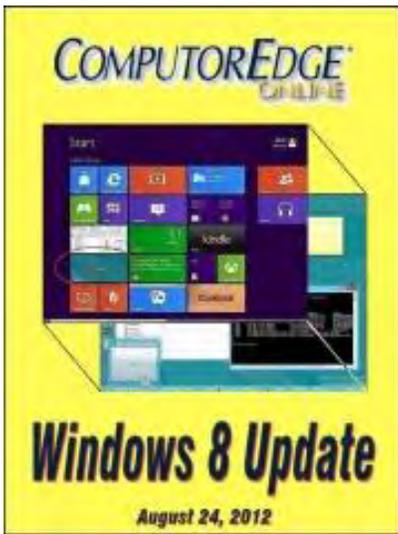# *ComputorEdge™ Online — 08/24/12*

This issue:
Windows 8 Update

Windows 8 is scheduled for release on October 26. Get the latest news and what you need to know.

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

"Programming for Morons," "E-Readers/Tablet Computers," "Canalys PC(?) Sales Quotes Misleading"

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Digital Dave

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

Changing File Associations; Is Safari Slow?; Upgrade to Windows 8?

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a fairly new computer running Windows 7. It came with the trial of Microsoft Office but I never installed/activated it, I use OpenOffice. My problem is that when I open an (as an example) .xls file (from my directories or an e-mail attachment), the computer wants to install Microsoft Office to start the MS version (Excel). I have to close out and start OpenOffice first and then load the file.

I know I can change the individual file associations, but it would be very tedious to change each possible file extention to the OpenOffice version. Is there a method (or program) to change all the extentions to the OO version globally?

John Carlson
Vista, CA

Dear John,

Yes, there is a way in Windows 7 to change all the file associations for a program. It's found in the Control Panel via Program =>Default Programs => Set your default programs. (You can also find Default Programs by typing "default" in the Start Menu "Search programs and files" field, then selecting it from the list.) Next, select "Set your default programs" from the top of the list opening the Set Program Defaults window (see Figure 2).
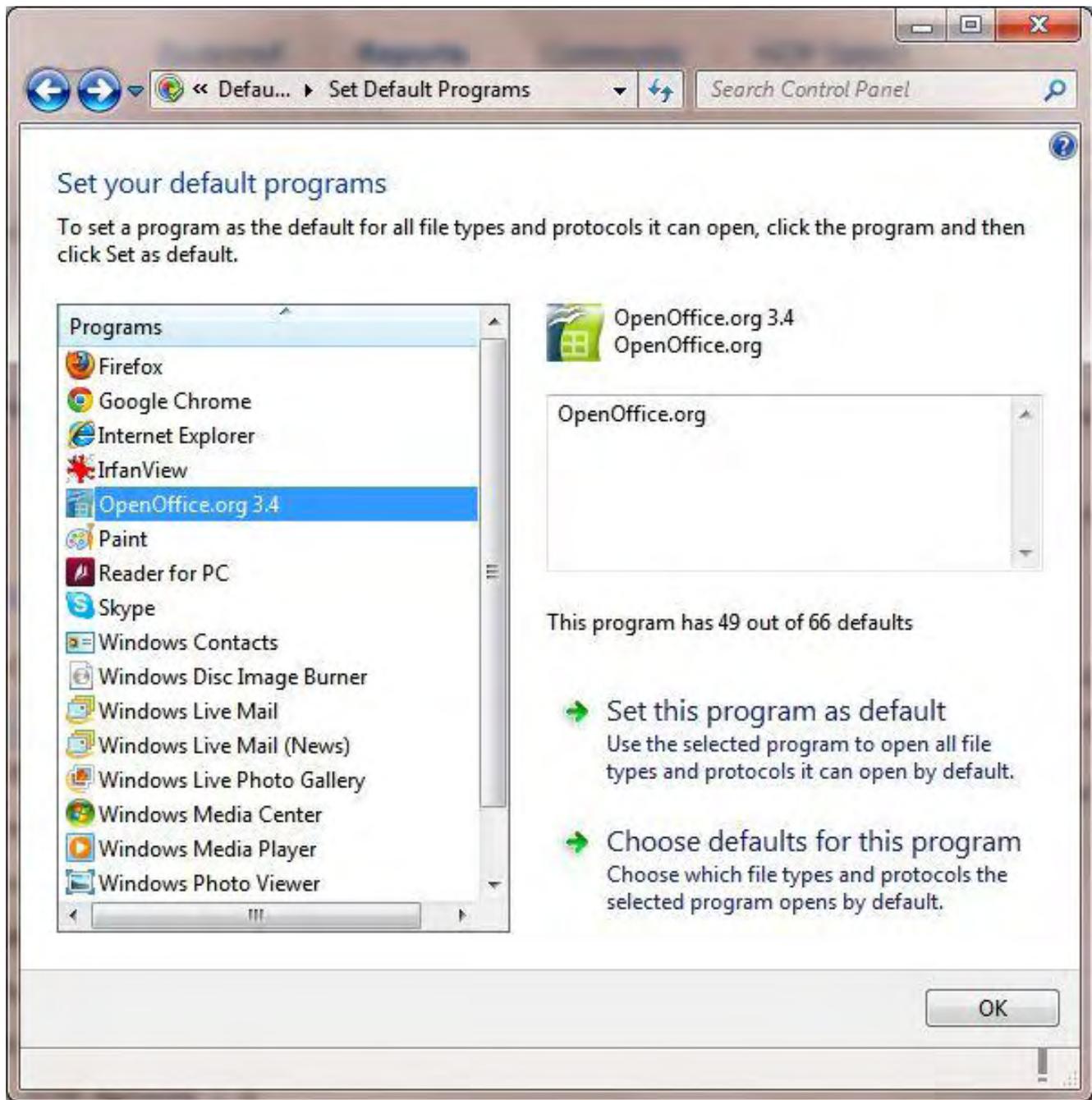
Figure 1. The Set Program Default window in Windows 7.

Windows will load the list of programs which allow the setting of multiple file associations. When you select OpenOffice.org, you will see the number of program default extensions assigned and the number of possible default extensions displayed just below the little window on the right side, as shown in Figure 1.

Notice that I only have 49 out of 66 extension defaults assigned to OpenOffice.org. The reason for that is I use other programs for specific tasks, such as image manipulation, for which I don't want the files extensions assigned to OpenOffice.org Draw. If I assign all possible extensions to OpenOffice.org, then I will be opening Draw when actually I want another program graphics program, such as IrfanView. However, if you do want to set all the default extensions for the selected program, click the "Set this program as default" link. But, before you do, review the following.

In my situation, I would select "Choose defaults for this program" to open the Set Program Associations window. See Figure 2.
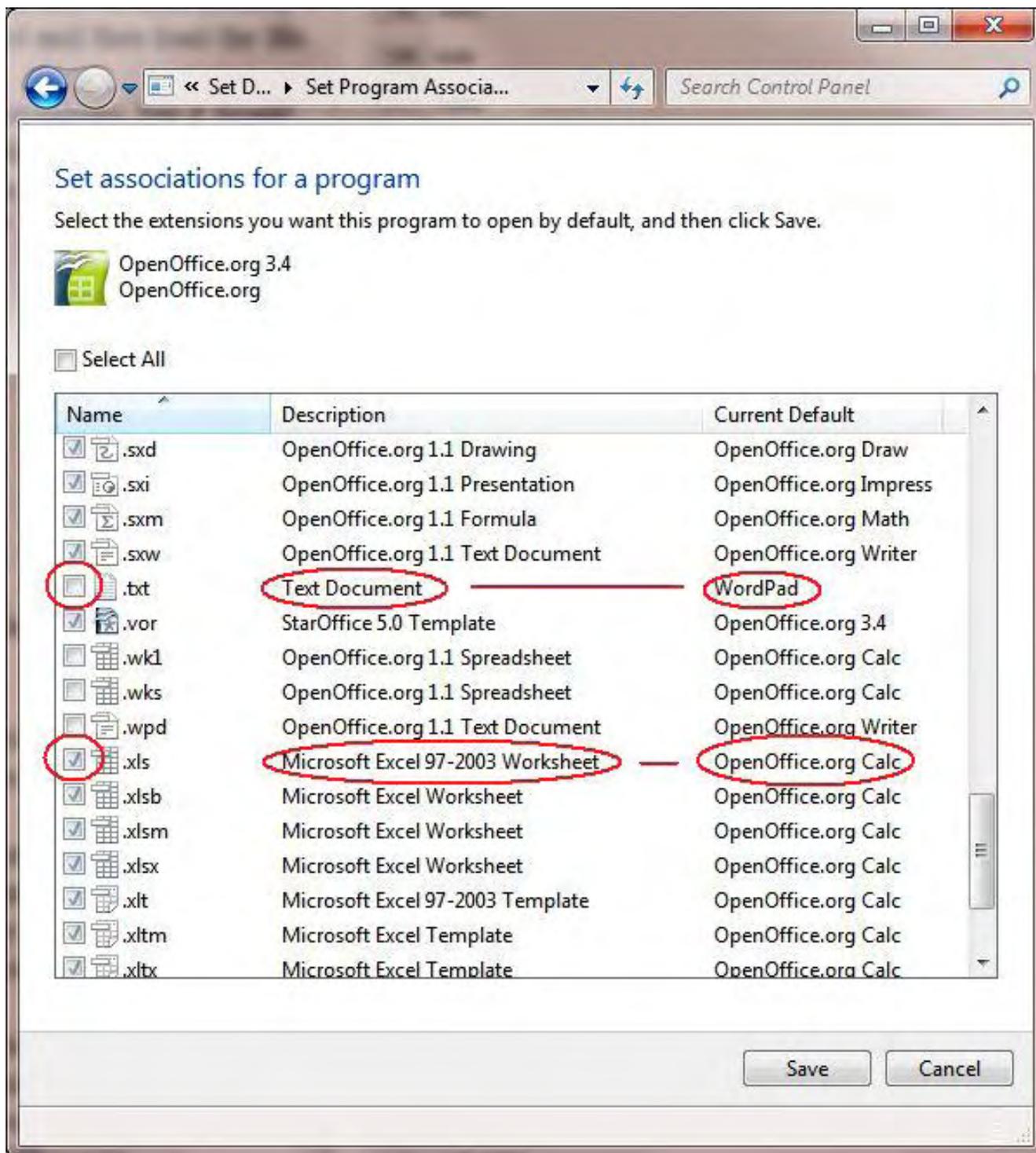
Figure 2. The Set Program Associations windows in Windows 7.

This way I select only those file extensions that I plan to associate with OpenOffice.org. I would advise you to do this rather than set all the default extensions. For example, some of the extensions (htm, html) could affect when your default browser will open.

Notice that the window displays a description of the file type as well as the current default program. Review the list before executing any mass default change. Checking the Microsoft Excel Worksheet extensions and saving any changes may be all you need or want. You could be surprised at the aggravation you may cause yourself by changing everything to OpenOffice.org.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Is it just on my computer or is Apple's Safari browser really *slow?*

Larry McLaughlin
Aurora, CO

Dear Larry,

I reviewed a number of browser speed tests found on the Web. While Safari is not the slowest browser—that award generally goes to Internet Explorer—it certainly doesn't keep up with Opera or Google Chrome. However, it is difficult to do one-to-one comparisons because the type of browser speed test (startup, tab loading, page loading) does matter, as well as the computer it is running on.

Safari and Chrome both run on the WebKit platform, so they should have similar rendering speeds. However, the relationship between the WebKit group and Apple has been rocky (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WebKit#Split_development*). Probably it's tailoring that Apple does to Safari (or Google does to Chrome) that affects so many of the benchmark tests.

Also, how you set up the browser can affect performance. If you add extensions, some of them can really slow down browser operations, especially if they need to access other servers periodically. For example, I've noted that certain grammar checkers when enabled slow things to a crawl. You may want to check your add-ons and disable the ones you don't need.

One of the most common recommendations for speeding up Safari is "empty the cache." The cache is where copies of Web pages are kept to make accessing them faster. Apparently over time the cache gets too big or becomes corrupted causing your computer to spend more time searching the cache than it would take to load directly from the Web. It seems ironic that a feature that's designed to speed up operations could actually slow it down.

Yes, it may also be your computer. However, if other browsers are fast, then the problem must rest with Safari or how its setup. I find it worthwhile to have many browsers available. My default browser is Chrome, but I during the Olympics I couldn't play the live videos on the NBC site. The login through my cable provider wouldn't work in Chrome. I switched to Internet Explorer and was able to see all the videos—both live and replays.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have enjoyed (and found useful) every issue of ComputorEdge *(formerly* The Byte Buyer*, circa May 16, 1983). I have read every issue since then and have gleaned some real useful information.*

My question is this: In December of 2011 I bought an HP Touchsmart 320 running Windows 7 Home Premium. I really like the touchscreen interface. In another computer magazine I read that Windows 8 will be released for $40 in late October. As a technology freak (grin) I am wondering how you feel about Windows 8 and how (if I decide to get the upgrade) will it work for me?

I know you can't answer specific questions but was wondering what your general take on this "new" operating system is. Also, how difficult do you think the learning curve will be?

Again, thanks for all you do.

James Murphy
El Cajon, CA

Dear James,

This is indeed a timely question. Jack Dunning informs me that he is doing a Windows 8 update in this issue. While I don't agree with every point that he makes, he has a useful view of Windows 8 and does a decent job of introducing it in his e-book, *Misunderstanding Windows 8 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/ B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007RMCRH8&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9- 20*).*

While I question Microsoft's rationale for adding a tablet touchscreen interface to all versions of Windows 8, in the long run I don't see it as a major hurdle. Eliminating the Start Menu on the Windows Desktop is upsetting to many people, but quite frankly the old Start Menu is a mostly redundant feature in earlier Windows versions. There is little that can be done with a Start Menu which can't be replicated on either the Desktop, the Taskbar, in Windows Explorer, or all three. Using it is more a matter of personal preference and not necessity. This may be heresy, but I'm not bothered by the missing Start Menu in Windows 8.

As for the new Metro Start Screen, while operating it with a mouse is a little annoying, it will add much more utility and flexibility to Windows computers while standardizing the user interface between Windows PCs and tablets. It remains to be seen whether this is important or not.

Right now you learn nothing about using an OS X Macintosh computer by owning an iOS iPad tablet. They are two incompatible operating systems with no real similarities. If Microsoft pulls it off, any owner of a Windows 8 tablet will learn techniques directly transferable to Windows 8 PCs—and vice versa. Is this a big deal? I don't know yet.

Windows 8 has performed a little better than Windows 7 on various bench tests. Most people will see quicker start-up times and more speed than they had with Windows 7 on the same hardware. All in all, I would say that Windows 8 appears to be a decent operating system. (I reserve the right to reconsider this opinion after I've spent more time with Windows 8 and installed it on some older machines.)

As for the Windows 8 learning curve, if you're already using Windows 7, you're 95% of the way there. The other five percent is using the Metro Start Screen. While the Start Screen may take a little time to know, it's no more difficult than a child's game. It seems pretty simple and intuitive.

It does seem that you might be a good candidate for the $40 upgrade, especially since your computer already supports the touch technology which is integral to the Windows 8 Start Screen. I notice that the HP Touchsmart 320 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005M1AA02/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B005M1AA02&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9- 20*) is already being touted as a candidate for upgrading to Windows 8. I suspect that you shouldn't have too many problems since both HP and Microsoft will be working to make the transition as easy as possible for touch capable computers. However, if you are dependent upon this computer, I would wait about a month before attempting an upgrade to Windows 8.

Anytime there is a new software release, there are bugs—no matter how well tested. If you wait a little while, then enough time will have passed for HP Windows 8 horror stories to hit the Web. It will save you a lot of headaches if you let other early adopters deal with the initial turmoil. If after a month the Web is silent about HP/Windows 8 problems, then it is probably safe to go ahead—although there are no guarantees.

If you are truly "a technology freak" then, at some point, you will be compelled to give Windows 8 a try.

Digital Dave

Microsoft's Windows 8 Release Is Closing In

"Do You Need Windows 8? How Is Windows 8 Different? How Can You Get It?" by Jack Dunning

> "Microsoft is betting heavily on this two interface (Metro and Windows Desktop) approach to Windows 8. There are many people predicting that it will be a failure in the vein of some earlier mistakes (e. g. Windows ME, Vista). Others think that it's no big deal."

On October 26, 2012 Windows 8 will be released. The new Microsoft Surface Tablet goes on sale the same day. Manufacturers are already installing Windows 8 RTM (release to manufacturing) on new model computers. That means there will be no major changes in Windows 8 between now and the release date. In October, Windows 8 computers will appear in stores everywhere creating a new set of questions for computer buyers. Here is what you need to know.

Do I Need Windows 8?

Your first question is "Do I need Windows 8?" The quick answer is "No." Certainly you don't *need* Windows 8. Windows 7 and all the alternative operating systems work just fine. I expect that Windows 7 computers will continue to be available for many years to come. The introduction of Windows 8 will not be an earthshaking event. If Windows 8 one day becomes the accepted operating system, it will be an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, process. Windows 7 is only now overtaking Windows XP. See Figure 1 from NetMarketShare (*www.netmarketshare.com/operating-system-market-share.aspx? qprid=11&qpcustomb=0&qptimeframe=M&qpsp=151&qpnp=12*). Windows XP has at least a few years of life remaining. (Ten years from now, I'm sure that we will still find XP machines up and running.)

Figure 1. Windows 7 has caught up with Windows XP in market share. It's expected to pass Windows XP in August 2012.

No, you don't need Windows 8, but you may want it.

How Is Windows 8 Different?

In many ways, Windows 8 is almost identical to Windows 7. The majority of Windows 7 programs should also run on Windows 8. However there is one radical difference. Microsoft removed the traditional Start Button and associated Start Menu located in the lower left-hand corner of the Windows Desktop from Windows 8. The replacement for the old Start Menu is the Metro Start Screen—a tablet interface which runs a new set of apps separate from the programs run in the Windows Desktop (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Windows 8 Start Screen (Metro), which appears to lay on top of "Windows", is a separate interface

from the Windows 8 Desktop.

*Note: I know that Microsoft has stopped calling the new interface the "Metro" Start Screen due to a trademark dispute (*www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2408042,00.asp*), but until they come up with something else, I'll continue calling it Metro. It is important to clearly separate the identification of the Start Screen from the Windows Desktop. There are important differences not only in how they work, but also in how the computers and tablets will be packaged for sale. When we think of "Windows", we visualize the Windows Desktop. Yet, tablets will be available with only the Metro interface. That means you will see Windows 8 tablets (Windows 8 RT) with no "Windows" Desktop—just the Metro interface—Windows without "Windows."*

The Windows 8 Metro Start Screen is first an operating system, Windows 8 RT (Run Time) for tablet computers and other mobile devices. It is designed for touch screens and one-handed computing, although it works almost as well with a mouse and keyboard. It may be intuitive for a touchscreen, but is a little less so on computers when moving between the Start Screen and the Windows Desktop, real "Windows." (The secret to making Windows 8 simple on computers is the Windows key (). From any app including the Windows Desktop, you can return to the Start Screen by hitting the WIN key (). Hit it again to return to your last app.)

"Microsoft has decided to call the new Windows 8 Start Screen the In-Your-Face Interface."

[If you want to learn more about how Windows 8 and the Metro interface works, see the e-book Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8 (*www. amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007RMCRH8)—also available at ComputorEdge E-books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm*), as well as Apple iTunes (*itunes.apple.com/us/book/misunderstanding-windows-8/id517331413?mt=11*), and Barnes and Noble e-books (*www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463*).]*

Windows Aero, the funky Desktop graphics effects which started with Windows Vista and continued in Windows 7, is now gone. From my perspective, it's not much of a loss. But, if you use features such as 3D Flip, then it could be an annoyance.

The final release version (*/www.pcworld.com/article/260582/windows_8_what_weve_learned_lately.html*) includes new Movie Maker and Photo Gallery. "Movie Maker has new features like video stabilization, audio waveforms and text effects, while Photo Gallery now has an 'Auto Collage' feature and built-in sharing to Vimeo."

Also, note that Windows Media Center (*windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-center/get-it*) is not officially included with Windows 8. However, you can add it free if you take part in the $39.99 upgrade offer (see below). Once the upgrade period expires, Microsoft plans to charge a fee for Windows Media Center. Go figure.

Windows RT (Metro only) includes a scaled-down Microsoft Office, plus there are more background options for the Start Screen.

Windows 8 Performance Versus Windows 7

In almost all categories, Windows 8 outperforms Windows 7 (*www.techspot.com/review/561-windows8-vs-windows7/page2.html*). In most benchmark tests conducted by TechSpot Windows 8 ran better than Windows 7, including Windows 8 boots faster (see Figure 3) and runs browsers faster (see Figure 4)—especially the Google Chrome browser.
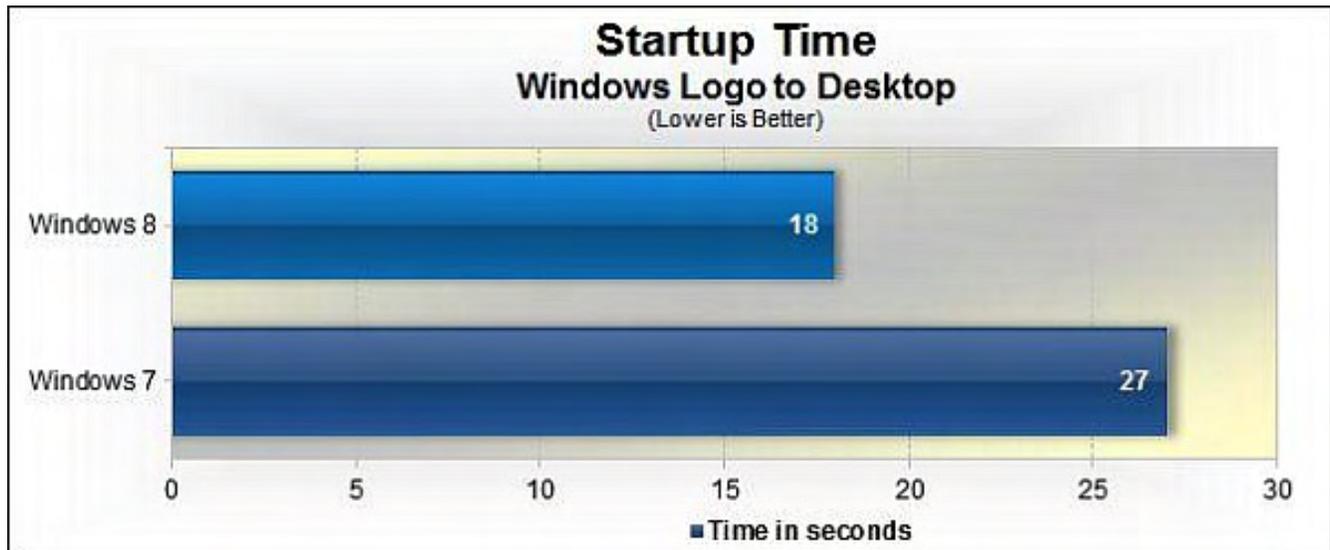

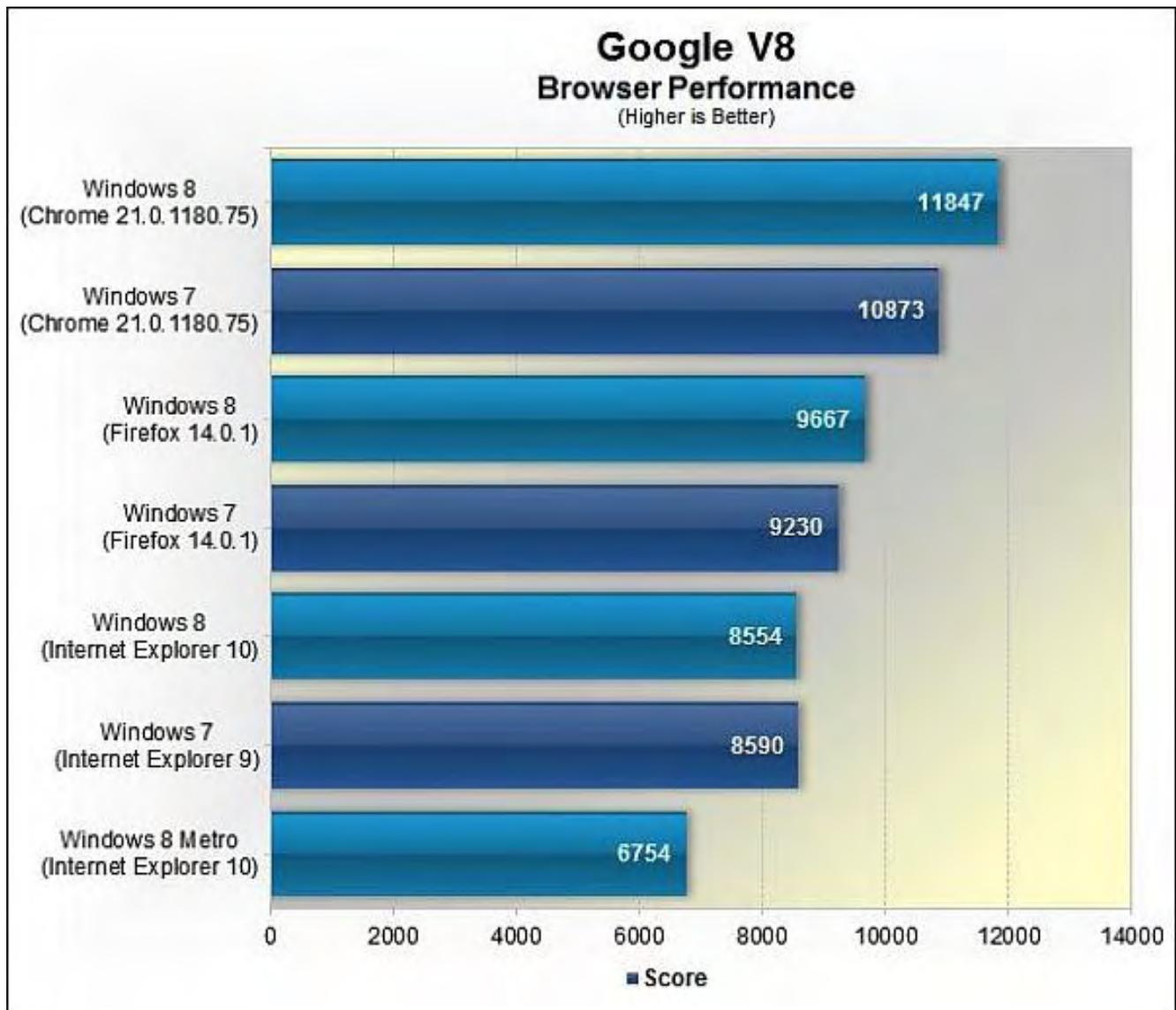Figure 3. TechSpot Windows 8 Versus Windows 7 Startup Time tests.

Figure 4. TechSpot Windows 8 Versus Windows 7 Browser Performance tests.

If you're looking to squeeze every bit of possible speed out of your computer, then there may be a compelling reason for you to upgrade to Windows 8.

While I'm not planning to run out and buy a new Windows 8 computer right away, I do have an old functioning Windows Vista machine which is a ripe candidate for upgrading. (See the $39.99 Windows 8 upgrade deal below.) If the reports about Windows 8 performance are true, then I should be able to turn that sluggish Vista computer into a useful computer again for only 40 bucks. There is no touchscreen, but it should serve my purposes, at least initially. (I will report back on any success in late October or Early November.) It's possible that Windows 8 will revitalize quite a few old computers.

Windows 8 Versions and Pricing

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

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

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

There is a free 90-day evaluation version (*technet.microsoft.com/en-US/evalcenter/hh699156.aspx?ocid=wc-bl-sprblog*) currently available for Windows 8 Enterprise, if you're anxious to get a peek at the release product.

If you upgrade from Windows 7 or Vista, your programs and data should be retained. If upgrading from Windows XP, your data will be retained, but you will need to reinstall your programs. In any case, be sure to back up everything before starting an upgrade. I understand that if a Windows 8 upgrade fails, it will automatically roll back to your old configuration.

At this point it looks like there will be an OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) version of Windows 8 available if you enjoy building your own computers, but there is no word on pricing yet. There is no support included with an OEM version and the copy is tied to one motherboard.

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

I expect that many new computers and laptops will come with Windows 8 installed, which is comparable to the Home version of other Windows releases. Windows 8 Pro will be an upgrade for those wanting the extra features. Tablets will come in either Windows RT (Metro interface only) or Windows Pro ("Windows Desktop" included) installed depending upon the power and capabilities of the tablet. See "A Peek at the Coming Microsoft Surface Tablet" from an earlier issue of *ComputorEdge* (which is now included as a chapter in the e-book *Misunderstanding Windows 8* referenced above).

Microsoft Surface Tablet Pricing

There is speculation that Microsoft could price the Windows 8 RT (Metro interface only) Surface Tablet at $199 to compete with the Google Nexus 7 and Kindle Fire, but this is probably a non-starter. Microsoft is planning to take on the 10-inch Apple iPad market (*news.cnet.com/8301-10805_3-57495940-75/microsoft-eyes-the-ipad/*) with rather than the cheaper 7-inch tablets. That means the Windows RT version is more likely to be priced around $399 to compete with tablets such as Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 and low-end iPads.

One pricing rumor is that regardless of the eventual price of the Windows 8 RT Surface Tablet, the Windows 8 Pro (Windows Desktop included) Surface Tablet will be about $300 more (*blogs.computerworld.com/windows/20850/windows-rt-tablets-300-less-windows-8-hardware-theyll-be-top-level-devices-bargain-basement-prices*). That means for $300 more, you will get both much more power, as well as, "real Windows" in your Surface Tablet.

The Windows 8 Learning Curve

Microsoft is betting heavily on this two interface (Metro and Windows Desktop) approach to Windows 8. There are many people predicting that it will be a failure in the vein of some earlier Windows mistakes (e.

g. Windows ME, Vista). Others think that it's no big deal. One thing is certain, if you do switch to Windows 8, you will be forced to deal with the Metro Start Screen and need to learn its nuances. For some, this is enough reason to avoid Windows 8 completely.

I've spent a good deal of time with the Windows 8 Consumer Preview and can tell you that it is not difficult to learn. The only thing that is truly new is the Start Screen and it works in pretty much the way you would expect. If you've ever used a tablet it will be intuitive. If not, it may take a little time to grow into it. The question is whether people will want the bother of learning a new way of doing things.

Perhaps a good approach would be to buy a Windows 8 RT tablet first. The experience gained using the Metro interface on a tablet would directly translate to a Windows 8 desktop or laptop computer with the full-blown Windows Desktop included. The addition of the Windows 8 Pro with the Desktop to their laptop or other computer would be a natural consideration for anyone already using a Windows 8 RT tablet.

There are many advantages which will come with the new Metro Start Screen. There is a host of new apps which will not depend on the Windows Desktop. The Start Screen has far more capabilities than could ever be found in the old Windows Start Menu. However, there is nothing so pressing in Windows 8 that you need to be the first in line on October 26th. Eventually, you may get involved with Windows 8, but for now there is no rush.
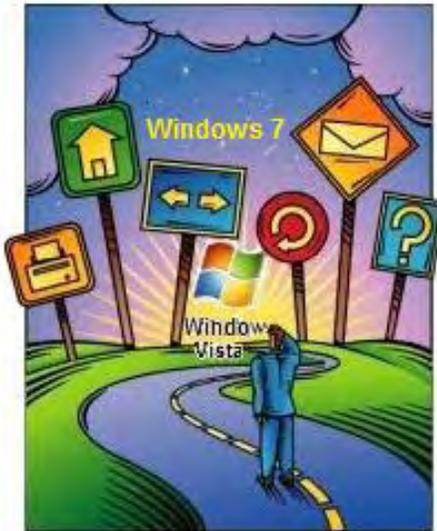

Jack is the publisher of *ComputorEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is *www.computoredge.com*. He can be reached at *ceeditor@computoredge.com*. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his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

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 ComputorEdge 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.

Windows Tips and Tricks: Make Hotkeys for Resizing Windows in AutoHotkey

"Write a User-define Function for Resizing Windows to Exact Dimensions on Your Desktop."
by Jack Dunning

AutoHotkey includes commands for manipulating the position and size of windows. Including these commands in a user-defined function will add more flexibility to your Windows computing.

Note: If you are new to writing scripts and have not been following along from the beginning with the first AutoHotkey article"Possibly the Best Free Windows Utility Ever!", it could be worthwhile to start there and work your way back up to this point. The follow-up "Windows Tips and Tricks" columns are designed to incrementally teach anyone *how to write AutoHotkey scripts, building on each earlier column a teaspoon at a time. It is useful to keep working with each section until you feel comfortable with the demonstration scripts and how they work.*

*   *   *

Have you ever wanted to resize a window to exact dimensions or move a window to a new screen location with the stroke of a hotkey combination? The fact that you can do this in AutoHotkey is yet another reason that it is "possibly the best free Windows utility ever."

This week we introduce two concepts which add more power and utility to your AutoHotkey scripts. The first are the windows manipulation commands (WinMove (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/ WinMove.htm*), WinGetPos (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinGetPos.htm*), WinMinimize (*www. autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinMinimize.htm*), WinMaximize (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/ WinMazimize.htm*)) which will control the location and shape of a window. The second is User-Defined Functions (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/Functions.htm*). By combining these two AutoHotkey features, we will build simple scripts which resize windows to specific sizes (see Figure 1).

```
WindowSize.ahk - Notepad
File  Edit  Format  View  Help

^#1::ResizeWin(600,0)
^#2::ResizeWin(800,600)
^#3::ResizeWin(1152,864)          Hotkeys calling
^#4::ResizeWin(1280,600)          function ResizeWin()
^#5::ResizeWin(1400,1050)         to reset window size.
^#6::ResizeWin(2084,1586)

ResizeWin(Width = 0,Height = 0)
  {
     WinGetPos,X,Y,W,H,A
     If %Width% = 0
        Width := W                 Function for resizing
                                   window.
     If %Height% = 0
        Height := H

     WinMove,A,,%X%,%Y%,%Width%,%Height%
  }
```
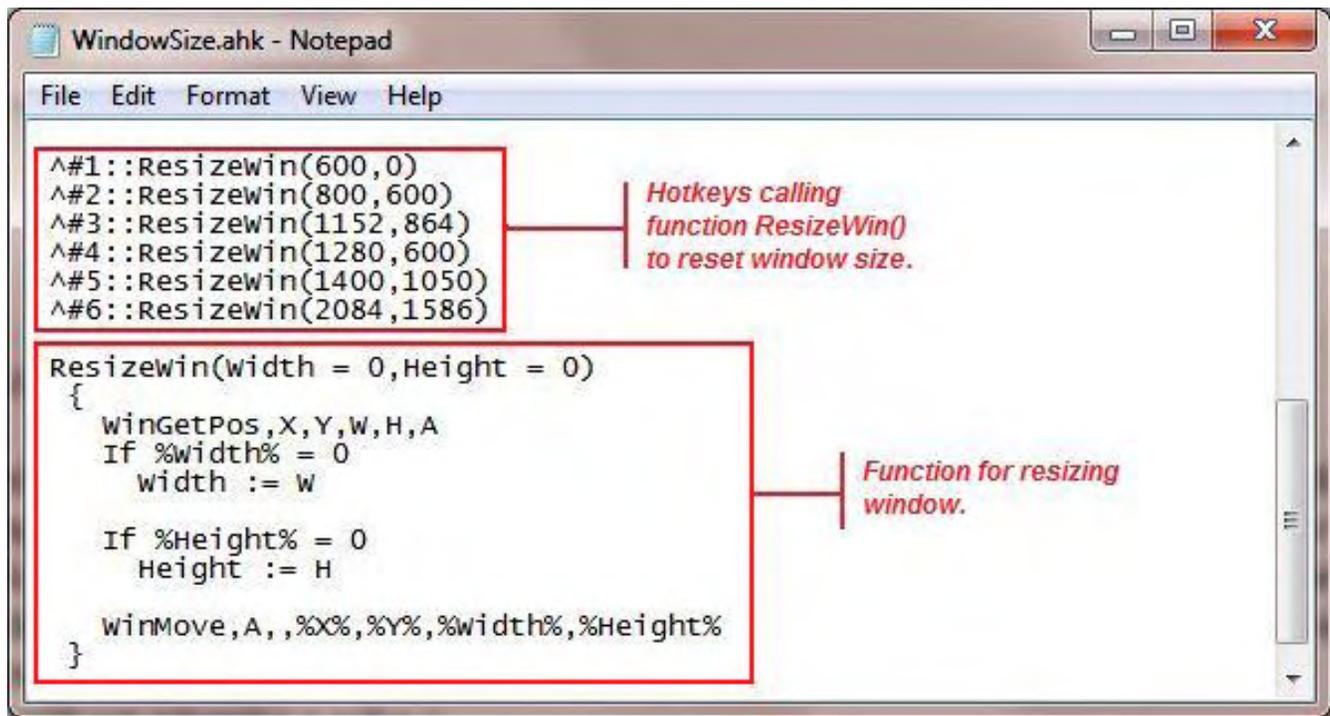
Figure 1. This AutoHotkey user-defined function sets up six hotkeys which resize the active window to a width of 600 pixels (CTRL+WIN+1), 800 by 600 pixels (CTRL+WIN+2), 1152 by 864 pixels (CTRL+WIN+3), 1280 by 600 pixels (CTRL+WIN+4), 1400 by 1050 pixels (CTRL+WIN+5), 1280 by 600 pixels (CTRL+WIN+6), 2084 by 1586 pixels.

Suppose that you want to resize windows to match the standard size of other computers or devices for testing purposes. The script in Figure 1 is an example of how a user-defined function, ResizeWin(), can be used to set up six different hotkeys for using the function with various parameters to create different size windows. For example, the CTRL+ +2 combinations changes the window's size to 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high (see Figure 2).
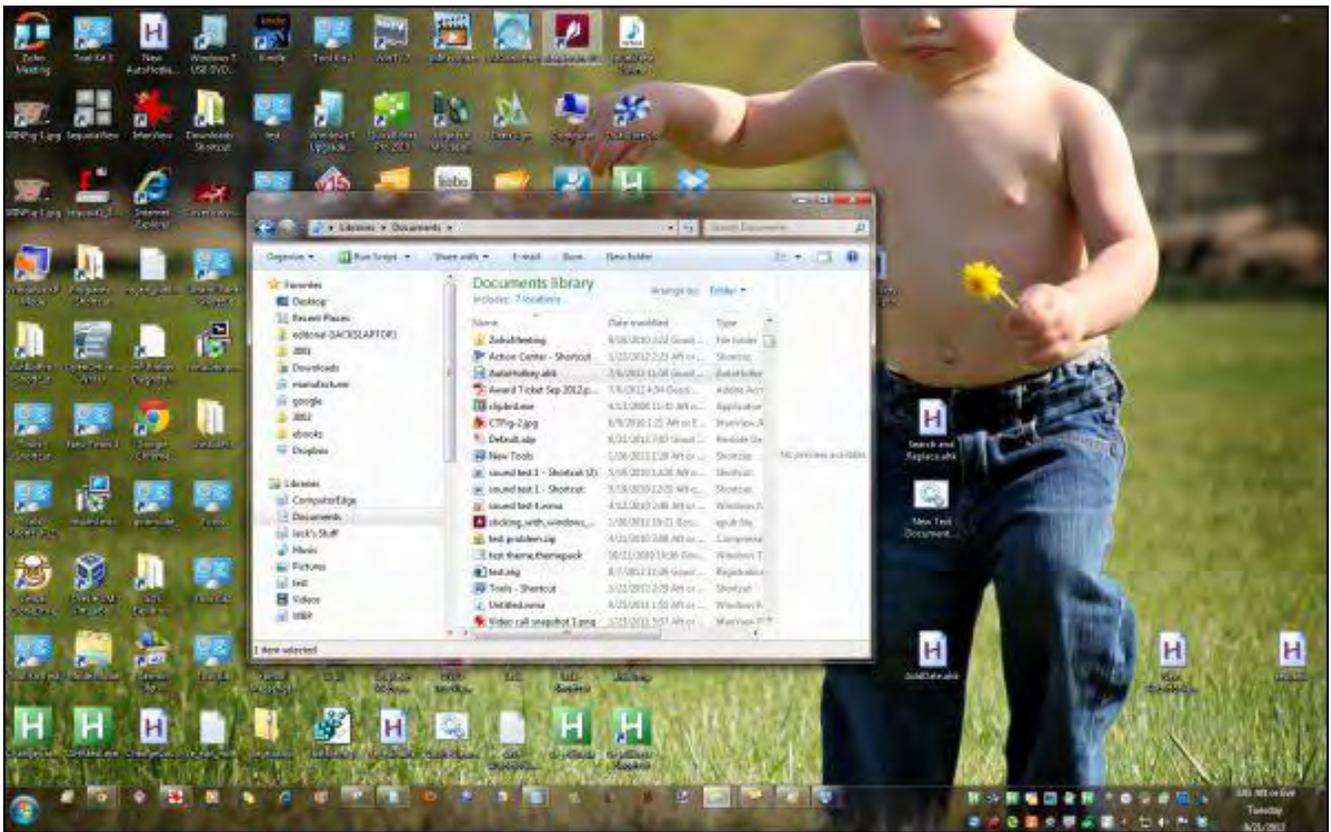
Figure 2. Windows Explorer window set to 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high.

Activating the hotkeys CTRL+ +5 will adjust the window's size to 1280 pixels wide by 600 pixels high (see Figure 3).
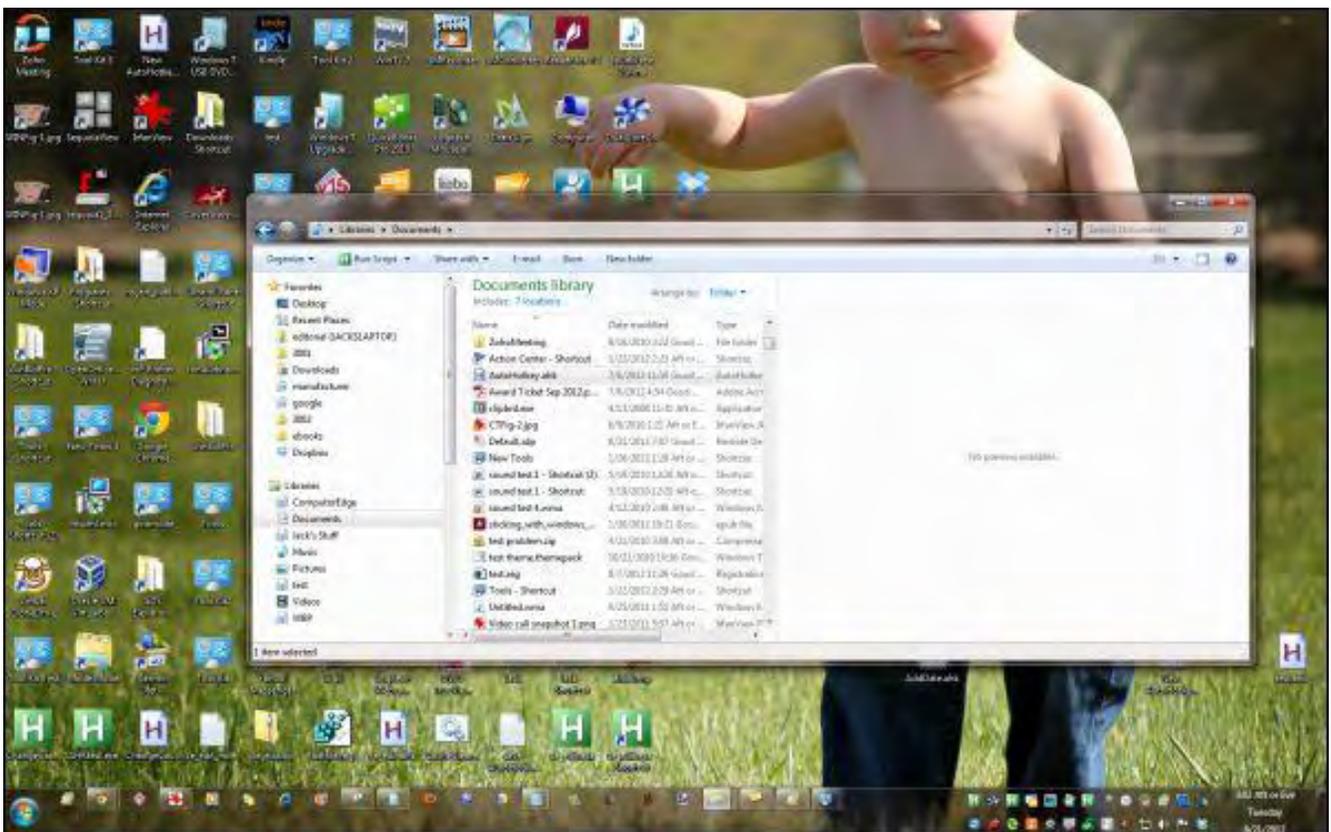

Figure 3. Windows Explorer window set to 1280 pixels wide by 600 pixels high.

The function ResizeWin(), which could just as easily been called ChangeWindowSize() or any other name, is an example of a user-defined function. (The code for the ResizeWin() function was originally found at How-to Geek (*www.howtogeek.com/howto/28663/create-a-hotkey-to-resize-windows-to-a-specific-size-with-autohotkey/*).)

User-Defined Functions

AutoHotkey has a number of built-in functions which return results for specific requests, such as a math function for determining the square root (Sqrt(Number)) or a string function for finding the length of any text (StrLen(String)). The key to recognizing a function is the set of parentheses, "(x,y)", which is used to pass values to the function. A **user-defined function** is merely a function that you write. The function's routine is bound by a set of curly brackets ({}) opened at the beginning and closed at the end of the routine.

The user-defined function is a convenient way to add a variable to programming code which performs calculations or operations on the fly. The power of these functions is that they can be written once and used repeated times as variables throughout a script. In the example above, we write one function, then use it six times for different hotkey results—in this case to resize windows.

Resizing Windows

AutoHotkey has a command specifically for resizing and repositioning windows called WinMove (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinMove.htm*). When executed it alters the window according to the following format:

```
WinMove, WinTitle, WinText, X, Y [, Width, Height, ExcludeTitle, ExcludeText]
```

where X and Y are the coordinates of the window on the screen. Width and Height are the new window width and window height. When the calling function supplies the new values for X, Y, Width and Height, the designated window is repositioned and resized accordingly.

In the new user-defined function ResizeWin(), the command WinGetPos (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinGetPos.htm*) is used to capture the current postition and dimensions of the active window:

```
WinGetPos [, X, Y, Width, Height, WinTitle, WinText, ExcludeTitle, ExcludeText]
```

This AutoHotkey window positioning command uses the same X, Y, Width, Height format as the WinMove command.

To test the AutoHotkey function, cut and paste the following code into a new script or add it to an AutoHotkey script:

```
^#1::ResizeWin(600,0)
^#2::ResizeWin(800,600)
^#3::ResizeWin(1152,864)
^#4::ResizeWin(1280,600)
^#5::ResizeWin(1400,1050)
^#6::ResizeWin(2084,1586)
ResizeWin(Width = 0,Height = 0)
 {
   WinGetPos,X,Y,W,H,A
```

```
    If %Width% = 0
      Width := W
    If %Height% = 0
      Height := H
    WinMove,A,,%X%,%Y%,%Width%,%Height%
  }
```

How the Function ResizeWin() Works

The function ResizeWin() establishes two parameters (variable information passed to the function) with Width and Height inside the parentheses. There could be more or less variables (even none), but the parentheses must appear immediately after the function name (no space). Using the equals sign with the parameter (Width = 0) sets a default for when no value is passed by the calling function in the code. Then, a default value is not required in the statement calling the function.

The function definition line is immediately followed by an open curly bracket "{" which establishes the beginning of the routine. The close curly bracket "}" on the last line of the function ends the function routine. All user-defined functions require these brackets.

The first line of the function routine, "WinGetPos,X,Y,W,H,A", captures the position and dimensions of the active window. X and Y are the horizontal and vertical coordinates of the window's location on the computer screen. W and H are the width and height of the window respectively. The "A" designates the active window.

The next line is a conditional "If" statement. It will only take effect *if* the expression on the same line is true —in this case, %Width% = 0. This is a planned trap for when there is no value has been sent for the new width. Since the width defaulted to 0 in the function definition line, the "If" condition is true and the line immediately after the statement executes. (For conditionals with more than one line of code it's necessary to use the same curly brackets, "{}", used in functions to begin and end the routine.)

The line "Width := W" sets the new width value "Width" to the old width value "W" captured by the WinGetPos statement. This ensures that the width of the window won't change if there is no value other than zero sent to the function.

The next conditional "If" statement serves the same purpose as the first except it applies to the window's height rather than the width. If you don't include a second parameter when calling the function, the width will adjust, but the height will remain the same. When you are sending a new height with this function, a comma must precede the value even if no value is sent for the width. Otherwise, without the comma, the function assumes that height value is the first parameter, or the new width.

The last line of the function, "WinMove,A,,%X%,%Y%,%Width%,%Height%", adjusts the active window "A" with the new values.

How the Function ResizeWin() is Called by the Hotkeys

Each of the first six lines assigns hotkeys which call the function ResizeWin(). The only difference is found in the parameters passed to the function.

^#1 (CTRL+⊞+1) sets the width of active window to 600 pixels without affecting the height. Remember that a zero value will assign the current value of the height to the new height. (I use this hotkey to downsize windows for *ComputorEdge* screen shots which are over the maximum of 600 pixels wide. If a 600 pixel window won't display enough of an image, I resize it with Irfanview (*www.irfanview.com*).)

^#2 (CTRL+ +2) sets the window's dimensions to 800 pixels wide by 600 pixels high.

^#3 (CTRL+ +3) sets the window's dimensions to 1152 pixels wide by 864 pixels high.

^#4 (CTRL+ +4) sets the window's dimensions to 1280 pixels wide by 600 pixels high.

^#5 (CTRL+ +5) sets the window's dimensions to 1400 pixels wide by 1050 pixels high.

^#6 (CTRL+ +6) sets the window's dimensions to 2084 pixels wide by 1586 pixels high. This size window will not fit on most of today's computer screens. AutoHotkey will extend the window well beyond any smaller screen's edge. In most cases this is not ideal. Also, depending upon where the window is initially located on the screen, any of these hotkeys could conceivably push the right or bottom edge off of the screen, thereby forcing a repositioning of the window by hand.

Next time, these window size and position issues will be addressed by using the "If" conditional and the same window commands to either center the resized window in the middle of the screen or, if too large for the screen, make the window conform to the screen size.

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*).

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

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 ComputorEdge 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.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"Abundance Lies in Your Perspective" by Wally Wang

Let Apple Pay You; A User Interface Patent; Free Protection; Kobo Books; Dictate to Your Computer.

In his book *Abundance (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1451614217/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1451614217&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*),* author Peter Diamandis talks about how abundant riches really are in this world if we only use our imagination to look for them. One example he gives compares the value of gold to aluminum.

At one time, aluminum was considered more valuable (*acswebcontent.acs.org/landmarks/landmarks/al/ revolution.html*) than gold because isolating pure aluminum took time and energy. Napoleon even used aluminum to create silverware for his most honored guests while he used the much less valuable silverware made from gold.

When scientists discovered electrolysis as a cheap way to separate aluminum, the value of aluminum plummeted to the point where we now use it for throw away purposes like cans, foil and inexpensive cookware. In Napoleon's time, a roll of aluminum foil would have made you wealthy beyond your dreams. Today, a roll of aluminum foil is worth less than a dollar. The difference is simply that technology has made aluminum easy to access while the actual metal itself has remained the same.

What's especially interesting about the *Abundance* book is not just eye-opening examples of how technology can dramatically change our world, but how technology progresses as well. Most people think with a local and linear outlook. Whatever they see, they assume will be the norm forever, changing only in a slow, linear progression. This is why dinosaurs like Kodak and Blockbuster Video evolved so slowly, they assumed their markets and customers would change just as slowly as they did. The moment digital photography and streaming video appeared, it wiped out Kodak and Blockbuster Video overnight.

Conversely, linearly thinking questions how rapid change can work today if it didn't work in the past. For example, linear thinking wonders why retail stores are complaining about getting hurt by online merchants if mail-order catalogs in the past didn't wipe out retail stores from that era. This assumes that the future will be nothing more than a linear extension of the past.

Initially, any change happens slowly, which makes it appear linear, then suddenly it explodes in an exponential growth pattern (*www.exponentialtimes.net/videos/linear-thinking-vs-exponential-thinking-peter-diamandis*). Just look at the smartphone market to see how Nokia and Research in Motion (along with Microsoft) once dominated that category. Then when the iPhone appeared, it upended the entire smart phone market in just a few years. That's an example of exponential change, and that's exactly the type of change most people refuse to believe could be possible despite seeing ample evidence right before their

eyes.

Even today's iPad is more powerful (*www.tuaw.com/2011/05/09/ipad-2-would-have-bested-1990s-era-supercomputers/*) than supercomputers from the 1990s. Yet if you think locally by not remembering the past, it's easy to ignore how much technology can progress in such a short time.

Will PCs remain the dominant computing device forever? No, because nothing lasts forever. With declining PC sales and rising smartphone and tablet sales, smartphones and tablets will likely continue growing more powerful while getting lighter and thinner. The trend favors mobile computing, not bulky computers that need an electrical outlet at all times and can't be moved easily where you need it.

In the old days, mainframe computer people laughed at PCs because a PC couldn't perform the same calculations that a mainframe could do. Today, the most common PC can perform tasks that mainframe computers used to perform in the past, and when was the last time you heard of someone still boasting that mainframes were "real" computers and PCs were nothing but toys? (Although you can still hear the same argument except now it's PC users boasting that desktop and laptop computers are "real" computers and tablets are nothing but "toys.")

Once again, local thinking ignores what occurred in the past to deceive yourself that nothing is changing after all. Of course if you pointed this out to mainframe computer advocates back in the 1980s, they might have accused you of "mainframe bashing" because they wouldn't like hearing facts that fail to support their belief that nothing will ever change for the rest of eternity.

Just as the exponential growth of PCs allowed them to wipe out most mainframes, expect smartphones and tablets to one day wipe out the need for most desktop and laptop computers. In just three years, the latest iPad is far more powerful than the original iPad, yet still costs the same and weighs a little less. In another few years, smartphones and tablets will be even more powerful.

Future generations will one day look back at the past and wonder how could anyone possibly believe that mobile computing devices wouldn't take over the personal computer market. In the same way, people of today scratch their head at the thought that anyone could have possibly believed that PCs could never replace expensive, bulky, and hard to use mainframe computers.

As the book *Abundance* points out, technology can improve exponentially, which means what seems like science fiction today quickly becomes reality tomorrow. Nearly everyone born thirty years ago can remember a time when cell phones didn't exist. Yet many young people can never imagine a world where pay phones represented the only form of mobile phones in the world.

If you think mobile computing can never replace PCs for the majority of people's needs, keep thinking linearly in an exponential world. In the meantime, the rest of us can keep moving forward and taking advantage of new opportunities while the dinosaurs of yesterday hold themselves back through their own stubbornness. Anyone still think the iPad will flop or that smartphones and tablets are useless unless they can run Adobe's Flash? That's what so-called "experts" thought less than three years ago.

Peter Diamandis states in his book *Abundance*, "Many [experts] have built their careers buttressing the status quo, reinforcing what they've already accomplished, and resisting the radical thinking that can topple their legacy—not exactly the attitude you want when trying to drive innovation forward." People who look for ways to stop or dispute change have no future. If they're wrong, they wind up looking foolish. Even if they're right in the short-term, they'll still wind up going nowhere by stopping themselves from taking advantage of new opportunities that will eventually appear in the future.

The future lies in recognizing that exponential change can literally change the world overnight. When you accept this premise based on seeing the evidence of the iPhone and Android upend the traditional mobile phone manufacturers, and seeing tablets hurt sales of laptops, you can see where the future is heading.

It's not going to come through incremental improvements like slapping a USB port or a built-in keyboard on a tablet and calling that innovation. It's going to come from some crazy idea that all the "experts" will dismiss as useless, right before it takes off and changes the world.

Let Apple Pay You

Many people complain that they don't buy Apple products because they cost too much. Never mind the fact that you can get an iPhone for the same price (or less) than comparable Android or Windows 7 phones, or that tablets the same size (or less) than the iPad cost just as much (or more) than the iPad. You can also ignore the higher resale value of used Apple products such as a Macintosh, and ignore the cost of your time when dealing with lost productivity when using less expensive products.

No matter how much Apple charges for their products, it will always be too much for some people, especially those who complain about everything, such as welfare recipients who whine that waiting for their checks to arrive in the mail so they can cash them is such an unbearable hassle every month. While nothing will make some people happy, others have found a way to let Apple pay for the latest gadgets.

With Apple's stock price fluctuating wildly, many traders time their stock purchase right after Apple's stock inevitably nose dives before rocketing back up again. If you can time your stock purchase, you can buy low, sell high, and use the profits to treat yourself to a new Apple product.

Many stock traders rely on real-time stock data from their brokerage firms, but you can also get delayed stock data through stock charting sites such as BigCharts (*bigcharts.marketwatch.com*) and StockCharts (*stockcharts.com*). For those who prefer to do their stock analyzing on their own computer, you'll need to find a stock data source so you can examine it using a program like ProTA (*www.beesoft.net*).

ProTA comes in a basic ($199) and a professional version ($299). The basic idea is that you load stock data into the program and then you can choose different chart types (to help you analyze the stock price). Based on your own analysis, you can determine when you should buy a stock or not.

Figure 1. ProTA lets you analyze your favorite stocks on your Macintosh.

In the past few months, Apple's stock has jumped over $60 a share. If you had bought 100 shares and sold them after just a $20 a share jump, you would have made enough money to buy yourself a new Macintosh, iPad, iPhone, and any other accessories you wanted.

Now with Apple paying dividends, you no longer have to worry about timing your stock purchases. Just buy 100 shares of Apple stock (not easy, given its current price), and with Apple's last dividend of $2.65 a share, you would have earned $265, which would cover part of the cost of a new Macintosh.

Obviously not everyone has the money to buy Apple's stock and those that do probably already have enough money to pay for a new Apple product anyway. Still, for those with enough cash to buy Apple's stock, you can let Apple pay you so you can afford more of their products.
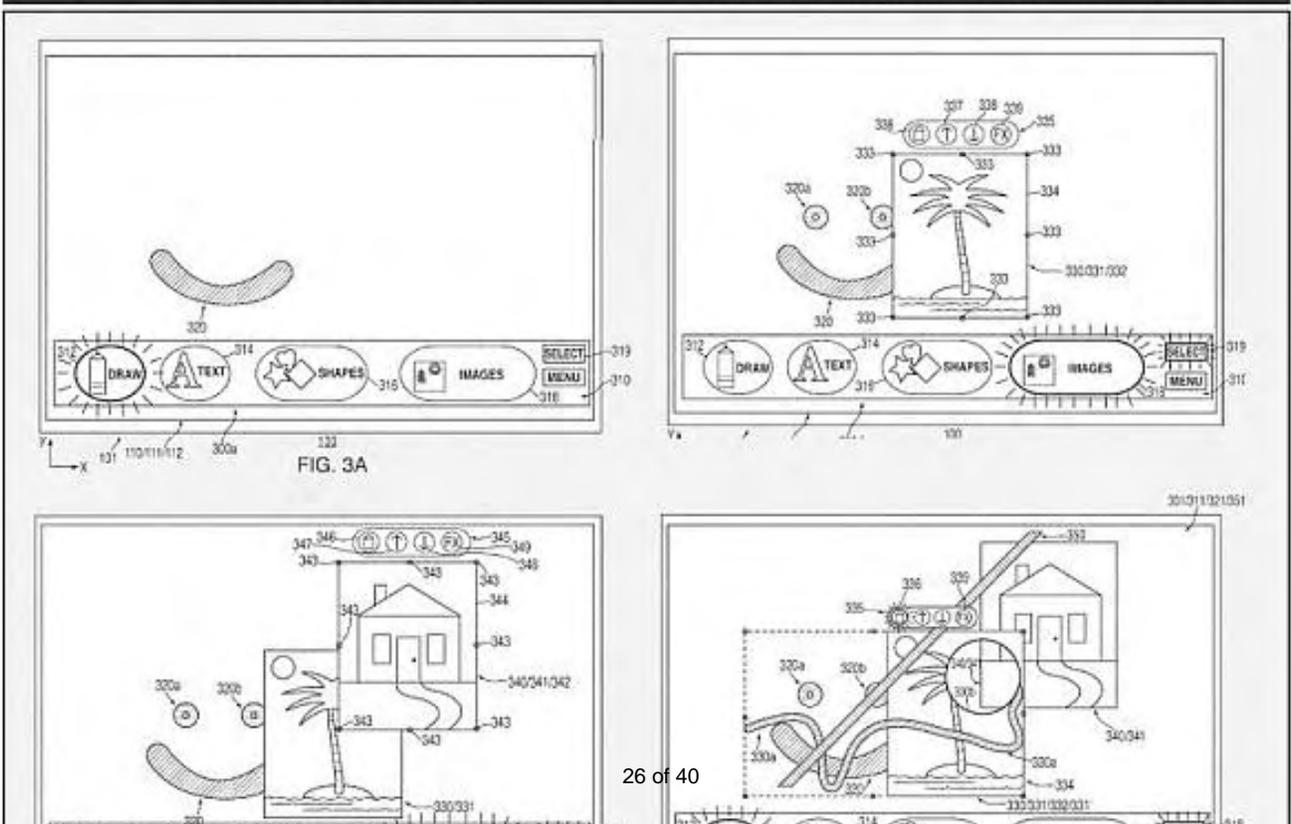
Of course, you don't have to buy Apple's stock. Buy Microsoft's stock, which is much cheaper, but still pays a dividend. Since Microsoft's stock is much less expensive than Apple's stock, more people can afford to buy Microsoft stock. Then use Microsoft's dividends to help pay for your next computer purchase, even if it's a Macintosh.

A User Interface Patent

Apple recently filed a patent (*www.patentlyapple.com/patently-apple/2012/08/boom-apple-invents-next-gen-virtual-drawing-app-to-take-on-adobes-photoshop-illustrator.html*) that uses a graphics program as an example. While some people immediately took this to believe Apple was creating a graphics program to rival Photoshop or Illustrator, the real key is the patent information about the user interface.

Rather than rely on traditional pull-down menus, Apple's new user interface "may provide input gestures at or near a displayed input tool to directly manipulate one or more properties of that input tool, such as its size or color. By visually changing how an input tool is represented on a user workspace so as to indicate a change in an input tool property, a user may be provided with a more efficient and intuitive user interface for generating graphical objects."

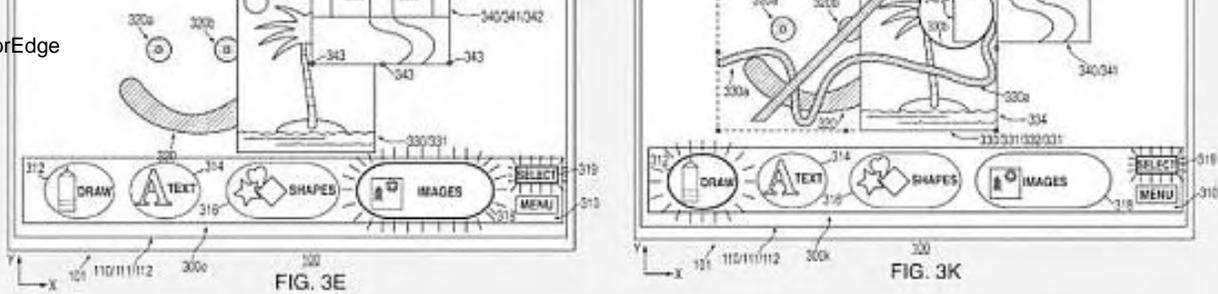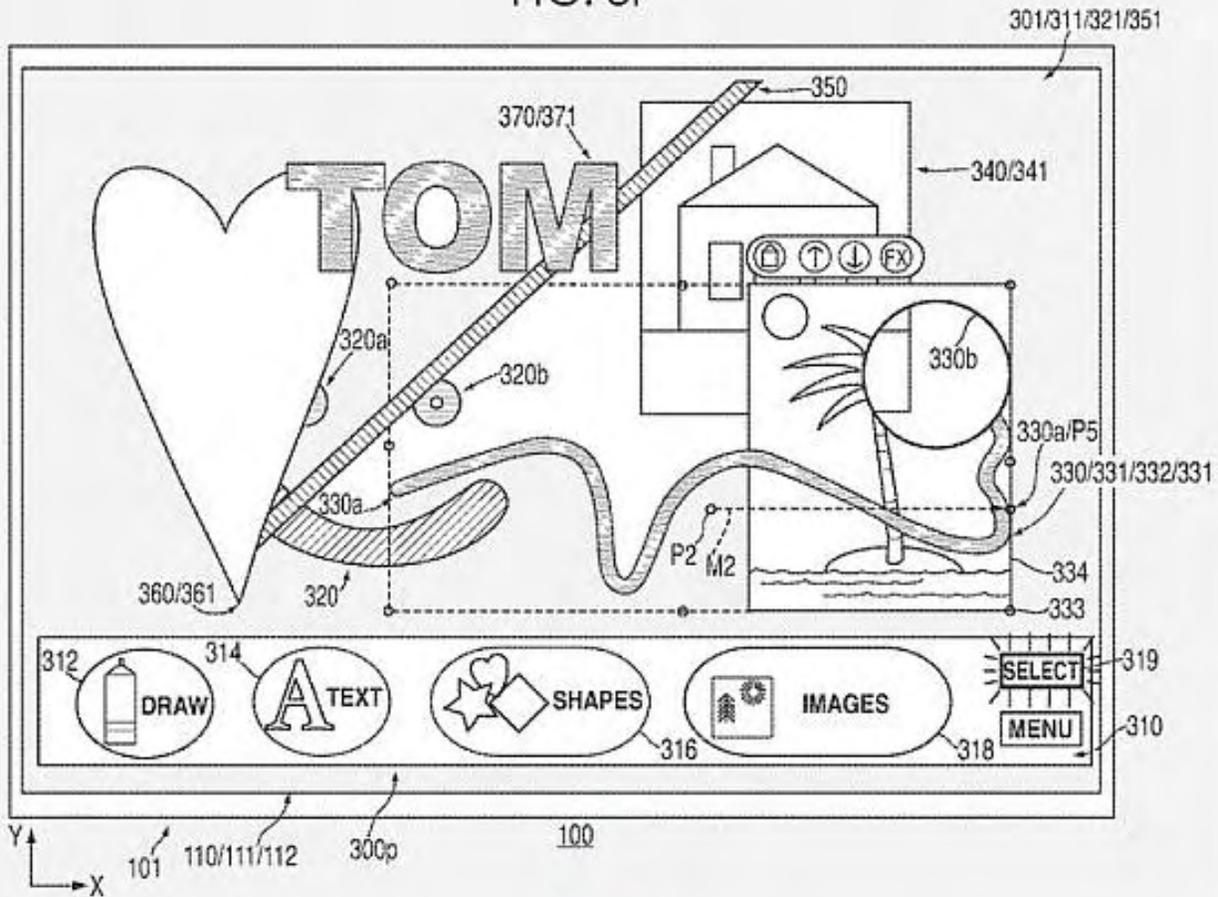Apple Patent Images Relating to a New Object Layering Management System

FIG. 3A

Figure 2. Apple's new patent application for a different user interface.

The idea is that tapping on an option displays a radial menu of available choices around that command. Now you can easily see all your available options for a particular command without wading through multiple submenus or simply memorizing which commands are related to each other.

While this new interface may never appear in an actual program, it does highlight how today's user interface will constantly change. The key is whether any new user interface immediately feels more intuitive or simply feels like pointless change without a corresponding increase in productivity.

Free Protection

There's a handful of Trojan horses specifically designed to infect a Macintosh, so if you're worried about this threat, download a free copy of Magican (*www.magicansoft.com*). Magican is a combination utility and security program. As a utility program, Magican can delete unnecessary files from your hard disk, uninstall software, and display information about your Macintosh such as your Bluetooth address or the type of

graphics card your computer uses.

Figure 3. Magican looks for ways to remove unnecessary files to increase storage space on your hard disk.

As a security program, it can scan your Macintosh for the handful of malware threats capable of infecting your computer. While there are fewer malware threats designed to infect a Macintosh, the number will only increase over time so the free scanning protection in Magican can insure your Macintosh remains malware-free.

Figure 4. Magican can scan your Macintosh for Macintosh-specific malware.

One interesting feature of Magican is its ability to recommend free apps in the Mac App Store. Instead of constantly scanning the App Store for useful programs that are free, you can just run Magican to see all the latest free apps at once.
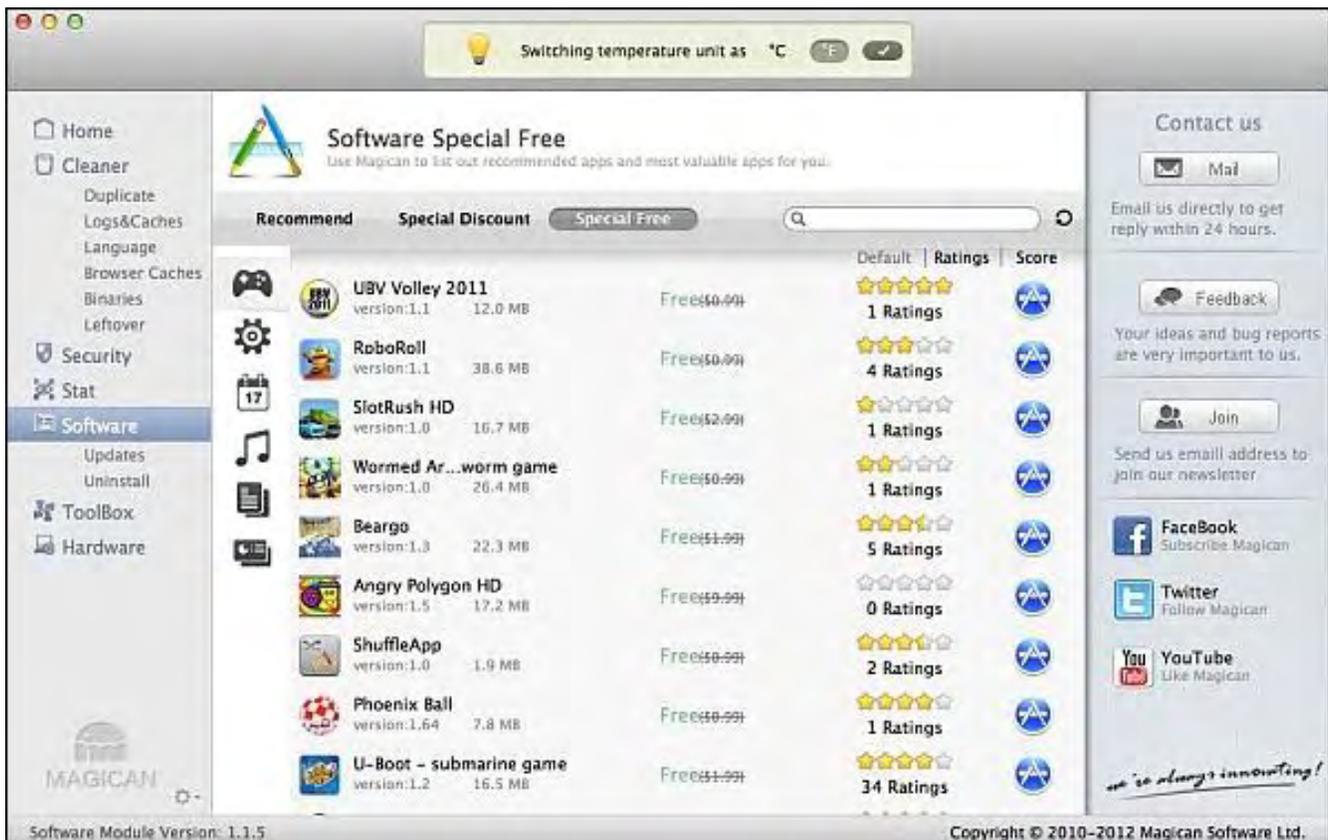
Figure 5. Magican lists the latest free macintosh programs.

By using Magican regularly, you can maximize your hard disk space, guard against malware, uninstall programs you no longer need, and find the best free programs without wasting time searching the Mac App Store yourself. Since Magican itself is also free, you might as well take the time to see if Magican will work for you.

Kobo Books

While many people still believe that printed books will last forever and e-books are just a temporary fad that publishers can use to promote their printed books, the e-book market continues to grow. One way e-books has changed the publishing world is through self-publishing. Instead of combing through unsolicited manuscripts and hoping to find the next best seller, traditional print publishers are now scanning the best-selling, self-published e-books to find a book that's already selling, which is how publishers discovered the erotic novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0345803485/ref=as_li_tf_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0345803485&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*).*

To profit from the growing e-book market for both authors and readers, Kobo Books (*www.kobobooks. com*) has appeared to challenge both Amazon's and Barnes & Noble's self-publishing e-book programs. Despite embracing the idea of e-book self-publishing, Kobo Books reflects the current, limited thinking around e-books.

Kobo Books lets anyone set up an account and upload a file that can be no larger than 10MB in size. While this is fine for novels that consist mostly of text, this 10MB file size limit immediately eliminates e-books that rely heavily on graphics such as children's books, cookbooks, travel books, graphic novels, and even scientific books that display charts and photographs. Artificially restricting Kobo e-books to 10MB or less is like McDonald's restricting their drive-through windows to motorcycles only, and then wondering why they aren't getting more customers.

Figure 6. Kobo won't let you submit an e-book larger than 10MB in size.

The future of e-books does not consist primarily of text, but of static pictures, audio, and video along with interactive games and other hands-on learning experiences. Kobo Books is looking forward by embracing the self-publishing, e-book market, but driving backwards by believing e-books should be no larger than an arbitrary file size.

While Kobo tries to drive forward while slamming on the brakes, their competitors will continue to distance themselves. If you want to see what happens when people fail to think ahead, watch how well Kobo Books competes against Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple in marketing e-books. Chances are good that

they'll simply fade away and won't know how their own short-sighted actions led to their demise.

                                    *   *   *

With Mountain Lion installed on your Macintosh, you can now dictate to your computer instead of typing any words yourself. While not 100 percent accurate, this dictation feature can be handy for people who dislike typing or have trouble using a keyboard.

Normally you can click the Edit menu and choose Start Dictation, but if you click the Apple menu, choose System Preferences, and then click the Dictation & Speech icon, you can customize a dictation shortcut such as pressing the left or right Command key twice in rapid succession.

Figure 7. You can define a shortcut key for turning on the dictation feature.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

*My New Mac, Lion Edition (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908*)*
*My New iPad 2 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-

20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X*)*
*Steal This Computer Book (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050*)*
*Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987*)*
*Beginning Programming for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702*)*
*Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541*)*
*Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468*)*
*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*
*How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/
ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70*)*
*The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M*)*
*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362*)*
*99% Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/
B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A*)*
*The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI*)*
*The 15-Minute Movie Method (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8*)*

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

Beyond Personal Computing

"A Look at the Human Side of Computing" by Marilyn K. Martin

Spell Checkers—And Grammatically Correct Typos That Get Past Them

With computers and word processing programs, spell checkers are everywhere today. The problems come with correctly spelled words in the wrong context. The results can be hilarious—or highly embarrassing.

Religion and Typos

One church e-mail went out saying "Meet with Christ in Tulsa," instead of "Meet with Chris in Tulsa." It quickly became a church joke that no one imagined the Second Coming would be in Oklahoma

Then there was a young man making church business cards on their computer. Again, the message on the cards checked out as spelled correctly. But he was red-faced when the finished cards announced that the church was offering a "holy massage from God."

In the same vein, men suddenly thought their church was a lot more appealing when they read a pamplet about "The Book of Titus"—with the "u" left out.

Hacker Ethos and Bad Spelling

When the Internet came into its own in the 1980s, hackers didn't want their Web sites or newsgroups to be picked up in keyword searches. So they started their own code to substitute numbers for letters, mostly vowels, such as A=4 or E=3, soon called "l33t" (*www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=l33t*) in gaming smack talk. "l33t" translated at LEET, or a contraction of the word Elite. When someone saw the term "1m4 3l1t3" (I'm For Elite), it was usually from a hacker bragging that he was not someone to be messed with.

Outside of that hacker code, bad spelling by hackers has always been one way to figure out that the on-screen page you were looking at had been hacked. (Well, that and sloppy pixel remakes of business icons.)

Candidate For a Pullet Surprise
By Mark Eckman and Jerrold H. Zar

I halve a spelling checker, It came with my pea see,
It plane lee marks four my revue, Miss steaks aye dew knot sea.

Eye ran this poem threw it, Your sure reel glad two no,
Its vary polished in it's weight, My checker tolled me sew.

A checker is a blessing, It freeze yew lodes of thyme,
It helps me right awl stile two reed, And aides me when eye rime.

Each frays come posed up on my screen, Eye trussed too bee a joule,
The checker pours o'er every word, To cheque sum spelling rule.

Bee fore a veiling checker's hour mite decline,
And if we're lacks oar have a laps, We wood bee maide too wine.

Butt now bee cause my spelling, Is checked with such grate flare,
Their are know fault's with in my cite, Of nun eye am a wear.

Now spelling does knot phase me, It does knot bring a tier.
My pay purrs awl due glad den, With wrapped word's far as hear.

To rite with care is quite a feet, Of witch won should be proud.
And wee mussed dew the best wee can, Sew flaw's are knot aloud.

Sow ewe can sea why aye dew prays, such soft wear four pea seas,
And why eye brake in two averse, Buy righting want too pleas.

The Story Behind the Poem

This clever poem has been all over the Internet in various forms, called everything from "Ode to a Spell Checker" to "Spellbound," and usually attributed to "Sauce unknown." The opening lines were written by Mark Eckman in 1991. And Dr. Jerrold H. Zar, Biology Professor at Northern Illinois University, expanded the short version to what it is today in 1992.

Mark Eckman was working for AT&T in the early '90s, and e-mail was all the rage—horrible spelling and all. But discussions on software fixes quickly broke down into two opposing camps of thought. The Marketing Staff said a spell checker should be added to the software since most people using e-mail were not skilled typists. The other side of the argument huffed that no one should be writing e-mails if they couldn't spell.

After a couple of weeks of arguing, Eckman playfully sent everyone involved the first verses, which were later put in the company's "AT&T Today" daily e-mail of news and updates. The in-company argument came to a grinding halt, but suddenly Eckman was deluged with pages and pages of additional verses from understanding readers everywhere. Dr. Zar ended up credited with the rest of the poem, although he and Eckman never met or corresponded. It endures today as a cautionary tale, that "correct" spelling can still be a grammatical nightmare. And to not be surprised if total strangers pop up to finish your public-poetry.

Keyboarding Skeelz

In 2010, Oregon Department of Education decided to let students use spell checkers (*www.oregonlive. com/education/index.ssf/2010/12/oregon_will_allow_students_to.html*) on state writing tests online and on paper starting in 2011. "We are not letting a student's keyboarding skills get in the way of being able to judge their writing ability," said state Superintendent Susan Castillo. In order to encourage kids to still learn how to spell and use grammar correctly, the spell checker they use in tests will not automatically correct the misspelled word, but will provide several options in a menu for students to choose from. Dictionaries

and Pocket Spell Checkers will be available to students from fifth grade and on who take paper tests.

On The Money

"Spell checking dos knot replace common cents."

Baud Professional Spillings—and Rampant Embarrassment

Before spell checkers I once typed in a report that something was "pissable" unstead of "possible." Everyone had a good laugh, but I learned that a final proofread, with or without running documents through a spell checker, is always a good idea.

How about the young lady's clerical resume bragging that she was a "fat typist," instead of "fast." Or the frantic phone calls of another young lady to retrieve her resume, that called one of her references a "horrible man" instead of an "honorable man."

Pity the typist who sent out correspondence where the "L" was left out of "public," when describing a handsome young attorney and his "pub(l)ic offering." Or a school sports memo with the "L" missing from "public cleaning area." (Makes you wonder if there is a specific spot for this "area," maybe under the stands or behind the Gatorade table.)

Sometimes just reversing a few letters can cause all sorts of confusion. Someone wrote that they attended the "Untied Methodists" (instead of United), with visions of pratfalls in church from men with untied shoe laces. And teachers recount how many students write that they live in the "Untied States of America." (I've heard of String Theory, but never thought that it was Constitutional issue.)

Sometimes spelled-correctly typos take on an almost Freudian aspect. One well endowed young lady e-mailed a male friend apologizing for being so busy lately. He fired an e-mail back that he hoped she was less "busty" today. Or the supervisor who e-mailed an employee that he'd prepared an "excrement report" instead of an "excellent report." (That's one way to explain drowning in paperwork BS!)

Medical transcriptionists report that voice recognition software makes amusing mistakes all the time. One lady said, "For erectile dysfunction, Cialis." Which the software changed to "For erectile dysfunction, see Alice." Or the secretary who sent out a formal report that should have said "compilation of information," but in actuality said "copulation of information." And one manager somewhere will probably never live down informing his employees by e-mail that there was to be a "meeting in the whorehouse"—instead of "warehouse." (Think he knows Alice?)

Even Lawyers Can Get Tripped up by Wrong Words—Spelled Correctly

A story circulated through the legal community a few years ago, about a lawyer who had used a spell checker on his legal brief. Without checking the checker, everywhere in his brief that used the legal term "sua sponte" (Latin for "on its motion"), the spell checker had substituted..."sea sponge."

So then his brief read in part: "An appropriate instruction limiting the judge's criminal liability in such a prosecution must be given sea sponge explaining that certain acts or omissions by themselves are not sufficient to support a conviction." And "It is well settled that a trial court must instruct sea sponge on any defense, including a mistake of fact defense." (I have images of a trial lawyer shaking his finger at a sea sponge on the witness stand.)

(Most of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple Internet joke sites. But special thanks to 101funjokes.com (*101funjokes.com*), squarewheels.com (*squarewheels.com*), and Grammar Girl.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Programming for Morons," "E-Readers/Tablet Computers," "Canalys PC(?) Sales Quotes Misleading"

Programming for Morons

[Regarding Jack Dunning's August 10 article, "Programming for Morons":]

A brief comment about Jack Dunning's article:

I programmed in several jobs for more than 20 years. The first three were in assembly languages (down and dirty).

The problem is the platforms change, the languages change, and it's hard to stay current. If you're out for five years you are left for dead.

-James Adair, San Diego, CA

Hey Jack,

Programming for Who?

I've seen "Programming for Dummies," and now, your "Programming for Morons," so I guess I need to wait for "Programming for the Half-wit, Dim-wit, Dumb-as-a-Stump, Totally Idiotic, Mentally Deficient Imbecile," and then I can proceed with confidence and start programming!

Morons? Tell us what you really think of us, Jack.

-Joe

Hi, Joe,

"The computer is a moron."

Perhaps I was being a bit too subtle, but as is stated by the quote at the beginning of the article, the computer is the moron, not the user. In the article itself, I think you'll find that I was saying just the opposite from what you suggest. I do agree with your sentiment.

Thanks for the response,

-Jack Dunning

E-Readers/Tablet Computers

[Regarding the August 10 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

In the 08/12/2012 Editor's Letters: column, in Jack Dunning's answer to Melba Kalaher's question about "Regarding Jack Dunning's July 27 article, "Google Nexus 7 Tablet Compared to the Amazon Kindle Fire",

I followed the "Micro SD slot" link, and found a PC World comparison chart for various E-Readers/Tablet Computers (I'm not sure what the right term for these units are). Anyway, I am interested in one of the units in the chat.

It was a MID7022-4G (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005C08UP0/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B005C08UP0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9- 20*), which was the least expensive of the lot. Since I'm short of money, and all I want is an e-reader and an MP3 player, and I'm willing to keep most of my content on Micro SD cards, will its comparatively low specs, such as, Display Resolution and Pixel Density, as well as its having only a Single Core Processor, limit me? And, if so, How?

Thank you,

-John G., San Diego, CA

Hi, John,

The primary drawback I see is the lower screen resolution which may affect you when you're reading or watching videos. It could certainly be a problem if you use it to browse the Web. In many situations you may be forced to scroll back and forth to read a Web page.

There is a little less battery life, but that may not be a problem depending upon how you use it. The microSD slot is a major plus for storing files, photos, music and e-books.

*You should read the Amazon MID7022-4G buyer reviews (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005C08UP0/ ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B005C08UP0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9- 20*) before you make a decision. It's certainly not top of the line, but it may do the job.*

-Jack Dunning

Canalys PC(?) Sales Quotes Misleading

[Regarding the August 10 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

I expect better from you re: using statistics from one survey to prove something else entirely. The Catalys chart lumps tablet sales with PC sales. This is data that means nothing unless they're separated. You saying Apple is selling many more PCs than HP or others is unlikely to be true, but certainly can't be decided from the chart. Apple's PC sales are in as much of a slump as any other vendor. Apple makes its money with iPhones, iPads and iTunes, *not* PC sales.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

To Rich Ernst,

Your statement about using statistics from one survey to prove something else entirely is absolutely correct. You cannot twist data to support any bias which is why I'm puzzled why you claimed that I stated that Apple is selling more computers than HP and others when I absolutely never made that conclusion. I simply stated that Apple's growth in selling Macintosh computers is increasing while HP and others are seeing declining growth for PCs. Stating that growth is increasing or decreasing as a percentage is definitely not equal to stating that actual units sold is greater than another.

Assume HP sold one million PCs and dropped 10 percent so now they are selling 900,000 PCs. Assume Apple sold 100,000 Macs and increased 50 percent so now they are selling 150,000 Macs. As you can see, 150,000 Macs is far lower than 900,000 PCs.

You also stated that the Catalys chart lumps tablet sales with PC sales and thus means nothing. Why do you believe this means nothing? Just stating that this means nothing is far different than giving objective, rational reasons for why you believe this is so, and even then, it is still your opinion, which means someone else could examine your same facts and reach an entirely different conclusion.

So you are completely correct that data means nothing when used to prove something else entirely. In this case, the data is a simple statement of growth percentages and the misleading conclusions are your own statements claiming that I tried to prove that it means Apple sold more computers than others, which is absolutely incorrect and a fabrication of your own imagination.

-Wally Wang

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