

ComputerEdge™ Online — 08/31/12



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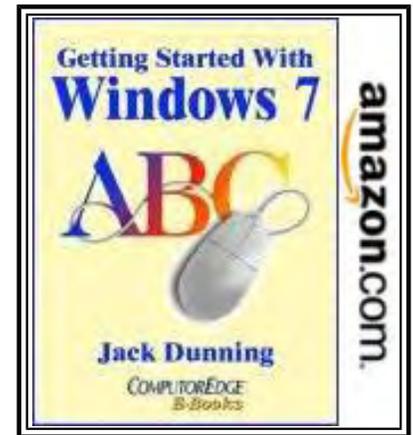
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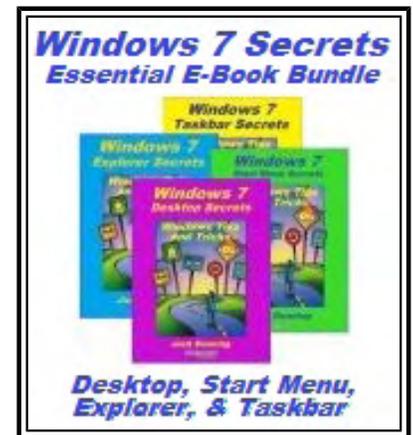
"Reply to Synaptics Touchpad Sensitivity," "Running 32-Bit Programs," "Secure Delete For Files Already Deleted," "Understanding Programming," "Killing Retail One Store at a Time"



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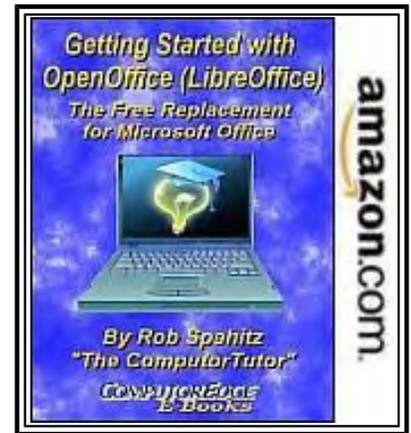
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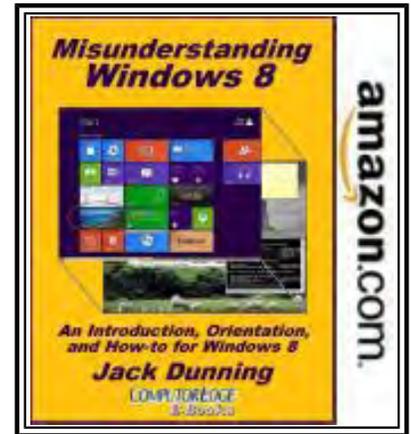
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Digital Dave

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

Keyboard Macro Assignment Question; Monitors vs. TVs; Setting File Associations in Windows XP; Windows 8 Start Screen Not Wanted.

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a Microsoft wireless 5000 keyboard on a system running Windows 7 Home Premium. Is there a way to assign a string of alphanumeric characters, such as an "e-mail address" to an available key? The object being to press one key instead of typing a long set of characters.

Thank you,

*Mike Ballou
San Diego, CA*

Dear Mike,

Assigning keystrokes to specific keys or key combinations is called macro assignment. It is often a feature available in word processors and other types of software. Microsoft does have IntelliType Pro (www.microsoft.com/hardware/en-us/help/support/how-to/keyboard/macros) software available for its keyboards which may help you with this problem. It should work across different programs. However, a more universal solution can be implemented with AutoHotkey, the free utility software which Jack Dunning has been outlining since his July article. This is a fairly easy answer which is not depended upon your keyboard.

For example, if I want a simple way to enter the e-mail address DigitalDave@mymail.com in any text field or editor on my Windows computer, I can do it with one line of code:

```
:::dd::DigitalDave@mymail.com
```

After downloading and installing AutoHotkey (www.AutoHotkey.com), I right-click on the desktop and select New => AutoHotkey Script. Next, I right-click on the new file icon and select Edit Script. Then I cut-and-paste the above line of code into the script. Save, right-click on file icon, and select Run Script. Now when editing, every time I type "dd" followed by space, comma, or period, it converts to my "DigitalDave@mymail.com" e-mail address.

Even better, I can then right-click on the icon and opt for Compile Script. This will create an executable program file (EXE) which I can copy to any Windows computer and run without needing to download and install AutoHotkey.

You may find that this will give you much more flexibility than assigning macros in a Microsoft keyboard.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

For 14 years I've been watching TV using a TV tuner card in my PC and CRT monitor, and I'm finally considering an upgrade. I see there are monitors with TV tuners, and TVs with PC inputs. What's the difference?

*OBTonyD
San Diego, CA*

Dear OBTonyD,

That's an excellent question. The first major difference is that televisions are designed to be watched from a distance of six feet or more where computer monitors are generally used at a distance of about two feet. The TVs are generally much larger while they make computer monitors for sitting on desks. For a number of reasons, most televisions are not very good computer monitors.

Televisions are optimized for viewing programming which may come in a number of formats. For that reason to improve quality they include filtering and automatic adjustments which compensate for those various formats. Computer monitors generally will not include these capabilities.

Computer monitors with the TV tuner included also will have the RF connector for broadcast television installed. This means that you can plug the monitor directly into an antenna to receive local programming. High resolution computer monitors can compete with televisions for quality, but again they are generally watched from a closer distance. The resolution of televisions is usually not as high as computer monitors. If you're sitting close to a television the picture will not seem as crisp as it would on a high-resolution computer monitor.

If your primary use of the computer is as a computer, get a computer monitor. If you mostly watch TV on your computer, consider getting a separate TV set where you can sit back on the couch and enjoy it. I wouldn't attempt to use a television as a computer monitor. I certainly wouldn't plug a Blu-ray player or game console into a computer monitor, but, if you want, plugging a PC into a TV seems fine as a second large screen for video and games.

If you buy a monitor with a tuner, you're stuck with that tuner. I would opt for a more practical solution and get a separate tuner card, or tuner box, as you have now. There is less that can go wrong with one piece of equipment.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Your file association info was great but only for Windows 7. I'm using XP, and the Control Panel doesn't have anything for Default, Set, Program or File. Rich Ernst responded that there was a LibreOffice page to set associations. I use LibreOffice 3.4.4 and I can't find this page.

I use batch files (.cmd). To edit them, I am only allowed to right-click on the file name and choose Edit, which brings them up in Notepad. I'd like to edit them with LibreOffice (as pure text files, of course). How can I set up Windows XP so that I can right-click on a .cmd file and open it with LibreOffice?

*Peter
Los Angeles*

Dear Peter,

There are a couple of ways to get to the file association settings in Windows XP. However, you do not want to change your "open" association for .cmd files.

File associations affect which program will run when you double-click on a certain type of file. If it is a data file such as .txt or .doc it is natural to associate it with opening an editor or word processor. The .cmd is an executable file associated with the Windows operating system. When you double-click the file, it goes into an execution mode, not editing. That's why you have a separate Edit option in the right-click menu. If you were to actually associate .cmd files with opening LibreOffice, those files would no longer run as designed.

It wouldn't be wise to edit command files with LibreOffice unless you're careful to always save it as a pure text file. A better option would be Notepad++ (notepad-plus-plus.org) which is a much more powerful text (program) editor than Notepad and will appear in your ".cmd" right-click menu ("Edit with Notepad++") after installation.

To get to the file association settings in Windows XP open Windows Explorer and select Tools => Folder Options => File Types tab (see Figure 1).

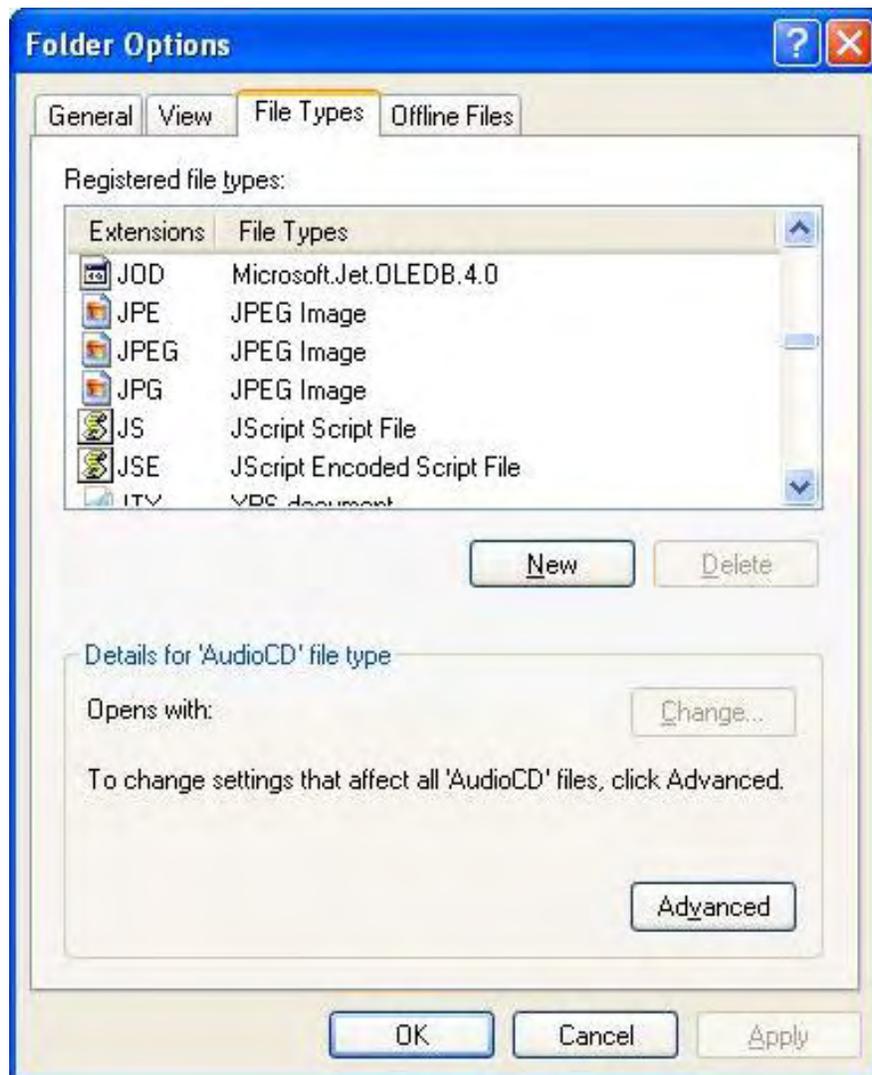


Figure 1. Folder Options window with File Types tab open in Windows XP.

If you really want to associate editing .cmd files with LibreOffice, then you will need to enter the Advanced option at the bottom of the tab with "CMD" selected. (If CMD is not on the list, you may need to add it as new.) After you click Advance, you will see the Edit File Type window shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Edit File Type window with CMD selected in Windows XP.

Select the "edit" action (not "open") and click the "Edit..." You will then be able to browse for LibreOffice Writer and set it as the edit default.

As for using LibreOffice to set defaults, all I found were instructions similar to those above, or use the "Open with..." option found in most right-click menus. Of course, I may have been looking in the wrong place.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

My wife uses Windows 7. If I were to buy her the upgrade to Windows 8, is there a way to bypass the Metro interface (Start Menu screen) permanently and run Windows 8 without it?

*Bill P.
Hotchkiss, CO*

Dear Bill,

My understanding is that there had been a hack for doing just that in the Windows 8 Consumer Preview, but Microsoft eliminated it. However, a while back I noted that Jack made a YouTube video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhTaLbbSEM4&feature=relmfu) demonstrating a trick from a reader for getting past the Metro Screen after Windows 8 boot up with just one keystroke. This is the quickest way I've seen for bypassing the Metro Start Screen.

If you want to eliminate the Start Screen in Windows 8, I recommend that you stick with Windows 7. There would be little point in upgrading to Window 8 without the new interface. While it's possible to do program and file searches other ways, the Metro Start Screen makes it very easy. Plus, there will be a number of new, useful free apps which will only run in Metro.

People who don't like the changes in Windows 8 (or don't want to deal with the learning curve) should use Windows 7—at least until they find a compelling reason to upgrade.

Digital Dave

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More Little Known High Tech Stories

“Algorithms to Pick Start-up Winners, Do-It-Yourself DNA Tests, and 3D Printed Guns” by Marilyn K. Martin

Political Convention Apps; Summer Gadgets; 3D Printing; Phone News; Tech for the Disabled; Pay Phone Kiosks Become Wi-Fi Hot Spots; Digital-magazines App; Holiday Gift Ideas; Training College Grads; How to Get Students More Interested in Science, Math and Technology; High Tech Food Marketing; Creative Algorithms; Better Health; Security Systems.

New Apps for the Political Conventions

Ticket Master and Bloomberg announced in early August 2012, that they were joining forces to put out apps for the upcoming political conventions (washingtonexaminer.com/the-conventions-theres-an-app-for-that/article/2504061). My2012Tampa (www.androidzoom.com/android_applications/my2012tampa) and My2012Charlotte (appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/search/My2012Charlotte/?lang=en) are free to blackberry owners and Android owners.

Another political convention app debuted at the end of July 2012, RE:CON (itunes.apple.com/us/app/re-conventions-2012/id526515781). The hope is that these apps can help sort out the logistical nightmare of distributing/ swapping tickets to the hundreds of parties, happy hours, and luncheons for delegates and reporters alike.

Hottest New Summer Gadgets



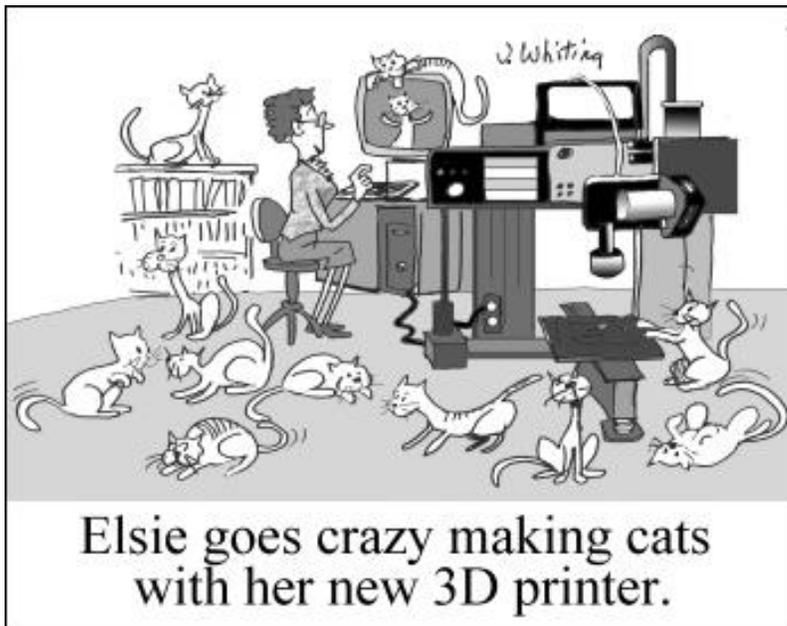
With summer about to fade into Fall, SiliconValley.com did a Tech Test Drive (www.siliconvalley.com/personal-technology/ci_21157218/tech-test-drive-best-gadgets-this-summer) of the best new gadgets that appeared during Summer 2012. They liked the Google Nexus 7 Tablet (www.google.com/nexus/#/7), saying it delivers fast performance on a beautiful and responsive screen. Barnes & Noble's Nook Simple Touch with GlowLight (www.barnesandnoble.com/p/nook-simple-touch-with-glowlight-barnes-noble/1108046469), glows evenly across the high-contrast Pearl e-ink touchscreen, and is perfect for reading in bed. Finally, they liked the Samsung Galaxy S3 (www.samsung.com/global/galaxys3/). All three were rated four points out of five by CNET, and sell for about \$140-\$200.

PopSci had their own list of the twelve Best of July gadgets (www.popsci.com/gadgets/gallery/2012-06/goods-july-2012s-hottest-gadgets), presented in gallery format. The Craftsman Figure-Eight Wrench (www.craftsman.com/craftsman-figure-eight-wrench-metric/p-00932762000P) is \$25, and is called "the most versatile wrench ever." For serious Gamers, Nvidia's GeForce GTX 690 (www.geforce.com/hardware/desktop-gpus/geforce-gtx-690/) is billed as "the fastest graphics card ever built," and sells for \$1,000 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007ZRO3U4/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007ZRO3U4&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20).

Other super-gadgets included a Garmin golf watch (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008KYY0ZE/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B008KYY0ZE&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) (\$350), a Hammacher Schlemmer thumb drive with voice encryption (\$50), and a ventilation pad for laptops (\$28).

SiliconValley.com also did a Tech Test Drive (www.siliconvalley.com/personal-technology/ci_21062222/tech-test-drive-top-smartphones-less-than-100) on the best smartphones for around \$100. They liked the LG Spectrum (www.verizonwireless.com/spectrum.shtml) from Verizon Wireless, the Samsung Galaxy S2 (www.att.com/shop/wireless/devices/samsung/galaxy-s-ii-black.html#bid=6eT3q-DWWfS), and the Nokia Lumia 900 (www.att.com/shop/wireless/devices/nokia/lumia-900-white.html#bid=6eT3q-DWWfS).

3-D Printing's Disruptive Technology



3D printing is all the rage now, especially with enough soft and freeware to tackle any job, and it is proving to be a classical Disruptive Technology. The following stories highlight what 3D printing (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B005OKHX9C/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B005OKHX9C&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) can now accomplish, which may set off another round of corrective security measures. Or, if you'd rather be a 3D lurker than printer, check out the 3D Printing Forum, Thingiverse (www.thingiverse.com/).

Before the Olympics in London, Luc Fusaro (a French engineering and design student), created a 3D printed running shoe (www.popsci.com/technology/article/2012-07/3d-printed-shoe-could-help-save-sprinters-precious-seconds). Luc thinks his custom-made running shoes could shave 3.5% off a pro runners time—which could be the difference between an Olympic medal and heading home in defeat.

At a recent hacker conference in New York, a German security consultant demonstrated how easy it is to snap open handcuffs with 3D printed plastic keys (www.popsci.com/technology/article/2012-07/hacking-handcuff-security-consultant-cracks-cuffs-open-3-d-printed-plastic-keys). Handcuff manufacturers currently post CAD files of their unlocking keys on the Internet for anyone to download. And duplicating them with 3D printers is fairly easy.

An amateur gunsmith (www.popsci.com/technology/article/2012-07/working-assault-rifle-made-3-d-printer)

recently announced he had "printed" a working .22 caliber pistol and then an AR-15 rifle. The marketing of 3D printed weapons is still controversial, but private gunsmiths could soon be printing 3D workable weapons for their private collections.

Phone News: Blocking Service to Stolen Phones, and Amazon's New Phone

With a sharp uptick in stolen cellphones, AT&T introduced a new service in July 2012, to let users report and then block service (blogs.denverpost.com/techknowbytes/2012/07/10/att-starts-blocking-stolen-phones/5331/) to their stolen phones. AT&T phones are actually more valuable on the black market since rivals Sprint and Verizon long ago implemented reporting and blocking services. This is after all four major phone service carriers said earlier this year that they would start working with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to disable lost or stolen phones. Only the smallest carrier, T-Mobile, has yet to announce a blocking service, but has introduced a \$7/month insurance plan to cover damage and loss of certain phones.

Amazon has decided to enter the smartphone-wars and develop its own phone (seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2018618903_report_amazoncom_to_make_phone.html). It will be an Android-based smartphone, and Amazon is already acquiring patents to defend its new phone against legal challenges. While Amazon isn't commenting, others have speculated earlier that Amazon might make this move, after acquiring the expertise it learned developing the Android-based Kindle Fire tablet.

New Tech for the Disabled



Related to a physically disabled Vet? How about a wheelchair that is really an Action Trackchair (www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2012/03/most-badass-wheelchair-weve-ever-seen-action-trackchair/). Made by Action Manufacturing, Inc. (www.actiontrackchair.com/), the Trackchair has camo seating and tank-treads instead of wheels. The Trackchair allows the rider to trudge through fields and forests for off-roading and mudding. While gun rack and mount accessories make this \$9,000 Trackchair ready to take the rider hunting.

According to Gizmodo at the end of July 2012, there is now a new device to use retinal tracking (gizmodo.com/5929598/new-device-turns-eye-movement-into-handwriting) to "write." Dr. Jean Lorenceau at the University of Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris, has developed a system that turns retinal movements on a screen into handwriting and drawings. This will be hugely helpful for paralyzed and disabled people, who only need to "write" on-screen with their eye movements to express their thoughts.

New York City Pay Phone Kiosks Become Wi-Fi Hot Spots

In July 2012, the *Baltimore Sun* reported that New York City is looking to add Wi-Fi (www.baltimoresun.com/business/technology/blog/la-fi-tn-nyc-pay-phone-wifi-20120711,0,2025790.story) to their pay phone kiosks. In an age when everyone has a cell phone, what are cities going to do with their occasionally used public phones? New York City initiated an experiment that turned ten payphone kiosks in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn into Wi-Fi hotspots. The payphones still work, an extra router was just added to allow an Internet signal to extend for a few feet around the kiosk. The Wi-Fi is free and available 24/7.

Digital-magazines App Now on iPad

A joint-venture by five big magazine publishers, Next Issue Media (www.nextissue.com/storefront/) launched in April 2012 with an app that bundles (techland.time.com/2012/07/10/next-issues-hulu-for-magazines-hits-the-ipad/) a bunch of famous publications for all-you-can-read. Available originally for only Android 3.0, a Next Issue app is now

available for the iPad. The app offers 39 magazines from the original mega-publishers, for \$10-\$15 a month. It now competes with Apple's Newstand (www.apple.com/ipad/from-the-app-store/newsstand.html), which is more of a folder that aggregates individual apps for magazines you subscribe to.

Early Holiday Gift Ideas



It's never too early to get started on your Holiday shopping, especially for those hard-to-gift friends and family. One idea is Brainwave Cat Ears (www.slashgear.com/necomimi-brainwave-cat-ears-officially-launch-in-the-us-13238439). Made by Necomimi (en.necomimi.com), these \$100 fluffy cat (or bunny) ears have a little sensor you attach to your forehead. The ears then move to indicate which of three emotional states the wearer is currently experiencing.

For those busy people on-the-go, there are new wristwatches (www.nytimes.com/2012/05/20/business/wristwatches-that-help-screen-your-messages-and-more.html?_r=1) that can display caller IDs, text messages, Twitter and news feeds, all beamed from a companion smartphone. Made for those times when you can't pull a smartphone out of a backpack or purse, the quietly vibrating wristwatch is much easier to check. Sony sells their Android SmartWatch (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007VG6ZC8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007VG6ZC8&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) for about \$150. Its color touchscreen works with swipes, taps and an occasional pinch, and comes with a rubbery black band (other color bands available for \$20). It is Bluetooth enabled, and requires two free set-up apps from Google Play.

Know some campers or disaster-preppers who can't stand to be away from their charged gadgets? How about a wood-burning camp stove that doubles as a gadget-charger (www.popsci.com/gadgets/article/2012-06/wood-burning-camp-stove-doubles-gadget-charger). BioLite CampStove (biolitestove.com/campstove/camp-overview/features/) burns eco-friendly wood as hot as propane, and also converts waste heat into electricity to charge any USB-powered gadget. It only weighs 2 pounds and 1 ounce, and costs about \$129.

Training College Grads to be Start-up Hires

According to the *Boston Globe* at the end of July 2012 seventy-two college grads have just completed the Boston Startup School (www.boston.com/business/technology/innoeco/2012/07/boston_startup_school_readies.html?camp=obnetwork). This is a six-week program to transform recent college grads into "high-impact hires for startup companies." The final event was Expose, where the double grads stood on stage and delivered one-minute summaries of their qualifications to an audience representing eighty-four companies hoping to hire them.

How to Get Students More Interested in Science, Math and Technology?

Google and Intel already host separate international Science Fairs (www.contracostatimes.com/business/ci_21173834/cassidy-google-science-fair-answers-and-raises-questions) for high school students. The winners receive substantial prizes as scholarships, research trips and internships. With CERN and Scientific American as co-sponsors of Google's Science Fair, training their own future workforce is an obvious goal. But Google's other, more immediate goal is to send their Science Fair winners into schools to talk-up how cool science and technology are, and how they can be used to solve world problems.

Stanford University, along with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), are America's premiere technology universities. Stanford, located near Silicon Valley in California, has just announced that for the very first time, Computer Science is their most popular undergraduate (www.contracostatimes.com/science/ci_21175486/computer-science-becomes-stanfords-most-popular-major) major. Students at Stanford don't declare their majors until their third year, with Human Biology now ranking as the second most popular major, and Engineering third.

Like other top schools, Stanford retooled their entry-level classes in 2009, to be more interdisciplinary and interesting. Computer Science dumped some less important core classes, and added things like gene-sequencing and climate change modeling. They also offered elective classes like Studio Art and Biology. After that course retooling, enrollment at Stanford surged 83% in just a couple of years.

High Tech Food Marketing Techniques

According to *PopSci* (from a *Wall Street Journal* article) in July 2012 some supermarkets are now using retinal trackers (www.popsci.com/technology/article/2012-07/marketers-tap-eye-tracking-and-brain-monitoring-get-inside-consumers-heads) to monitor your shopping choices. Using 3D computer simulations of shopping experiences, along with eye-tracking and brain-wave monitoring, food companies are now "extracting far more meaningful data from the human shopping experience."

Other food companies are market testing through social media (www.nytimes.com/2012/07/31/technology/facebook-twitter-and-foursquare-as-corporate-focus-groups.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120731) like Facebook. Frito-Lay's Facebook app suggests new flavor combinations, and when visitors read a combo they like, they click the "I'd Eat That" button. Frito-Lay then has an enthusiasm/curiosity index for new flavors, and also a breakdown of which states like which new flavor combos the best. Wal-Mart, Samuel Adams and Estee Lauder, among others, are also using social media for actual/potential customers to vote on products.

Algorithms That Can Create, Compose and Pick Start-up Winners

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's magazine, *Technology Review*, published an article in July 2012 that computer algorithms (www.technologyreview.com/news/428437/can-creativity-be-automated/) can now write news stories, compose music and even choose hit songs. Like it or not, complex algorithms are moving into creative fields, like Music X-Ray (www.musicxray.com/), whose founder spent a decade developing technology to detect those musical-hooks that destin a song for the top of the charts. Music X-Ray's algorithms use Fourier transforms, which isolate all the catchy factors of a song, then build a 3-dimensional model of the song and compare it to past hit songs.

Algorithms have also been developed to grade English essays, and take box scores and produce well-styled sports reports. Algorithms cannot yet write prose worthy of awards, but can help publishers by measuring the number of page views a site registers. They can even write news articles in a matter of seconds. And David Cope, professor emeritus at University of California, Santa Cruz, spent 30 years developing music-making algorithms that can now compose music that imitates past masters like Bach.

Technology Review also had an article in July 2012 about an algorithm that can pick startup winners (www.technologyreview.com/news/428427/an-algorithm-to-pick-startup-winners/). Correlation Ventures (correlationvc.com/) is a new kind of venture capital firm, "leveraging world-class analytics to offer entrepreneurs and other venture capitalists a dramatically better option when they are seeking additional capital to complete a financing round." Based in San Diego and Palo Alto, California, CV adds efficiency and expediency to the investment process, with rejections determined in just days. For top-ranked start-ups, a 30-minute interview with the start-up CEO and the outside investor leads to a quick legal review and background check. If everything goes right, co-investor CV can deliver a multi-million dollar check in less than a couple of weeks.

Better Health Through Apps and Do-It-Yourself DNA Tests

A July article in the *Seattle Times* said that mobile devices may be the next big thing in public health (seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/health/2018767798_healthapps29.html). Smartphones can be used to monitor people's chronic diseases, like obesity and diabetes. And clinicians in the field can quickly relay important information and find people in distress, in the event of an epidemic or other public health emergency. Meanwhile, general health apps have proliferated to 13,619, but only 10% of smartphone users are downloading them, since most only track diet and fitness. Other criticisms are

that health apps are uneven in quality, and most have little scientific backing. Yet studies have shown that "remote health coaching" and financial incentives can make a difference in adults eating healthier and getting more exercise.

The Boston Globe reported in July 2012, that a company is seeking permission from the Food and Drug Administration to market personalized DNA testing kits (articles.boston.com/2012-07-30/business/32944491_1_genetic-code-dna-test-diseases). Genetic test maker 23andMe (www.23andme.com/) uses saliva-based kits to test for health and ancestry. Such tests are controversial when it comes to claims of predicting future diseases. Similar DNA tests already on the market are deCODE Genetics and Navigenics, which are sold through physicians. Only 23andMe is being marketed directly to the public, and sells for about \$300 online.

New Security Systems

All you really need to make your home look like an impenetrable top-secret government facility, according to a July article in *Red Ferret*, is a sweeping laser security system (www.redferret.net/?p=32896). The moving red lasers are fake, but are designed to make potential burglars decide that your super-secure home is not worth breaking into. Selling for \$221 from Spy Gadgets (www.spygadgets.com/best-burglar-deterrent-laserscan.aspx), the system is marketed as a deterrent by giving the "perception of security."

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will soon be installing laser scanners (washington.cbslocal.com/2012/07/11/new-homeland-security-laser-scanner-reads-people-at-molecular-level/) in airports that can "read" people down to a molecular level from 160 feet away. These new airport laser-scanners can detect everything from a person's adrenaline level to traces of gun powder on clothing. All this can be detected without random or personal searches, and multiple people can be scanned at one time. These new scanners are called Picosecond Programmable Lasers, and should start to show up in airports by 2013. Marketed by Genia Photonics (www.geniaphotonics.com/), the company develops and markets advanced laser systems, and holds numerous patents. They also claim that their PPL system could also have medical uses, such as real-time cancer detection.

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

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

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

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

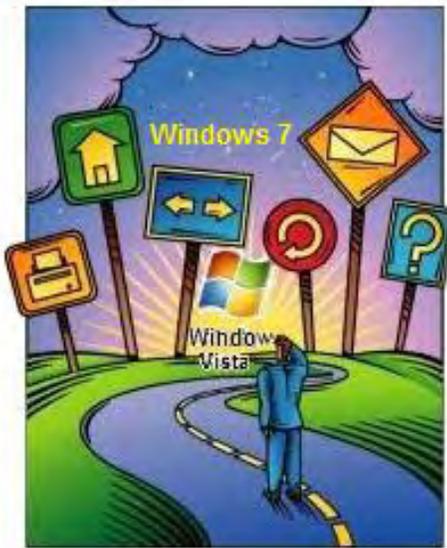
* *Computerholics Anonymous: PC Users, Abusers and Confusioners*, in both EPUB format (www.computoredgebooks.com/Computerholics-Anonymous-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0003-

1.htm?sourceCode=writer) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (www.computoredgebooks.com/Computerholics-Anonymous-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0003-2.htm?sourceCode=writer) for Amazon Kindle.

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

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

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Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: Make Any Window Always-on-Top Anywhere, Anytime
 “Using AutoHotkey to Make a Window Always-on-Top” by Jack Dunning

Using AutoHotkey for always-on-top and using "If" conditionals to solve some window size and location problems.

A question from Rich Ernst of San Diego:

I don't know if I missed it, but I'd love to see an AutoHotkey script to open/force/keep a window on top of all other windows.

Possible? Thanks,

Rich

Hi, Rich,

Yes, there is a way to set an active window to always-on-top in AutoHotkey:

```
^#8::WinSet, AlwaysOnTop, toggle, A
```

In this case, when a window is active, the hotkeys CTRL++8 use the WinSet (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinSet.htm) command to toggle always-on-top on and off. The "A" designates the active window for the action.

Thanks for the question. What many people may not realize is that I'm learning AutoHotkey as I write these columns. Questions help guide me by pointing out what is most important to new AutoHotkey users. Searching for your answer gave me that much more insight into AutoHotkey. Finding the WinSet command made me realize that this technique for setting windows always-on-top is easier than clicking and holding the top of a window while shaking (used in both Windows Aero and AquaSnap).

Jack

It's fairly easy to create the one-line AutoHotkey script listed in the letter. It's a matter of installing the AutoHotkey download. Creating the script text file with the ".ahk" extension. Adding the above line to the new file (or an old one), then activating the script. The steps are outlined in the article linked in the following note.

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. However, many of the techniques shown in this series can be immediately implemented without any extra knowledge.

* * *

Centering Windows and Limiting Window Size

Last time, there remained some issues concerning windows resizing beyond the edge of the computer screen. There are two techniques in AutoHotkey which can be used to ensure the resized window remains within the screen. The first is to center the resized window which will keep any window smaller than the size of the screen within its limits. The second is to force the window to match the screen size if the new resize is too large for the screen. This was done by modifying last week's script (see Figure 1).

```

WindowSize.ahk - Notepad
File Edit Format View Help

^#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

    WinGetPos,X1,Y1,W1,H1,Program Manager
    X2 := (W1 - width)/2
    Y2 := (H1 - Height)/2

    If (width >= W1){
        X2 := 1
        width := W1
    }

    If (Height >= H1){
        Y2 := 1
        Height := H1
    }

    WinMove,A,,%X2%,%Y2%,%width%,%Height%
}

```

New portion of code added to center the window and limit to screen size.

Figure 1. Code is added to the WindowSize.ahk script which finds the size of the computer screen, centers the window, and limits its size to the screen size.

Note that the "If" conditional (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IfExpression.htm) is used. In this case the curly brackets "{}" are used to show the start and end of the code within the conditional. These curly brackets are required when there is more than one line of code. Also note that the key expression is included within regular brackets "()" for the new

conditionals. While these brackets are not always needed, as in the traditional AutoHotkey "If" statements (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IfEqual.htm), it is often cleaner to include the brackets when appropriate.

To add the new features to the WindowSize.ahk script, copy and replace the old code in the file with the following:

```

^#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
    WinGetPos,X1,Y1,W1,H1,Program Manager
    X2 := (W1 - Width)/2    ;Center the window width
    Y2 := (H1 - Height)/2  ;Center the windows height
    If (Width >= W1){      ;If the window is too wide for the screen
        X2 := 1
        Width := W1
    }
    If (Height >= H1){    ;If the windows is to high for the screen
        Y2 := 1
        Height := H1
    }
    WinMove,A,,%X2%,%Y2%,%Width%,%Height%
}

```

How the New Code Works

The first new line, "WinGetPos (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinGetPos.htm),X1,Y1,W1,H1,Program Manager", captures the size of the screen. The title "Program Manager" refers to the computer screen. Of interest here are W1 and H1 which are the width and height of the screen. The coordinates for the position of the screen (X1 and Y1) will not change since they are always at the upper left-hand corner.

To center the new size window, you need to find the coordinates for the upper left-hand corner of the window which will place it in the center of the screen. For the horizontal coordinate (X2) location, the width of the screen (W1) minus the width of the window (Width) will yield the uncovered screen space. You place half of the open space on each side of the windows by using the midway point (X2) for the horizontal coordinate—half the total open distance gives the spacing from the left edge of the screen:

```
X2 := (W1 - Width)/2
```

For the vertical coordinate (Y2) location, the height of the screen (W1) minus the height of the window (Height) will yield the

uncovered screen space. You split the open space between the top and bottom of the screen by making the midway point (Y2) the vertical coordinate—half the total open distance gives the spacing from the top edge of the screen:

```
Y2 := (H1 - Height) / 2
```

X2 and Y2 are the positioning coordinates used in the WinMove (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinMove.htm) command at the end of the routine. This is all that's needed for positioning a window smaller than the screen, but what if the new window's size is too large for the screen?

The two new "If" conditionals account for a window width or height which is larger than the respective screen dimension. "If (Width >= W1)" checks whether the width of the window (Width) is greater than (>) or equal to (=) the width of the screen (W1). If so, the position of the horizontal coordinate (X2) is set to 1 (the left side of the screen) and the window width (Width) is set to the screen width, thereby matching the screen size. "If (Height >= H1)" checks whether the height of the window (Height) is greater than (>) or equal to (=) than the height of the screen (H1). If so, the position of the vertical coordinate (Y2) is set to 1 (the top edge of the screen) and the window height (Height) is set to the screen height, thereby matching the screen size.

You might think that you could simplify the code by using the WinMaximize (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinMaximize.htm) command which expands the window to full screen. This would definitely be true if all you wanted to do was expand the active window to the full screen size with a hotkey (F11::WinMaximize, A). However, since you are looking at new dimensions and checking both the height and width, you probably only want the windows to maximize when both the width and height exceeded the screen size. That would require adding another "If" conditional—this time adding the "else" alternative.

Maximizing the Window

One way to use the WinMaximize command when both the width and height of the windows exceed the screen width is as follows:

```
If (X2 = 1 and Y2 = 1)
  {
    WinMaximize, A
  }
else
  {
    WinMove, A, , %X2%, %Y2%, %Width%, %Height%
  }
```

In this situation, the original WinMove command for centering with the new dimensions would be executed unless the coordinates for the position of the windows are (1,1), the upper left-hand corner of the screen. This would be true only when the active window is targeted for occupying the entire screen. In that case, the active window (A) would use the WinMaximize command. (The WinRestore (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinRestore.htm) command can be used to reverse the maximize process or WinMinimize (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinMinimize.htm) to move the window out of the way.)

* * *

We're starting to accumulate so many useful hotkeys that it's impossible to remember them all. Next time, we will explore making a pop-up help window which will remind us of the many useful hotkeys we've created.

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

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

Just released and available from Amazon, *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)! Also available at Barnes and Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463) and ComputerEdge E-Books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer).

Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20), *Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007AL672M/?&tag=comput0b9-20), *Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00758J4L6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20), and *That Does Not Compute!* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Poor User Interface Design” by Wally Wang

The Future of Tablets; Apple vs. Samsung; Survival Skills on an iPad; Rapid Change; Customize Settings.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The cargo doors of many passenger planes swing inward. This design ensures that if the door's lock should fail for any reason, the door still can't swing open because it would be held back by the door jamb.

The problem with inward swinging cargo doors is that you have to leave space inside the plane for the door to swing open. To maximize space, engineers decided to design a cargo door that would swing outward. This would allow the plane to carry more cargo since all the space inside could be filled. Unfortunately, if the door's locks failed, there would be nothing to keep the door in place. Eventually, one such cargo door lock failed, the door blew open, and the plane's cargo went flying out the open door as well.

The lesson is that everything should be designed to make failure as difficult as possible, yet engineers ignore this rule of thumb all the time. In Vista, you could right-click on the Recycle Bin to empty it, but actually delete the Recycle Bin icon from your desktop through one accidental click. To restore the Recycle Bin, you had to go through multiple steps. Vista made it easy to make a mistake but difficult and cumbersome to correct that mistake, which is the exact opposite that it should be.

When examining any user interface, ask yourself if it protects you from making catastrophic mistakes. For example, in some operating systems, it's possible to delete another program's files accidentally.

If you use Windows 7, create an Excel file and then exit Excel. Now open Word, view an Open dialog box, choose to view all files, right-click on that Excel file (or any program's file for that matter), and when a pop-up menu appears, you can delete that file. Windows makes it easy to delete other program's files even if there's no reason for one program to access another program's files.

Open Word for the Macintosh under Mountain Lion, view the Open dialog box, and see if you can right-click and delete a file. The iOS operating system on the iPhone and iPad makes that task even harder since each app can only view the files created by that app and no other app. This effectively isolates you from accidentally deleting another program's file within a different program.

While iOS relies on touchscreens that revolutionized the smartphone and tablet market, touchscreens don't always make the best user interfaces in all situations, such as the touchscreen used in Ford's MyFord Touch system (<http://autos.yahoo.com/news/why-the-myford-touch-control-system-stinks.html>). In case you don't know what MyFord Touch does, here's a quick summary.

Instead of displaying physical controls like knobs to manipulate your stereo, the MyFord Touch system uses a touchscreen

and voice commands to manipulate the car stereo. Beyond problems with the touchscreen not working or crashing, or the voice commands not working reliably, the biggest problem with MyFord Touch's touchscreen is that when you're driving, you must take your eyes off the road to use the touch screen.



Figure 1. The MyFord Touch touch screen forces you to look for its controls.

With older car stereos that used physical controls, you could feel the different controls such as the volume or radio station tuner knob. Then you could adjust the radio without ever taking your eyes off the road.

With the MyFord Touch touchscreen, you can't feel any controls so you must take your eyes off the road to see and use the touchscreen. Taking your eyes off the road even momentarily is dangerous, yet the user interface of the MyFord Touch system forces you to do that unless you can manage to get the voice commands to work right.

The MyFord Touch user interface simply works against the driver's best interests, which is to stay focused on driving and not look at anything else. A well-designed user interface keeps you from making mistakes. A poorly designed user interface gives you the opportunity to make mistakes by assuming you're smart enough not to make them in the first place. By placing the burden on the user, poor user interfaces make the user work harder avoiding mistakes while well-designed user interfaces let the user focus on performing a task safely.

With this criteria in mind, examine the user interfaces for Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Android, and iOS to see which ones shield you from mistakes and which ones give you the "freedom" to make as many mistakes as you can. If you don't think it's necessary to protect people from mistakes, then perhaps you'd like to run a few red lights and drive against traffic since you're willing to take full responsibility for not hurting yourself in the process. Cut your seat belts off and remove the air bags too while you're at it.

For the rest of us, we can spend our time getting work done through user interfaces that protect us from needless complexity and easy-to-make errors. User interfaces should be designed to simplify our lives, not complicate them. No matter how bizarre a user interface may be, if it simplifies your life, it works. If it doesn't, then it doesn't work. It's really that simple.

The Future of Tablets

ABI Research predicts tablet shipments (www.abiresearch.com/press/tablet-market-on-track-to-exceed-100-million-shipm) will exceed 100 million units in 2012 with the iPad estimated to capture 69 percent of the market with Android and other tablets taking up the rest. More interesting is that Apple sold 17 million iPads in the second quarter of 2012, which nearly equaled the 17.7 million that all the other tablet manufacturers sold in that same time period.

While tablet sales continue to climb, PC sales continue to drop (articles.marketwatch.com/2012-08-17/industries/33245071_1_abhey-lamba-pc-sales-dell). One common excuse is that PC sales are slowing because people are waiting for Windows 8, although that doesn't explain why PC sales have been slowing for several quarters in a row. Most likely, people are buying and using smartphones and tablets instead of buying a new computer. With more choices between smartphones, tablets, and PCs, PCs are no longer the only way to get on the Internet.

If tablet sales continue to climb and and PC sales continue to drop, eventually there should come a time when tablets outnumber PCs. If you still cling to the delusion that tablets can consume content but never create it, you might be interested in downloading Quark's DesignPad (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%252Fquark-designpad%252Fid551786067%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30) app for the iPad.

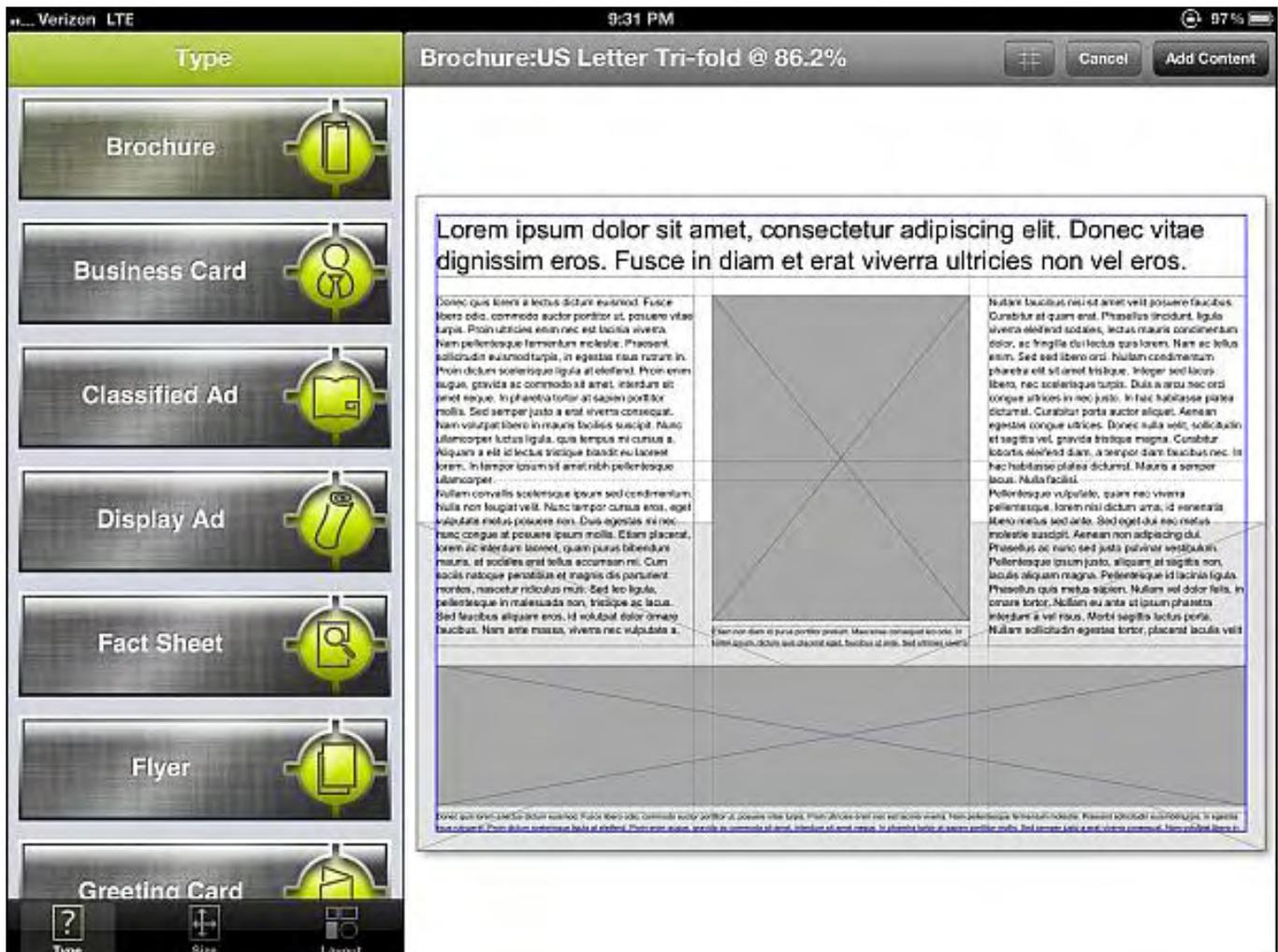


Figure 2. DesignPad lets you chose a template for your page layout.

With DesignPad, you can turn your iPad into a desktop publishing program and quickly create layouts using nothing more than the touchscreen and finger gestures. Then you can send your design as a graphic file or as a Quark XPress file so you can further edit your design on Quark XPress running on a PC or Mac.

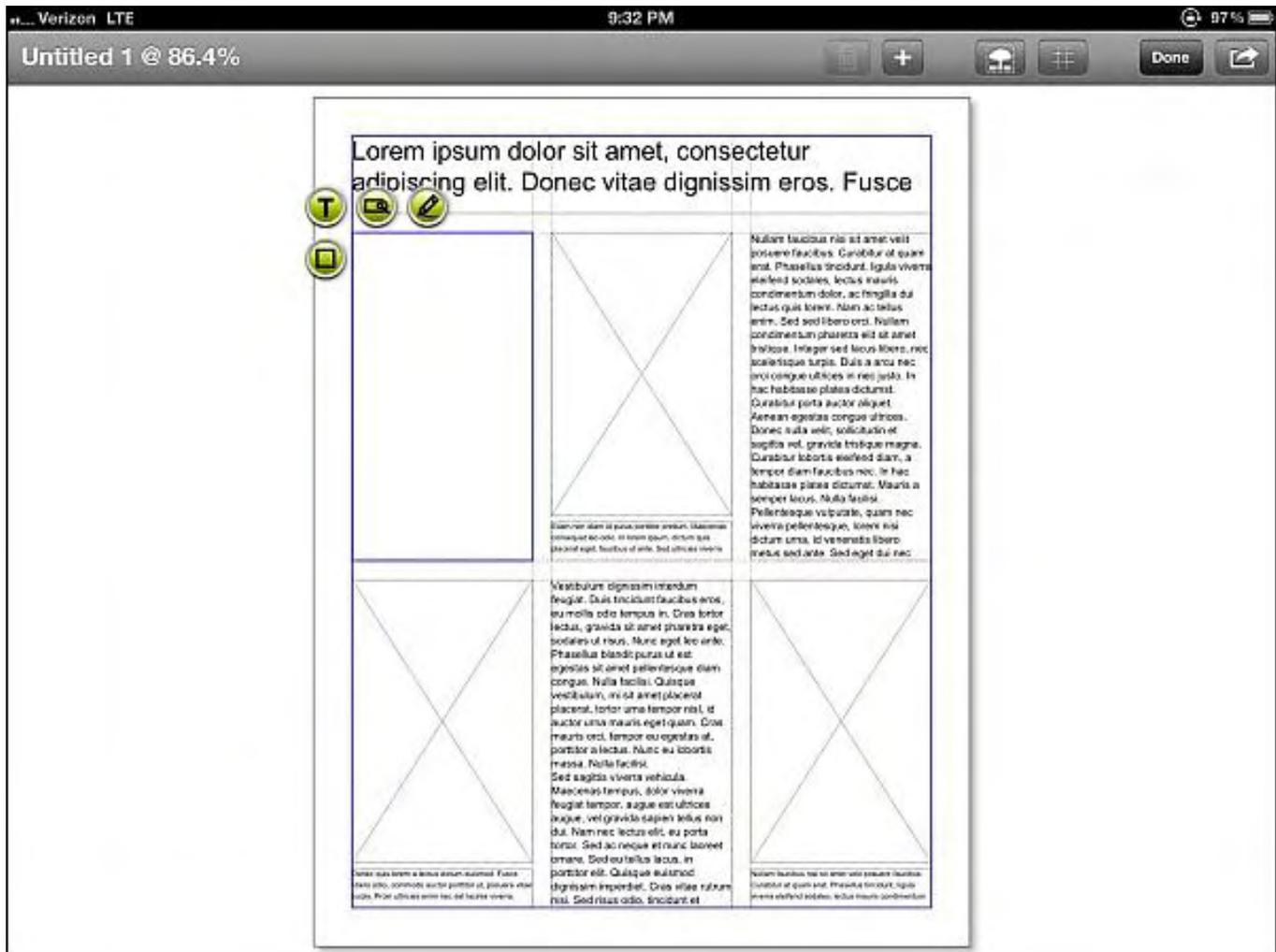


Figure 3. You can add text or pictures to your page layout using the iPad.

DesignPad represents yet another example that it's possible to create content on an iPad without using a physical keyboard or mouse. Despite the numerous examples proving that the iPad can create content, expect to hear people continue claiming that the iPad can only consume content much like some people still continue claiming that the Earth is flat or that Elvis Presley is still alive.

Apple vs. Samsung

In the recent trial between Apple and Samsung, a jury has decided mostly in Apple's favor. Right away you can hear people complaining that Apple is trying to patent the rectangle or that Apple didn't invent the touchscreen. The real issue isn't whether Apple invented everything, but if Samsung deliberately copied Apple's designs to make their products closely resemble Apple's. This is no different from McDonald's suing a restaurant that displays a sign that looks too much like the McDonald's golden arches.

If you look at the phone icon for the iPhone, it's a white icon against a green background. Then look at Samsung's designs for that same phone icon and it looks nearly identical (news.cnet.com/2300-13579_3-10013263-1.html). Obviously

Samsung could have chosen a different icon or color, but is it possible that they just happened to design an icon that looks identical to Apple's icon?



Figure 4. Samsung's phone icon looks almost exactly like Apple's phone icon.

Samsung recently opened a store in Australia (www.androidauthority.com/samsung-opens-apple-like-store-sydney-coincidentally-almost-next-apple-retail-store-110143) that looks almost exactly like an Apple Store. While no one can claim that only Apple can open stores, there are plenty of ways to design a store so it doesn't look like a carbon copy of a competitor's store.



Figure 5. Samsung's store looks similar to an Apple Store.

The patent lawsuit against Samsung mostly targeted Samsung's TouchWiz interface (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TouchWiz) that makes Android and other operating systems look similar to Apple's iOS. Apple isn't claiming that they invented the mobile phone or touchscreens, but that Samsung simply made their products look too much like Apple's products, not by chance but by deliberate choice. Anyone can open a restaurant but nobody can design a restaurant so the outside building, sign, and menu looks almost identical to McDonald's.

Microsoft even felt threatened when a Linux distribution named Lindows (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_v._Lindows) appeared. After trying to sue Lindows out of existence, Microsoft realized that their Windows trademark might not hold up in court since it was a generic term, so they settled and purchased the rights to the Lindows name instead.

Even though Lindows was based on Linux and didn't try to mimic the exact look and feel of Windows, Microsoft felt that the Lindows name was too close to Windows. Protecting your business brand and not letting others mimic it too closely is what every business needs to do. The big question is whether Apple will continue suing other companies and go too far, or if other companies will actually try to innovate and create their own solutions like Microsoft did with Windows Phone 7 and its tile interface that nobody would ever mistake for an iPhone.

Innovation stems from creativity, not copying. Samsung probably wouldn't be happy if someone created a line of smartphones that looked like their own phones but named the company Samsung instead.

There's nothing wrong with improving on ideas, but there is something wrong with blatantly mimicking other people's ideas and claiming that you came up with them on your own. Lawsuits typically only enrich the lawyers, but in Samsung's case, it may force them to actually start innovating and come up with their own designs instead of copying the iPhone and iPad, which even Google warned Samsung (allthingsd.com/20120725/apple-google-warned-samsung-against-copying-us/) about.

For consumers, this should be good news since it will encourage companies to innovate. Since most companies can't innovate, this will more likely cause companies to fail instead, and then everyone will blame Apple for preventing innovation in the market.

Survival Skills on an iPad

Many airlines are replacing bulky printed paper manuals with an iPad that can contain thousands of pages stored digitally. While the iPad can work in the comfortable surroundings of a cockpit, it probably won't work as well outside in a dusty or wet environment without a reliable source of electricity unless you want to lug around your iPad in a protective case with a portable battery or solar charger.

For those outdoor enthusiasts who don't want to lug around paper manuals and want to brave the elements with their iPad, consider getting the \$2.99 Wilderness survival manual (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%252Fisurvival-wilderness-survival%252Fid411704517%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30) or the \$1.99 U.S. Army survival manual (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%252Fisurvival-army-survival-field%252Fid377726228%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30) as an app for your iPad.

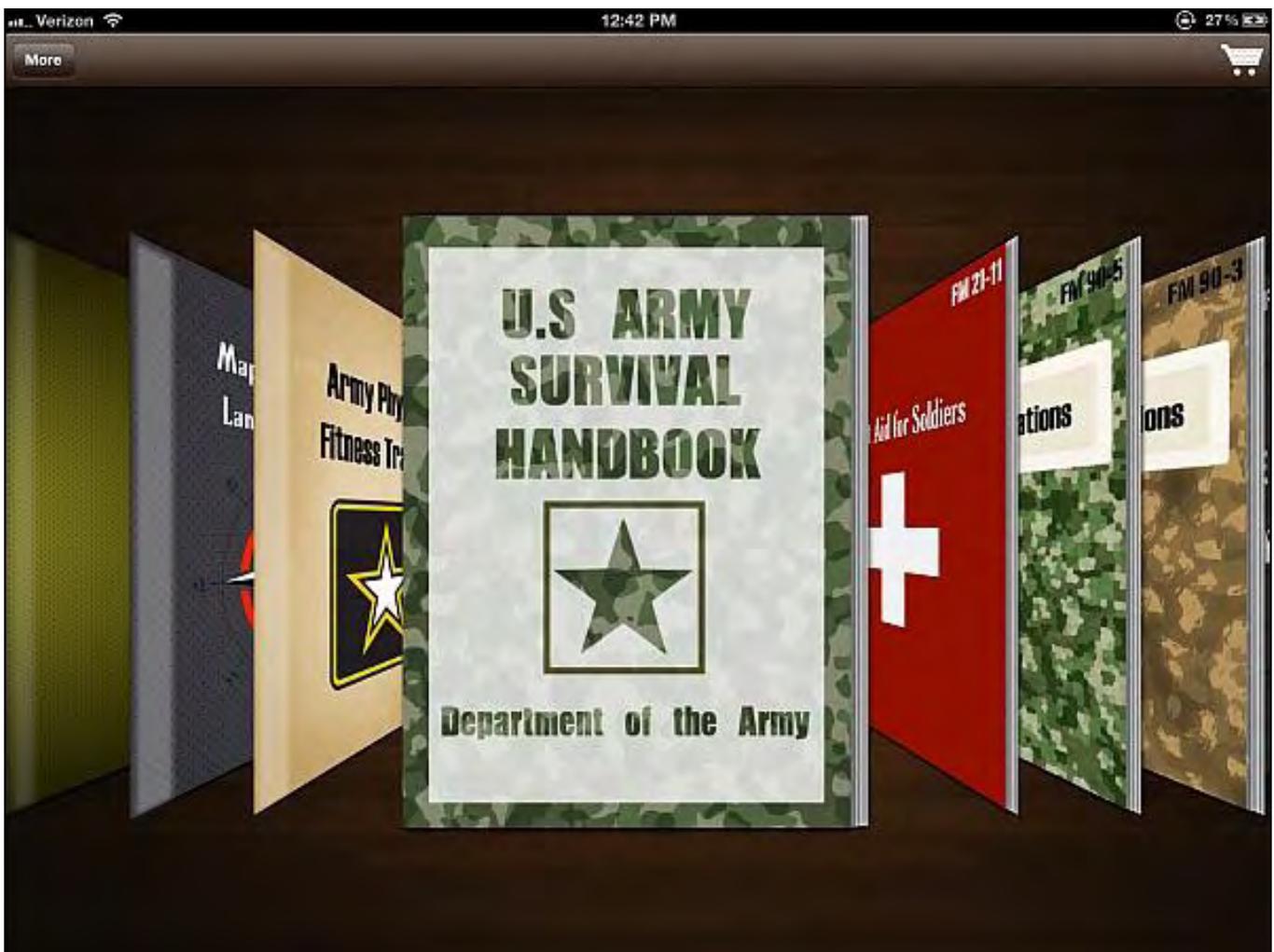


Figure 6. You can read multiple military survival manuals in a single app.

Both digital books cram dozens of pages into an app that you can browse through and read in the comfort of air conditioning and a sofa, or out in the wilds of a forest or desert. By skimming through these survival books, you can learn the best ways to build a fire, find edible plants, create a shelter, and even hide from someone pursuing you.

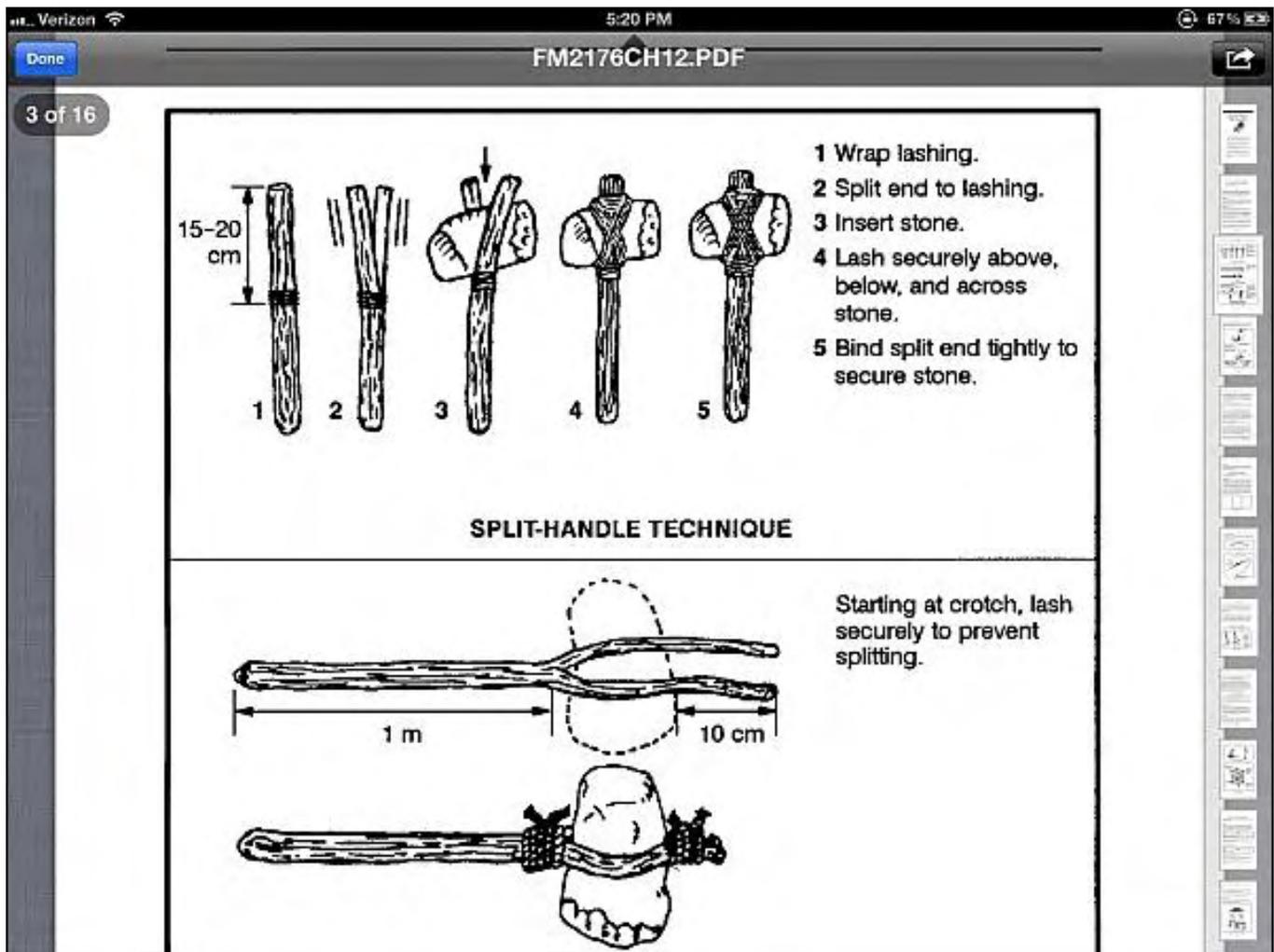


Figure 7. Learn how to survive through a digital book on your iPad. Enter caption here.

If you're running around in the wilderness, lugging around multiple survival manuals will likely be impractical. While such digital manuals may be fine for bedtime reading, you could find them handy on your next camping trip, provided you don't run out of power or damage your iPad first.

Rapid Change

A little less than three years ago, critics claimed that the iPad was worthless because netbooks were superior. When netbooks faded from the market, critics next claimed that the iPad was worthless because it couldn't run Adobe Flash so therefore Android and other devices were superior. Of course, Flash never ran very well on Android or other mobile devices either, but facts rarely stop some people from voicing their opinions. The rapid pace of change from the time when the iPad was supposed to flop to the time when the iPad has changed the computing world has been less than three years. If you think such rapid change can't happen again, you probably haven't learned the lesson that history tends to repeat itself.

The author of *Communities Dominate Brands* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0954432738/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0954432738&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20) has put together a list of the top computer manufacturers (communities-dominate.blogspot.com/brands/2012/08/largest-computer-makers-when-smartphones-included-apple-dominates-nearly-twice-as-big-as-nearest-riv.html) including both smartphones and tablets as computers. The result is that Apple holds 21 percent of the market with Samsung its nearest rival at 11 percent, Nokia at 8 percent, and Hewlett-Packard at 7 percent. The next closest PC manufacturers are Lenovo and Dell at 5 percent each.

If you look at operating system market share, Windows still leads, but only holds 31 percent of the market while Android holds

the number two spot with 23 percent and iOS follows in third place with 21 percent. Before the popularity of smartphones and tablets, Windows dominated the market at over 90 percent. Yet by taking into account mobile computing, Windows' market share looks a lot less intimidating, so it's no surprise that Microsoft is promoting Windows 8 as the operating for traditional PCs, smartphones, and tablets.

While critics can complain that smartphones and tablets aren't computers, the rest of the world is cheerfully adapting to mobile computing (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2408960,00.asp) devices anyway, especially smart phones. Chances are good that if mobile computers didn't exist, you would buy a new PC, but with the growing popularity of mobile devices, your next PC will probably be a smartphone or tablet instead.

* * *

With every Macintosh program, there's an easy way to customize that program. Just look for the program name menu such as Word, Pages, Safari, or Keynote, and then choose Preferences to open a Preferences window.



Figure 8. Every Macintosh program lets you customize its settings through its Preferences menu.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

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

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

Steal This Computer Book (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050)

Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies (www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987)

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

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

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

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

How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70)

The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M)

Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)

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

The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI)

The 15-Minute Movie Method (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8)

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

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Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

-  Don't say we didn't warn you.
- 
 What is that store's return policy?
- 

 We've seen better; we've seen worse.
- 


 You'll probably be happy you did.
- 



 What are you waiting for?

Time to Hide Your Samsung Smartphone?; Get to Know—and Thwart—Online Predators; Get Your Head into the Cloud—but Keep Your Wallet in Your Pocket; Motorola Droid 4 Smartphone; Ear Candy for Mobile Device Users.

Time to Hide Your Samsung Smartphone?

There's an excellent piece by Julianne Pepitone and David Goldman over at CNN Money that nicely sums up last week's Apple-Samsung patent verdict and what it may mean to the tens of millions of people who own Samsung—and perhaps other—Android-powered smartphones:



"What happens to my Samsung phone? Apple's design and software claims involved scores of Samsung devices, including the Nexus S 4G and S II. As a result of the ruling, Apple could request an injunction against the Samsung devices that were found to have infringed on its patents. That means Samsung could be forced to take those gadgets off the market until they are changed. If you already own the devices in question, though, don't worry: Even with an injunction, no one can pry the phone out of your hands. But it's possible that your phone could receive a software update that tweaks how it looks and works.

"What about my Samsung Galaxy tablet? This category offered one spot of good news for Samsung: The jury ruled that Samsung's Galaxy Tab tablets did not infringe on Apple's design patents for the iPad.

"Will we see any changes to future phone and tablet hardware? Chris Carani, an intellectual property attorney and design law expert at McAndrews, Held & Malloy, says the verdict could spark "a burst of creativity" in the design of future devices. Competitors won't want to risk being slapped with a design infringement lawsuit, given that it costs so much money to roll out a new smartphone or tablet.

" 'Competitors will have to go back to the drawing board, and give their designers more creative license,' Carani says. 'They'll have to create something very different as far as the visual experience, and that choice could be a great benefit for consumers.' "

Read the entire story here (money.cnn.com/2012/08/24/technology/apple-samsung-verdict/index.html).

Get to Know—and Thwart—Online Predators

The child safety company uKnowKids (uknowkids.com) has released "Online Predators," the fifth of a series of infographics that addresses the alarming number of teens getting targeted by online predators. The company writes:

The results show that more kids are being targeted each year and that this growing problem needs to be addressed immediately. Internet and Mobile Safety expert Tim Woda stated "there are over 5,000,000 predators that surf the Internet and 77% of the targets of online predators were 14 or older."

uKnowKids provides the following tips on online predators for parents:

Know who you are talking to: Children are curious and naive and don't understand that everyone doesn't have their best interests at heart. They need to be aware that there are people out there who may want to harm them. Kids shouldn't add friends on their social media sites if they haven't met them in person and if their parents don't know who they are.

Personal information: Just because someone asks for it doesn't mean you have to give it. You don't know why the person wants your personal information and more importantly don't know what they want to do with it.

Privacy: All social media accounts should be set to private where only friends can view profiles and information. If it's not private you allow predators and unwanted visitors knowing information about your child.

Talk to your children: Make you sure you discuss the protocol of what to do in case they are approached by someone they don't know online. Make it easy for them to be able to tell you what's going on in their digital world.

Use a Parental Intelligence System: It is the parent's job to make sure to keep their child is safe and the only way to do that is to monitor their phone calls, text messages, and social media sites. It's important to stop any situation before it becomes a catastrophe.

Get Your Head into the Cloud—but Keep Your Wallet in Your Pocket

Siamak Farah, founder and CEO of InfoStreet (www.infostreet.com), provides the following tips for saving costs by using the Cloud:

Although there are many benefits of moving to the Cloud, most cost-saving benefits may still be unknown to small businesses. Now, more than ever, is the time to show businesses how to expand while reducing costs.

The Cloud gives your small business access to otherwise hard-to-reach or hard-to-afford IT expertise. You don't have to pay for full-time IT staff that will manage your servers, software, and hardware. The Cloud relieves you from installing, maintaining, and upgrading software and hardware and manages everything for you.

Eliminate the cost associated with replacing PCs every two to three years. Since the computing is done in the Cloud, any old computer will do. Use the computer till it runs into the ground, then just simply get up, go to the next computer, log in, and continue exactly where you left off in two minutes flat.

Another benefit comes to you with the advent of the new Cloud app markets, giving you comparison shopping right at your fingertips. Almost all apps offer free trials and pay-as-you-go pricing so you can sign up for new apps for as long as necessary, without any long-term commitments. Additionally, for every highly sophisticated (perhaps too sophisticated) app, there are simpler options at much lower costs for those businesses that only need a basic solution.

Lastly, every entrepreneur can tell you that often, unnecessary costs come from things that they've purchased, but never used. The Cloud scales with you. If you are seasonal—or grow overnight—you won't have to spend a dime on additional hardware or long-term software agreements, since Cloud apps are typically charged on a monthly and per-user basis.

Motorola Droid 4 Smartphone (Verizon)

I enjoyed using the Motorola DROID 4 (www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/store/controller?item=phoneFirst&action=viewPhoneDetail&selectedPhoneId=5845) for about a month; really gave it a good workout.

It's basically a solid, Android-based smartphone that features a slide-out keyboard. From what people tell me, the keyboard is of particular use to anyone who either can't quite get the hang of typing onscreen or who is, perhaps, new to cell phones and would like to get started by using something that feels more like the physical computer keyboard they have likely been typing on for years. And it's a great little keyboard. Five rows, LED edge-lit; the perfect partner to the DROID 4's ample 4" display.



Another plus—one that we need to see on more smartphones—is that the DROID 4 has a built-in HDMI jack. That means, if your cell or Wi-Fi connection is strong enough, you can plug it right into most modern TVs and watch Netflix or Hulu or other online streaming media with nothing more than the phone itself (and your own HDMI cable).

The DROID 4 also sports a very snappy dual-core 1.2GHz processor and a gig of LP DDR2 RAM. All that power and screen real estate comes at a price, though, in the form of less-than-optimal battery life. I was never able to get the DROID 4 through an entire day without carefully biding the power meter and sometimes topping the unit off midday for an hour or two. You might be able to make it if you carefully monitor power use of individual components (screen brightness, GPS, Wi-Fi, etc.) or only watch media with the phone plugged in. The phone allows you to automate many daily tasks and adjust a variety of settings.



In conclusion, if you prefer a smartphone with a slide-out keyboard, the DROID 4 is definitely worth a look. There's a lot to love, just keep in mind the iffy battery life.

Specs (from Verizon):

Network:

- CDMA 800, 1900 EVDO REV A
- LTE B13 700
- GSM/EDGE: 850/900/1800/1900
- UMTS/HSPA+: 850/900/1900/2100

Dimensions:

- 2.8 (w) x 5.0 (h) x 0.5 (d) inches
- Weight: 6.31oz

Operating System:

- Android 4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich) OS with Motorola Application Platform

Display:

- 4" qHD (960x540) Display
- Scratch-resistant Corning Gorilla Glass display and water-repellent nanocoating.

Keyboard:

- 5-row, PC-like, LED edge-lit QWERTY keyboard

Battery:

- 1785 mAH Li-Ion
- Talk Time—Up to approx. 12.5 hours or Standby Time—Up to approx. 8.5 days
- SAR: Head 0.70 W/kg / Body-worn 0.58 W/kg

Memory / Processor:

- Dual core 1.2GHz processor & 1GB of LP DDR2 RAM
- 16GB internal memory (actual formatted capacity is less)
- Supports up to 32GB microSD card (sold separately)
- Phonebook capacity dependent upon available memory



Ear Candy for Mobile Device Users

SRS Labs has followed up their iWOW-3D audio enhancing device (reviewed here July 22, 2011) with a new one called iWOW-U (\$69.99 MSRP). This new device's name is indicative of its "Universal" support for mobile devices with a standard headphone/headset jack (3.5 mm). Supported devices (srslabs.com/uploadedFiles/30_Products_With_SRS/310_Audio_iWOW/iWOW-U%20User%27s%20Manual%20-%20VF.pdf) include smartphones, notebook and tablet computers, game consoles, MP3 players, etc.

This audio enhancing product comes in a rectangular box (7.5" x 4" x 1.25") made of clear plastic and decorated cardboard. The box contains the iWOW-U, a 7.5" long recharging cable that has a USB connector on one end and mini-USB on the other, four colored faceplates (red, blue, black, and purple) for user customization, and a diminutive (3.75" x 3") paper sheet that has an English only Quick Start Reference Guide on one side and warranty information on the other side (both sides' typeface is eye-strainingly small). The Guide includes a URL pointing to a downloadable English only user's manual (more comfortable to read) on the company's Web site.



Figure 1. iWOW-U supports a wide variety of mobile music-playing gadgets thanks to its reliance upon a standard headphone jack rather than iDevices' proprietary Dock connector. This product contains digital signal processing circuitry and a rechargeable battery.

iWOW-U is a black plastic pill-shaped unit (approximately 2" long, 0.75" wide, 0.38" thick) with a brushed aluminum-like faceplate (Figure 1). The unit contains SRS Labs' digital signal-processing circuitry, a rechargeable battery (details in a moment), and cables extending from either end. The entire unit measures about 7" in length beginning at the tip of the female jack at one end that accepts a headphone's or earphone's 3.5 mm stereo plug cable at one end, and extending to the tip of a 3.5 mm stereo plug at the other end that goes into a cell phone's or other music-playing device's corresponding jack. The unit weighs in at only 0.625 oz., scarcely adding any heft to the user's music-playing device.

In addition to supporting portable music-playing gadgets, iWOW-U also can be used with a home or vehicular stereo. This requires an additional cable, however, such as a male stereo 3.5 mm to male RCA cable or a male-to-male 3.5 mm stereo cable.

The aforementioned faceplates cover iWOW-U's elegant user interface. Its interface consists of a single recessed button that controls power and audio enhancement activation, an LED that illuminates green or blue, and white LEDs that illuminate SRS Labs' logo (Figure 2). Brief instructions for these interface elements appear in white text on the opposite side of the pill-shaped unit—press and hold down the button for three seconds to power on or off (the logo illuminates); single press the button to toggle audio enhancement on or off; quick double press the button to switch between the digital signal processing circuitry's two built-in modes (the LED shines blue or green).

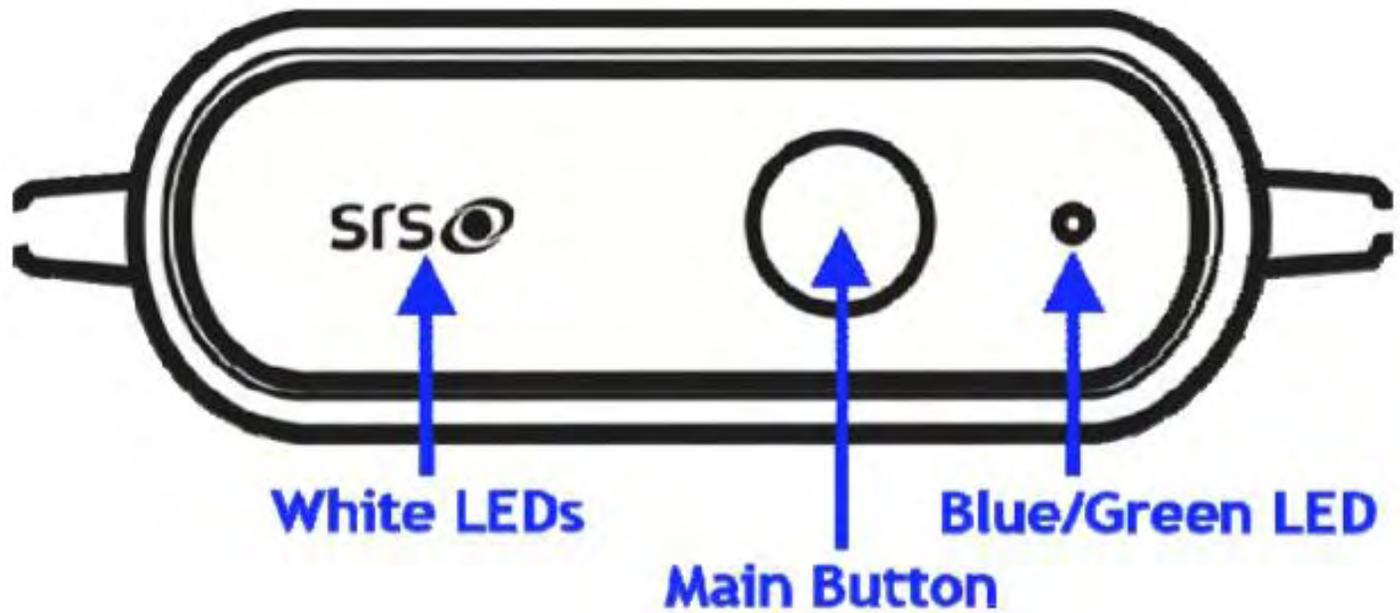


Figure 2. This diagram is explaining the iWOW-U's simple user interface is included in the downloadable user's manual. The interface consists of white LEDs that illuminate the company's logo, a single multifunction button, and an LED that shines blue or green depending upon which audio-enhancing mode the user has activated.

Instead of using a software configuration app like the one for iWOW-HD, the two preset tunings mentioned above are built into iWOW-U. One tuning is for headphones or earphones (the LED illuminates blue), the other for a vehicle's or home's stereo system (the LED illuminates green). This is at least cosmetically different from iWOW-HD's app that has settings for high treble and deep bass that can be activated separately or in combination. iWOW-U additionally lacks a configuration for the wide surround effect that is supported by iWOW-HD's app.

My favorite feature is iWOW-U's totally addictive audio enhancement. As reported previously for iWOW-HD, I'm incurably hooked. I no longer can listen to my music and video collection without the iWOW-U. In its absence, my collection sounds plain, muddy, even dreary; the audio quality is vastly inferior even when using expensive earphones.

Exactly what is the qualitative difference between SRS-enhanced and non-enhanced music? You almost certainly will hear additional voices and/or instruments in your favorite tunes while using iWOW-U with your present earphones than before. Clarity is another virtue of audio enhancement; it's reminiscent of the difference between a CD's audio quality versus a cassette tape's. Moreover, my impression is that iWOW-U delivers a different audio enhancement than iWOW-HD. I noticed percussion instruments in my favorite tunes while listening with the former that I did not notice with the latter. Presumably iWOW-U's built-in hardware tuning processes digital signals differently than iWOW-HD's software app. Your mileage may vary.

Another favorite feature is iWOW-U's support for earphones' built-in microphone and remote controls (play-pause; volume up-down; fast forward and rewind). This feature could be a great convenience for users who carry their music device in a backpack, purse, pocket, or elsewhere out of reach. iWOW-HD does not support the microphone and remote control because it utilizes iDevices' Dock connector while iWOW-U utilizes their headphone jack. Users who have earphones like the ones Apple provides with iDevices will miss out on this truly handy convenience.

Perhaps most importantly, though, iWOW-U brings support for SRS Labs' addictive audio enhancement to users who have devices without Apple's Dock connector. Now they too can become audio enhancement addicts!

Although this product's audio enhancing feature is highly addictive and its support for other music-playing gadgets besides iDevices is advantageous, iWOW-U has some notable drawbacks worth considering before plunking down your plastic. They include the following.

Perhaps the most serious drawback of the iWOW-U unit tested for this review was a clearly audible hissing when the unit was powered on. This hissing was clearly noticeable and independent of the music-playing device to which the unit was connected. Purists with a distaste for the hissing that can be heard in cassette tapes likely will have a similar distaste for the iWOW-U's hissing.

This product's built-in battery has a number of drawbacks. iWOW-U's battery is sealed and not user-replaceable. Therefore, when the battery reaches the end of its lifespan, the iWOW-U needs to be discarded and completely replaced. I find the battery's limited capacity more troublesome than its lack of user replaceability, however. The battery is rated at 5 hours before needing a recharge, and this rating was confirmed during my testing. Five hours of usage translated into recharging almost every other day, and recharging took 60–90 minutes (charging and simultaneous play-through thankfully are supported, though). My preference is to minimize the number of devices that need frequent recharging, and therefore iWOW-HD's reliance upon an iDevice for supplying juice meets this preference better than iWOW-U's limited battery capacity. Your mileage may vary.

Two additional points related to charging the built-in battery also are worth noting. First, the battery's current charge level is not indicated in the device's user interface. You only find out that the battery requires attention when your music suddenly and totally stops playing through your earphones or headphones. You can attempt to squeeze out the battery's last remaining electrons by pressing the on-off button until the logo LEDs illuminate, and repeating this process when the music inevitably cuts out again. Quite annoying. Second, the device's mini USB port for the recharging cable has a rubber dust cover that connects to the device via a thin piece of rubber. Mine tore off within short order during testing and the dust cover got lost. Hopefully a better design (or no dust cover at all) will be incorporated into iWOW-U v.2. And one more thing...when iWOW-U is turned on, it relays a distinctive popping noise to connected headphones or earphones; and when the unit's battery is exhausted or power is turned off, you cannot listen to your music with the unit connected to your music device.

Lastly, I have several quibbles with the company's online and printed documentation for this product. My searches failed to find answers to the following questions which prospective customers might like to know in advance.

- Does iWOW-U have an energy-saving sleep mode in case the user forgets to power off the device?
- How many recharge cycles does the built-in battery support before dying?
- How to properly dispose of the device after its battery dies?

In summary, iWOW-U delivers a music enhancing experience to which owners of almost any mobile device readily can become addicted in spite of some potentially annoying issues related to this product's hissing, built-in battery, and weak documentation.



Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.

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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Reply to Synaptics Touchpad Sensitivity," "Running 32-Bit Programs,"
"Secure Delete For Files Already Deleted," "Understanding Programming,"
"Killing Retail One Store at a Time"

Reply to Synaptics Touchpad Sensitivity

[Regarding the August 10 Digital Dave column:]

Hello Dave,

Thank you for responding to my problem with the Synaptics Touchpad sensitivity issue. I tried going through Control Panel => Hardware => Mouse and when I click on "Mouse" I get a pop-up saying, "Unable to connect to Synaptics Pointing device driver." In the past I had problems with the touchpad and ended up uninstalling then reinstalling it, so that is probably the problem. I tried to update the driver, but it informs me that the latest driver is already installed. Should I reinstall the whole touchpad again?

Thank you,

-Jerry Hughes, San Diego, CA

It's worth a shot. You might check this answer (answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_7-hardware/unable-to-connect-to-synaptics-pointing-device/01ad8a10-82e4-4118-91cb-50e39197e9d5) as well.

-Dave

Running 32-Bit Programs

[Regarding the August 17 Digital Dave column:]

I may have read the user's comment wrong, but I suspect he didn't "install" the program, but just copied the program files folder over and it now won't run. This isn't because of incompatibility, it's because you can't (generally) do that with Windows programs. This is because the installation puts files in lots of different places on the system, not just in the Program Files folder, as well as making registry entries for the program so it'll run.

So...the long and short of it is to reinstall the program from the original file/CD (if that's not what he did to start with).

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Secure Delete For Files Already Deleted

[Regarding the August 17 Digital Dave column:]

Most secure delete programs have an option to "cleanse" all the free space on a drive, including space for previously deleted files. The program I use is sDelete.exe (technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb897443.aspx), a free program you can download. It works from the command prompt. To cleanse the C: drive, enter the following at command prompt:

```
sdelete -p 3 -z C:
```

In this example the -p 3 switch will cause the program to make three passes (overwrite the data three times). You can use as many passes as you want.

Note: The more passes you specify increases the time it takes. To cleanse a large drive can take a long time.

To get a list of other sdelete options, enter the following at the prompt:

```
sdelete /?
```

Other free downloadable secure delete programs are Eraser, BCWipe, KillDisk, SureDelete, and TDEL.

-Don Davies, Ramona, CA

Understanding Programming

[Regarding the August 10 Windows Tips and Tricks: Cool Date Tricks with AutoHotkey column:]

Very clear, well written article. I have never programmed or written a script, yet I could understand Jack's article.

-Richard Hardy, La Jolla, CA

Killing Retail One Store at a Time

[Regarding the August 17 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Didn't Montgomery Wards kill off retail stores with their mail order catalogs a long time ago?

-Dennis, San Diego

Actually Montgomery Wards substituted their mail-order catalogs for places where retail stores didn't exist with the same variety of goods. Eventually, Montgomery Wards did a very good job eliminating themselves by not recognizing that their mail-order business could easily transition to online selling.

-Wally Wang

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

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