 percent of children ages 12-14 know someone who has received a sexual message or picture over their phone—a figure that jumps to 53 percent among children ages 15-17. Additionally, nearly one in five 8- to 11-year-olds surveyed have received a mean or bullying text message. Yet, kids say that discussing mobile safety is low on the list of talks parents have with their kids.

"The AT&T Mobile Safety study sheds new light on very serious issues that can arise for children who are using mobile devices," said National PTA President Betsy Landers. "Today's parent should be aware of today's technology and how it can affect their

children. Being an engaged parent includes having a conversation about wireless safety with their children as they grow up."

While the study results bring up a variety of concerns, there are ways parents can manage how a mobile phone is used. These include blocking certain content may be accessed, times of day phones can be used and ways to block texts and calls from bullies. AT&T (and other providers) offer tools that can block what content may be accessed, times of day phones can be used and ways to block texts and calls from bullies. Additionally, AT&T FamilyMap can help parents locate their children and it will send alerts at predetermined times with the child's location, such as when they should have arrived at home or school.

A full menu of parental controls and a library of resources on mobile safety topics can be found on the company's new Mobile Safety Web site (www.att.com/familysafety).

What's App, Doc?

Bretton Holmes with Holmes World Media Inc. writes in this week with a new app every doctor should consider getting, or you should consider telling your doctor about:

When Dr. Tracey Haas and Dr. Tim Gueramy, got married a few years ago, they both knew their schedules would be a real challenge, but being interrupted in the middle of really special occasions (like their first wedding anniversary) got to be too much. "When you're a doctor, you expect that your plans will be cut short, but the vast majority of times, the interruption isn't an emergency. When you're married and you're both doctors, well, we felt that something had to be done to approach the issue more effectively," explains Gueramy.

"It was during our first wedding anniversary dinner," explains Haas. "Tim was on call, but didn't know he was on call when he was paged by a resident on a case and had to leave right as the appetizers were being served. Later that night, Tim came back and when I asked what happened, he said it wasn't an emergency and if he'd been able to get an x-ray of the fracture on his iPhone, he would have been able to finish dinner with me."

So DocBookMD was born. The app the doctor couple created allows doctors to send and receive secure HIPAA compliant patient information right from an iPhone or iPad. "We can send and receive things like X-Rays, lab results, or EKG's and get a response back from another physician that uses DocBookMD in minutes. The app allows us to more effectively communicate which means we can more effectively treat our patients."



The app is free for physicians who are members of their county or state medical societies. All activity is run through a secure server, with multiple encryption levels, and the data is stored on the server, not the physician's mobile device. Dr. Gueramy explains, "JCAHO reports that the Number One contributor to a sentinel event or complication in a hospital is the lack of effective communication between medical staff."

Currently doctors in approximately 23 states use the DocBookMD app. "The most important benefit of the app is for the patients," explains Dr. Haas "We support doctors so they can better serve their patients." DocBookMD runs on iPhone, iPad and Android. Medical liability companies fund the app for doctors who belong to a medical society in their county or state.

DocBookMD is available at www.docbookmd.com (www.docbookmd.com) or through the Apple App Store (itunes.apple.com/app/docbookmd/id301558273?mt=8) or Google Play (play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.docbookmd.docbookandroid).

Mega Sales Spur Pico Demand

Sarah Evans, from GBI Research (www.gbiresearch.com), writes:

The global craze for smartphones will drive future growth in the pico projector market, as increasing consumer demand for the ability to watch videos, make presentations, and capture and view photos will fuel new technological breakthroughs. The global pico projector market generated revenues of around \$0.49 billion in 2011, a figure which is expected to grow at a colossal compound annual growth rate of around 75% during 2011-2016, to reach \$8.12 billion in 2016.

Pico projectors are handheld devices that can be used to project photos, videos or presentations, either as standalone units or embedded into handheld devices such as cell phones, cameras or media players. Embedding pico projectors in smartphones will

allow individuals to view their applications on a larger screen, giving phone companies an edge in the hugely competitive market. Decreasing product costs and constant improvements in image quality would lead to further growth in the pico projectors market, supporting the popular desire for ever-improving personal technologies.

Pico projectors are following in the footsteps of HD video recording, high-resolution cameras, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technologies, which are now essential attributes on most smartphones.

At the moment, advancements in laser technologies are needed to compete with LED light sources in pico projectors. The market leader in laser-based pico projectors, Microvision, currently uses a complex green laser to create a full color image. This technology is costlier than red and blue laser diodes and less efficient than direct green lasers.

Companies such as OSRAM, Nichia, Sora, Sumitomo SEI and Corning are in the process of producing commercial direct green lasers using InGaN semiconductors with wavelengths in the 510-531nm range. However, compared to an LED light source, lasers are very costly and difficult to mass produce, though image quality is far superior. Technological advancements in the green laser market must therefore step it up in order to compete with LED-based pico projectors.

In a research interview with GBI Research, Frank Moizio, Manager of DLP Pico Projection, Texas Instruments stated: "On mobile devices such as cameras, cell phones, notebooks, and tablets, there is a desire to have bigger picture experiences for consumer entertainment applications, such as gaming, sharing videos and photos, and even Web browsing...in the enterprise space for mobile workers looking to easily get their vision across, and also in the education space to foster greater collaboration and content sharing among small work groups."

Optoma ML500 LED Projector



Optoma's ML500 LED projector (www.optomausa.com/products/detail/ML500) (about \$600 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00556F9I2/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8)) is a lightweight 500 lumen projector boasting a native resolution of 1280x800 and featuring Texas Instrument DLP technology.

The ML500 is the perfect travel companion for business because it can be tucked into a briefcase making you always ready to give a presentation to

small- to medium-sized groups. And, because it can read files from internal memory or SD cards, you don't even need a laptop.

The ML500 is also a handy little TV replacement or gaming projector for a dorm room or other place where space is tight. It also runs very cool and is almost soundless, especially in energy saver mode, so you can get right up close and personal. Movie night under the covers? No problem.



The ML500 plays just about any video format you throw at it: H.264 (AVI, MOV, MP4 and 3GP), MPEG4 (AVI), Xvid (AVI), M-JPEG (AVI) and image file formats JPEG and BMP. The Office viewer supports Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel files.

The ML500 weighs just 2.5 pounds—and that's an honest weight because there's no power brick to lug around. Just plug in the AC power cord and you're in business.

The unit's LEDs are rated for 20,000 hours of life. That's essentially "forget about it." In that amount of time you'd have to replace four conventional projector bulbs at a cost of about \$200 each. Hey, you just paid for this thing.

Delivering native WXGA resolution, the ML500 projects widescreen images of up to 180 inches diagonal (although the picture starts to get a bit thin at that size) with a 3000:1 contrast ratio.

One potential downside is that the ML500 does not have an audio out jack—you have to listen through a small two-watt amp and speaker built into the unit. But, if you're playing back a movie through, say, your laptop, use the computer's HDMI or 15-pin VGA output for video and its audio out jack to connect to a pair of monster speakers. Same deal with a Wii, PS3, or Xbox 360. No biggie.



The package includes the Optoma ML500 projector, remote control with batteries, VGA cable, USB cable (Type A to Mini USB), carrying case, and AC power cord.

The Optoma ML500 is one heck of a little projector. Sure, 1000 lumens would be bigger and brighter, but 500 is still plenty to do most things you need it to do.

Key features (from Optoma):

- No laptop required. Present directly from SD card or USB.
- LED light source produces excellent color while lasting over 20,000 hours, so the projector can be used four hours every day for over 13 years.
- DLP Pico imaging technology.



- On-board memory and SD card slot allows for memory expansion up to 32GB.
- VGA and HDMI inputs—Connect to laptops, tablet computers (such as iPads), Blu-ray players, game systems to display content.
- Built-in media and Microsoft Office document viewer allows for PC-free playback of videos, presentations, documents and images directly from projector's 2GB memory, SD cards, or from a USB drive.
- A combination of VGA and HDMI inputs also allows users to readily connect to laptops, Blu-ray players, tablets including iPads and game systems to display content.
- Uses about half the power of a typical 42" LCD television.



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

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

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

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

Carr has judged many writing competitions including San Diego Press Club and Time-Warner Communications contests and was sole judge for the national NAPPA Tech Toys awards for five years (which his kids really appreciated). He was recently a judge for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition.

He has won many writing accolades, including Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Consumer Writing and Best Arts and

Entertainment, and has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.

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EdgeWord: Cheap Windows 8 Upgrade Offers

“Microsoft Wants Everyone from Windows XP on to Have a Shot at Windows 8” by Jack Dunning

There are many questions about Windows 8. Microsoft is hoping that inexpensive upgrades will help address those doubts.

Upgrade pricing has been announced for Windows 8. It seems that Microsoft wants to make it easy for anyone who buys a Windows 7 (except Starter Edition) computer between now and next January 31st. If you purchase an eligible Windows 7-based PC you can also buy a Windows 8 Pro upgrade (windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/upgrade-offer?ocid=O_WOL_UPG_Home_Upgrade_en-us) for \$14.99—once it becomes available this fall. You can register now (windowsupgradeoffer.com/en-US) to be notified when the upgrade is available.

Those who are currently using Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7 machines will be able to download a Windows 8 Pro upgrade for \$39.99 (\$69.99 for DVD version). This offer is also available through January 31, 2013. The Pro version of Windows 8 is one which includes what the average person would call "Windows." It will run both the Metro interface and its app, plus your Windows programs in the Desktop (as opposed to Windows 8 RT (Run Time) which only includes the Metro interface—no "Windows Desktop"—designed for tablets and other mobile devices).

Also it is noted that you can add Windows Media Center (windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-center/get-it) for free after the upgrade. Once the upgrade period expires, Microsoft plans to charge a small fee for Windows Media Center.

This is definitely the least expensive Windows upgrade Microsoft has ever offered. The Windows 7 upgrade was priced at \$49 for the Home Premium version and \$99 for the Professional version.

There are four versions of Windows 8: Windows 8 (for personal users, "Windows Desktop" included), Windows 8 Pro (same as Windows 8 with additional features for encryption, virtualization, PC management and domain connectivity), Windows RT (no "Windows Desktop," only comes pre-installed on tablets and other mobile devices), and Windows 8 Enterprise (for mass licensing).

As yet there is no word on the eventual pricing of Windows 8. I expect that on many new computers Windows 8 laptops will come with Windows 8, which is comparable to the Home version of other Windows releases. Windows 8 Pro will be an upgrade for those wanting the extra features. Tablets will have both Windows RT (Metro interface only) and Windows Pro ("Windows Desktop" included) available depending upon the power and capabilities of the tablet. See "A Peek at the Coming Microsoft Surface Tablet" from an earlier issue of *ComputerEdge*. (For more information on Windows 8, see the e-book *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007RMCRH8)—also available at ComputerEdge E-books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm))

Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

Currently only at Amazon.com, *Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Get Started!* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20).

Just released and available from Amazon, *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)! Also available at Barnes and Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?)

ean=2940014229463) and ComputerEdge E-Books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer).

Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007AL672M/?&tag=comput0b9-20),

Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00758J4L6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

and *That Does Not Compute!* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Lotus Symphony," "Getting to the Desktop," "The Thunderbird Question," "Killing Brick & Mortar Universities"

Lotus Symphony

[Regarding Jack Dunning's May 18 article, "My Favorite Free Windows Office Productivity Software":]

Ever tried IBM Lotus Symphony? It's free also.

-Jack

I owned a copy of it many years ago, but I never used it. I'm sure that it is comparable to other free programs.

-Jack Dunning

Getting to the Desktop

[Regarding the June 15 Digital Dave column:]

Hi Digital Dave,

When I have open windows on my Windows XP Pro system Desktop, I simply point my mouse pointer into the Quick Start Tray, to the right of the start button, and slightly left of the most left-hand Quick Start icon, do a right button click and select Show the Desktop. All open windows are immediately placed on the Taskbar allowing access to my Desktop icons.

-Don Rader, Poway, CA

I like to use keyboard "hot keys"—hold down the Windows key and press the D key to get to the desktop and use the same combination to bring back your open windows.

-Mike, Denver, CO

The Thunderbird Question

[Regarding the June 15 Digital Dave column:]

I'm wondering if this problem in Gmail has the same cause that you describe, Dave. When typing an e-mail I notice the same thing happens—letters do not appear as soon as they are typed. I delete received e-mails all the time, if that's what Jim means. Your solution sounds too technical for me, so guess we'll have to live with this issue.

Thanks for all the good advice and solutions!

-Sandy, San Diego

Usually when there is a lag in the appearance of typed letters it is caused by an overloaded processor. You

may have too many programs running at the same time, in the background, or on startup. This could also be a cause of accident deletions since you may inadvertently hit the Delete key too many times before it reacts.

-Digital Dave

Killing Brick & Mortar Universities

[Regarding the June 15 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

From a purely money point of view, what you write is correct as far as universities, but there are other factors: being exposed to different trains of thought, living among people with different experiences and backgrounds, etc. all open your mind. That is the real value of a university.

-J. D. Mendez, San Diego, CA

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

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