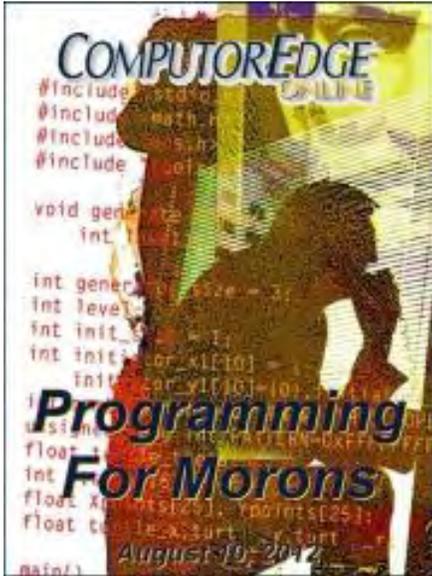


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 08/10/12



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Making computers do what you want them to do is not only for nerds.

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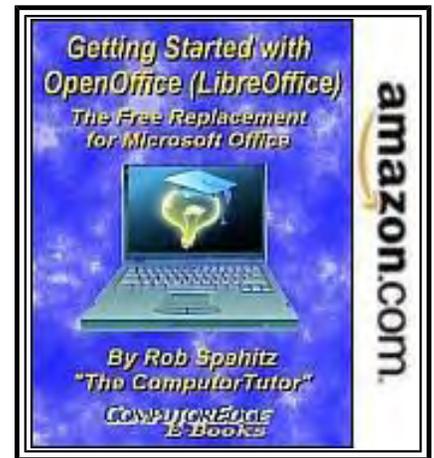
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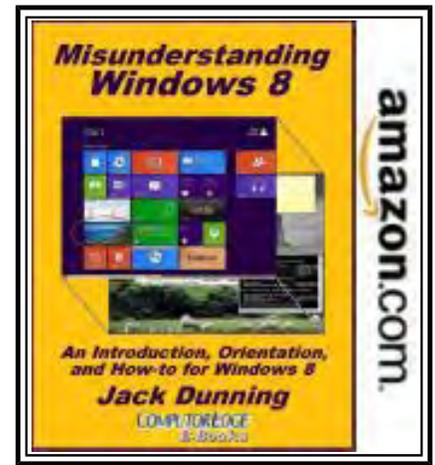
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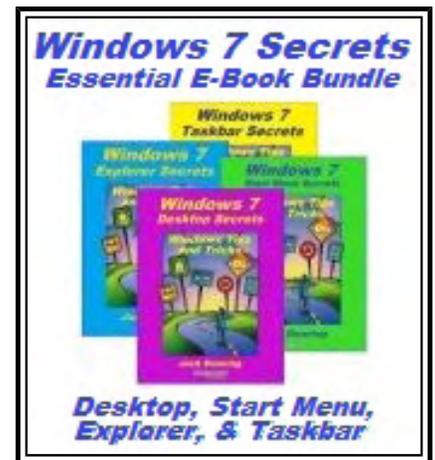
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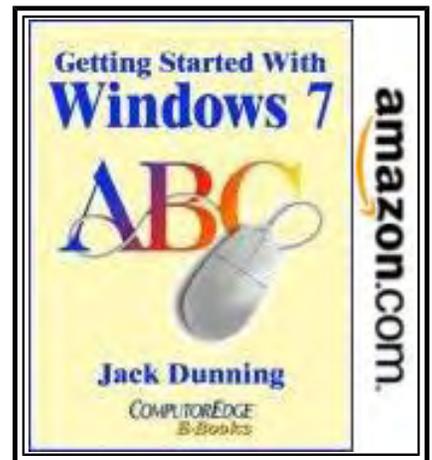
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## Digital Dave

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

Dropbox Concerns; Images Are Missing on Web Site; Touchpad Sensitivity.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have three computers and an iPhone. My question is about Dropbox. If one computer crashes and loses everything on the hard drive, will the other computers and the iPhone lose all the Dropbox information as well?*

*You have answered my questions before and I really do appreciate it.*

*Thanks,*

*Jim White  
Spokane, Washington*

Dear Jim,

If a computer with Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)) (Cloud file sharing system) installed crashes and loses everything, then the Dropbox application on that will have disappeared with it. It should not affect any other device or the Dropbox contents on the Web since the crashed computer will have no way to access Dropbox. Once you get the device up and running, you will need to reinstall Dropbox, in which case it will be a new device and will merely copy the original content back into the new Dropbox folder.

You do need to be cautious when using Dropbox since any deletion on any connected computer will affect all the other computers. Is best to copy (CTRL+C) and paste (CTRL+V) files into Dropbox rather than move them by dragging. Since Dropbox acts like a regular folder on your computer, dragging files into Dropbox will remove them from the original folder. Using copy will leave you a backup.

If, for some reason, someone deletes any (or all) of your Dropbox files, Dropbox maintains copies of deleted folders and files on the Web—thirty days for free accounts.

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I visited the Web site [www.highdefforum.com/directv-forum/92691-what-swm-how-install-request.html](http://www.highdefforum.com/directv-forum/92691-what-swm-how-install-request.html), but I did not see any images being described. Why? Other people reading this forum seemed to be*

*able to see the images.*

*Brent Hunt  
Chula Vista, CA*

Dear Brent,

I can assure you that people currently visiting that Web page are no longer seeing any images. That is due to the fact that the site which originally hosted the pictures no longer exists: [www.gamedaygear.org](http://www.gamedaygear.org). This post was put up over three years ago. While it's possible that some people could still have the images in their cache, it's likely that the images will not return.

It is not uncommon for Web sites to use images from other sites by merely linking directly to the image rather than hosting it on the same site. This may be for convenience or a way of saving bandwidth for the original page. It's also less work than copying images and reposting them on the same site.

The problem is that if the site hosting the images goes away, so do the pictures. That's the case here.

I recommend that you search the Web for alternative instructions—if needed.

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have an HP laptop with a Synaptics PS/2 Port Touchpad. The problem is that I can't find where to adjust the touchpad sensitivity. (I have IE9 and Windows 7 Home Premium.) When I even pass over a link on a page, sometimes the link opens when not clicked on. I've checked various places and haven't been successful. Can you point me in the right direction?*

*Thanks,*

*Jerry Hughes  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Jerry,

The setting for your touchpad can be found at Control Panel => Mouse. You need to select the touchpad from the drop-down menu in the Buttons tab (see Figure 1). You can then make whatever adjustments you need, Apply and OK.

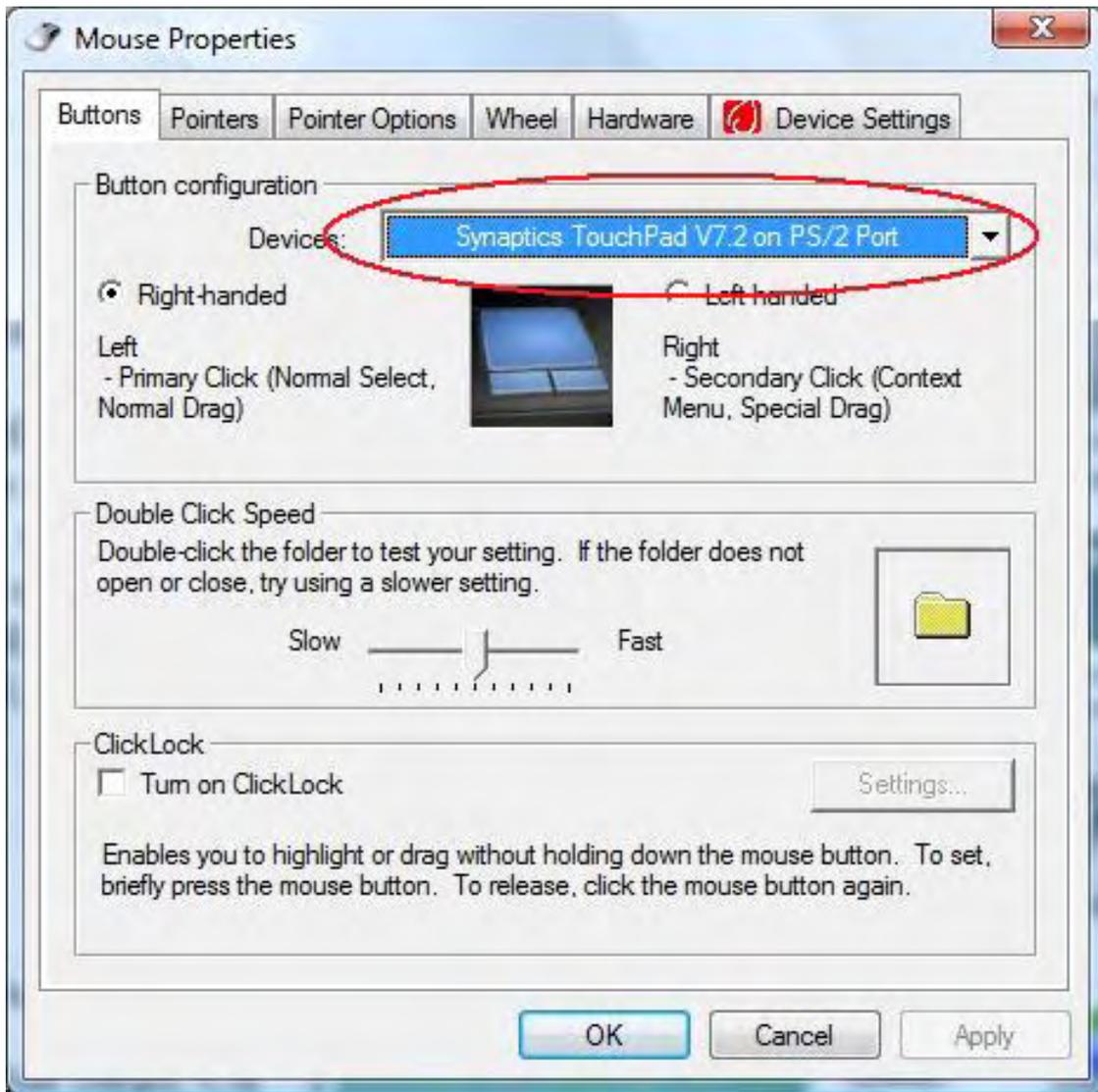


Figure 1. Touchpad controls in Windows Mouse Properties window.

There are other settings that may be affecting the touchpad operation. In Windows Explorer under Organize => Folder and Search Option the items can be set to a single click (see Figure 2).

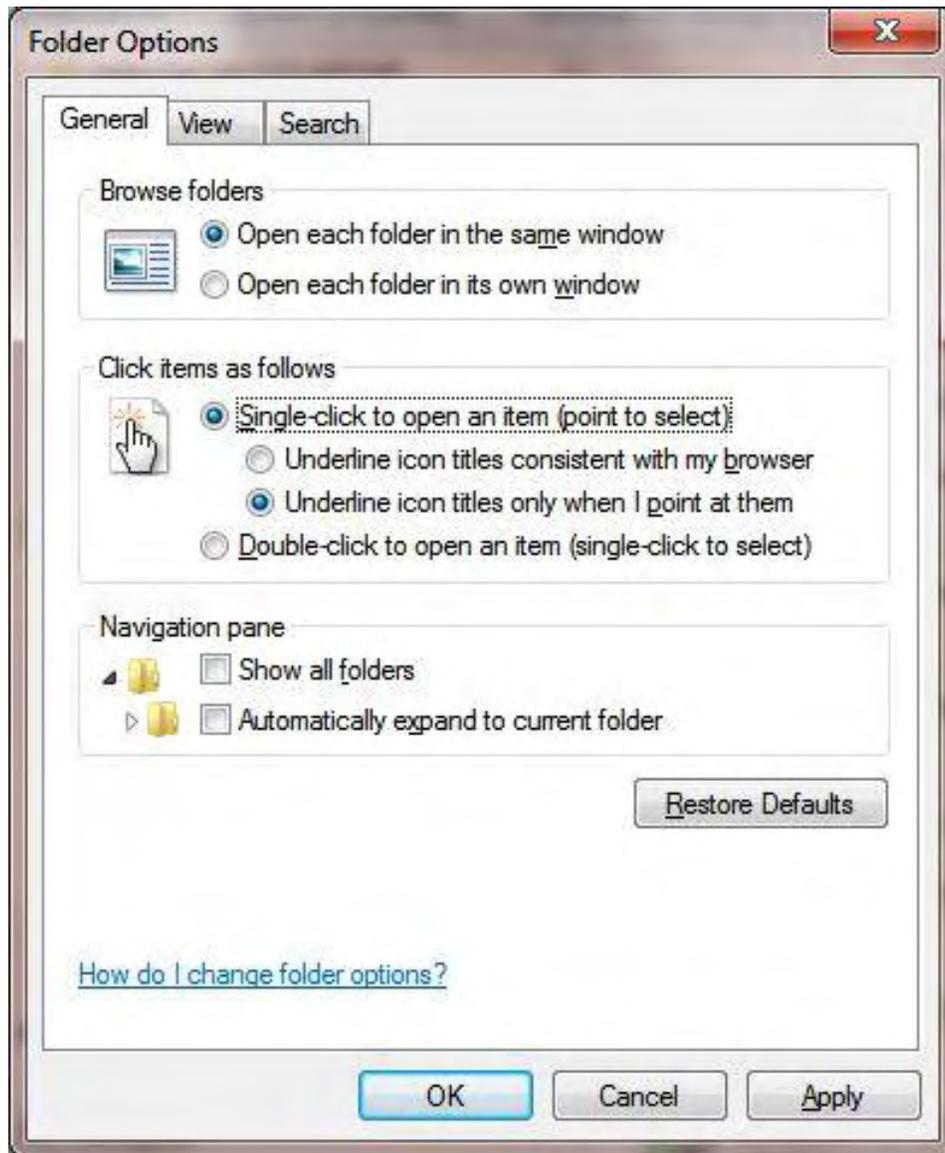


Figure 2. Folder Options in Windows Mouse Properties window.

In Control Panel => Ease of Access Center, "Make the mouse easier to use" will offer a setting to automatically activate windows by hovering.

Digital Dave

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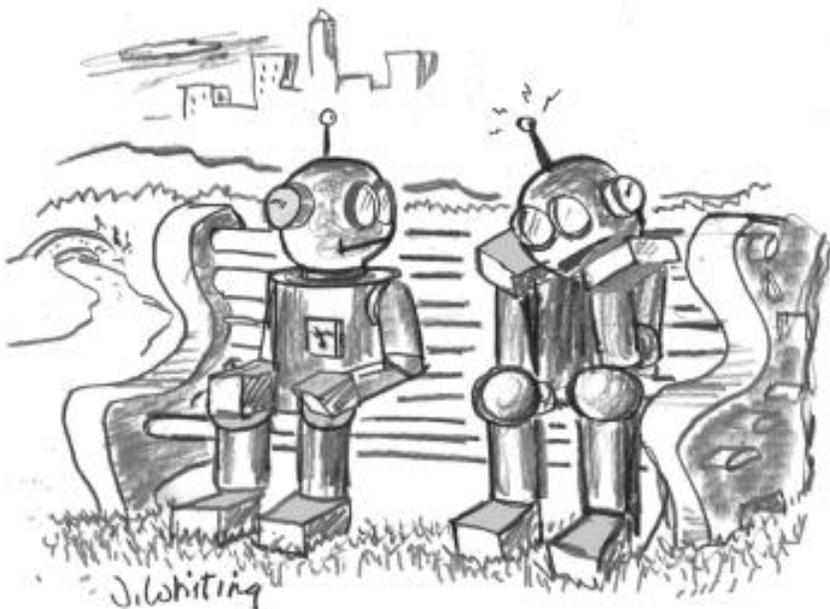
## Programming for Morons

“Writing Software Scripts Is Not Just for Nerds” by Jack Dunning

Many people avoid programming because it looks too mysterious and complicated. However, it's really not all that hard. Most people could benefit from writing a little bit of code for the unintelligent computer.

*"The computer is a moron." —Peter Drucker*

Whenever I talk about programming in a group of people, I watch as people's eyes glaze over. Unless I'm in the company of other programmers—who will often perk up—most people have little interest in the tasks involved in making a computer do something. They just want it to work. I don't really blame them. Aren't computers supposed to make life easier—not harder? Yet, I can't help but feel that with a little effort anyone could make their own computing life easier through some programming.



Many people avoid computer programming because it appears mysterious and complex. It's the thing that nerds do to create all those wonderful apps. Programming is done in secret languages with strange terminology. It seems to be far beyond the comprehension of the average person. Why would any normal person want to program? Is it far too complicated for most people?

When I started the series about AutoHotkey with the article "A Look at the Power of AutoHotkey," I knew that I was asking people to learn a little scripting—which is after all programming. However, many people have mistakenly

“All I did is what he told me to do”

“All I did is what he told me to do  
and I’m the one who’s a moron!”

convinced themselves that they can't program. It's just too hard. Writing code is only for those who have the aptitude. The language is too enigmatic. In many cases, that's just not true.

Most people reading this article have a well-developed understanding of the English language. Yet, English is much more complicated than any programming language. Programming languages are written for the unintelligent computer. Certainly, with the proper motivation, most people can learn to program—if only to write short scripts which make computing easier.

You don't need to write the next word processor or spreadsheet. Programming results do not need to be complicated to be useful. A script can be as simple as the one line example:

```
::imho::in my humble opinion
```

which in AutoHotkey will change "imho" into "in my humble opinion" wherever it is typed. It's still programming.

## Why Learn to Program?

The number one reason to teach yourself a little programming is that the computer truly *is* a moron. It will only do what it's told to do. If no one has ever written the app that makes a computer do specifically what you want it to do, then the computer won't do it. When using a program or app have you ever asked yourself, "Why won't it do that?" "That" is something you want, but the software won't do it. There lies the problem.

One of the software writing goals is to make an app user-friendly. Software should be so easy to understand that anyone can use it. Programmers have done an excellent job of making computer products much more intuitive and easy to operate—in particular Apple devices. However, there is a down side to user-friendly. In order to make software easy to use, it is necessary to eliminate some level of flexibility. The simpler the program, the more likely that something unusual can't be done. This is not a problem unless that "unusual" task just happens to be what you want to do. The only way around this inflexibility is to include some type of programming language with the software—which most apps don't. A programming language makes it possible to tailor software to your specific needs. Unfortunately, user-friendly tends to be the opposite of flexible in software.



At some time, everyone has encounter something that they would like their computer to do, such as automatically add today's date to any text editing program or Web field (this week's "Windows Tips and Tricks column" ), yet there is no easy way to do that in Windows without a little script writing. Yes, there are word processing programs which have shortcuts for adding the date, but that won't work when you're blogging on the Web. If you want to create personalized tools to use in your daily computing—add your e-mail address or telephone number anywhere—then you will want to be able to do a small amount of programming.

I know that many *ComputerEdge* readers are either already capable programmers or could easily start. The fact that they return each week to read *ComputerEdge*

shows enough motivation for getting the most out of their computers. I also know that there are also a number of

*ComputerEdge* readers who are intimidated by the mere thought of writing any type of computer code. I'm here to encourage you to give it a shot. It's not as hard as it looks.

## Learning to Program a Little at a Time

Just as no child is born with an English vocabulary, no programmer instantly acquired their knowledge of software languages. It all starts with a one or two words and builds from there. Eventually, with practice, the vocabulary can become quite extensive.

This is why I've built a step-by-step process into the AutoHotkey series of articles and columns. If you start in the beginning with the first article, you can add to your AutoHotkey vocabulary one word at a time. Much of the terminology in AutoHotkey is very similar to that in other scripting languages. Certainly the programming concepts are the same.

I use AutoHotkey examples not only because it is possibly "the best free Windows utility ever," but because you can get immediate results with only one line of code such as `::js::johnsmith@gmail.com` which will expand to "johnsmith@gmail.com" whenever "js" is typed. While AutoHotkey can be quite simple, it has most of the commands and functions used in other programming languages which make much more complex applications possible. You can use the same incremental approach to learning BASIC, C++, or any other programming language, but, with the exception of the standard "Hello, World!" program for beginners, it will take a little longer to produce satisfying results.

Unlike English, programming absolutely requires logic. Computers are morons. They don't respond unless the words are exactly right and in the right order. This can make programming very unforgiving, but once you get something right, you can use it over and over again. While this can cause endless staring at code while looking for an error, once right, it will run over and over again. There is a need for precision—and, at times, patience with yourself. (I've often found that going to bed is a good problem solver. Rather than staying up all night working on a bug, get some sleep. Come morning, the solution will often smack you in the face.)

In programming, spelling is called syntax. A syntax error is a spelling error. The commands and functions need to be spelled correctly or they will not do their job. In some languages upper and lower case letter are important to syntax (JavaScript), whereas other language will ignore any capitalization in syntax (HTML). You do need to be aware of these subtleties as your knowledge of a language grows and your programs add more features.

Once you become comfortable with one programming language, it's easier to learn another. They all have the same basic commands and functions (if-then, loops, for-next, etc.). For example, the process for writing Batch (BAT) files, which will run a series of Windows commands, is virtually identical to writing AutoHotkey (AHK) scripts. First, create a text file with a text editor. Second, type in the commands (or cut-and-paste from someone's example code). Save the file, then run the script. Later the file may be compiled into an independent executable program depending upon its purpose and environment. This is essentially the same process for all programming, whether writing a simple one-line command or developing the next killer app.

## Interpreted Versus Compiled Programs

Interpreted programs are read and executed line-by-line by an interpreter. This is how Windows Batch files work. The batch file interpreter is built into the Windows operating system. As each line of the batch file is read, it is immediately executed. Without the interpreter, the batch file is merely a text file with a list of instructions.

However, interpreted text files will run slower than programs compiled into directly executable (EXE or COM in Windows) files. When a file is compiled it is reduced to a humanly unreadable code which will run directly on the computer. No interpreting software is required since the files will run directly without it. These files can be moved to other computers within the same operating system without installing the original software which aids in code writing and generates the applications.

While interpreted text file programs are quicker to produce and run, they run slower and are generally much less portable than compiled programs. Plus, it is much harder for anyone to steal or manipulate the code in compiled programs since they are not easy to read text files.

For example, in AutoHotkey the first step is to create your interpreted script in a text file. Since you need the interpreter for these text scripts, you will need the installation of the AutoHotkey download on your computer to run these scripts. Once you have AutoHotkey scripts working without errors, you can use the compiler included with AutoHotkey to make an executable (EXE) file. This new executable file can be placed on any Windows computer and activated (double-click on icon) without any other AutoHotkey installation. (There is an example of a compiled AutoHotkey EXE file available for download at the end of this week's "Windows Tips and Tricks" column. It should run on any Windows computer. See the column for activation hotkeys, which include the cool popup calendar shown above.)

It's important to understand that the interpreted text programs can only be run on a computer with the interpreter installed, whereas the compiled executable program should be able to run on any compatible computer.

## Programming Is Fun

While some programming may be a little mundane and/or frustrating, it can actually be fun. If you enjoy solving puzzles or doing crosswords, then it just might be right for you. There is nothing more satisfying than putting together a script that does what it's supposed to do. In fact, after having a particularly unique programming success, you'll need to seek out someone just so they can appreciate what you've just accomplished. "Look at this!" (Hopefully, they will appreciate your achievement.)

As you add more and more personalization to your computer, you will become increasingly comfortable with the software terminology and code writing process. Soon you will be producing results that you never thought possible. You will start dreaming about programs at night. Eventually, you will mention some of your programming techniques and achievements at a family gathering, only to watch eyes glaze over.

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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](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer)).

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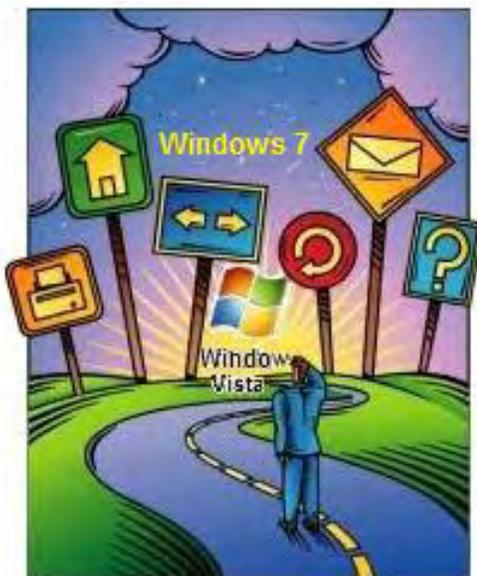
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Windows Tips and Tricks: Cool Date Tricks with AutoHotkey

“Enter the Current Date into Any Windows Program Automatically” by Jack Dunning

AutoHotkey includes tools that make it easy to enter the time and/or date into your documents and files. There is even a cool popup calendar for picking alternative dates.



# Windows Tips and Tricks

Working with time is one of the more annoying problems for computers. Yet, it is also one of the most important issues in many applications. What makes time so difficult is that it is a mix of dimensions that are mostly arbitrary. Very few of the units work out mathematically. Some years are 365 days long while others are 366. Months vary from 28 to 31 days. There are seven days in a week and a little more than 52 week in a year. Most months have a little more than four weeks. Each day has 24 hours, but each hour has 60 minutes. There seems some consistency in that each minute contains 60 seconds. When it is all put together, calculating and displaying the time and date is a major computer headache. This is why virtually all programming languages include functions which will calculate the time and date and additional functions for formatting the results for display.

Computers see time only one way, as a string of digits starting with year and ending with seconds. (Actually, computers measure time down to the microsecond, but for the most purposes the nearest second is more than close enough.) The time is expressed in units starting with the largest span (the year which also includes the century) and ending with the smallest (seconds or microseconds) (see Figure 1). This format works out best for when computers are sorting data in date/time order.

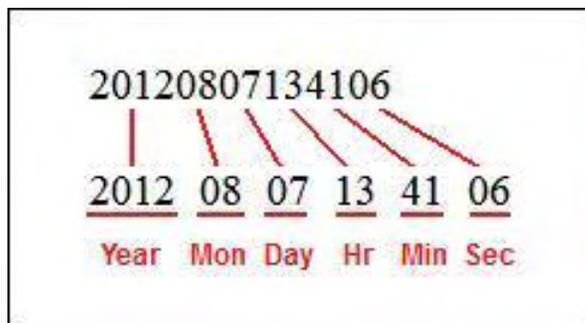


Figure 1. The computer sees the date/time as digits from the year down to the second.

Unfortunately, almost no one expresses the time and date in this logical order. Americans like month, day, year (August 7, 2012). The British use day, month, year (7 August 2012) format. Time may be shown as the 24-hour clock (13:41) or the 12-hour clock (1:41 pm). Sadly, programmers must spend an inordinate amount of time making both the

time and the date display the way users wants to see it—regardless of their cultural preference. That's the reason most programs include formatting options for selecting how dates can be shown on the screen and in reports.

AutoHotkey is no different. There are techniques for automatically adding dates to all or your programs, documents and Blogs, but you do need to use the special AutoHotkey date/time functions to make them work properly.

## Adding the Date to Your Text

In Notepad, you can add the date to any document by hitting the F5 key, thus pasting the current date and time (i.e. "2:57 PM 8/7/2012") into the editing window. Some other programs have similar date/time paste functions, but you need to know the hotkeys for each individual application.

With AutoHotkey you can create routines which will add the date in your preferred format to any of your Windows programs. You can even use a cool AutoHotkey pop-up calendar which will allow you to select any date and paste it into your work. Three examples of AutoHotkey routines for adding a date to your documents are discussed below (see Figure 2).

```

^#F1::      Computer Date/Time Stamp
Send, %A_Now%
return

^#F2::      Formatted Date
FormatTime, TimeString,, MMMM d, yyyy
Send, %TimeString%
return

#^d::      Popup Calendar
Gui, Add, MonthCal, vDayPick
Gui, Add, Button, Default, Submit
Gui, Show
return

ButtonSubmit:
Gui, Submit
FormatTime, DayPick, %DayPick%, MMMM d, yyyy
Send, %DayPick%
Gui, Destroy
return

```

Figure 2. These AutoHotkey routines offer three ways to add a date to a Windows document.

As outlined in previous columns, with the AutoHotkey program installed ([www.autohotkey.com](http://www.autohotkey.com)) you can create an AutoHotkey (AHK) script file by right-clicking on the Windows Desktop and selecting New => AutoHotkey Script. Relabel the file to an appropriate name such as AddDate.ahk. Next, right-click on the file icon and select Edit Script from the menu. Copy and paste the routines below as desired. Save the file. Right-click and Run Script will activate the script for testing. Right-click the AutoHotkey icon (white "H" in a green square) in the system tray on the Taskbar at the bottom right of the Desktop and select "Reload This Script" whenever after modification you want to activate a newly saved version of the script.

The first routine will paste the current Date/Time stamp (or computer time as shown in Figure 1 above) into any document:

```
^#F1::
Send, %A_Now%
return
```

In the first line of the script, this routine is activated by holding down the CONTROL key ("^"), the Windows key ("#"), and the F1 function key simultaneously (CTRL++F1). (As previously discussed in earlier columns, the hotkeys can be any combination of keys which won't interfere with other Windows or program hotkeys. For the meaning of the hotkey symbols shown in the first line, see this list of hotkeys ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/Hotkeys.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/Hotkeys.htm).)

The second line pastes the current date/time into your open text editing window using the A\_NOW variable. There is a list of current time variables ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/Variables.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/Variables.htm)) which can be used to return the date and time in different formats. For example, A\_DDD returns the abbreviated day of the week (Wed), A\_MMM returns the abbreviated month (Aug), A\_DD returns the two-digit day of the month (08), and A\_YYYY returns the four-digit year.

The "return" in the last line ends the routine.

The second routine uses the FormatTime function ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/FormatTime.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/FormatTime.htm)) to paste the current date in month (text), day, year format (i.e. August 7, 2012) into any document or text editing window:

```
^#F2::
FormatTime, TimeString, %A_NOW%, MMMM d, yyyy
Send, %TimeString%
return
```

In the first line Control+Windows+F2 (CTRL++F2) is used to activate the routine.

The second line uses the FormatTime functions to format the current date/time (A\_NOW) as the long date with the text month, day of month and year (i.e. August 7, 2012). The FormatTime functions takes the form:

```
FormatTime, OutputVar [, YYYYMMDDHH24MISS, Format]
```

If the date/time input (YYYYMMDDHH24MISS) is omitted, then the current computer date/time will be used. In the second line of this routine, if the %A\_NOW% is omitted the result will be identical since the same current value would be used automatically. However, the additional comma must remain in place:

```
FormatTime, TimeString, , MMMM d, yyyy
```

The third line of the routine pastes (Send) the value of the formatted date into the document.

The "return" in the last line ends the routine.

An alternative method for pasting the current date into your text editing fields is to use the current time variables mentioned previously rather than the FormatTime function:

```

^#F3::
Send, %A_DDD%, %A_MMM% %A_D%, %A_YYYY%
return

```

This works fine for the current date, but for any other date the FormatTime function should be used.

## Adding a Pop-up Calendar

This next routine may be one of the coolest date features you can add to your Windows computer with AutoHotkey. It uses one of the GUI (Graphical User Interface) ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm)) features available in AutoHotkey to display a monthly calendar (MonthCal) which can be used as a selection box for dates (see Figure 3). The GUIs available in AutoHotkey are just a few of the reasons that AutoHotkey may be the best free Windows utility ever. (More on GUIs next week.)



Figure 3. The MonthCal GUI in AutoHotkey can be used to paste selected dates into documents and text editing fields.

This routine for adding the MonthCal GUI may look a little more complicated, but it is fairly simple once broken down:

```

#^d::
Gui, Add, MonthCal, vDayPick
Gui, Add, Button, Default, Submit
Gui, Show
return
ButtonSubmit:
Gui, Submit
FormatTime, DayPick, %DayPick%, MMMM d, yyyy
Send, %DayPick%
Gui, Destroy
return

```

The first line activates the hotkeys Windows+Control+D (+CTRL+D). Notice that the order of the hotkey symbols (different from previous two routines) does not matter.

The second lines adds the MonthCal GUI. The vDayPick term creates the global variable DayPick for the results returned by MonthCal. (The v preceding the variable name makes DayPick a global variable which means that unless removed the variable will continue to be available even after the routine is completed.)

The third line adds the Submit button for capturing the selected date. The fourth line displays (Show) the activate MonthCal GUI. The return in the next line ends the initial portion of the routine while it waits for a Submit (button) from the user.

"ButtonSubmit:" activates action when the Submit button is clicked by the user. This is the submission cause by the "Gui, Submit" line. The FormatTime line is essentially the same as the line of code used in the second routine (FormatTime) formatting the contents of the DayPick variable. Next, the formatted value of the DayPick variable is pasted (Send) into the selected windows at the cursor location.

The last line, "Gui, Destroy", is used to remove the MonthCal GUI and the global variable DayPick from memory. Otherwise, an error will be generated when the routine is activated for a second time and it tries to recreate a variable (DayPick) which already exists.

If you would like to see how this routine works on your Windows computer, a compiled version of AddDate.ahk (AddDate.exe) can be downloaded in a ZIP file at [www.computoredge.com/misc/AddDate.zip](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/AddDate.zip). You do *not* need to install the AutoHotkey download first. You will most likely get warnings from your computer ("AddDate.zip is not commonly downloaded and could be dangerous.") and/or antivirus software, but I can assure you that it's OK. Extract the EXE file and double-click the file name. The AutoHotkey icon should appear in your system tray and the hotkeys listed above will be activated. The hotkeys should work in any Windows text editing window. Right-click on the icon in the system tray and select Exit when you're ready to deactivate the hotkeys.

Next time, we will explore more of the GUIs available in AutoHotkey.

If you have any questions about writing or using AutoHotkey scripts, please use the "Tell us what you think about this article!" comment link at the top or bottom of this column, or send an e-mail to AutoHotkey Questions ([ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com)).

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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](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Leaving Old Software” by Wally Wang

Leaving Old Software; What Happened to Metro?; Wimpy Calculators; The Minds of Modern Mathematics; Be a Martian; User Interface Changes; View Multiple Web Pages.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

When you get used to certain programs, they start to feel like an old pair of comfortable shoes. Even though newer, fancier programs may appear, it's often easier to stick to what you're used to rather than make an effort to change. This is why so many people stick with Windows XP because if it works, why bother changing?

In the Macintosh world, Quicken reigned supreme as the money management program of choice until Intuit allowed Quicken to languish when Apple switched from PowerPC processors to Intel processors. Despite Intuit's cash, they still haven't made the effort to release a comparable version of Quicken for the Macintosh. Their Quicken Essentials program is a much simplified version of Quicken that doesn't equal the previous version of Quicken for the Mac. For many people, Intuit's refusal to update their program has forced them to move on, and one of the more popular choices is the \$59.99 iBank ([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%252Fibank%252Fid402422773%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fibank%252Fid402422773%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)).

The interface for iBank is drastically different from Quicken, but once you get used to iBank's quirks, you'll have little trouble using iBank. If you have financial data trapped in Quicken or another file format like Microsoft Money or QIF (Quicken Interchange Format), you can import that file directly into iBank. Given the lack of options with Quicken on the Macintosh, you can't wait for Intuit any more so look at iBank or another money management program.

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While few companies are as incompetent as Intuit when it comes to updating their software, the rapid pace of operating system developments means some companies will update their software faster than others. Since you can expect Apple to keep releasing a new version of OS X every year, you can either stick with software that you're familiar with (and hope that they update it so you can use it on the latest version of OS X), or you can switch to another program that does keep up with the latest changes.

If you need to capture screenshots, one Mountain Lion compatible screen capturing program is TechSmith's \$49.99 SnagIt ([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%252Fsnagit%252Fid492729790%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fsnagit%252Fid492729790%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)). Nearly all screen capturing programs (including

Grab, the screen capturing program that comes buried inside the Utilities folder of every Macintosh) can capture the entire screen, a window, or any part of the screen that you want to capture. However, SnagIt also gives you the ability to capture scrolling screens.

Suppose you want to capture an entire Web page but only part of that page appears in your browser window at one time. With a traditional screen capture program, you'd have to capture the Web page, scroll down, capture another part of the Web page, and repeat the process to capture the entire Web page. Then you would have to manually stitch the separate images together to capture the entire page. Obviously, such a solution is clumsy, tedious and error-prone.

However with SnagIt, you can tell the program to capture the entire scrolled area. SnagIt automatically scrolls through the window until it captures everything. If you need to capture images that are often larger than the window they appear in, SnagIt's scrolling capture feature puts it above any other screen capturing program.

If you need to explain how different programs work, you'll inevitably need to capture screenshots of different program menus. With most screenshot capturing programs, you have to drag the mouse around the menu, which often clips the edges of the menu off or captures too much space around the menus, forcing you to manually trim this image.

With SnagIt, you can easily capture a menu by displaying it and then pressing Control+Shift+E (or any other keystroke combination you prefer to use instead). This menu capturing feature lets SnagIt capture a pull-down menu of any program perfectly every time.

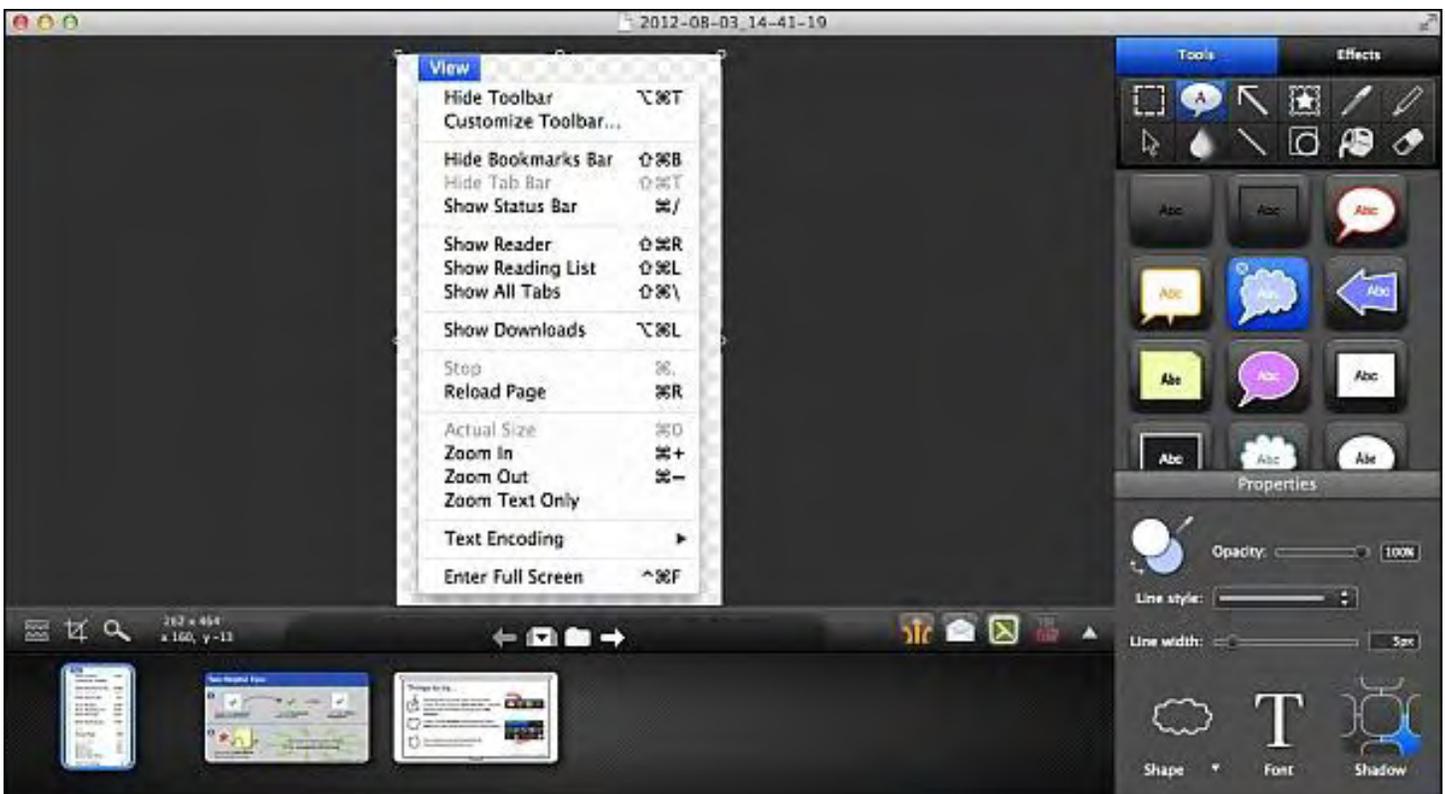


Figure 1. SnagIt makes it easy to capture pull-down menus.

Once you capture a screenshot, you can save it in a variety of common graphic file formats such as JPG, PNG, or TIFF. If you want to draw arrows or jot down comments about a screenshot, other screen capturing programs force you to edit your screenshots in a separate graphics program like Photoshop. SnagIt contains its own basic graphics editor so you can add lines, text, and other objects on your screenshots. If you save your screenshots in a special . snagproj file format, you'll be able to move and modify any objects you add to a screenshot at a later time. Then when

your image looks perfect, save it in a traditional JPEG or PNG file format to share with others.



Figure 2. SnagIt lets you add objects to your screenshots.

As long as some software publishers continue to lag behind when it comes to keeping their software up to date, you'll always have a reason to abandon your favorite software and switch to something else. If you're currently using another screen capturing program, ask yourself if it offers the same features as SnagIt. If not, then the switch to Mountain Lion might be a good time to switch to SnagIt as well.

## What Happened to Metro?

Ever since Microsoft released Windows Phone 7, they've been promoting its tile interface as Metro. When they announced Windows 8, Microsoft continued to promote the Metro interface as providing a consistent interface for multiple devices ranging from smartphones and tablets to PCs. Now Microsoft has suddenly dropped the Metro moniker ([www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/260367/windows\\_8\\_metro\\_is\\_dead\\_but\\_ui\\_still\\_needs\\_a\\_name.html](http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/260367/windows_8_metro_is_dead_but_ui_still_needs_a_name.html)), claiming it was just a code name all along. Until Microsoft comes up with another name, they're currently calling Metro the "Windows 8 Style UI."

While Microsoft isn't revealing why they needed to make this sudden name change, it does seem rather hasty and their excuse that it was just a code name doesn't make sense. Whatever you thought of the tile interface, calling it Metro made it easy to visualize. Changing the name from Metro to "Windows 8 Style UI" sounds convoluted and confusing, much like slapping the name "Windows" on everything from Windows CE, Windows Media Center, Windows Live, Windows Phone 7, Windows Azure, Windows Mail, and Windows Mobile.

With Microsoft promising Windows 8 by October 26, they still have time to choose a better name for the tile interface and prepare the world for a drastic user interface change. To really take advantage of the tile interface, you'll need a touch screen, which likely means buying a new computer or at least a touch-enabled monitor. If you try Windows 8's tile interface without a touch screen, perhaps you can come up with your own name for the interface formerly known

as Metro. Just make sure whatever name you call Windows 8's interface can be uttered in front of mixed company and small children.

If you're doubtful about Windows 8's future, you might enjoy reading Stephen Weir's book *History's Worst Decisions* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1741960517/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1741960517](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1741960517/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1741960517)) that covers such notable failures as General Custer charging into battle without adequate reinforcements, the Maginot Line that the French built to defend against German attack (the Germans simply went around it), and Britain's fortresses in Singapore that embedded massive cannons that could only shoot towards the ocean but could not turn around to defend against an invading Japanese force coming by land.

One interesting feature of this book is that it highlights the various sins that led to each disaster such as greed, sloth, gluttony, envy, or lust. By reading through some of history's biggest blunders, you can apply these principles to see where today's companies are failing. Perhaps sloth and pride could explain why Nokia and Research in Motion failed to take the iPhone seriously or envy and greed could explain why so many companies keep trying to copy Apple while pretending that they're not.

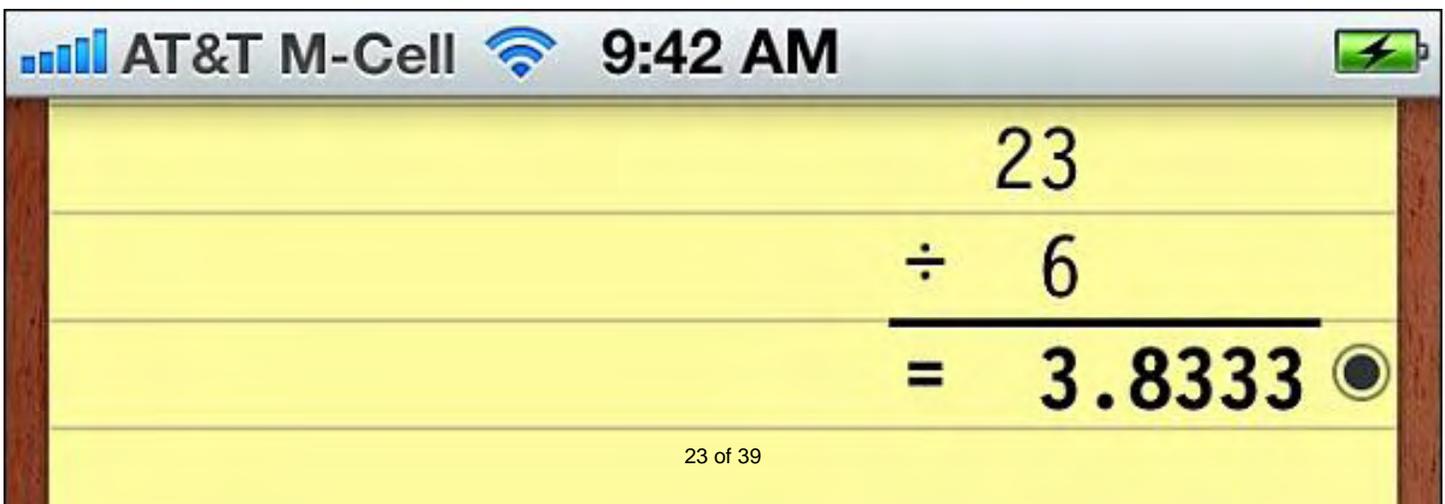
## Wimpy Calculators

When pocket calculators first appeared, people debated on whether they would help or hinder students learning math. While teachers and administrators mulled over these questions, students happily dumped their slide rulers and kept using pocket calculators anyway.

Despite being far superior to slide rulers, pocket calculators were often seen as inferior to ordinary adding machines. Punch a few numbers in an adding machine and the paper tape would record your numbers so you could review them. Punch those same numbers into a calculator and those numbers disappear, never to be seen again. That's why some of the better pocket calculators offered a paper printing option.

If you use the calculator included with the iPhone, you may run into this same problem. To mimic the paper tape of an adding machine with the convenience of a pocket calculator, try the \$4.99 Scalar 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%252Fscalar-the-better-calculator%252Fid380168978%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fscalar-the-better-calculator%252Fid380168978%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)).

Punch in numbers and a mathematical operator and Scalar displays your past calculations on a paper background so you can scroll back and review your calculations. For more flexibility, Scalar even lets you edit numbers in your past calculations so if you find you mistyped a number, just select it and replace it with the correct number. Now you don't have to retype your entire calculation all over again.



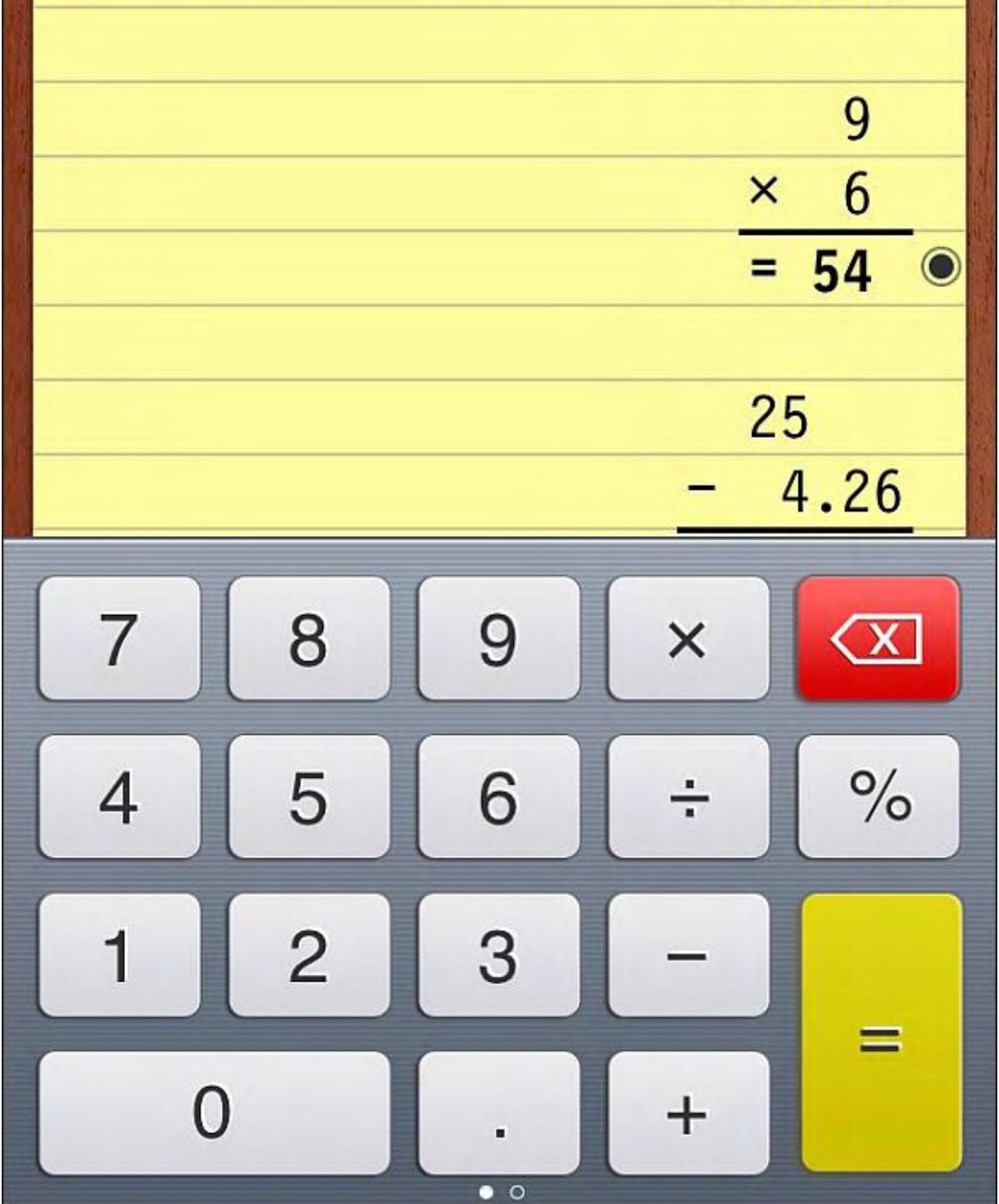


Figure 3. Scalar displays your previous calculations on simulated paper tape.

Scalar doesn't just do simple addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Swipe the keypad to the side and you can use its more sophisticated keypad that includes square roots, cosine and logarithms.



23

÷ 6

= 3.8333

9

× 6

= 54

25

- 4.26

sin

cos

tan

ln

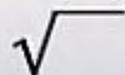


arcsin

arccos

arctan

log



x<sup>2</sup>

x<sup>3</sup>

exp

lg





Figure 4. Scalar offers sophisticated mathematical functions.

If you're tired of the wimpy calculator that comes on the iPhone, you may want to upgrade to Scalar instead. If you have an iPad, you don't even have a built-in calculator so you might want to try Scalar if you need its features. Calculator apps may sound simple, but you'll be surprised at the variety if you only take the time to look.

## The Minds of Modern Mathematics

Attend practically any class in mathematics and you'll be bombarded with dry formulas and confusing symbols devoid of any sense of humanity or rationale behind it. While traditional education tends to drain any subject of excitement, math can actually be a fascinating topic once you understand the people behind the subject. While everyone remembers Lewis Carroll for *Alice in Wonderland* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0486275434/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0486275434](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0486275434/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0486275434)), too many English majors ignore the fact that Lewis Carroll was also a philosopher and a mathematician. To study his literary work while ignoring his mathematical background simply gives you a limited view of his life.

To help put the humanity back into mathematics, IBM offers a free iPad app called Minds of Modern Mathematics ([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%252Fminds-of-modern-mathematics%252Fid432359402%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fminds-of-modern-mathematics%252Fid432359402%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)). While the app is little more than a timeline showing the progress mathematics, it does give you the names and history behind the major mathematicians of history. Just browsing through this timeline can help you realize that actual people thought about and developed today's math against the background of history, which can help make math seem less like a cold, heartless subject and more like the inquisitive and interesting topic that it really is.



Figure 5. IBM's free Minds of Modern Mathematics displays the history of math as a timeline on an iPad.

By seeing the history behind the mathematicians who shaped our world, you can get a better understanding and appreciation for mathematics. While some people fear math, it's nothing more than a way to think, which explains why so many mathematicians were also philosophers. Of course, if you don't want to think, you can find plenty of organizations who love people who can't think logically so by staying ignorant, you'll always have plenty of company.

## Be a Martian

While most taxpayer money either gets wasted on useless projects, disappears into the ether like the billions unaccounted for in rebuilding Iraq, or used to bail out the people responsible for creating the financial crisis in the first place, sometimes taxpayer money actually goes to something useful. If you're interested in Mars, you might want to download NASA's free iPhone app called Be a Martian ([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%252Ffnasa-be-a-martian%252Fid543704769%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Ffnasa-be-a-martian%252Fid543704769%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)).



Figure 6. NASA's free iPhone app provides information about exploring Mars.

Through this app you can view the latest pictures of Mars (and look for evidence of intelligent life since it's unlikely you'll find much intelligent life in Washington D.C.). You can also browse through the history of past Mars missions so you can see what scientists know about Mars from each mission and watch animation to see a view of Mars that's impossible to capture with any camera until we actually start putting people on Mars.



Figure 7. Learn about past Mars missions.

Even if you're just mildly interested in space exploration, NASA's Be a Martian iPhone app is free so you might as well get it since your taxpayer money helped create it. By exploring NASA's app, you just might find yourself curious about other planets in our solar system and look at science as a fascinating and interesting topic that can be far more intellectually and emotionally satisfying than following the latest celebrity gossip all the time.

In case you're wondering what type of computer some of the smart people at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory used to track the Mars Curiosity rover as it descended to the planet's surface, you can see this picture of people cheering while using Macintosh laptops.

Then again, with more people using the Macintosh, the odds are higher that fewer people every year will be using a Windows PC. Research firm Canalsys says that Hewlett-Packard experienced a 11.3 percent decline in PC sales ([www.insidermonkey.com/blog/apple-inc-nasdaqapl-is-killing-dell-inc-and-hewlett-packard-16016/](http://www.insidermonkey.com/blog/apple-inc-nasdaqapl-is-killing-dell-inc-and-hewlett-packard-16016/)) year-over-year in the second quarter 2012 while Dell had a 10.9 percent decrease. In the same period, Apple's sales increased 60 percent during that same period so you can expect to see more Macintosh computers in the future.



Figure 8. Many people at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory use a Macintosh laptop.

## User Interface Changes

If you've ever used Time Machine, you know how you can choose a time period in the past to view the contents of your computer on that date. Then you can pick a file from that previous time and restore it to your computer, essentially letting you retrieve a previous version of a file.

When Apple released Lion (OS X 10.7), they introduced a unique feature that allows certain programs to offer the same feature with individual documents. For example, if you use Pages, you can click on the File menu and choose Revert To so you can choose an earlier date for a file. Now you can examine your current file with the file from this earlier date and selectively copy text from an older file so you can paste it in your current file.

Such a feature can prove handy for protecting your work, but many people got confused when Apple changed the Save command in the File menu to Save a Version. Fortunately in Mountain Lion (OS X 10.8), Apple changed this command back to the familiar Save command.

If something as simple as changing Save to Save a Version could confuse and annoy so many people, what will greater user interfaces changes do? Ubuntu Linux found that out the hard way when they created a Unity user interface that caused users to switch to Linux Mint, which offered a more familiar interface. Linux Mint is now more popular than Ubuntu Linux, all because people disliked learning a new user interface without a compelling reason to do so.

So when Windows 8 and its tile interface arrives, be prepared to watch people complain, scream and argue about the pros and cons of this interface formerly known as Metro. Whatever happens, it's a safe bet that Windows 8's user interface won't satisfy everyone. The big question is how many people will it satisfy and will that be enough?

\* \* \*

Safari 6 offers a new way to view multiple Web pages. While you can still display and click a tab to view a different Web page, Safari 6 now offers a special Show All Tabs feature, buried near the upper right corner of the screen.

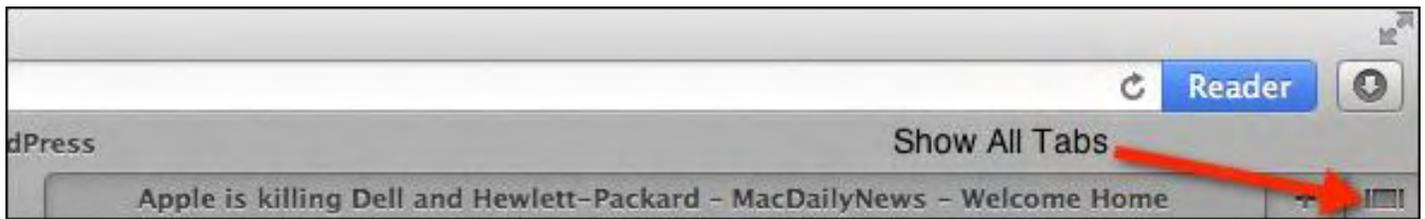


Figure 9. The Show All Tabs.

Click the Show All Tabs and Safari 6 now displays all your open Web pages as images you can scroll through sideways. Now you can quickly flip through your open Web pages until you see the one you want.



Figure 10. The Show All Tabs displays Web pages as scrolling images.

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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908))
- My New 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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X))
- Steal This Computer Book* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050))
- Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987))

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

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

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

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

***How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To)*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M))

***Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362](http://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](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI))

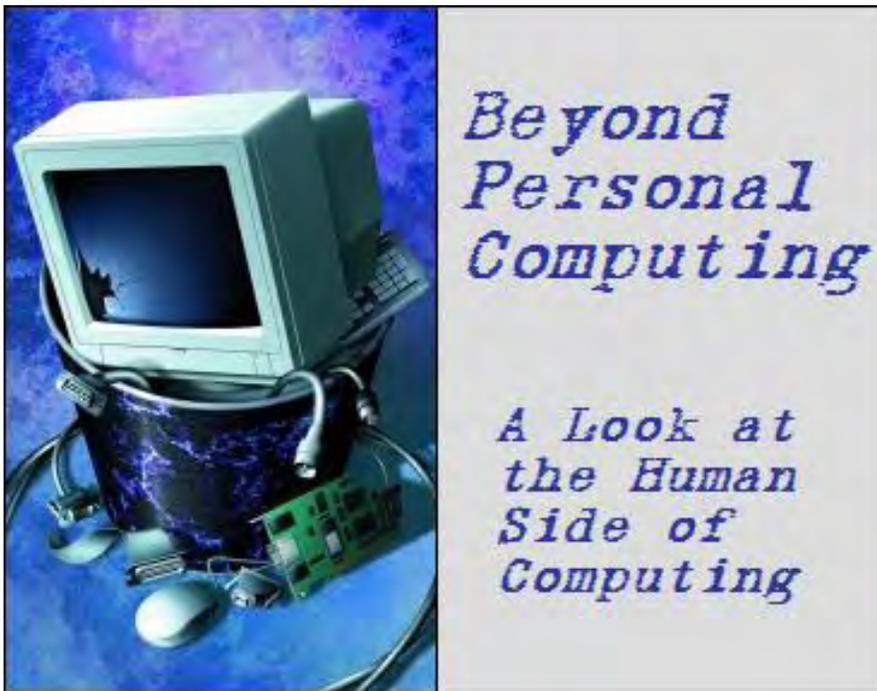
***The 15-Minute Movie Method*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8))

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method. ([www.15minutemoviemethod.com/](http://www.15minutemoviemethod.com/))" Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com).

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## Beyond Personal Computing

“Advertising and Marketing: Modern Life As a Walking Target” by Marilyn K. Martin

Amusing anecdotes about advertising and marketing online.

There's a not-so-subtle part of life, especially on the Internet, called advertising and marketing. It's about data-miners discovering that you loved pistachio-raspberry ice cream in middle school, and are now plastering "mango ice cream!" ads on every Internet screen you visit. It's about Web designers asking if you want "the full monty" on your Web site for your Au Natural Personal Products. It's about buying a few corner ads for your *My Tiny Terrorist* book, based on your rambunctious 18-month old, and getting ICE Flags on every site you visit after that.

For even casual Internet surfers, every site you visit is now a carnival shooting-game full of pop-up, drop-down, slide-sideways advertising, where you race to find those close-ad Xs in under fifteen swear words. And that's not to mention the screens that won't even open until you first watch a 30 second ad for products you have absolutely no use for. Or when your cursor slips from the up/down bar and you accidentally click on a sidebar ad, so you go from reading about artichoke-origami to a raucous motorcycle ad that nearly gives you a heart attack.

Admit it—it's war! Amid your Internet wanderings are hoards of stealthy advertising and marketing people trying to grab your attention—and time—as you frantically search for past legal cases on "suing for insects-in-donuts," or emergency antidotes for your kid who just ate a small floating candle thinking it was candy.

### How Many Social Media Experts Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

"It's not about the change. It's not about the light bulb. It's about engaging people to talk about the light bulb, and how it can improve their lives if they share their positive experiences with 600 of their closest friends."

### Ads For Hourly Advertising Writers

"Need marketing approaches for successful small farmers who don't spend much time on the Internet, or carry around anything but an unsmart cell phone. Want to wean them away from their usual buyers. Must not mention wrathful weather or livestock oozing antibiotics. E-mail Come-And-Get-It Buffets, Inc."

"Need new advertising approach for glance-and-leave X-Geners who love to travel. Full nudity is discouraged, especially displaying frost-bite. Animation, on-spot video games and non-specific celebrity gossip will be considered. E-

mail Iceland-In-Summer Travel Bureau."

"Desperately need new marketing approach for blind consumers. Must be enticing audio blend of announcer and appealing, background vehicle sounds. E-mail The-Country-Tire-And-Lube Store."

## They Own the Bathroom Mirrors Too?

Now you lucky travelers can stand in line in the Chicago O'Hare Airport bathrooms and be entertained with advertising videos ([www.jaunted.com/story/2012/2/6/152122/2862/travel/Up+Close+with+the+Annoying,+Magic+Ad+Mirrors+of+Chicago-O%27Hare+Airport](http://www.jaunted.com/story/2012/2/6/152122/2862/travel/Up+Close+with+the+Annoying,+Magic+Ad+Mirrors+of+Chicago-O%27Hare+Airport)) as you hop from one foot to the other in the I-gotta-go dance. These are public bathroom "advertising mirrors," and they'll undoubtedly be popping up elsewhere sooner or later as the ultimate "trapped audience" venue.

They work on motion-sensors, so as you stand in line meters away, you'll get to see moving advertisements as you creep toward an empty toilet cubicle. Which is apt to make you tired and grumpy travelers even more tired and grumpy. Especially since you'd rather check your disheveled airline-pillow-hair in passing, instead of hearing about how the insurance you have will destroy your kids' entire future. When, post-cubicle, you finally get in front of those bathroom mirrors, there's a slight delay before you can see your own annoyed face, and the advertising just shrinks to a square at the bottom of the mirror. Oh—and the mirror glass is tinted, which means you ladies wanting to retouch your makeup may unwittingly end up with that gothic, makeup-for-midnight look.

## How Many Advertising Agencies Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

"That depends. Let's do a video-conference and discuss your budget."

## Videos as Viral Advertising

A site called Visible Measures ([www.visiblemeasures.com/adage](http://www.visiblemeasures.com/adage)) features a Top Ten weekly list of advertising videos that are so unique and appealing that they go viral. The #1 viral video for the week of July 11, 2012, was Angry Birds, Space. A NASA astronaut on the International Space Station does physics experiments in a weightless environment, using Rovio's Angry Birds characters. By the end, there has been clever physics lessons while advertising Rovio's newest game, Angry Birds in Space.

## Classical and Sadly True Marketing Campaign Failures

- 1) Holiday Inn: Transsexual Failure. An attractive woman walks along, as subtitles tell how much each body part cost. A man walks up to her and brags he never forgets a face. Suddenly he displays a look of horror at the maybe-woman as he sputters, "Bob? Bob Johnson?"
- 2) Calvin Klein: Pedophilia Failure. Half-dressed teenagers being asked sleazy questions prompted the FBI to investigate. Klein killed the campaign and issued an apology to the U.S.
- 3) McDonalds: Lingo Failure. Some ad exec decided to incorporate his teen son's lusty "I'd hit it!" into an ad campaign for cheeseburgers. Confused consumers couldn't connect the street-lingo for drugs and sex—to burgers. Duh!

## How Many E-mail Marketers Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

"Wait a minute—Did the light bulb just opt in? Cuz we can't spam light bulbs just cuz you want us to."

## Smelly Products No Amount of Advertising Could Save

How about the guy who thought "charcoal underwear" and "charcoal filter nose plugs" to use against flatulence was going to make him millions? He thought, "Heck! Everyone farts. And everyone hates to smell it, whether it's a personal-emission or from someone else. The public will love it!" After a dozen ad campaigns centering on flatulence-absorbing charcoal, some serious and some humorous, the public was laughing alright. But not buying.

In 2001, DigiScents introduced a computer peripheral designed to emit smells to go with sites visited or e-mails opened, called iSmell. It was to fill in that smell-experience we didn't know we were missing online. The device held a cartridge carrying 128 different primary smells, to be emitted in various combinations. Unfortunately, iSmell never made it beyond prototype, and PC World went on to call it one of "The World's 25 Worst Tech Products." Ever.

## How Many Web Designers Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

"Unknown. But the designer made your site so incredibly cool and interactive, that the next person to visit your room/cubicle/basement would love to change that bulb for you!"

## Web Sites: How to Market Yourself or Your Product

As much as you hate ads flashing all over whatever site you visit online, there may come a point where your armadillo-tails collection or start-up to sell hamster trampolines needs a Web site for your brilliance to be sold as real products. How can you design (or have designed) the smartest, cleverest, most eye-popping Web site imaginable? Probably easiest if you just avoid these classic mistakes:

- 1) Your URL is funnyfacemakeup.com, and your Web site opens on a picture of something barely related, like your five-year-old's fingerpaint handprint.
- 2) Your URL wasn't beta-tested—by reading it out loud. That happened to Pen Island, whose unfortunate URL was penisland.com.
- 3) You design a super-clever opening screen—you think—with scattered numbers and letters, and instruct the visitor to arrange them into the proper codeword that will take them inside. Even Mensa types will growl in frustration and exit without even trying.
- 4) Don't clutter your opening screen with customer quotes, your ten-paragraph bio, sidebar ads, or awards and recommendations to the point a visitor has to search in frustration for your actual product or service being sold.
- 5) Don't get too cute with the links to the rest of your site. "Buzz Me" might not be understood in Argentina, for someone just looking for Contact information. And "Complaint Dept" that links to a photo of a garbage can may not be as hilarious as it was to you and your friends on beer-and-poker night.
- 6) Keep your Web site up-to-date. Visitors who see "Personal Musings - 1989" may not stick around long enough to check out whatever you are selling.

(Many of these jokes and anecdotes appear on multiple online jokes sites. But special thanks to wired.com (*wired.com*), searchenginejournal.com (*searchenginejournal.com*), and prospectmx.com (*prospectmx.com*).

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Humor-Computer-and-Internet-Anecdotes-and-Jokes_c16.htm?sourceCode=writer)).

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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

"Nexus 7," "Fat Finger Syndrome Cures," "Simple Digital Photo Editor, Irfanview Free!"

### Nexus 7

[Regarding Jack Dunning's July 27 article, "Google Nexus 7 Tablet Compared to the Amazon Kindle Fire":]

There are two things that are missing on the Nexus 7 and that is it does not support PDF files. Also it does not have a Micro SD card slot. These are two important features to have missing. Both My Kindle Fires have these features and I find them very handy to have. I can read my PDF files on either one. I also can put my music on a SD card and not clog up my drive.

-Melba Kalaher, CO

*While I agree with your sentiment about the lack of an SD card slot on the Nexus 7, perhaps you own the Barnes and Noble NOOK or another Android tablet rather than the Kindle Fire. The current version of the Kindle Fire does not have a Micro SD slot ([www.pcworld.com/article/258508/nexus\\_7\\_tablet\\_vs\\_kindle\\_fire\\_vs\\_the\\_rest\\_spec\\_smackdown\\_chart.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/258508/nexus_7_tablet_vs_kindle_fire_vs_the_rest_spec_smackdown_chart.html)). (Check "Expandable Storage" in the chart located in the linked article.) Plus, I think that you'll find that Adobe provides free PDF readers ([get.adobe.com/reader/otherversions/](http://get.adobe.com/reader/otherversions/)) for all types of devices including the Nexus 7.*

*-Jack Dunning*

### Fat Finger Syndrome Cures

[Regarding the July 27 Digital Dave column:]

I recently bought at eBay auction 12 styluses for about \$10. They work well enough and for the whole lot paid about the price of one low-end one (about \$10) from a local office supply company.

And they come in vivid colors to match any mood. I think I just finished my Christmas shopping as a result.

They work wonders to cure the Fat Finger Syndrome.

-Chris, San Diego, CA

### Simple Digital Photo Editor, Irfanview Free!

[Regarding the July 27 Digital Dave column:]

I've been using Irfanview ([www.irfanview.com/](http://www.irfanview.com/)) for doing quick modifications of digital images (camera or scanner, etc). It's free, has all the commonly wanted features, easy cropping, resizing, saving as smaller size for e-mails/Web

pages, removing red-eye, as well as color, tint, saturation, gamma, brightness, contrast adjustments.

Best of all, it's *free* and relatively simple to use, versus some of the high-end programs to do everything and cost an arm and a leg.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

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*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](http://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](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit ComputerEdge E-Books ([www.computoredgebooks.com](http://www.computoredgebooks.com)).

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