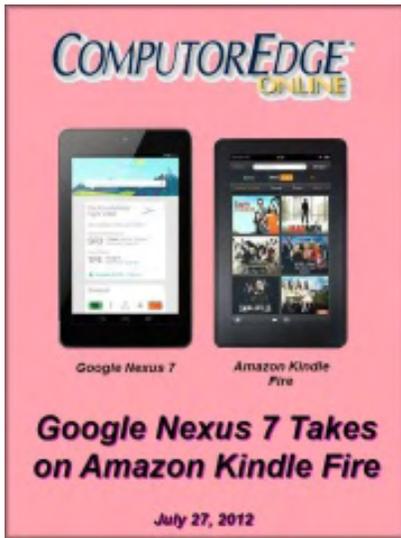


ComputerEdge™ Online — 07/27/12



This issue: Google Nexus 7 Takes on Amazon Kindle Fire

The Latest Tablet Entry from Google Looks Like It May Be a Winner

Table of Contents:

[Digital Dave](#) by *Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
Fixing and Preserving DVDs; Washed out Color; Dealing with Fat Fingers on Tablets.

[Google Nexus 7 Tablet Compared to the Amazon Kindle Fire](#) by Jack Dunning

The Low Priced Google Nexus Is Set to Zoom Past the Amazon Kindle Fire.
The Kindle Fire has been the king of the seven-inch tablets. Now, the Google Nexus 7 with more computing power, higher resolution screen, a front-facing camera, and built-in GPS is a direct challenge to the Fire.

[Windows Tips and Tricks: Sharing AutoHotkey Scripts](#) by Jack Dunning

Compile Your AutoHotkey Scripts into an Executable (EXE) File. There is no need to install the complete AutoHotkey program on every computer. All you need to do is compile your scripts for use on any Windows computer.

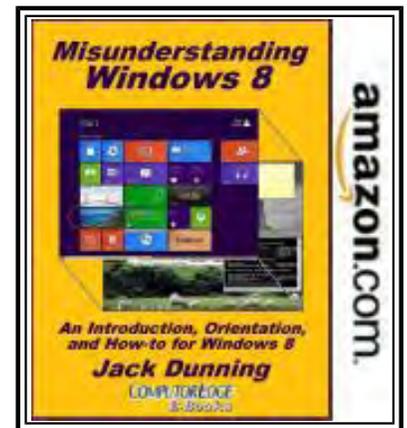
[Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#) by Wally Wang

Game Changers
Game Changers; Teleprompter for the iPad; The Paradox of Apple Stores; The Real Purpose of a CEO; Learning Chess on the Go; Android Piracy; and One-click Access on Your Mac.

[Beyond Personal Computing](#) by Marilyn K. Martin

Learn to Touch Type? Or Hunt and Peck Forever?
Amusing anecdotes about typing and the difficulties surrounding it.

DEPARTMENTS:



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

[Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers](#) by ComputerEdge Staff

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

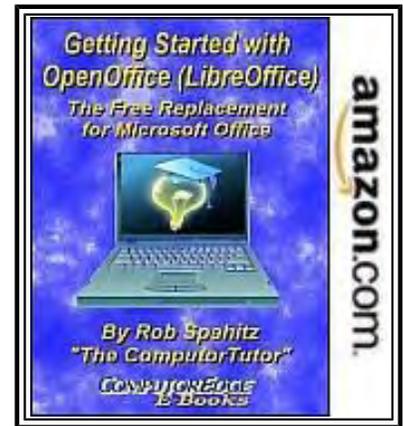
"It Worked!" "Password Reset," "The Majority of MP3s Have Lower Audio Quality"



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)



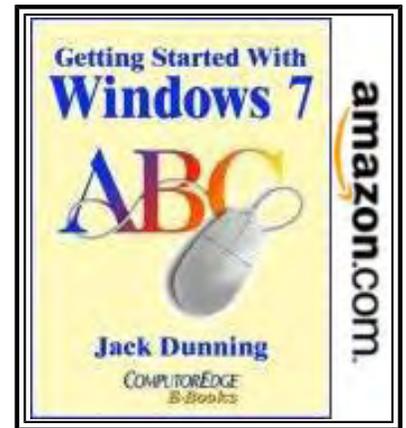
(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

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

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

Copyright © 1997-2012 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Digital Dave

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

Fixing and Preserving DVDs; Washed out Color; Dealing with Fat Fingers on Tablets.

Dear Digital Dave,

I have many hours of home movies that my dad started back in 1938 stored on DVDs. Just recently a family member wanted copies and that's when I discovered that one master DVD won't play all the way through and won't copy. I noticed a number of scratches on it and tried to fix it with a device called SkipDRx. It got rid of all the scratches but it still won't play to the end.

Do you know of a service that may be able to restore the DVD? This also makes me aware of how important it is to properly preserve the movies. So, before it's too late I want to copy what I have to longer lasting disks. Do you have a recommendation?

Thank you very much,

*Poz
San Diego*

Dear Poz,

I'm not familiar with a specific service that recovers damaged DVDs. Most of the data recovery people specialize in hard drive recovery. They use special equipment and software which can read the files directly from the drives while skipping over the damaged portions. Data recovery specialists can be expensive, but if the data is important enough (or irreplaceable), it may be worth the price. However, data on a DVD is stored in a totally different manner and the demand for DVD recovery services from the business community is not nearly as strong. I would guess that there are services which do DVD data recovery and I would welcome any recommendations from other readers.

I found numerous different programs on the Web for DVD recovery—often with free trials. Since many of them will use different algorithms to recover DVD data, I would try as many as possible. You could get lucky and find one that will piece together most of your files.

Preserving irreplaceable data such as your dad's home movies is a critical task with not one easy solution. The problem with any media is that errors can develop over time. The playback equipment does error correction which often makes the playing more robust. How well this error correction works is depended upon the quality of the playing device as well as the condition of the media. You may find that the problem disc will play through on other devices, although once there is damage to binary data, there is no absolute way to repair it.

Theoretically, standard DVDs will last 30 to 100 years. Blu-ray are supposed to live 100 to 150 years. However, these can't be tested and there will be some level of deterioration during that time depending upon storage conditions and handling. It wouldn't be prudent to depend upon any of these manufacturer claims.

The best way to protect important data is through redundancy. The more copies you have the better the chance that you will have good copies when you need them. How many copies you make depends upon how safe you want to be. You will never be safe with only one master regardless of how you store it or where you keep it. Store the copies at multiple locations. Sending them to family members will help.

Also, you may not want to depend only upon DVD technology. Maintaining data on hard drives and/or solid state drives can be useful. Hard drives continually get larger and cheaper. As you add or change more backup drives, you can copy the crucial data to the new devices.

You may also want to consider using remote online storage which includes automatic backup. As long as the company stays in business, you will have additional protection.

As you can see there is no one answer to this problem. It depends upon what makes you feel safe. Regardless of which way you go, making more backups every few years will be useful. Don't expect to store data on any media for 50 years and have it remain readable. In fifty years there may not be any compatible equipment still available, even if the disc is good.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I recently used my printer/scanner to scan some watercolor art, but I was very disappointed in the results. It was all washed out and not nearly as bright as the original. I know that there are ways to improve images, but I don't want to spend hundreds of dollars on software. Plus, many programs are complicated and I'm not sure what to do to brighten up the images.

*Susan Wilkes
San Diego, CA*

Dear Susan,

Many people don't realize how easy it is to improve the quality of digital images and photos with the tools that commonly come with today's computers. I'm always surprised when I see pictures uploaded to the Web with red-eye from camera flashes and other problems with lighting conditions. Almost all image editing programs have a tool for removing red-eye.

It is worthwhile to play with the various features in your editing program. In particular, exposure adjustments for brightness and contrast can go a long way toward correcting photos that are too light or dark. That is the beauty of digital photography. Many pictures which would have been a lost cause in the old days can now be fixed with a few simple adjustments.

In your particular situation, you should use an feature called saturation—usually located under color adjustments. As you increase saturation, your washed out colors will brighten. Other controls such as tint may not be as useful if your scan brought in the proper hues.

When you play with these adjustments, make sure you use a copy rather than the original file. That way you won't destroy your starting point as you make changes.

If you do a lot of art scanning, it could be worthwhile to invest in a higher quality scanner (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002OEBMRU/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B002OEBMRU&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20). Standalone scanners have extra features and capabilities not found in the all-in-one printer/scanners.

Digital Dave

Digital Dave's Tip

I've seen Jack Dunning address what he calls Fat Finger Syndrome in relation to tablet computers. The problem is that unless the user has slim graceful fingers, using a tablet computer can become an exercise in frustration. You often see advice suggesting to expand the screen size with a reverse pinch. While this may work, it shouldn't be necessary. Plus, on some Web sites certain clickable icons will return to their original tiny size—even after the page is expanded. Fortunately, there is a relatively simple solution.

Get a stylus for your touch tablet. The stylus for a touch tablet looks like a pen with an eraser on the end. (Some styluses or styli actually double as pens.) However, the little rubber nub is not an eraser. It is made from a soft, pliable plastic which simulates a finger on the tablet screen interacting with the electro-magnetic field. Being small, it is much more accurate than your finger, making navigation and tapping much easier.

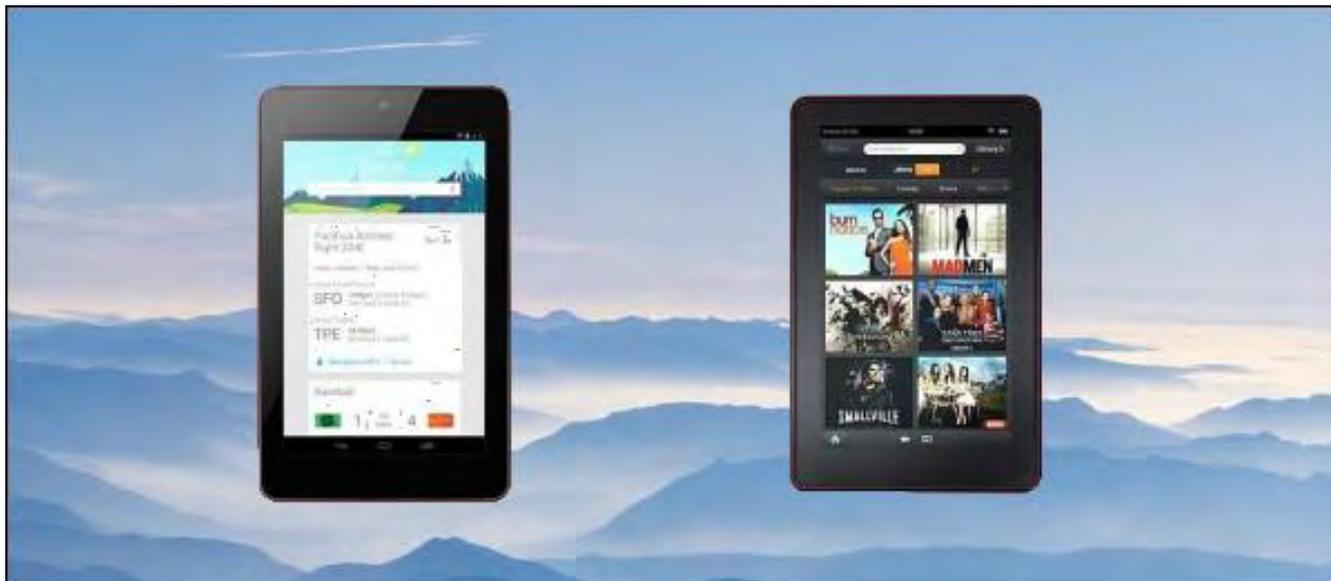
The best thing is that a tablet stylus (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0075IQKYA/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0075IQKYA&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) is relatively inexpensive and easy to find. The biggest problem with stylus pens is losing them. That's why you buy lots of them and leave them all over the house and office.

Another possibility is to get a sausage stylus (www.engadget.com/2010/03/08/sausage-stylus-for-the-iphone-now-on-sale-in-the-us/). Apparently, during cold weather in South Korea people couldn't work their iPhones with gloves on. Then someone figured out that you could use a snack sausage to break the electric field on the touchscreen. Not only did it solve a cold weather smartphone/tablet touchscreen problem, but it was a handy snack when the user was finished interacting with the device.

If you have big fingers (and even if you don't), using a stylus pen on a tablet computer can make a huge difference in how much you enjoy your tablet or smartphone experience.

Digital Dave

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Google Nexus 7 Tablet Compared to the Amazon Kindle Fire

“The Low Priced Google Nexus Is Set to Zoom Past the Amazon Kindle Fire.” by Jack Dunning

The Kindle Fire has been the king of the seven-inch tablets. Now, the Google Nexus 7 with more computing power, higher resolution screen, a front-facing camera, and built-in GPS is a direct challenge to the Fire.

According to reports, the Google Nexus 7 Tablet (www.google.com/nexus/) started shipping last week. It is getting a reception not unlike the original release of the first iPad. While many retail outlets have taken pre-orders, there are not many available. Google says it has shipped its pre-orders of the eight and 16 Gig models. It may be a little while before you can just walk into a store and pick one up.



“Moses is so judgmental since he got his new tablet computer.”

Last year, when Amazon released the Kindle Fire (2952*cover), it appeared that Amazon was taking the iPad head on. That was not the case. Amazon was aiming low and to the right with a lower price and smaller size. This created a separation in the tablet market between the larger and necessarily more expensive iPad with a 10" screen and the tablets with 7" screens. Many people opted for the cheaper and more portable models, although even after this slight market erosion iPad continues to be king of the tablets.

Google has decided that rather than target the iPad market, it would go after the Kindle Fire market with a similar yet more powerful 7" tablet in the Nexus 7. If the Fire is selling well with its capabilities, then Google reasons that the more capable and powerful Nexus 7 will be a hit. So far, they appear to be right.

Some critics have pointed out that Google can't possibly make any money at \$199 for a tablet with a Quad-core

Tegra 3 processor, 1.2MP front-facing camera, and 1280x800 HD display. They are probably right and even Google has acknowledge that the margins are slim. However, people forget that, unlike Apple, Google in not in the hardware business and

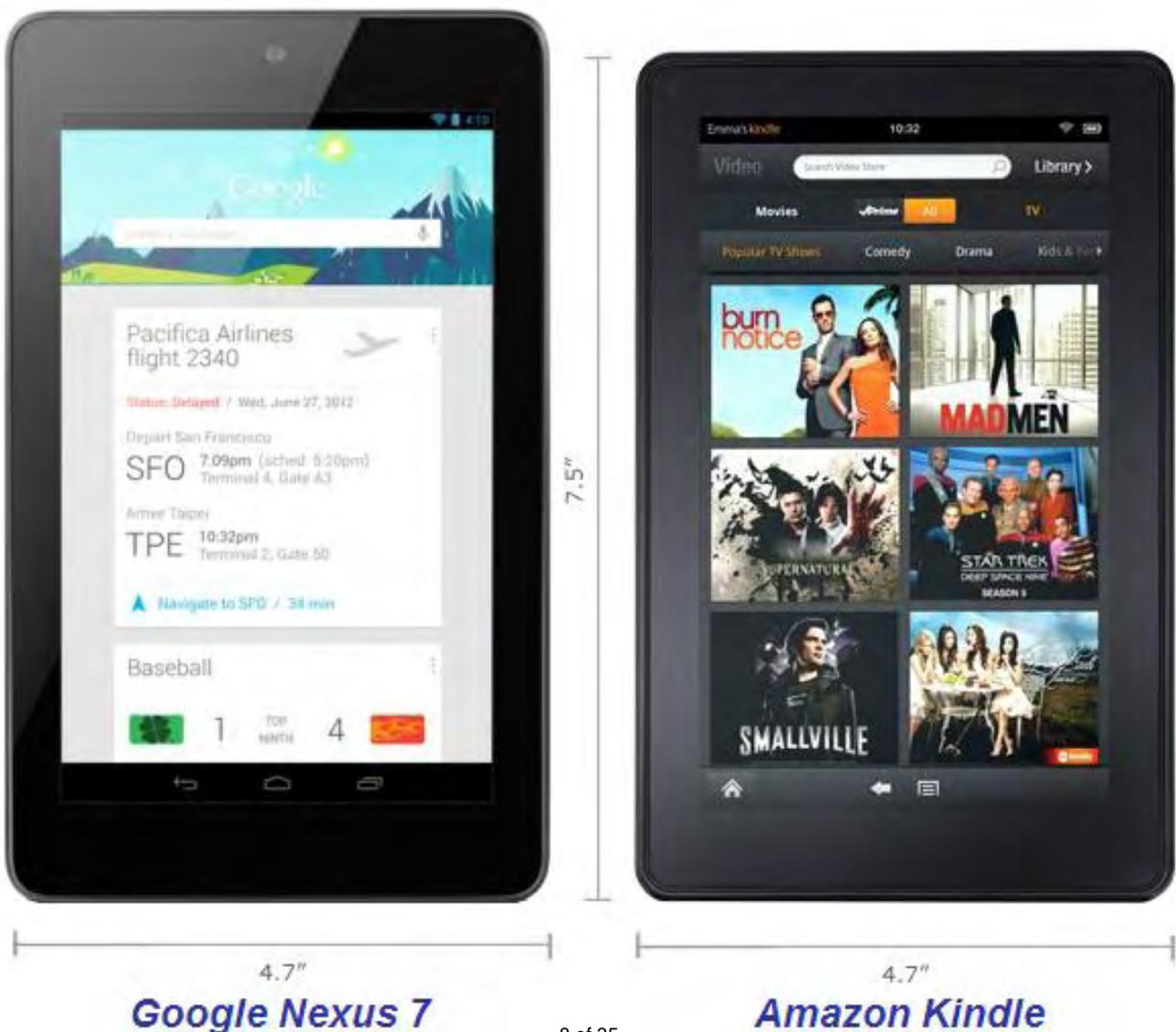
producing profit directly for Nexus sales is not their primary goal. Google is an Internet company which treasures traffic above all else. Advertising to that traffic is their primary source of revenue and underlies all Google business decisions. Google sees the Kindle Fire (and the Apple iPad) as attempts to contain and control user traffic with online stores and support systems. Google has no intention of being left behind. Google sees the Nexus as a way to break the Amazon (and eventually Apple) stranglehold on their respective markets. Google could afford to lose a few dollars on millions of Nexus 7 tablets with negligible impact on their profits.

This is why Google has teamed up with ASUS to manufacture the Nexus. It seems that ASUS is making the primary hardware decisions involving features included in the tablet. ASUS recently released an explanation of why no rear-facing camera (hothardware.com/News/Asus-Explains-Decision-to-Eschew-Rear-Facing-Camera-on-Nexus-7-Tablet/) was included. Partnering with ASUS makes it much easier for Google since they don't need to make massive capital investments to gear up manufacturing capabilities. That would only produce stuff, not traffic.

For this article, the Google Nexus 7 is compared primarily to the Amazon Kindle Fire since that is the market target. However, it will be noted when there are capabilities that fall short of, or compete with, the Apple iPad and other tablets.

Google Nexus 7 Versus Amazon Kindle Fire

The Google Nexus 7 and Amazon Kindle Fire are very close in size. See Figure 1. They are the same width (or height depending upon how you're holding it) with the Nexus being slightly longer. The Nexus is a little thinner (.41") than the Fire (.45"). The Nexus weighs just over 3/4 of a pound while the Fire is close to one pound. That's a 20% difference and is not insignificant in a tablet.



Google Nexus 7

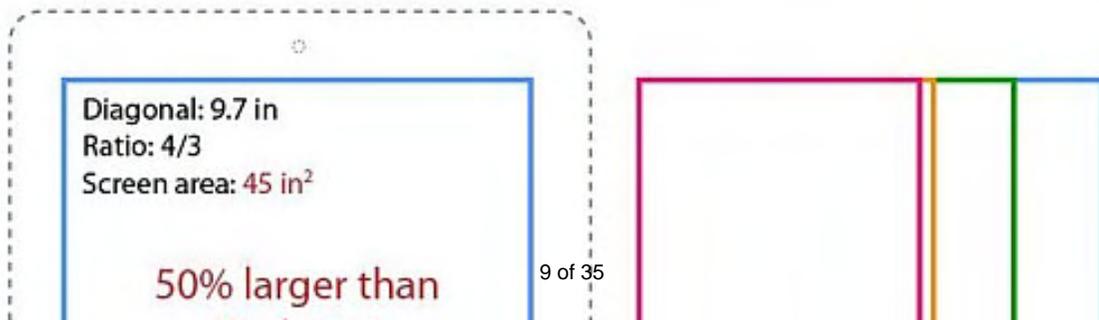
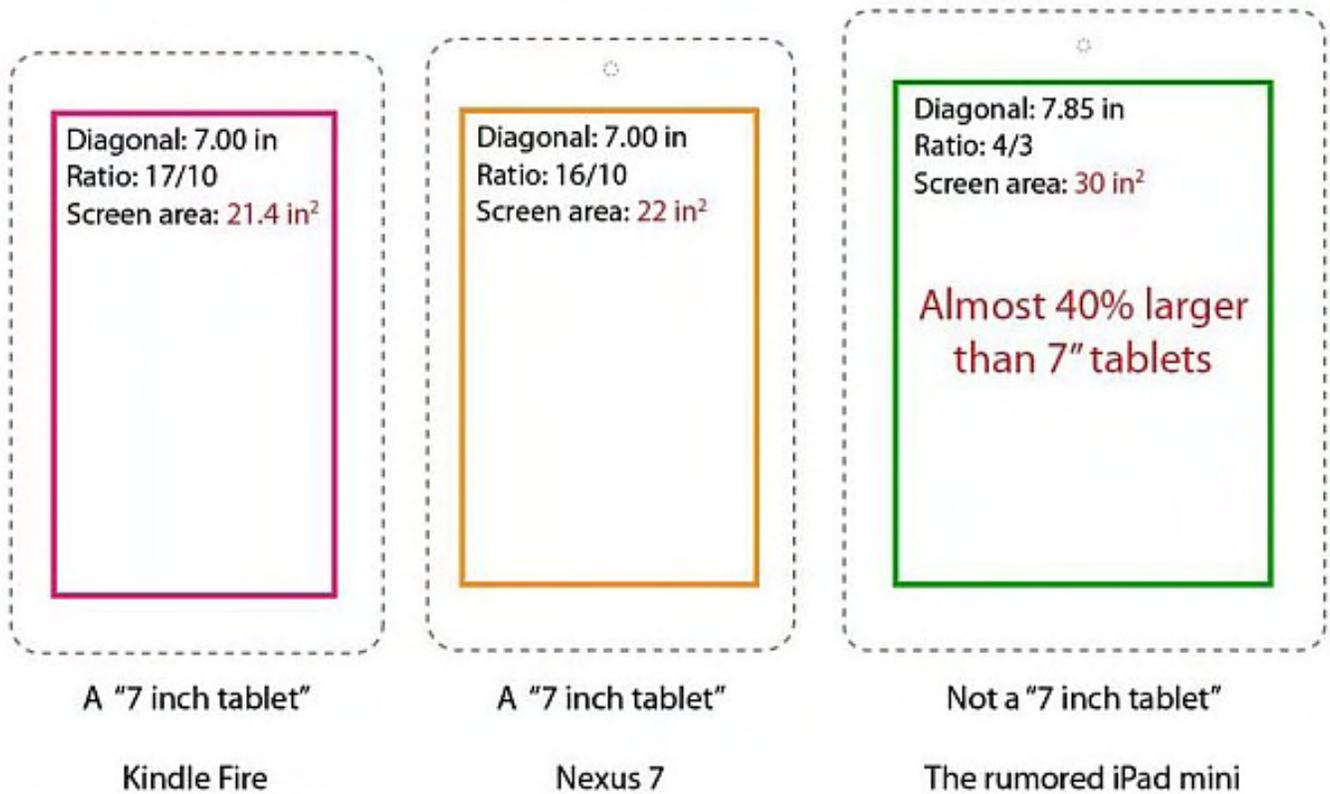
Amazon Kindle

Figure 1. The Nexus 7 next to the Kindle Fire.

The Kindle Fire screen is a 7" multi-touch display with IPS (in-plane switching) technology, 1024 x 600 pixel resolution at 169 ppi. The Nexus screen is a 7" multi-touch display with IPS 1280x800 HD display, 216 ppi resolution. The Nexus has almost 30% higher screen resolution.

"Despite sharing the same screen size and basic looks, the Nexus 7 build quality is much nicer than the Kindle Fire. The Nexus 7's soft, textured back makes it very comfortable to hold." says Xavier Lanier at GottaBeMobile.com (www.gottabemobile.com/2012/07/13/nexus-7-review/).

Personal experience tells me that both the size and shape of a table screen are very important. While the 7" HDTV shaped screen is optimal for watching videos, it is annoying for viewing Web sites. If held vertically the tablet screen is too narrow and when held horizontally the Web page appears in too short of a window. The screen shape of the Apple iPad is much more suitable for browsing the Web, although it may lose much of its Web browsing advantage if applied to the rumored mini-iPad with an almost 8" more square shape. I much prefer Internet surfing on the iPad over the Fire. Watching Netflix is only slightly better (largely depending upon the video format) on the iPad than the Kindle Fire. Figure 2 from the Gizmodo article (gizmodo.com/5924849/the-size-of-the-rumored-ipad-mini-compared-to-the-ipad-nexus-7-and-kindle-fire) "The discussed iPad Mini's Size Compared to the iPad, Nexus 7 and Kindle Fire" shows a comparison of various screen shapes and sizes.



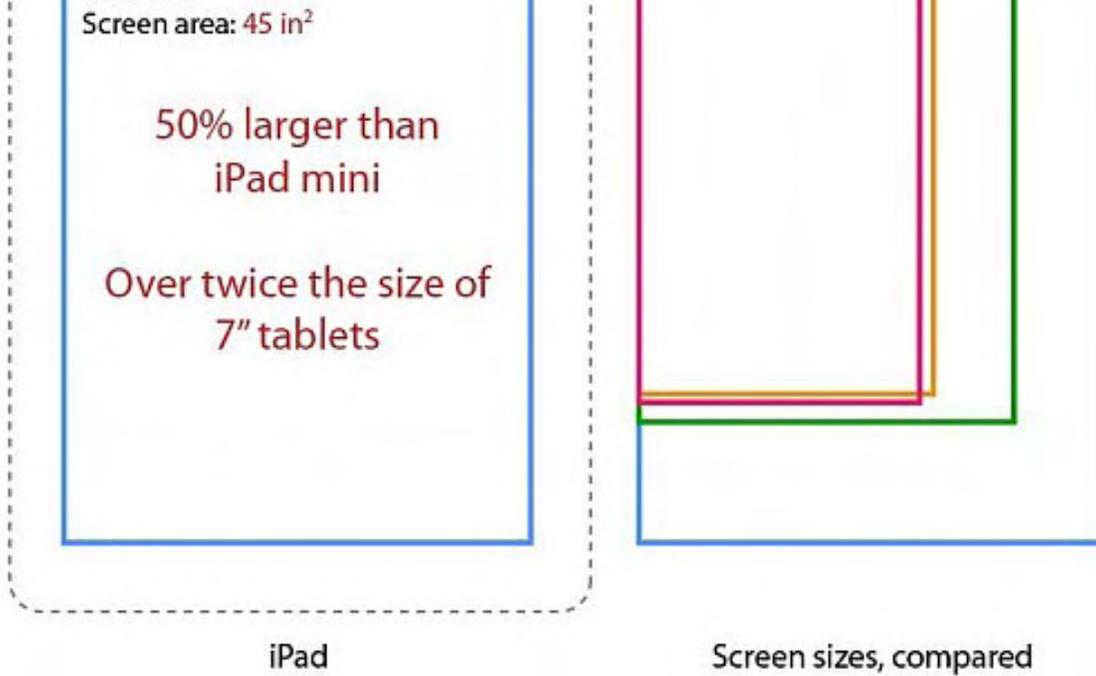


Figure 2. The size of various tablets compared.

The fact that there is speculations that Apple is working on a smaller version of the iPad, the iPad Mini, shows that Apple may recognize the fragmentation in the tablet market. There is so far no credible challenge to Apple in the iPad market. It's possible that the coming Microsoft Surface Table will bring some competition. I have seen some excitement about the Surface in people who were previously unenthused about tablets. If so, it will be because of the removable keyboard and/or running Windows programs in the Pro version. That remains to be seen this fall.

Nexus 7 Front-Facing Camera

Unlike the Kindle Fire, the Google Nexus 7 tablet has a front-facing camera. The primary use of a front-facing camera is to make video calls with a service such as Skype. If this is something that you do, then it will be a major plus. If not, then you won't see any added value, although I'm sure there are apps other than video phone calling that take advantage of a front-facing camera. Both the Fire and Barnes and Noble Nook lack any camera.

There have been complaints about leaving the rear-facing camera off of the Nexus 7. (The iPad from iPad 2 on have both a front-facing and rear-facing camera.) ASUS says that it was a conscious decision to maintain quality while holding the price point. Some question (including myself) whether a rear-facing camera is needed (gadgetnode.com/why-asus-were-right-to-leave-out-google-nexus-7-rear-camera/) on any tablet computer at all. I don't see tablets replacing either handy smart phones or capable digital cameras as the accepted photo taking device anytime soon. Droid Life took an informal poll (www.droid-life.com/2012/07/10/tuesday-poll-does-a-tablet-need-to-have-a-rear-facing-camera/) about the necessity of rear-facing cameras. See Figure 3.

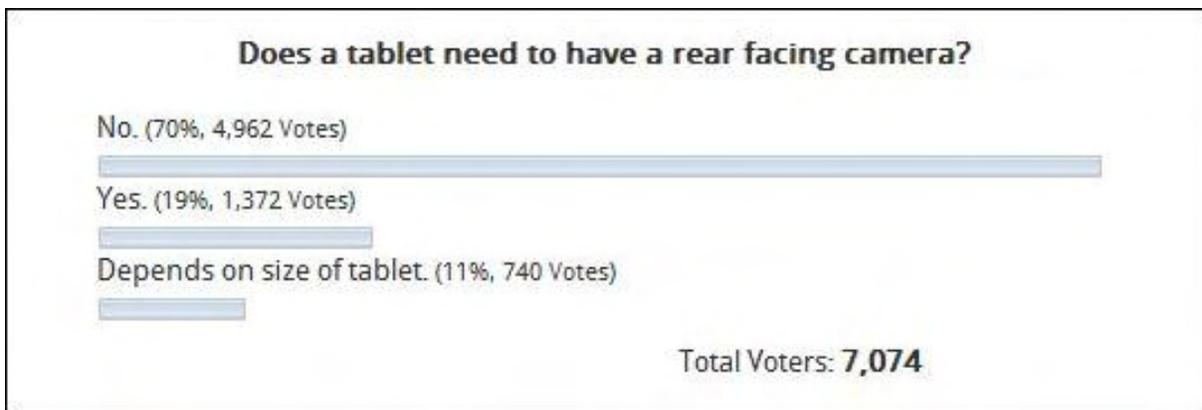


Figure 3. 70% of those polled don't care about a rear-facing camera.

More Processing Power with the Nexus 7

Probably more important than the front-facing camera is the Quad-core Tegra 3 processor in the Nexus. Both the Kindle Fire and the Nook use dual-core CPUs. In many applications, this additional power may not make much difference, but for the high-resolution game effects the improvement can be astonishing. It's also been reported by most reviewers that Android 4.1 Jelly Bean running on the Nexus is snappy and smooth. The graphics processor has 12 cores.

It's not as easy to compare the Tegra 3 to the latest iPad processor—the A5X ARM system-on-a-chip (SoC). While it technically is a dual-core processor, it still compares favorably with the performance of the Tegra 3. Apple is careful when doing its performance comparisons (www.extremetech.com/computing/121993-apple-a5x-is-the-new-ipad-quad-core-or-not), avoiding the mention of the terms "dual-core" and "quad-core" since there is much more than that to assessing CPU power.

On-Board Memory Storage

Both the Kindle Fire and Nexus 7 start with eight Gigs of internal storage (approximately six Gigs available for user content). While that is currently all there is for the Fire, the Nexus also comes in a 16 Gig model at \$249. Both Amazon and Google have Cloud services that augment storage remotely, but it doesn't take long to fill up six Gigs when storing photos, music and videos. The Nook has a SD card slot (www.wptv.com/dpp/news/national/google-tablet-nexus-7-can-google-compete-with-the-ipad-barnes—noble-nook-and-amazon-kindle-fire#ixzz20cUj2pA7) for expanding storage.

Internal Memory (RAM)

The Kindle Fire has 512 Megabytes of RAM, while the Nexus 7 comes with one Gig. That's a big difference! Anyone who has worked much with computers knows that one of the easiest ways to improve performance is often increasing the amount of memory. The latest iPad has doubled its RAM to one Gig.

GPS Navigation ()

While there are a number of other additional features of the Nexus 7, the most notable is the inclusion of GPS. That means there is no need get an add-on device to receive the GPS satellite signals. Most tablets can do limited navigating with Wi-Fi by locating known Wi-Fi sites. However, this is not much good on the road. It's hard to say how well it will replace smart phones or dedicated GPS devices, but it will certainly be an option. It would also create a pretty large blind spot with a dashboard or windshield mount.

Battery Life

The Nexus 7 battery life is rated at an hour or two greater than the Kindle Fire. Field testing will bear this out.

Communications ()

Both the Kindle Fire and the Nexus 7 use Wi-Fi as their primary source of digital communication. Neither offer 3G or 4G cellular service as an option.

Unlike the Fire, the Nexus 7 offers both Bluetooth and NFC (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Near_field_communication) (Android Beam) for shorter range communication between devices. A Micro USB is standard on both tablets.

No Final Answer

While the Google Nexus 7 is currently a clear winner over the Amazon Kindle Fire, Amazon is not sitting on its hands. There will certainly be a new Amazon tablet, possible two or three. It's rumored that one will have a larger screen (10") and possibly add a front-facing camera, GPS, and microphone. (The Nexus 7 has a microphone which is needed for video chatting with any installed front-facing camera.) It's expected that the new Kindle Fire model(s) will come out in early 2013.

Of course, as mentioned, the Apple rumor is that an iPad Mini will enter the small tablet market. In any case, everyone is now feeling the Google pressure. Especially since Google can keep the price low because they don't need to make money on hardware sales. It's all a marketing expense for Google.

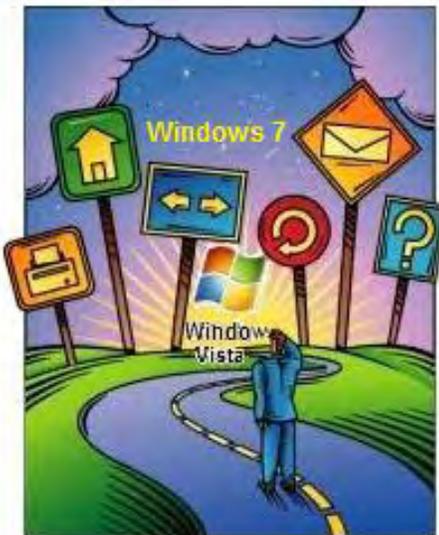
Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: Sharing AutoHotkey Scripts

“Compile Your AutoHotkey Scripts into an Executable (EXE) File.” by Jack Dunning

There is no need to install the complete AutoHotkey program on every computer. All you need to do is compile your scripts for use on any Windows computer.

One of the strengths of AutoHotkey is that you don't have to load the main program on every computer that you want to run your scripts. You can compile any AutoHotkey script into an executable file (EXE) which can be copied onto any other Windows computer and loaded with a double-click. In fact, you can keep the compiled file on a flash drive and start it on any computer by plugging in the drive, opening Windows Explorer and double-clicking the file icon on the flash drive.

An amusing trick to play on a friend who likes to use many text message shortcuts is to write a script that will automatically expand those short cuts to the associated words. For example, when "lol" is typed it will expand to "laugh out loud." When "imho" is typed "in my humble opinion" will appear. All the most commonly used abbreviations can be added to a script (::imho::in my humble opinion). After you copy a compiled version of the script and run it on the target computer, the user will marvel at the new intelligence of the machine.

Compiling AutoHotkey Scripts into Executable Files (EXE)

It's relatively easy to compile an AutoHotkey script. Right-click on the script file (AHK) and select Compile Script. See Figure 1. After the file is compiled a new file with the EXE extension will appear at the same location. (ChangeCase.ahk becomes ChangeCase.exe.) See Figure 2.

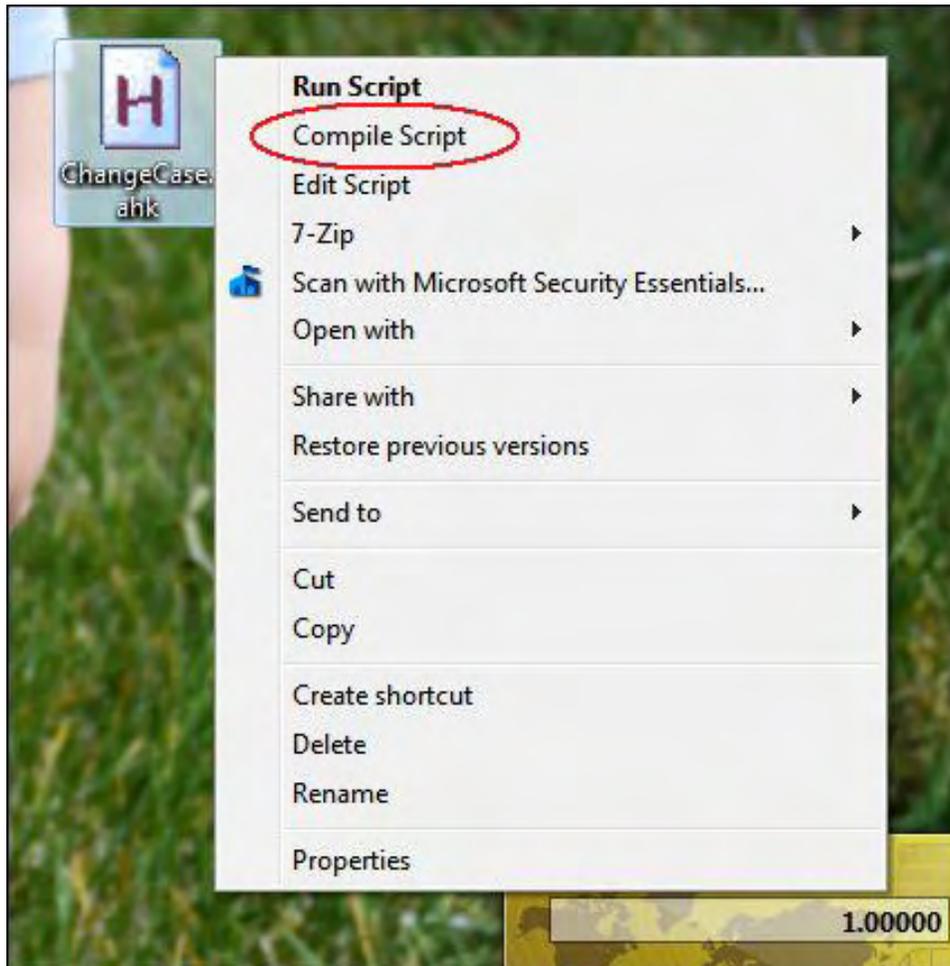


Figure 1. Compile an AutoHotkey AHK file into an independent EXE file by right-clicking on the AHK icon and selecting Compile Script.

The new EXE file can be copied into the Startup folder on any computer or, if you don't want automatic loading on startup, merely copied to a convenient location for a double-click to run.

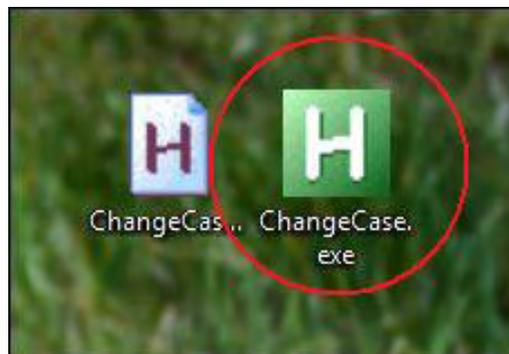


Figure 2. When compiled, the AutoHotkey icon for the EXE file will show a green background to help distinguish it from the AHK file icon.

There are two Startup folders available on Windows computers. The first is the Startup folder for all users which will implement the script for anyone who logs on to the machine. Before the Windows 7 version, the Startup folder could be opened by right-clicking on the Start Menu and selecting Open All Users. Navigate to Programs => Startup (C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup). In Windows 7 type "startup" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Start Menu and select the appropriate Startup folder. If you copy or move the EXE file to this location, it will load every time Windows starts up. (In Windows XP, the Startup folder is found at C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Start Menu\Programs\Startup.)

The second Startup folder is for the individual user and loads only when that user logs in (C:\Users\[User Name]

AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup). Put the EXE file into this folder if you only want the script to affect that one user. (In Windows XP the individual Startup folder is found at C:\Documents and Settings\[User Name]\Start Menu\Programs\Startup.)

AutoHotkey scripts can also be compiled with the "Convert .ahk to .exe" program which is included with the AutoHotkey installation. See Figure 3. This convert program gives you more options upon compilation.

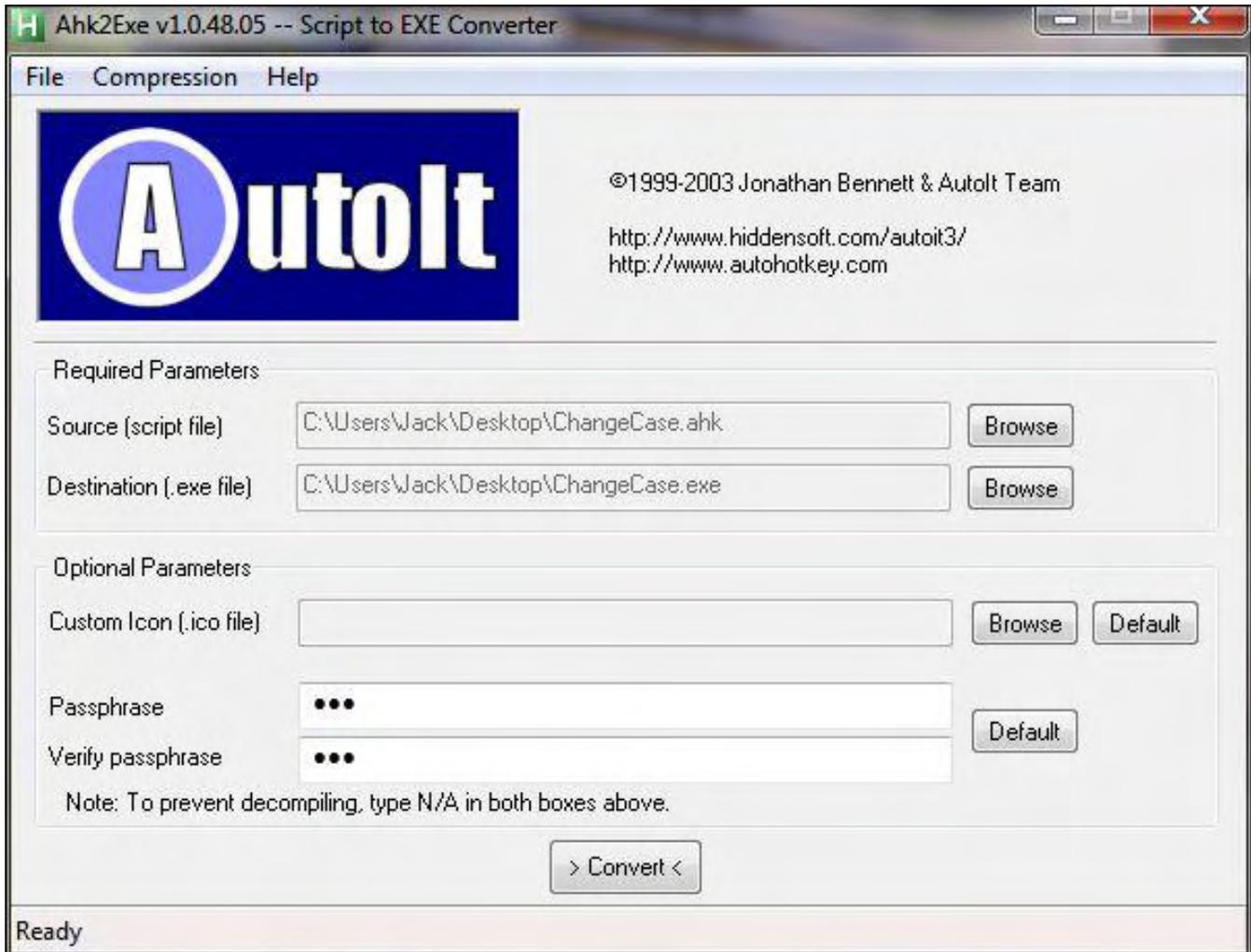


Figure 3. Using the AutoHotkey Script to EXE Converter program allows tailored icons and a passphrase to prevent decompiling.

With the "Convert .ahk to .exe" program you can designate a new destination folder for the compiled file, add a custom icon, or add security to the compiled file to prevent prying eyes from decompiling the script for the source code.

Saving the Clipboard Contents in AutoHotkey Scripts

Last week I suggested the you could save the contents of the Clipboard before using it to manipulate data. While you can do just that, I found that it was just a little more involved than I suspected. If you would like to save the previous Clipboard contents, then run the script later restoring the original contents, you can use the additional code shown in Figure 4. (This is one of the routines from last week's script ChangeCase.ahk.)

```

ChangeCase.ahk - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help

^u::                                ; Convert text to upper
oldclipboard:= Clipboard
Clipboard:= ""
Send, ^c ;copies selected text
Clipwait
StringUpper Clipboard, Clipboard
Send %Clipboard%
Sleep 1000
Clipboard:= oldclipboard
return

^l::                                ; Convert text to lower
oldclipboard:= Clipboard
Clipboard:= ""
Send, ^c ;copies selected text
Clipwait
StringLower Clipboard, Clipboard
Send %Clipboard%
Sleep 1000
Clipboard:= oldclipboard
return

+^k::                                ; Convert text to capitalized
oldclipboard:= Clipboard
Clipboard:= ""
Send, ^c ;copies selected text
Clipwait
StringUpper Clipboard, Clipboard, T
Send %Clipboard%
Sleep 1000
Clipboard:= oldclipboard
return

```

Figure 4. Adding these lines of code will save the original contents of the Clipboard.

To cut and paste the code, use the text shown below:

```

^u::                                ; Convert text to uppercase
OldClipboard:= Clipboard
Clipboard:= ""
Send, ^c ;copies selected text
ClipWait
StringUpper Clipboard, Clipboard
Send %Clipboard%
Sleep 1000
Clipboard:= OldClipboard
return

```

The three lines outlined in Figure 4 can be added to any routine.

How It Works

The second line saves the contents of the Clipboard to the variable OldClipboard:

```
OldClipboard:= Clipboard
```

You can use any name for the new variable. SaveOldData would work just as well.

I needed to add the eighth line because the processing would outrun the script without first Sending the manipulated data string:

```
Sleep 1000
```

The Sleep command causes the routine to pause for one second while the altered Clipboard contents is sent to the screen. Without the Sleep command the old contents would appear as the Send result.

The ninth line restores the old value of the Clipboard:

```
Clipboard:= OldClipboard
```

Now if you use CTRL+V (^V), the original value of the Clipboard will be returned.

For a copy of the compiled version of the ChangeCase.ahk script download ChangeCase.zip (www.computoredge.com/misc/ChangeCase.zip), extract the file ChangeCase.exe, and double-click to load. For description of how this script works see last week's column.

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.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Game Changers” by Wally Wang

Game Changers; Teleprompter for the iPad; The Paradox of Apple Stores; The Real Purpose of a CEO; Learning Chess on the Go; Android Piracy; and One-click Access on Your Mac.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

When Apple introduced the iPhone it changed the world. Previous smartphone makers, Nokia and Research in Motion, dismissed the iPhone. Even Microsoft didn't take the iPhone seriously with Steve Ballmer complaining that it lacked a physical keyboard. Yet within a few short years, the iPhone wiped out Nokia's lead, destroyed Research in Motion's Blackberry empire, and even humbled Microsoft's Windows Mobile platform for smartphones, which Microsoft abandoned to develop a more modern operating system called Windows Phone 7 (which they quickly abandoned once more to develop Windows 8 running on smartphones).

The iPhone ushered in the world of mobile computing. Not only did it kill all existing smartphones, but it also provided a mobile computer capable of running apps and browsing the Internet, reducing dependence on traditional laptop and netbook computers. In hindsight, even the harshest anti-Apple critics can't deny the impact of the iPhone, but what game changing technologies can we expect in the future? Just open your eyes and take a look around you.

The traditional world of PCs is dead. Companies like CompuUSA no longer exist although they once thrived under the Windows PC market. Retailers like Best Buy are rapidly losing customers through "show rooming," which is where people use Best Buy's stores to examine a product and then order it for less online. Amazon has already helped kill retail bookstores, now they're targeting all retailers by focusing on same-day service (finance.yahoo.com/blogs/daily-ticker/amazon-offer-same-day-delivery-change-way-shop-151801298.html).

Instead of ordering online and waiting a few days to receive your product, same-day service would let you order from Amazon and receive your merchandise within hours. While still not as emotionally satisfying as taking home something new from the store, same-day service from Amazon avoids the expense of retail space and hiring employees to run a store. With Amazon moving into groceries along with other types of merchandise, Amazon may not become the dominant online retailer, but could still drive a stake through the traditional retail store business altogether.

Retail stores won't disappear, but they're no longer the only option for customers. Retail stores can service a local community, but an online presence can reach a global customer base at far less cost. The future points to fewer retail stores and more online stores. If you're stuck in the retail business, good luck.

Dell Computers can already see that the future doesn't lie with selling PCs any more, so the company has been shifting its focus away from selling PCs and more towards providing services for enterprise customers. To reduce their dependence on Windows, Dell has been gradually shifting towards open source software (techcrunch.com/2012/07/19/4-ways-dell-is-becoming-an-open-source-company/).

The idea is to attract customers through open source and provide services to support that software. By catering to enterprise

customers, Dell hopes to move away from the increasingly fragile PC market.

The smart businesses know that the boom town days of the PC market are gone for good and not likely to ever return. If Dell wants to get away from the PC market and Hewlett-Packard still debates about whether they should abandon the PC market as well, it's easy to see that the PC market has declined dramatically and won't likely ever return to its glory days of the past. If you rely on the PC market, you're relying on a business that everyone else is abandoning.

For another sign that the retail market is dead, Penguin Books recently acquired Author Solutions, Inc. (in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/19/us-pearson-acquisition-idINBRE86I0OM20120719), a self-publishing company. In the old days, traditional publishers like Penguin Books could safely ignore self-publishing, but with e-books growing in popularity, printed books quickly disappearing, and retail bookstores nearly extinct, Penguin Books can already see that self-publishing will grow far faster than their traditional book publishing business could ever do.

If you're in the retail book business that relies on the PC market (think of all those book publishers and authors creating books for Windows software), you're about to get crushed from three different directions at once. On one side, you have retail stores fading. On the other, you have a declining PC market. On the third side, you have the gradual disappearance of printed books through traditional publishers.

The current struggles of Nokia and Research in Motion should be enough to open anyone's eyes that if you ignore trends, you'll get run over. Retail stores, the PC market, and printed books are all dying. Online selling, mobile computing, and e-books are all thriving. Where do you want to bet your future?

Teleprompter for the iPad

If you watch politicians speak, they almost always use a teleprompter. Since most politicians never write their own speeches and rarely have the skills to deliver any type of presentation with the clarity and power of someone like Winston Churchill, they rely on teleprompters to help them look like they actually know what they're doing.

Most people don't have the luxury of speech writers or teleprompters, so they have to stumble through their own presentations trying to do the best they can. While writing presentations can be an art in itself, teleprompter technology is now available with the 99 cent Best Prompter 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%252Fbest-prompter%252Fid429145806%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30) for the iPad.

First, you need to write your speech either by typing it in the Best Prompter app directly or using any word processor so you can copy and paste the text into the app later. Once you have the text loaded in the app, you can format it using different fonts, font sizes, colors, or underline to help you emphasize particular words or phrases. When writing his speeches, Winston Churchill used to represent long pauses with lots of empty space to help him visually see his pauses for emphasis.

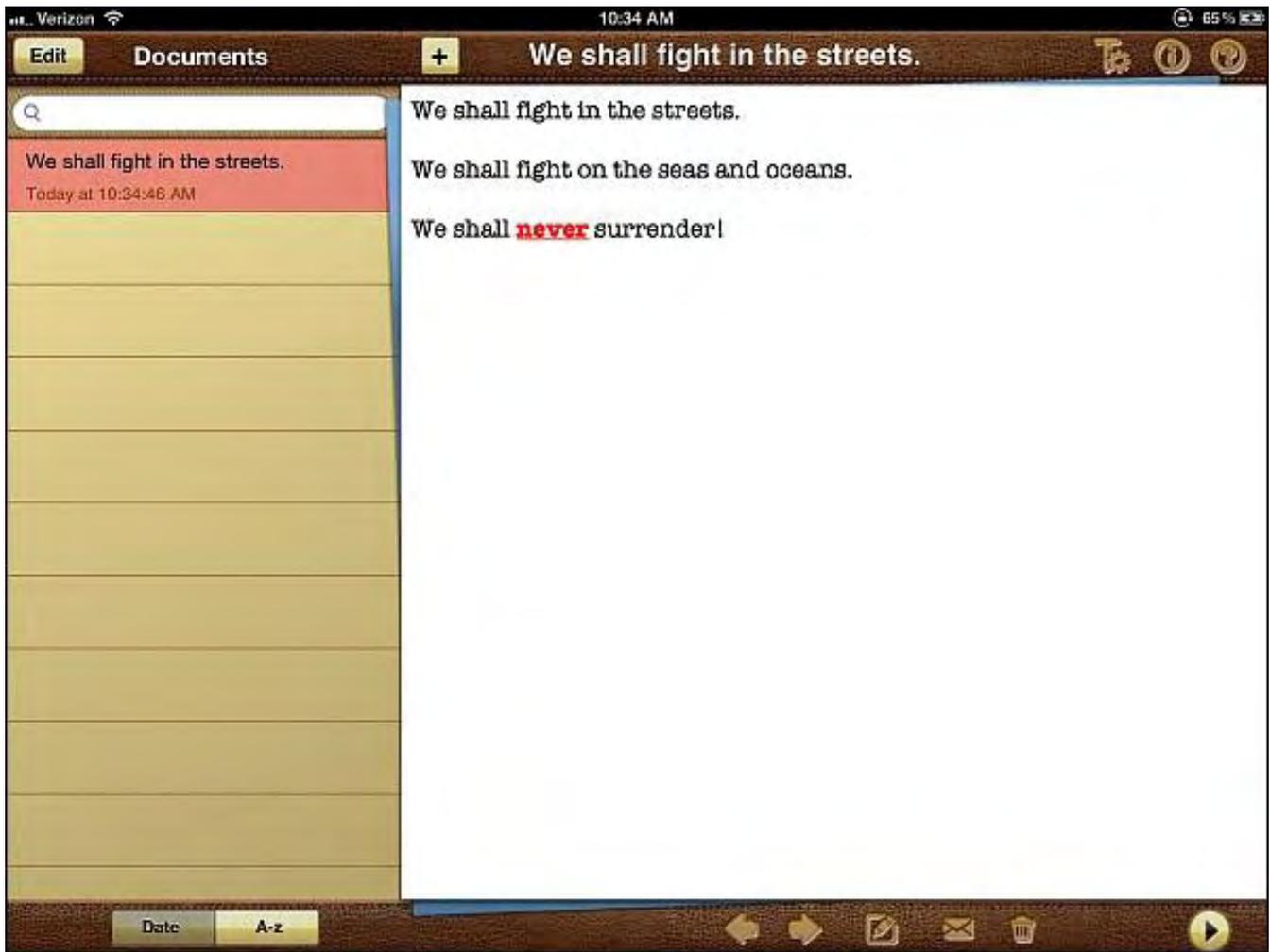


Figure 1. You can use text formatting to help make your speech easier to read.

Once you finish editing and formatting your text, the Best Prompter app lets you define how fast to scroll your text so you can read it comfortably. To practice, you can even record yourself so you can get used to the timing of your words coordinated with the scrolling of your text in the app.



Figure 2. Practice your presentation by timing it as your text scrolls across the iPad screen.

When you're finally ready to give your presentation, prop your iPad up and start talking. Since the iPad is lighter and smaller than any laptop computer, you can prop your iPad at a convenient angle and position such as flat on a table or propped up using one of many iPad protective cases.

The Best Prompter app won't help you write a presentation, but it can certainly help you polish your delivery of one. For those who need to give presentations often, the Best Prompter app can be a handy tool to give you that extra bit of confidence while speaking in front of others. Just as long as your iPad's battery doesn't suddenly cut out on you in the middle of a presentation, Best Prompter and your iPad can be a valuable tool to make presentations less stressful and easier to deliver.

The Paradox of Apple Stores

While stores like Best Buy flounder and other retailers like CircuitCity and CompUSA become retail history footnotes, why do Apple Stores pack in the customers every day while copycat retail stores (think Microsoft Stores) remain relatively empty most of the time except when they're giving away free concert tickets to attract a crowd?

The answer lies in customer loyalty as explained in the book *Exceptional Service, Exceptional Profit* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0814415385/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0814415385). First, Apple Stores mostly sell Apple products with a handful of products from other companies. Other retail stores sell mostly products from other companies.

If you want an Apple product, the price difference between buying online and buying from an Apple Store is minor, which encourages more people to buy from an Apple Store for immediate gratification. If you do decide to buy online, either from Apple's online store or some other online retailer, Apple still makes a profit.

In comparison if someone wants to buy an Acer laptop, if they don't buy it from Best Buy, Best Buy makes zero profit. Since Apple is in the retailing business and the manufacturing business, they'll make a profit through retail or online, which is a luxury that other retail stores can't match. Microsoft makes a profit whether you buy a Windows PC from the Microsoft Store or from somewhere else, but the profit margin from a Windows license is far less than the profit margin Apple enjoys from a Macintosh, iPhone, or iPad.

In *Exceptional Service, Exceptional Profit*, the authors make the point that customer loyalty is crucial to success. If your business constantly churns through new customers, selling them commodity products at low prices, you'll constantly need to advertise to find new customers. By creating a loyal customer base, Apple (and other high-end retailers) can enjoy the luxury of focusing more on customer service and less on advertising to reach new customers. By earning more profits per product, Apple can afford to offer more service.

Walk into an Apple Store and you can show your broken Macintosh or iPad to an actual person who can help fix your problem. If your Dell or Hewlett-Packard computer breaks down, have fun talking to somebody on the other side of the world over the telephone, who will guide you through all the steps needed to fix your computer yourself, which is almost always a time-consuming and frustrating process.

One key to Apple's success is customer loyalty. Although nothing is perfect, Apple customers appreciate the way Apple makes computers easy to use. Given the choice between an Apple product or a rival product that's cheaper and almost as good as an Apple product, most Apple customers won't even consider the rival product. By striving for superior service and quality, Apple creates a loyal customer base that won't be easily swayed to competitor's products in a way that no amount of advertising could possibly duplicate.

Think low prices will create customer loyalty? The moment a rival offers slightly lower prices, there goes all your customers attracted only by a low price. As the title suggests, *Exceptional Service, Exceptional Profit* emphasizes that successful businesses must create fierce customer loyalty no matter what that product might be.

Apple users are less likely to use rival products in the same way that Harley-Davidson enthusiasts will be less likely to buy a different motorcycle. Once you've created a loyal customer base, often through superior service of some kind, you'll have an advantage that rivals will find difficult to match.

Even people who hate Apple can't ignore the tremendous loyalty customers hold towards Apple. The only other computer company that attracts similar feelings of loyalty is Microsoft. While such customers may stick with Windows, they aren't necessarily loyal to any particular computer manufacturer like Dell or Hewlett-Packard. Even worse for Microsoft, Windows enthusiasts may be loyal to Windows, but that loyalty rarely translates into loyalty to similar products like Windows Mobile, Windows Phone 7, Bing, Vista, or even Windows 8.

Once you have customer loyalty, you have a built-in stream of steady, repeat customers. To get customer loyalty, you must offer superior service and a product worth paying for. Offer sub par service with mediocre products and your chances of surviving will look dim at best. Research in Motion once offered excellent service with a superior product, but when rivals offered an even better product with nearly equal service, Research in Motion's loyal customer base rapidly evaporated overnight.

If you're in business, the fastest way to success is to develop loyal customers. If you can't give customers a reason to stay loyal, you probably won't have a reason to stay in business much longer.

The Real Purpose of a CEO

Here's a shocking statistic. According to a study by the Economic Policy Institute (www.epi.org/publication/ib331-ceo-pay-top-1-percent/), CEO compensation grew by 725% between 1978 and 2011, yet the average worker's pay has only risen by 5.7% in the same period. Are CEOs suddenly doing a much better job or are they simply exploiting the people who actually do the work?

While people like the former CEOs of Research in Motion walk away with millions in compensation while driving the company into the ground with their short-sightedness and leaving the workers to deal with layoffs, the CEO of Lenovo, Yang Yuanqing, recently did something unheard of in the corporate world. When he received a \$3 million dollar bonus for increasing Lenovo's profits, Yang turned around and shared his bonus (finance.yahoo.com/news/chinese-computer-ceo-restore-faith-203000640.html) with all the workers at Lenovo.

Ask Lenovo's workers if such a move encourages greater loyalty and respect to their CEO. Now ask Hewlett-Packard's workers how they felt when their last CEO, Leo Apotheker, helped drive the company into the ground while walking away with millions in compensation and leaving them with dimming prospects for the future. Shouldn't CEOs be paid based on their performance? How many people can do nothing in their job, wreck the company's projects, and then walk away with millions in compensation?

Why companies continue rewarding CEOs with millions regardless of performance remains a mystery even greater than the origin of the Easter Island statues. Perhaps one day CEOs will actually earn their money by helping the company they're leading. Then again, the odds are better that Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy will actually prove real instead.

Learning Chess on the Go

Chess is a deceptively simple game. While the pieces and rules are straightforward, the complexity of strategy makes chess far more difficult to master than it looks. In the old days, people could only develop their chess playing skills by playing against live opponents. When personal computers arrived, people could practice playing against a computer chess program. Now with more people relying on mobile devices, you can practice your chess skills against a chess app on your iPhone or iPad. Now you can practice your chess any time you need to wait in a line.

The \$4.99 Ultimate Chess (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%252Fultimate-chess%252Fid525997249%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30) is just one of many chess game apps available. Like most chess programs, you can switch sides, take back moves, or ask for suggestions in making the best possible move. You can also define the strength of the app, ranging from 500 to 2500 Elo, which is a rating system used to define each player's capabilities. Playing the app at 2500 Elo is like playing against a chess master while playing against the game at a 500 Elo is like playing against a novice who will make regular mistakes.



Figure 3. Like most chess programs, you can customize the appearance and playing strength of the computer opponent.

Besides changing the playing strength of your computer opponent, Ultimate Chess also lets you modify its playing style that can range from Passive to Suicidal. For more variety, choose a Random playing style so you'll never know what the program might do next.



Figure 4. You can change the game's playing style to make it more or less aggressive.

Playing against a computer can improve your chess skills, but for added study, Ultimate Chess includes famous games so you can examine the positions of the different pieces and see how you might have made a different move. By studying games from past chess masters, you can literally put yourself in a chess master's shoes.



Figure 5. Ultimate Chess lets you load famous chess matches from the past.

Chess can be a fun game to play by yourself or against others. In any case, learning chess can teach you the value of planning ahead and dealing with the unexpected, which is a skill that CEOs should master. At least when CEOs lose at a game of chess, they don't bankrupt the other player and walk away with million dollar paychecks to reward their failure.

Android Piracy

One common criticism against the iPhone and iPad is Apple's "walled-garden" approach to vetting what types of apps users can load on their devices. That means no pornography, racist, or other types of information that Apple deems unsuitable. While this has caused problems with Apple rejecting perfectly good apps, it also makes malware less likely to occur on iOS than more open systems like Android.

Perhaps the biggest problem with Android's openness is rampant piracy of apps. Madfinger Games recently released a 99 cent game called Dead Trigger, but piracy made the company give up (www.fiercemobilecontent.com/story/skyrocketing-piracy-rates-cause-madfinger-games-relaunch-dead-trigger-free/2012-07-23) and release the game for free on Android devices. If developers can't make money off Android apps, that means developers will either avoid Android altogether or release much simpler apps that don't take much time to create.

In either case, developers want fair compensation for the time they spent creating apps, and if they can't find that on Android, they'll simply focus on iOS and rival operating systems like Windows Phone 8 (not Windows Phone 7, since that operating system is already obsolete).

If Android doesn't have the same quality and variety of apps that other operating systems offer, then Android will become far less attractive to consumers. Google plans to address this problem with encryption in the latest version of Android, but until they can

limit piracy on Android, developers will likely steer away from Android and follow the money, which they can easily find on iOS. The next time someone claims openness is always superior, ask them how safe they'd feel flying in an airplane where the terminal offered no security whatsoever or if they'd want to take drugs from a factory that allowed anyone to walk in and out of the building any time they wanted.

* * *

If you open the Finder window, you'll see a list of folders that always appear on the left such as Applications or Documents. Displaying this list of folders on the left gives you quick one-click access to commonly needed folders such as your Documents folder.

Of course, you can place your own favorite folders on the left side of the Finder window. Just browse through the Finder window to find a folder you need to access regularly, and drag and drop it over this left sidebar portion of the Finder window. Now your chosen folder will be available at a single click of the mouse or trackpad.

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=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.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Beyond Personal Computing

“Learn to Touch Type? Or Hunt and Peck Forever?” by Marilyn K. Martin

Amusing anecdotes about typing and the difficulties surrounding it.

Not every high school offers a typing elective course anymore. It used to be that female students crowded those classes in anticipation of getting clerical jobs. Today, everyone with a cubicle has their own computer and only upper level executives have secretaries. So there are a lot of people making their living on computers today who can only hunt-and-peck. (Rumor even has it that a lot of IT departments are full of highly trained brainiacs who are index-finger typists.)

And then there's that generational thing. Older folks may type like speed-demons, but can't fathom all the keys on a computer keyboard. Many young people, however, were on computers before they'd learned the alphabet. They may be hunt-and-peck typists, but can rattle off what every "F" key is for.

And some typists of all stripes never learn the proper names of the punctuation keys—whether on a typewriter or a keyboard. Leave it to patient Support Techs to blink and frown, then figure out that a "squashed bug" is really an asterisk.

Key Search—Cue the "We're Gonna Be Here a Long Time" Theme

One tech recalled installing a new computer system in a company in the 1980s. The assistant manager was an MBA in his twenties. The tech told him to log in as user1. The manager stared at the keyboard. Fifteen seconds later, he reached out one finger and hit the "u." Ten seconds later he typed the "s." Another ten seconds and he found the "e," and so on. Then he started typing in his password, "apple." He located the "a," then spent another ten seconds looking for the "p." Then he proceeded to look back and forth on the keyboard for the other "p." When the manager had finally logged in the tech had taught him a trick: Leave one finger on a key you know you will be using again very soon.

A computer instructor in a beginner class had an elderly gentleman who had bought a computer to track his stocks. For the first class he was at the computer that the instructor had connected to the overhead projector that displayed the monitor for the entire class to see. The instructor then asked the entire class to type the word "book." After a long pause, a "b" appeared on the projected screen. Another twenty-second pause and an "o" appeared. Another long pause and a "0" appeared—but had to be deleted since it was a zero. Fifteen seconds later another "o" appeared on the overhead screen. The class was getting restless when the final "k" appeared, and the older gentleman looked up with a big smile of accomplishment.

Not Knowing Names of Non-Letter Characters

Tech: Now insert a hyphen.

Customer: What's that?

Tech: Same as a dash.

Customer: What's a dash?

Tech: (rubbing forehead) Another name for a, uh, minus sign.

Customer: I can't find the Up Arrow key. All I see is an "I" with a funny little triangle hat on it.

Tech: That's it!

Self-Taught Typing Lessons

There are free online programs to learn how to type, like typingweb.com (*typingweb.com*), goodtyping.com (*goodtyping.com*) and sense-lang.org/typing (*sense-lang.org/typing*). There are other free programs to test how fast you can type (still a requirement for most clerical jobs). Other free programs online can help brush up your typing skills, some are typing games like play.typeracer.com (*play.typeracer.com*).

Posted Question in an Online Forum

"I type with the hunt-and-peck method at about 40 WMP (words per minute). I'm finishing up my degree. Will my lack of touch-typing skills hold me back in the job market?"

A1: Don't worry, only a minority in any company use the 10-finger-system. 40 WMP should be sufficient.

A2: Don't worry about it. You'll get faster the more you type.

A3: I don't even know many people who can actually touch type.

A4: You may get some laughs for hunting-and-pecking, but it's no big deal as long as you can get the job done.

A5: You should learn to touch type. If you could double your typing speed, you could accomplish the same tasks in half the time.

A6: If you are still in school definitely take that typing elective in high school. It's one skill that people use for the rest of their lives.

A7: On the other hand, if you type too fast, you may sacrifice accuracy. Or all your posts in chatrooms and on forums will be so long that no one will read them.

The Conundrum of Colons

A physician called up Tech Support and said, "I want to call the Internet." The Tech sighed, knowing this was going to be a long call. The Tech helped the doctor find his browser, and told him to type in `http://`. The physician reported that it didn't work. "So read me what you typed," the Tech asked. The physician answered "h-t-t-p-c-o-l-o-n..." The Tech stopped him right there. "No, I mean use the colon on the keyboard. You do know what a colon is, don't you?" "Of course I do," the doctor snapped. "I *am* a doctor!"

Another Tech was helping a phone customer through an installation problem. After he heard a few erratic keys hit, the customer stopped and asked, "What's the colon look like?" The Tech responded that it was the key with one dot over the other dot. "Oh! The two-dot key. Why didn't you say so?"

A Tech was on the phone with a new computer owner. The customer was instructed to load a program by typing "A:" and then the name of the program. "I can't," responded the customer. "Every time I try to type the dot over dot thingy, all I get is the dot over comma thingy." The Tech then enlightened him on the magic of the Shift key.

Special Keys Only on Computer Keyboards

Tech: OK, now press F10.

Customer: Do I press F1 and F0?

Tech: There is no F0 key. Go all the way over across those top keys to F10 and press it.

Customer: On the left or on the right?

Tech: This isn't a mouse, ma'am, just press the F10 button down.

Son: What's wrong, Dad? Didn't you enjoy that Nascar Racing game I put in your computer?

Dad: Loved it. But now something is broken. The screen says "Press ESC." But every time I press E, S, C in succession, nothing happens!

Just When You Learn to Type Fast—They Change the Keyboard

Complaints are popping up about tablet computers' virtual keyboards. Comments like "I can type pretty fast on a regular keyboard. But on a tablet, with tiny flat keys, I have to stare at every keystroke, and that seriously slows me down."

One solution is to buy a small tablet keyboard as a separate unit. Logitech's Tablet Keyboard is highly rated, and sells for around \$50-\$80. A combo Logitech Tablet Keyboard and Stand (to prop up your tablet/monitor before your keyboard) run about \$70.

And for the Dedicated Hunt and Peck Types—Your Own Keyboard

A Web site called Slippery Brick (www.slipperybrick.com/2009/05/the-hunt-%E2%80%98-peck-keyboard-for-those-who-never-learned/) highlighted a keyboard that can turn into an ABC (or straight alphabetical) keyboard, for those who love computers but don't want to learn to type. Each key cap has both the alphabetical letter in order, and the letter for the normal QWERTY keyboard. There are also keys that have common IM abbreviations for the excessively lazy. It runs under \$25 on Amazon.

(Many of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple Internet sites, but special thanks to rinkworks.com (*rinkworks.com*).

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).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"It Worked!" "Password Reset," "The Majority of MP3s Have Lower Audio Quality"

It Worked!

[Regarding the June 29 Digital Dave column:]

Dave...I hope you remember this. A few weeks ago I asked you if you had any suggestions as to what I should do to be able to read my Olympus camera's SmartCard, because Windows 7 wouldn't recognize it. You recommended that I might have some success with a card reader made by ABC Products. Hurray! You were right on. I ordered one and *it worked!* Thank you so much. You saved my camera from being an anchor. Seriously, thank you for your effort, your expertise, and your help.

Sincerely,

-Gabby DeDonato, San Clemente, CA

Password Reset

[Regarding the July 20 Digital Dave column:]

The tip says, "All you need to do is plug in the device and open User Accounts (see Figure 3)." I did that and can find no "User Accounts" anywhere. After 27 years of computer operating, I have *never* seen a "User Account." Could you please say where to find it?

-Allen, Albuquerque, NM

My bad! I should have been more clear and specific. You can find User Accounts in the Control Panel. (Start => Control Panel => User Accounts). Then select the account you want to protect and you should see a window similar to the screen shot above. In Windows 7 and Vista you merely need to type "user" in the Start Menu search field and select User Accounts from the resulting list.

-Dave

The Majority of MP3s Have Lower Audio Quality

[Regarding the July 20 Without MP3s, Life Would Be an Error column:]

Many of the online MP3s are *not* as good with the audio sampling bit rates.

320k bit rates *are not the norm* for most audio services because of the file sizes in the MP3 format. IMHO, that 128k bit rate is OK for today's crappy music, but not for orchestra, opera or even classic music of any type.

I'll stick to OGG or FLAC and even 320k bit rate MP3s.

Disclaimer:

I've run a few audio boards in my time. I've ripped my vinyl & tapes, too.

-Art Blackwell, Evergreen, CO

The Sound...I'd like to hear the sound of two bricks being smashed together.

Thank you,

-Prof. R.J. Gumby, [My brain hurts)

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/).

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

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

Copyright © 1997-2012 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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