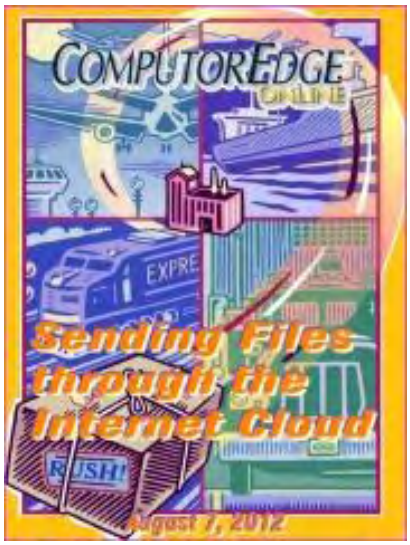
ComputorEdge™ Online — 09/07/12



This issue:
Sending Files through the Internet Cloud

Dropbox is often billed as an online file storage system, but its real value is in moving and sharing files. Plus Digital Dave, Wally Wang, a secret for finding hidden critical Windows files, and humor from Marilyn Martin.

Table of Contents:

Digital Dave by *Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
Eliminate Sign on/Log-in for Win 7; Importing iPhone Photos to a PC; Multiple Startup of Firefox.

Forget E-mail! Dropbox for Moving and Sharing Files by Jack Dunning

Why Dropbox is Now My Favorite Free Internet Cloud Service.
While the major computer and Internet companies are battling over online storage service and Internet apps, Dropbox is offering a truly useful free multi-device service for moving and sharing files.

Windows Tips and Tricks: A Trick for Opening Useful Hidden Windows' Folders by Jack Dunning

An Easier Way to Open Hidden Folders, Such as Startup...Plus More AutoHotkey!
It can be difficult to find some of the important Windows system folders. Here is the secret to opening them quickly. Then, add this technique to an AutoHotkey script to make it even easier. Also, how to make a pop-up Help window in AutoHotkey.

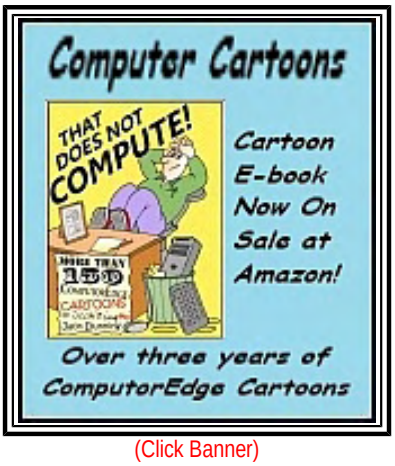
Wally Wang's Apple Farm by Wally Wang

Gamification
Gamification; The Dying Inkjet Printer Market; Running Windows on an iPad; Still Waiting for the Paperless Office; Mac OS X Catches up to Vista; News From the World; Bad News for Samsung; Hide Details.

Beyond Personal Computing by Marilyn K. Martin

A Look at the Human Side of Computing
The Misunderstood Middleman: The Miracles of Modems

(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

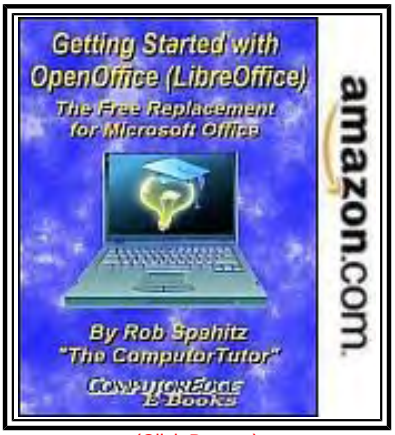
DEPARTMENTS:

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

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

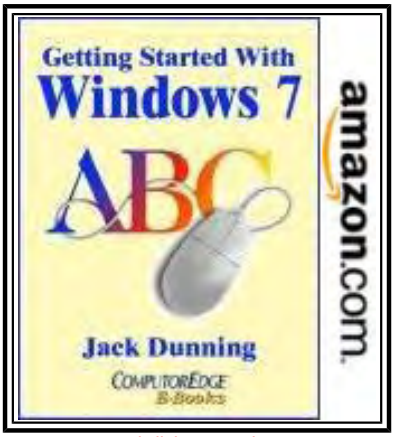
"Windows 8 Metro Interface," "Internet Explorer and New Windows, Etc.," "Statistics," "Videos in Firefox," "The Real World and Welfare Recipients"

(Click Banner)

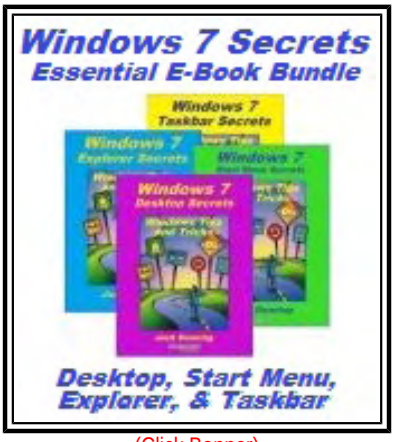


(Click Banner)

(Click Banner)

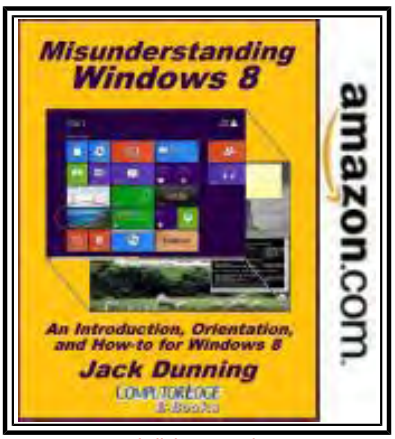


(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *cewebmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2012 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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

Return to Table of Contents

Digital Dave

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

Eliminate Sign on/Log-in for Win 7; Importing iPhone Photos to a PC; Multiple Startup of Firefox.

Dear Digital Dave,

I had previously upgraded a small Dell Laptop to Windows 7 Home Premium. I started with a clean disk, completed the installation, tweaking, and setup. I then decided the 10" screen was too small for my old eyes, and now comes the problem.

I did the same upgrade to a larger Dell laptop, only after the tweaking and setup, it always wants me to Select User, after waking up from Sleep mode. Both computers are set up to go to "sleep" when cover is closed. When the cover is re-opened, the small computer goes right to the desktop, the large computer goes to select user screen.

On Windows XP, this used to be something you could fix with Tweak UI, but I am told it will not work with Win 7. Both computers have the default USER with admin rights, and a GUEST which is disabled.

Thanks for any help you can offer.

Frank Bishop
Bennett, CO

Dear Frank,

There are a couple of settings that you want to check to ensure that you are not presented with the log-on screen when your computer wakes up.

First right-click on the Desktop and select Personalization from the menu. (You can also find Personalization in the Control Panel or type "personalization" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Start Menu, then select it from the list.) The Personalization window will open (see Figure 1).

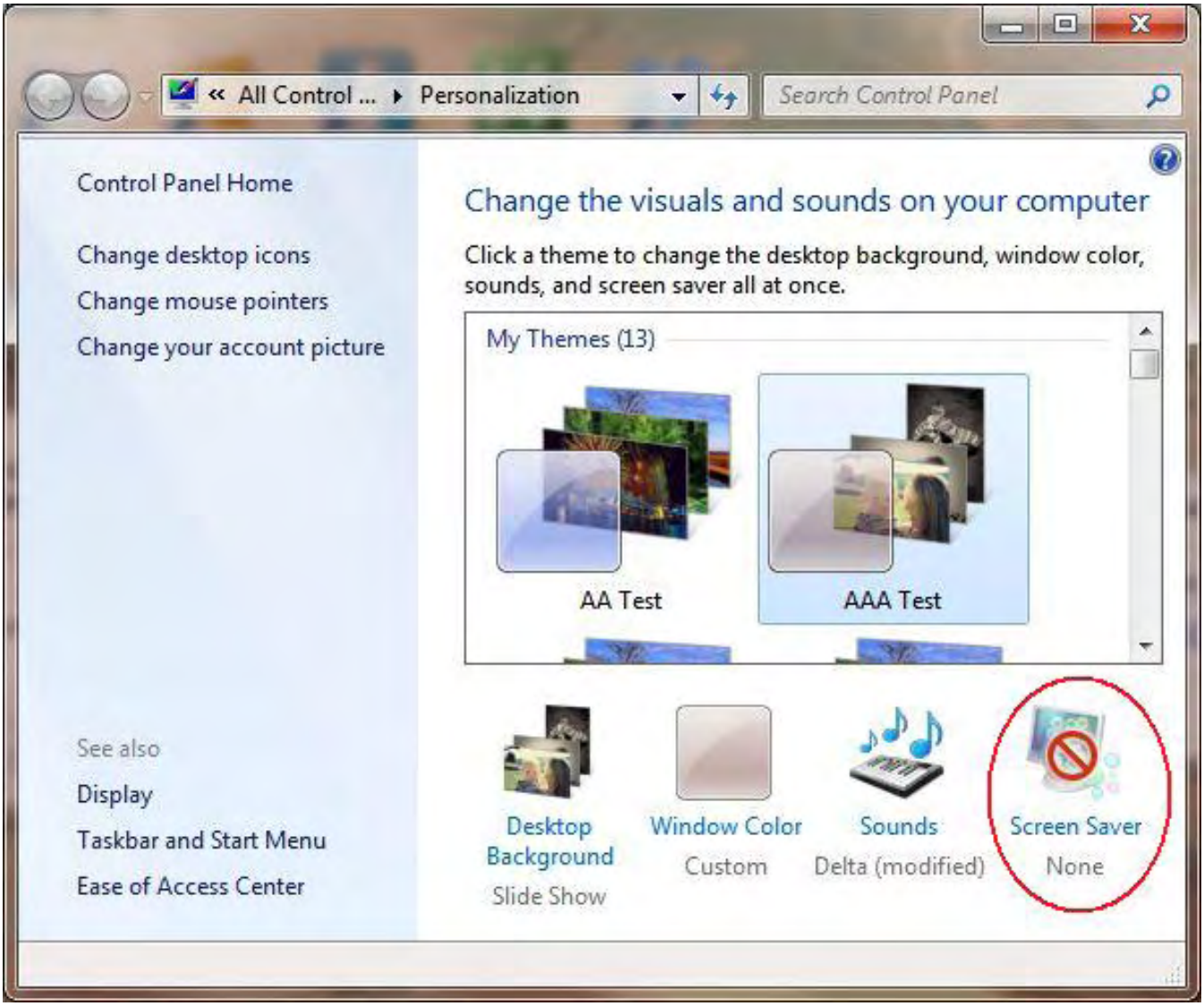


Figure 1. The Windows 7 Personalization window.

In the bottom right-hand corner click Screen Saver. The Screen Saver Settings window will open (see Figure 2).

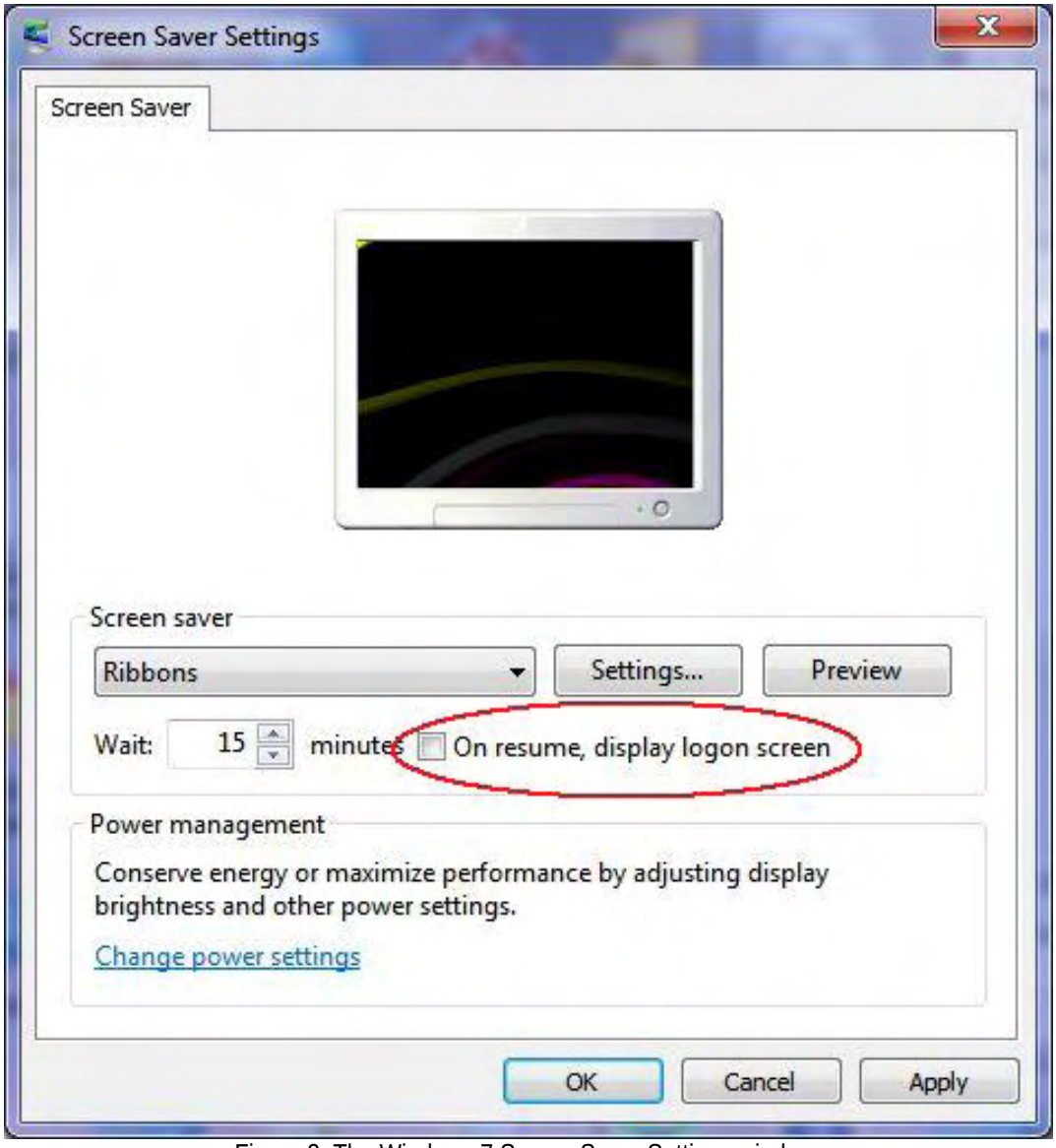


Figure 2. The Windows 7 Screen Saver Settings window.

In the middle of the Screen Saver Settings window, uncheck "On resume, display logon screen" and Apply.

The second setting you need to check is in Power Options.

Go to Control Panel => Power Options. (You can also type "power" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Start Menu, then select Power Options from under the Control Panel list.) The Power Options window will open. Click "Require a password on wakeup" from the list of links on the left side of the window. The Power System Settings window will open (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

At the bottom of the window click the "Don't require a password" radio button and Save changes.

If both of these settings are configured as directed, you should no longer need to log-on every time your computer wakes up from a nap. Naturally, no one else will need to log-on either. If someone happens upon your sleeping computer, they will be free to rummage through all of your files.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

When importing iPhone 4S photos to my PC (Windows 7), the orientation is wrong for many of the images. This occurs regardless of whether I just transfer the files directly or use Picasa for importing. The same problem occurs when I e-mail the photos from the iPhone. Some are upside down, others are 90 degrees off. Each one must be rotated, but some of the images can't be rotated because the file's properties are corrupted and I am unable to save the result. Since many of my friends experience the same problem and it is written up on the Web, I don't believe it is due to some issue on my PC.

Thanks,
Dave (from a long-time reader)

Howard Ray
Colorado Springs, CO

Dear Howard,

You're right it is not an issue with your PC. The problem is with the iPhone 4S. I expect that Apple is aware of the problem. It has been reported that upgrading to iOS 5.1.1 has solved the problem for many people. If that doesn't work, version 6 of iOS is due out soon.

Apparently the problem is related to the addition of the face recognition feature which added a metatag to the photos unrecognized by Windows computers causing some programs to choke. Some people found that they could open the files in Paint, rotate them, then re-save them. Others solved the problem by uploading them to Picasa Web service, then downloading the album.

Even if updating to the latest iOS resolves the problem, you will still need to process the old ones in some fashion. Yet another technique used was stripping the metadata from the file with JPEG & PNG Stripper (*www.steelbytes.com/?mid=30*) from Steel Bytes.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I recently had a situation where Firefox would start-up with two identical windows when called from some location (such as Roboform) other than the start icon itself. I solved the problem by restoring to an earlier point, but the question is how did this suddenly occur and was there another way to solve the problem? The only thing installed other than MS updates was a program called Soluto which I had subsequently deleted.

Ray Gill
San Diego

Dear Ray,

It is quite possible that Soluto or another program was involved in the unusual behavior you observed. I have often opened more than one instance of a program by accidentally (or deliberately if a computer is running slow) double-clicking the program icon. For some reason, a settings file or option (in Roboform?) was initiating two launches of Firefox. It's great that the earlier restore point worked because I would be hard pressed to find the exact cause.

Similar symptoms are associated with Firefox malware which uses Firefox to access your computer. If this is the case, then you would find the Firefox process running in Windows Task Manager (CTRL+SHIFT+ESC) even though you have never loaded it. It's worth a look. If you find this issue see the article "Firefox.exe Always Open (*kb.mozillazine.org/Firefox.exe_always_open*)."

I did some looking into Soluto and found the negative reviews on CNET a little disturbing. While there were many positive reviews, if you happen to have setups similar to the people who complained, it probably isn't worth the risk. I find that sometimes it's worthwhile to pay more attention to the negative comments reviewing software. Possibly some *ComputorEdge* readers have more experience with Soluto and can enlighten us.

Digital Dave

Return to Table of Contents

Forget E-mail! Dropbox for Moving and Sharing Files

“Why Dropbox is Now My Favorite Free Internet Cloud Service.**”** by Jack Dunning

While the major computer and Internet companies are battling over online storage service and Internet apps, Dropbox is offering a truly useful free multi-device service for moving and sharing files.

“Who needs a cake? My girl put this file in my Dropbox on the computer!”

It has been almost two years since *ComputorEdge* published "Data Backup on the Web" by Michael Ross. Michael included a pretty long list of Cloud storage services. Today all the Cloud talk is about Apple's iCloud (*www.apple.com/icloud/*), Google Drive (*/drive.google.com/*), Microsoft Skydrive (*skydrive.live.com/*), Amazon Cloud Drive (*www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html/?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&docId=1000796931&linkCode=ur2&tag=comput0b9-20*), and Dropbox with over 50 million users. Dropbox (*db.tt/rRn27Ury*) is the only one not affiliated with a computer mega giant—for now. Each service has its own advantages and disadvantages. Each offers free online storage. In many ways, it's hard to

distinguish between the various Internet backup services. It's difficult to justify recommending one company over another. However, today Dropbox is my favorite Cloud service for some very specific reasons.

I'm not a big fan of online file storage. I favor using external hard drives to back up my files. USB hard drives are cheap, fast, and very private. The idea of using one of these Cloud backup services is not appealing to me. Yet, over the last few months, since Digital Dave started answering questions about Dropbox, I have explored the Dropbox service and implemented it on all my devices. Surprisingly, I favor Dropbox, but not for its backup services. They only offer two gigs free which is minuscule compared to a 500 gig hard drive. I like Dropbox for how it shares files and its simplicity.

The Key is Simplicity

The goal of any free online backup service is to upgrade you to a paid package with more storage and possibly more features. But I don't care about online storage. While Dropbox (*db.tt/rRn27Ury*) only gives two gigs of free storage, for my purposes that's more than enough. I don't intend to put anything in Dropbox for posterity. I want Dropbox for its ability to quickly and easily move files between the various computers and devices I use (see Figure 1). Dropbox does this by simply placing a Dropbox folder on your computer or device. Put a file in the special folder and it's automatically uploaded to the Cloud servers, then distributed to all the connected devices. Remove a file from any of the Dropbox folders and it's removed from all the devices. Nothing could be simpler.

Figure 1. Dropbox works by syncing all connected devices with the Dropbox Cloud server.

The Dropbox Folder

After installation, the most notable feature of Dropbox in Windows is the "Dropbox" folder. It looks and appears like most folders in Windows except it has the blue "Dropbox" icon. In Windows XP, the Dropbox folder appears in the My Documents folder. In more recent versions of Windows, the Dropbox is on the same level as the Documents folder and is added to Favorites (see Figure 2). There is a Desktop shortcut and Notification Area icon (open Dropbox on the computer or Web) added to all versions of Windows, so getting to Dropbox is very easy.

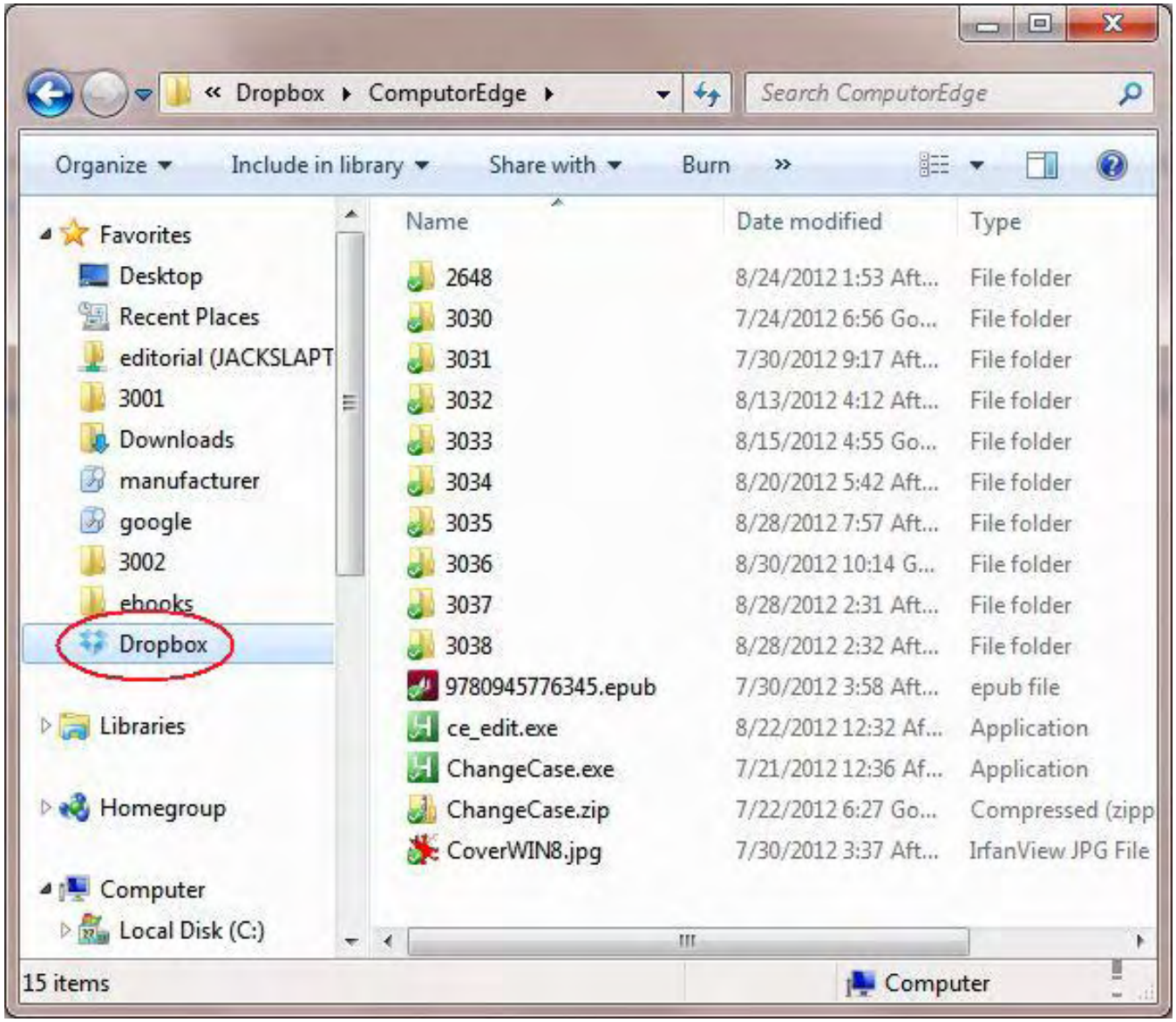


Figure 2. Windows Explorer shows the Dropbox shortcut Favorites in Windows 7.

Dropbox is just as simple when installed on a Mac. The Dropbox icon is placed in the top bar with the menu opening with a click (see Figure 3). Selecting "Open Dropbox Folder" gives direct access to Dropbox.

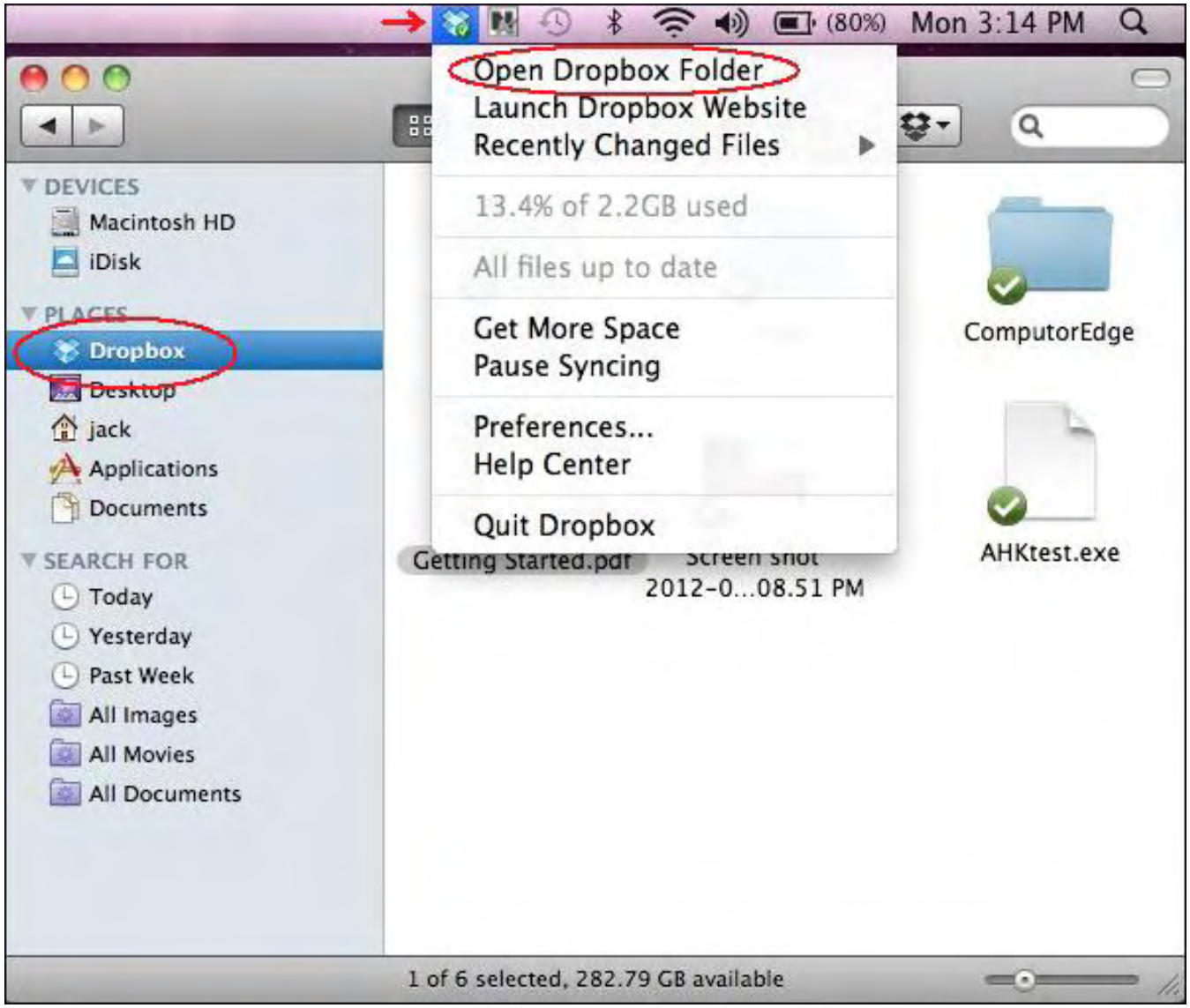


Figure 3. On the Macintosh computer, the Dropbox icon at the top gives access to options.

I moved the screen shot shown in Figure 3 by merely dragging it into the Dropbox folder on the Mac. In less than a minute, it appeared on all of the other Windows computers ready to use. In the past, I would have e-mailed it to myself or used some other more involved technique. (I have never bothered to network the Mac.) This is far more useful to me than the backup service.

The procedure for installing is similar on all devices, although using Dropbox may be a little more awkward on smartphones and tablets. The tools included in some apps (iPad, Kindle Fire) for moving files and uploading are not as easy to use as the drag-and-drop in Windows and on the Mac.

It's impressive how many types of computers and devices can be connected to the same Dropbox account. The vast majority of computers (including Linux), tablets and smartphones can be added to a Dropbox account by installing the software and logging into the account. The files already in the Dropbox immediately start downloading. I currently have eight computers or devices connected (see Figure 4). There is probably a limit on how many devices can be connected to a free account, but I'm not sure what it is.

Figure 4. Dropbox can be connected to many devices at once.

One of the better features of Dropbox is the ability to discretely share your folders with other people. You can share folders between other Dropbox users by adding specific folders in your Dropbox to their Dropbox. You can also share with anyone by creating a Web link, which you can then e-mail, for any folder (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Creating a public link to a Dropbox folder for sharing is easy.

Dropbox is a Sharing Service, Not a True Backup Service

Unlike some Cloud backup services which maintain the files on the servers accessible from each computer or device, Dropbox maintains a copy of each folder/file on every connected piece of equipment. This is why I don't consider Dropbox a true backup service. It's a sharing service for moving files between your various pieces of equipment. Even when not connected to the Internet you have access to your Dropbox files. Any changes will be synced once there is an Internet connection again.

Dropbox does not act like a backup service. First, if you delete a file in one locations, it's deleted everywhere. You can recover files deleted within the last 30 days by using the Web interface (see Figure 6), but depending upon the service for recovering from disaster is iffy. It is too easy to remove files for any type of reliable backup.

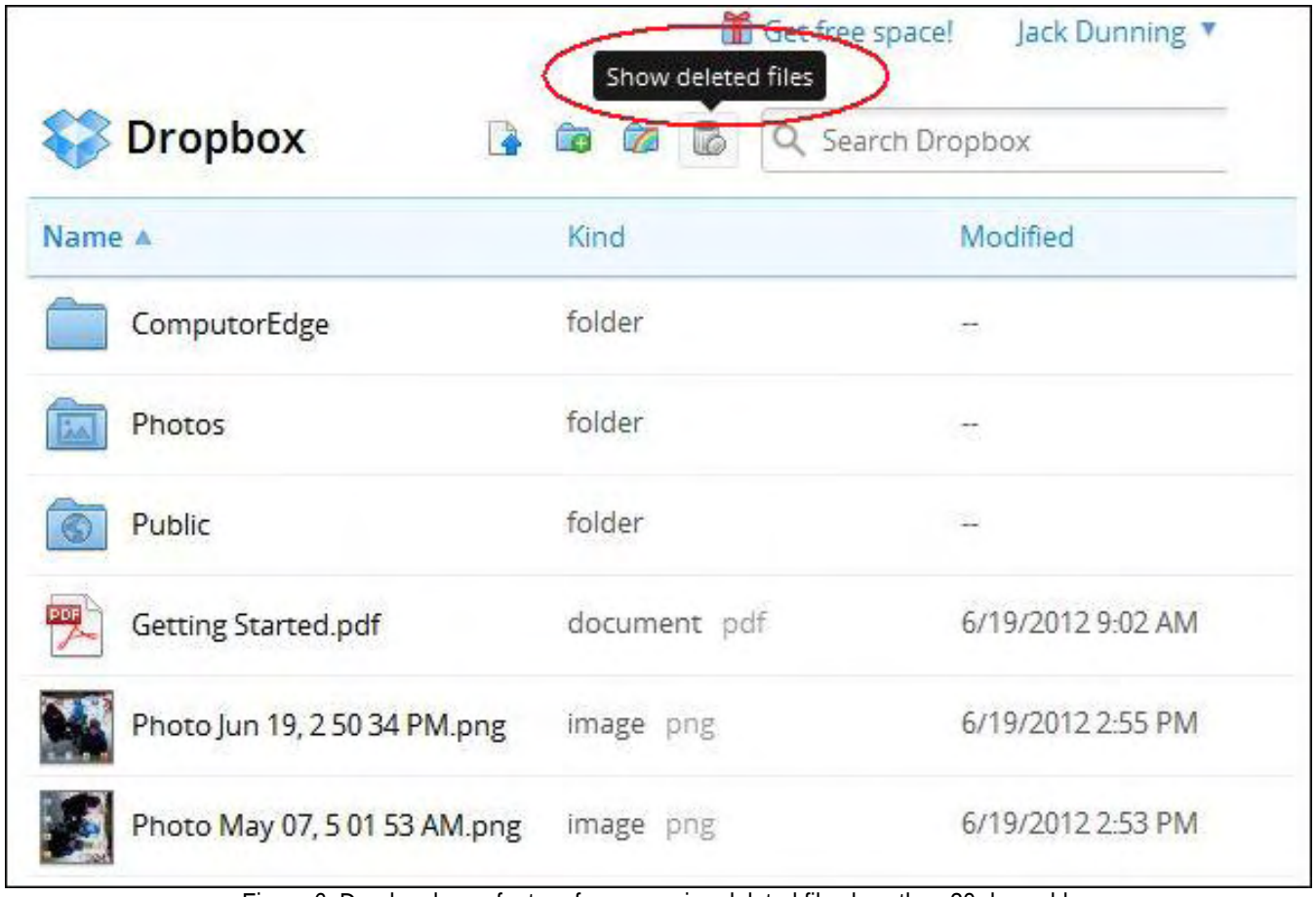


Figure 6. Dropbox has a feature for recovering deleted files less than 30 days old.

Second, when you merely drag a file into Dropbox, you are moving the original file. If you want to maintain a copy (original) on

your computer then you should copy-and-paste, rather than move (drag) the file into Dropbox. (Windows tip: Hold down the CTRL key (Control key) while dragging the file and it will be copied into the Dropbox folder leaving the original intact.) None of this bodes well for some type of off-site backup plan. Fortunately, I have no intention of using Dropbox as my backup. For me it's all about moving and sharing files.

A Cool Windows Tip for Copying Files to Dropbox

There is a little known technique for adding tools to the file's right-click menu "Send To" option which makes it easier to copy files. First, open the SendTo folder by using the shell command to "Run shell:sendto" either from Run in the Start Menu (see Figure 7).

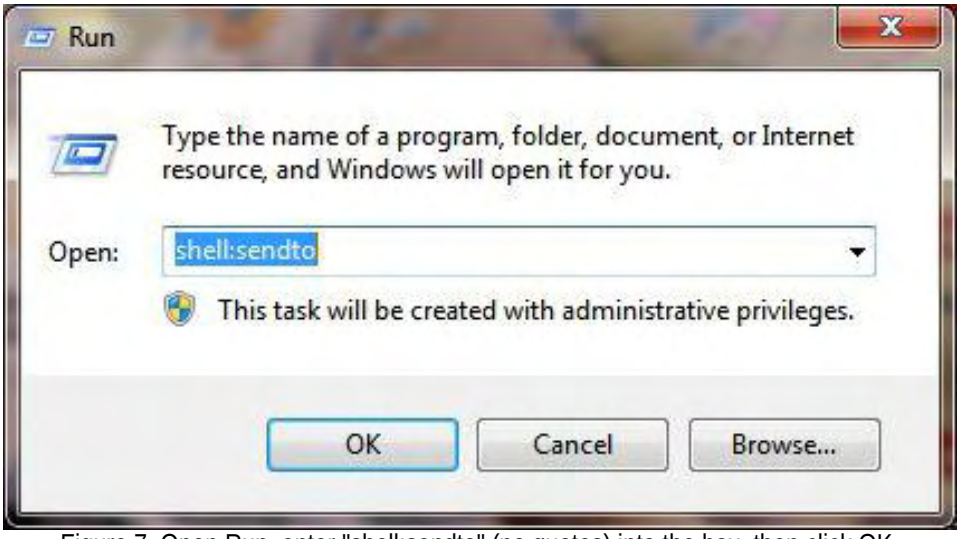


Figure 7. Open Run, enter "shell:sendto" (no quotes) into the box, then click OK.

This will open the SendTo folder (see Figure 8). Drag the Dropbox folder into the SendTo folder while holding down the ALT key. This will create a shortcut to the Dropbox folder. (It is important that you create a shortcut rather than attempt to move the folder into SendTo. Otherwise, the technique will not work properly.)

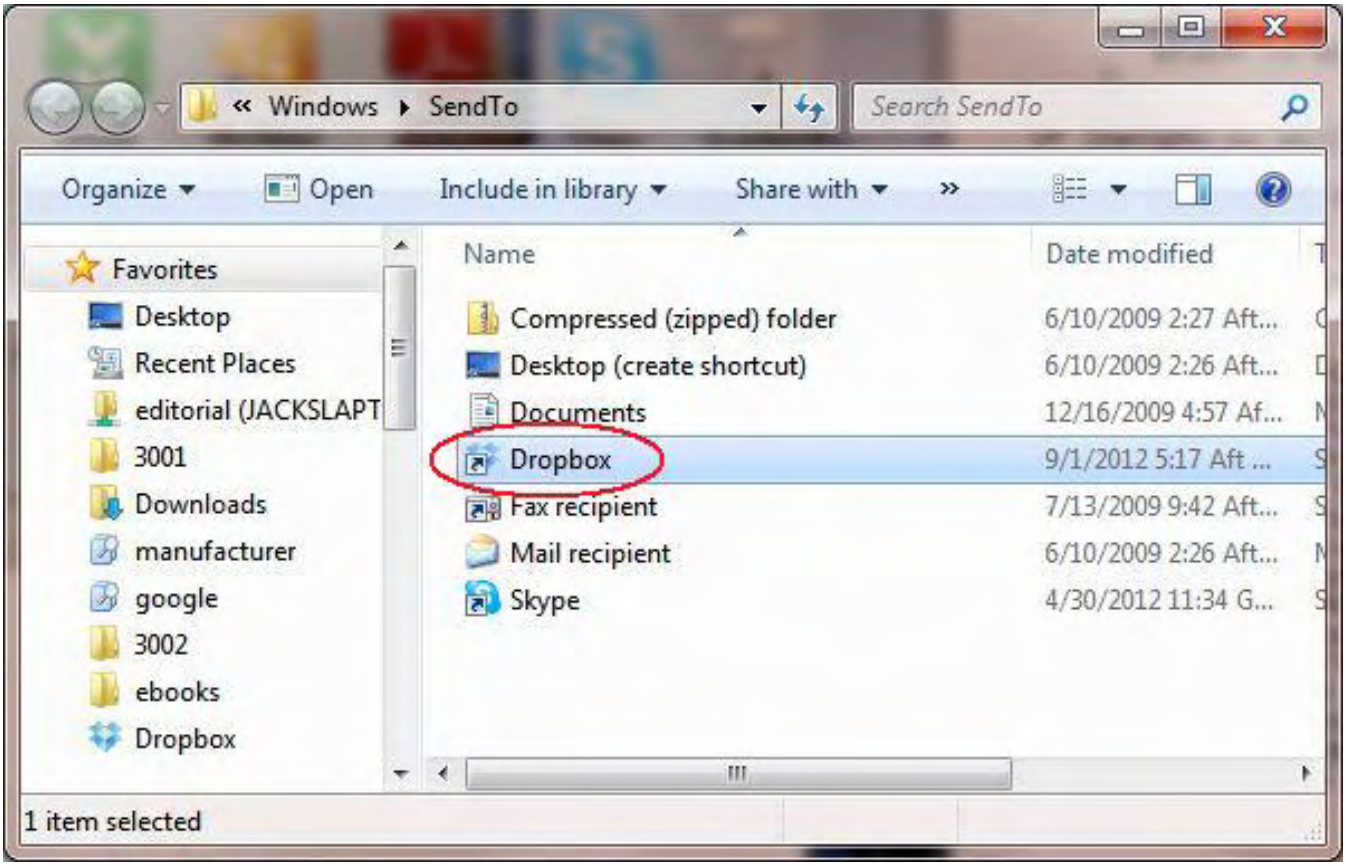


Figure 8. The Windows Send To folder.

Now whenever you right-click on a file, the Dropbox option appears in the Send To menu (see Figure 9). Select the Dropbox option and the file will be copied (not moved) to Dropbox.

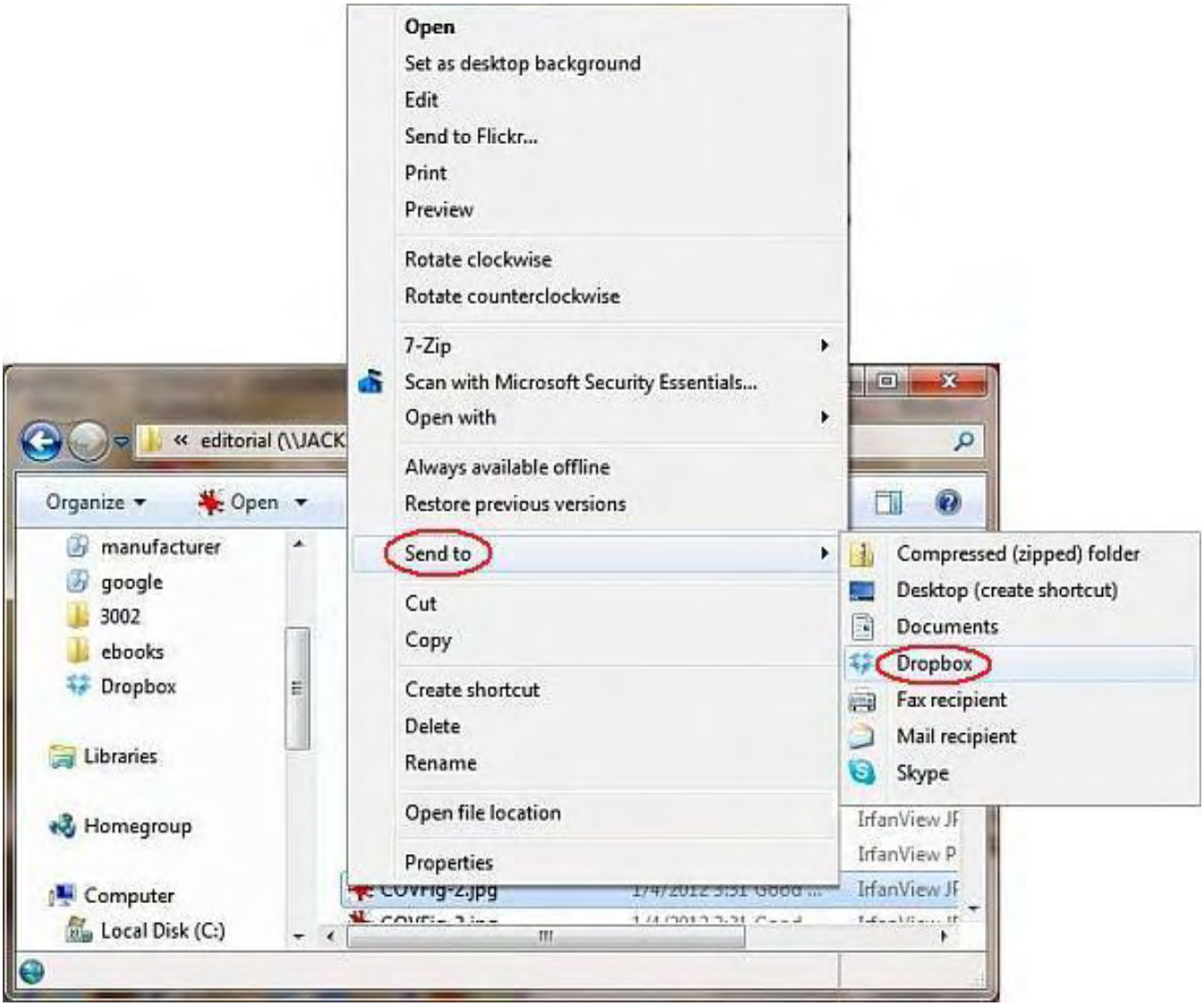


Figure 9. The Dropbox option now appears in the Windows right-click Send To menu.

Security Concerns

There have been some issue with online security for Dropbox, but almost every online service has had similar issues. I don't intend to put anything sensitive into Dropbox. For me it's a working service, not a secret hideaway. Dropbox insists that it's working very hard on security (*www.dropbox.com/security*). One of the security issues came about because users were using the same password on more than one site. Be sure to use a different password on every site you don't want someone else to break into.

If you have concerns, then don't put anything on the Web that you could cause you problems. For how I use it, Dropbox (*db.tt/rRn27Ury*) is working great. I don't plan to leave anything there too long.

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.

Return to Table of Contents

Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: A Trick for Opening Useful Hidden Windows' Folders

"An Easier Way to Open Hidden Folders, Such as Startup...Plus More AutoHotkey!" by Jack Dunning

It can be difficult to find some of the important Windows system folders. Here is the secret to opening them quickly. Then, add this technique to an AutoHotkey script to make it even easier. Also, how to make a pop-up Help window in AutoHotkey.

There are two parts to this week's column. Even if there is no interest in AutoHotkey, which is "possibly the best free Windows utility ever," Windows users should find the beginning of this article useful.

The first part is a reintroduction of the Windows Shell: command which is important to any Windows user who wants to quickly access the most relevant hidden Windows folders such as Startup, Program Files, and SendTo, plus many other commonly used folders. The second part shows how to use AutoHotkey to assign the Shell: command to hotkeys for opening the hidden folders. In the second part introduces, the AutoHotkey command MsgBox for opening a Help window displaying the new hotkeys—or anything else you want to pop up on your screen.

The Windows Shell: Command

One of the problems with finding special hidden Windows folders in Windows Explorer is, if you don't know the exact path, it very difficult to navigate directly to the folder. That's why Windows has the Shell: command (*www.sevenforums.com/tutorials/4941-shell-command.html*) which launches from the Start Search field (Windows Vista and Windows 7) in the Start Menu or the Run dialog (+R). For example, the Startup folder holds all those programs (or shortcuts to those programs) which are launched when logging on. By typing "shell:startup" (without quotes) into the Run dialog window, then clicking OK, Windows Explorer is launched with the Startup folder open for the current user (see Figure 1).

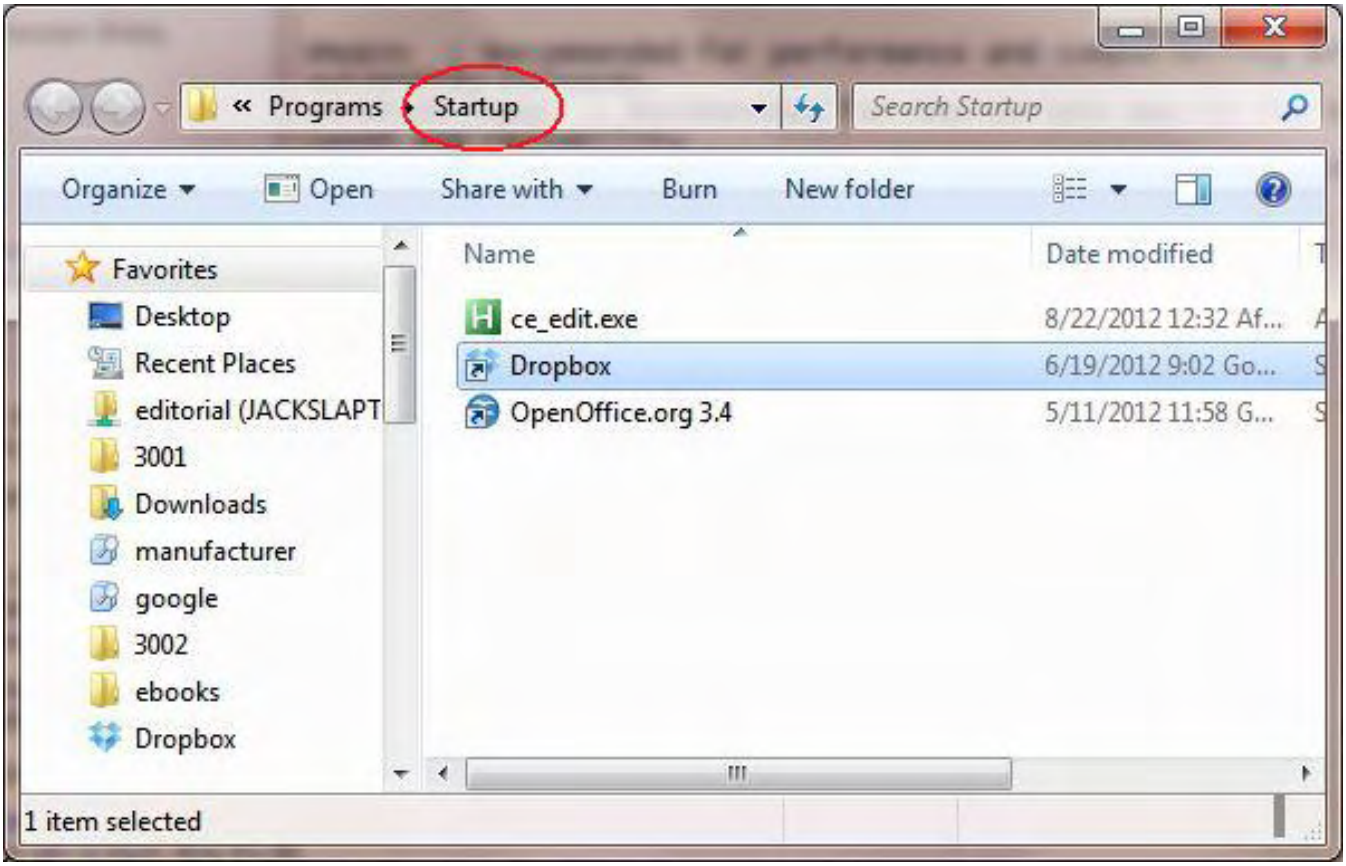


Figure 1. The Startup folder in Windows for the current user.

If there are programs that you want loaded and ready to go when you log on, then adding a shortcut to the Startup folder will do the job. This is not the only way to pre-load software. There is also the System Startup folder which will launch programs for all users when the computer boots up. The all users Startup folder opens with the "shell:common startup" command. Other programs may be loaded at startup via Windows Services found in Administrative Tools.

Running the command "shell:ProgramFiles" (no quotes) opens the folder containing programs (see Figure 2).

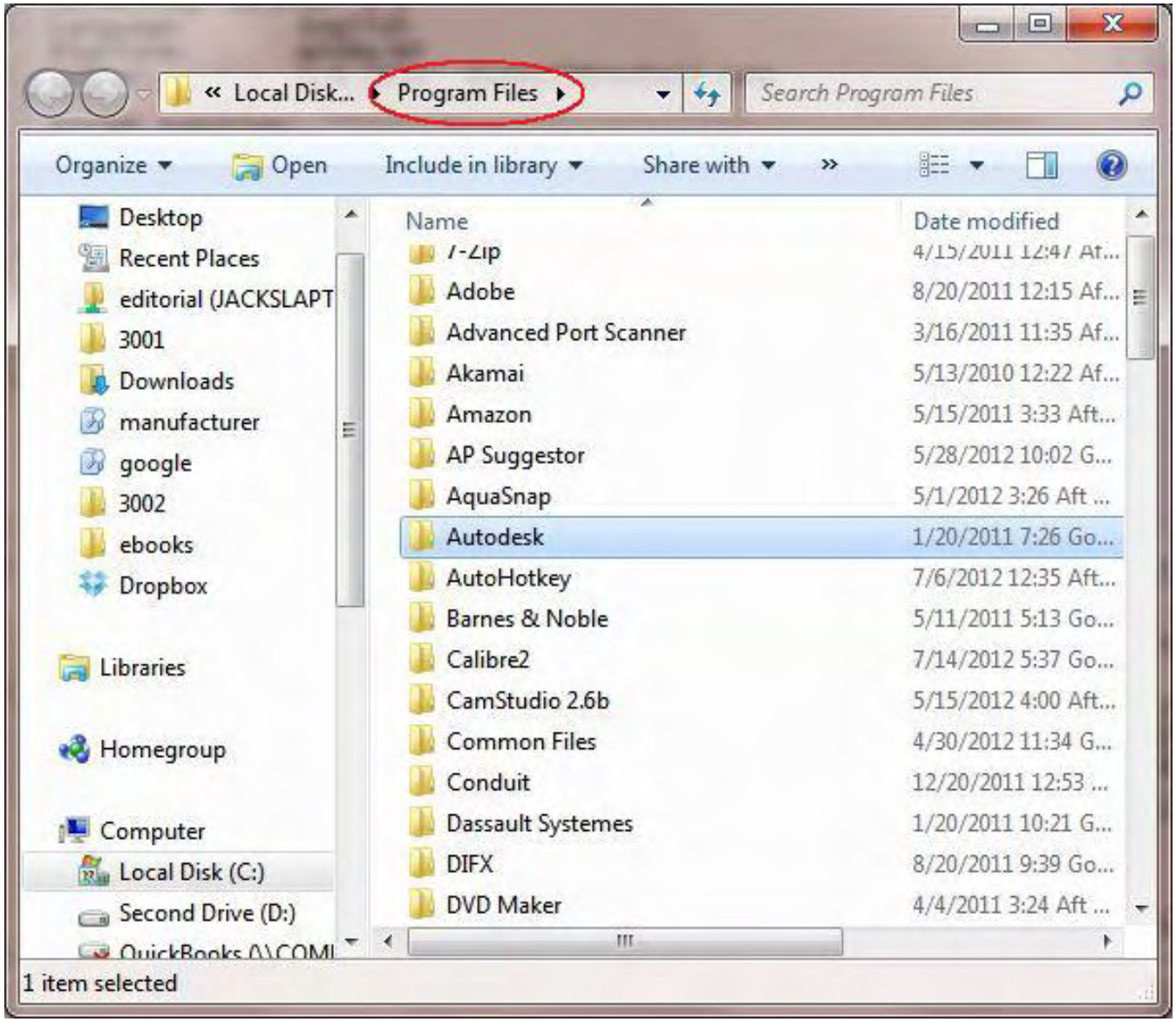


Figure 2. The Windows Programs Files folder.

This may be useful in Windows 8 since there will be no Start Menu. Even better, "shell:programs" opens the folder where the user's programs are installed.

All the regular folders, "My Music" (shell:My Music), "My Pictures" (shell:My Pictures), "My Videos" (shell:My Video), are available for quick access (see Figure 3).

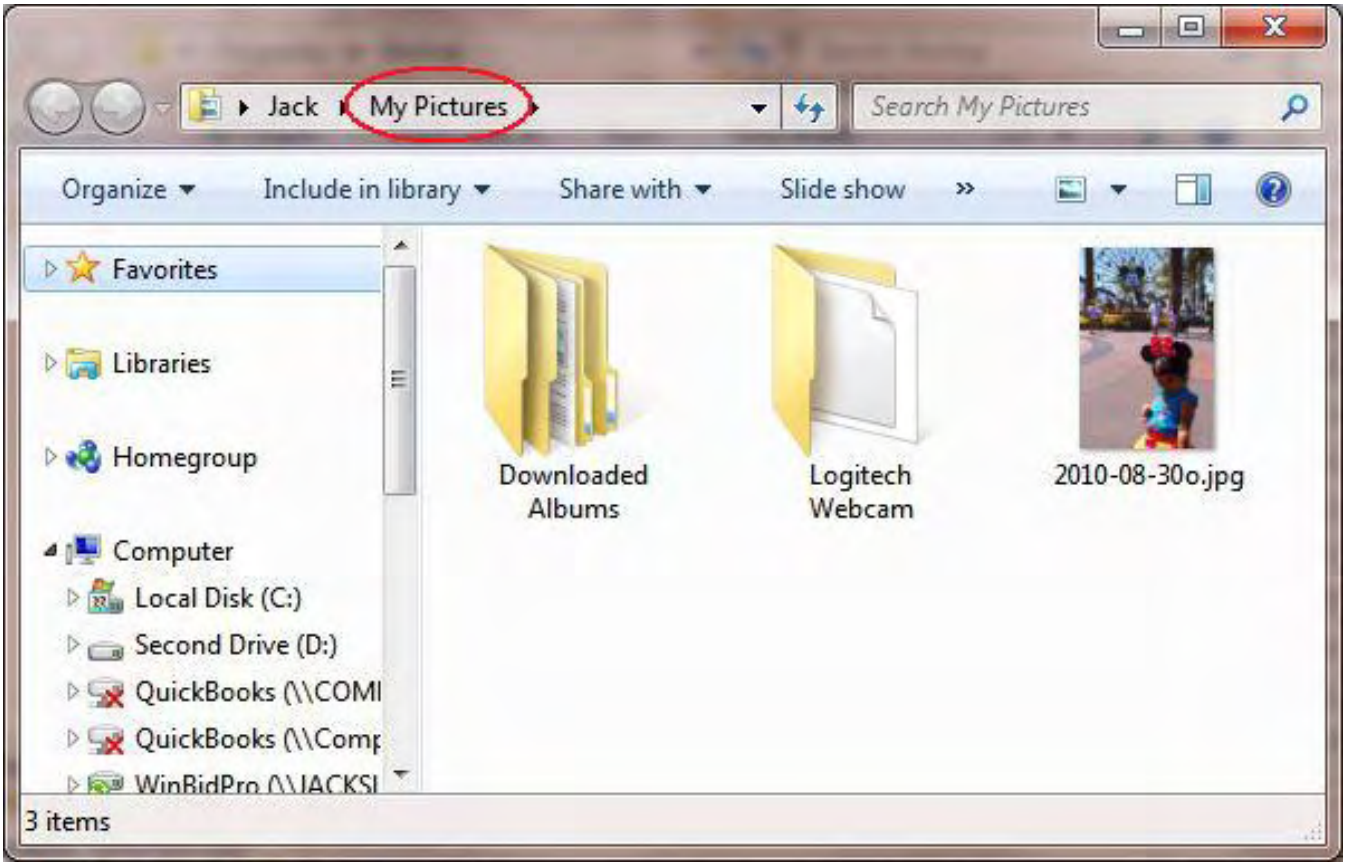


Figure 3. The Windows Picture folder.

Of special interest in relation to this week's article about Dropbox is "shell:sendto" (no quotes) that opens the folder containing the selection options for Send To found in the right-click menu for a file or folder (see Figure 4).

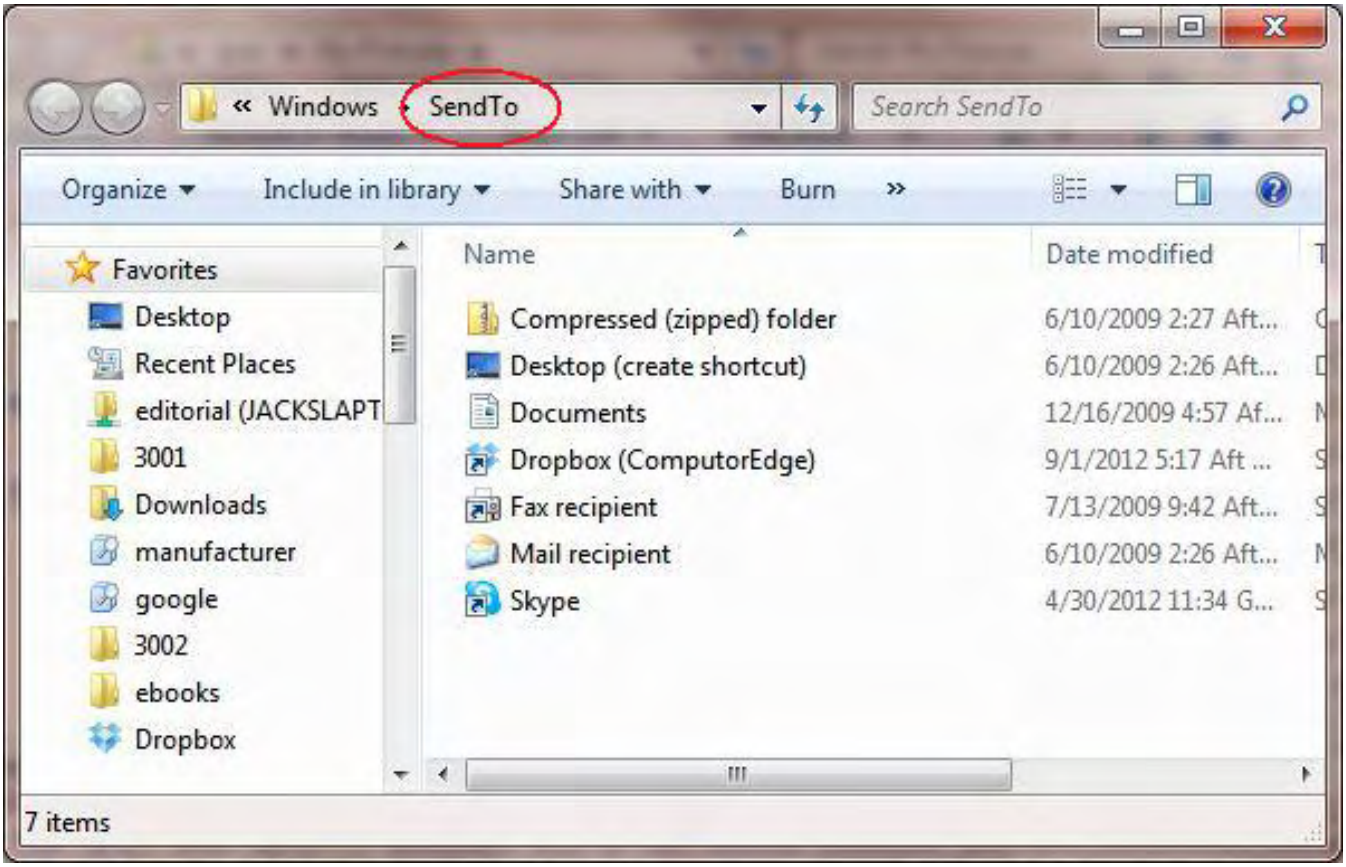


Figure 4. The Windows Send To folder.

These Shell: commands, when combined and added to AutoHotkey scripts, are an easy way to access hidden folders. First, the four examples above are added to an AutoHotkey script. Then a pop-up listing the new hotkeys and their purpose is added to the same script (see Figure 5).

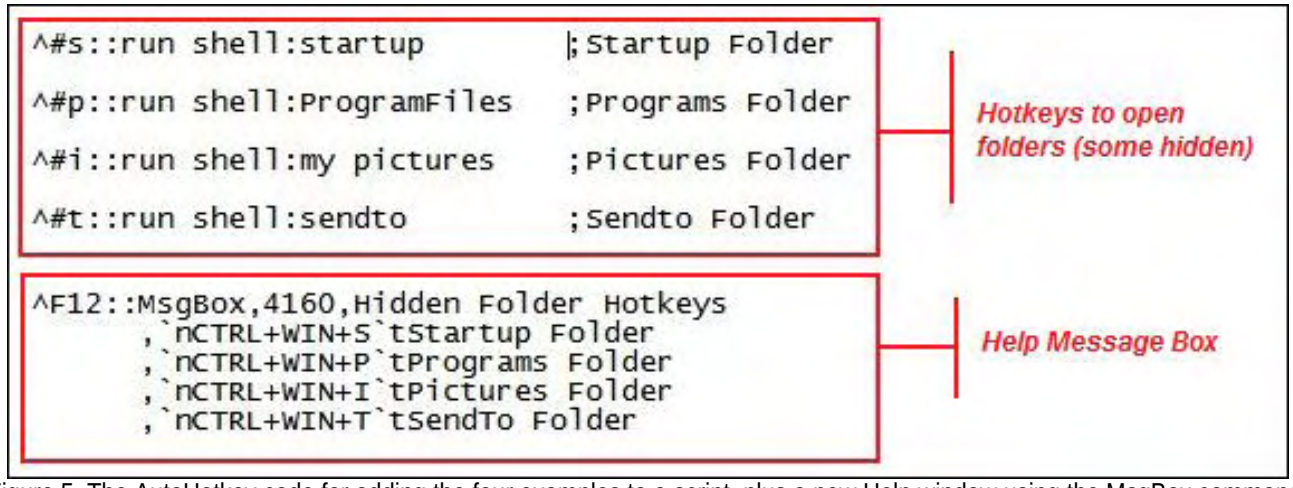


Figure 5. The AutoHotkey code for adding the four examples to a script, plus a new Help window using the MsgBox command.

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.*

The Shell: Command in AutoHotkey Scripts

Adding the Shell: commands to a AutoHotkey script is as simple as copying in the following code into the text file:

```
^#s::run shell:startup        ;Startup Folder
^#p::run shell:ProgramFiles   ;Programs Folder
^#i::run shell:my pictures    ;Pictures Folder
^#t::run shell:sendto         ;Sendto Folder
```

Once the AutoHotkey script is activated the Startup folder will open when CTRL+⊞+S are pressed simultaneously. (⊞ is the Windows logo key.) CTRL+⊞+P opens the Programs Folder; CTRL+⊞+I opens the Pictures Folder; and CTRL+⊞+T opens the SendTo Folder. You can use any hotkey combination you prefer as long as it doesn't interfere with built-in Windows keyboard shortcuts, application program hotkeys, or other AutoHotkey combinations already in use. The Run command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Run.htm*) in AutoHotkey serves the exact same purpose as the Windows Run dialog.

There is also a RunWait form of the command which serves the same purpose as Run except the execution of the script will pause until the launch program finishes before continuing the routine. RunWait is useful when the remainder of the routine depends upon the completion of the Run. For example, when the folder must be open before the script completes its work, RunWait should be used.

Making an AutoHotkey Help Window

The AutoHotkey MsgBox command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/MsgBox.htm*) is useful for displaying

information, warnings, and/or decision points. The pop-up in Figure 6 is displayed adding the following code to an AutoHotkey script:

```
^F12::MsgBox,4160,Hidden Folder Hotkeys
      ,`nCTRL+WIN+S`tStartup Folder
      ,`nCTRL+WIN+P`tPrograms Folder
      ,`nCTRL+WIN+I`tPictures Folder
      ,`nCTRL+WIN+T`tSendTo Folder
```

This Help message box is displayed by pressing CTRL+ (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. The Help pop-up for the AutoHotkey combinations which open the sample folders.

Interestingly, options are added to MsgBox by adding together the number values of the selected options—in this example the number 4160. (See the MsgBox command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/MsgBox.htm*) format page for the options.) The number 4160 is composed of the option number value 64 for Icon Asterisk (info) window and the option number value 4096 System Modal (always on top). (64 + 4096 = 4160) The number 64 contained in the sum adds the "i" icon shown in Figure 6 (with an audio ding) and the 4160 embedded in the sum 4160 sets the pop-up to always-on-top—at least until the pop-up window is closed.

Note the strange character sets "`n" and "`t" in the code in each line after the MsgBox command. Normally the MsgBox command reads the text which will appear in the pop-up as one continuous line. To make AutoHotkey read the text lines following the command line and wrap the words in the pop-up, there are a couple of things that need to be done.

First, for the text line to continue reading (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/Scripts.htm#continuation*) the following lines each of those lines need to be preceded by a certain character. In this case, the comma at the beginning of each of the following lines tells AutoHotkey to read it as if it was part of the preceding line. A period "." also acts as a continual mark. Check the AutoHotkey continuation section (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/Scripts.htm#continuation*) for other options.

To format the text (new line, tab, etc,) in the pop-up it is necessary to add special formatting characters called escape sequences (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/_EscapeChar.htm*). "AutoHotkey's default escape character is accent/backtick (`), which is at the upper left corner of most English keyboards. Using this character rather than backslash avoids the need for double backslashes in file paths." In this case, `n (accent mark plus the letter n) tells AutoHotkey to start a new line. The `t escape character is replaced with a tab which aligns the right column in the pop-up. The combination of these two escape sequences formats the pop-up windows as shown in Figure 6.

* * *

I received the following e-mail from Joey Derden:

Hello, I love your writing on AutoHotkey functions! Why don't you put together an e-book on AutoHotkey? What book or site do you recommend to learn more about AutoHotkey functions?

Hi, Joey,

Actually, my plan is to turn these AutoHotkey articles and columns into an e-book for beginners. I'm not sure when I will have enough to publish. The more I study AutoHotkey, the more I'm amazed at how much it can do.

When writing the columns, I use the primary AutoHotkey (*www.autohotkey.com*) Web site. It includes command lists, documentation, tutorials, and forums—all very useful. Most of the links I include here go directly to this site. I also use Google to find specific examples of scripts which I can modify. There are a number of forums which come up in searches. I don't have one favorite yet.

Thanks,

Jack Dunning

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*).

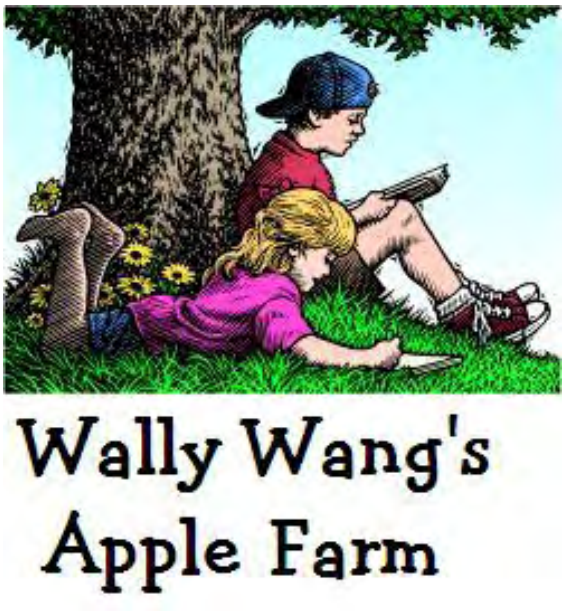
Jack is the publisher of *ComputorEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is *www.computoredge.com*. He can be reached at *ceeditor@computoredge.com*. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his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

Return to Table of Contents



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Gamification” by Wally Wang

Gamification; The Dying Inkjet Printer Market; Running Windows on an iPad; Still Waiting for the Paperless Office; Mac OS X Catches up to Vista; News From the World; Bad News for Samsung; Hide Details.

People tend to learn faster and more effectively when they're having fun, which is a simple concept that schools too often miss. Having fun goes far beyond just learning. Many people who truly enjoy their work often see their job as nothing more than a game. The best surgeons enjoy operating on people for the excitement and intellectual challenge while the worst surgeons see an operation as a distasteful chore that can at least reward them with enough money to buy a new car or condo to make up for the fact that they'd rather be doing something else besides working as a surgeon. Given a choice between someone who loves their work or someone who doesn't, you can see which person you'd rather place your trust and life with in crucial situations.

Having fun falls under a category known as gamification, which is the idea of turning ordinary tasks into a game to get better and faster results. If you like the idea of playing a game while helping society, consider playing the free FoldIt game (*fold.it/portal/*). The basic idea is to help scientists find the optimum way to fold proteins.

In the past, scientists used computers to find such optimum folding, but they soon discovered that if they made this task into a game, thousands of people around the world would play it for free. Even more surprising is that people often found more efficient ways to fold proteins that computers overlooked.

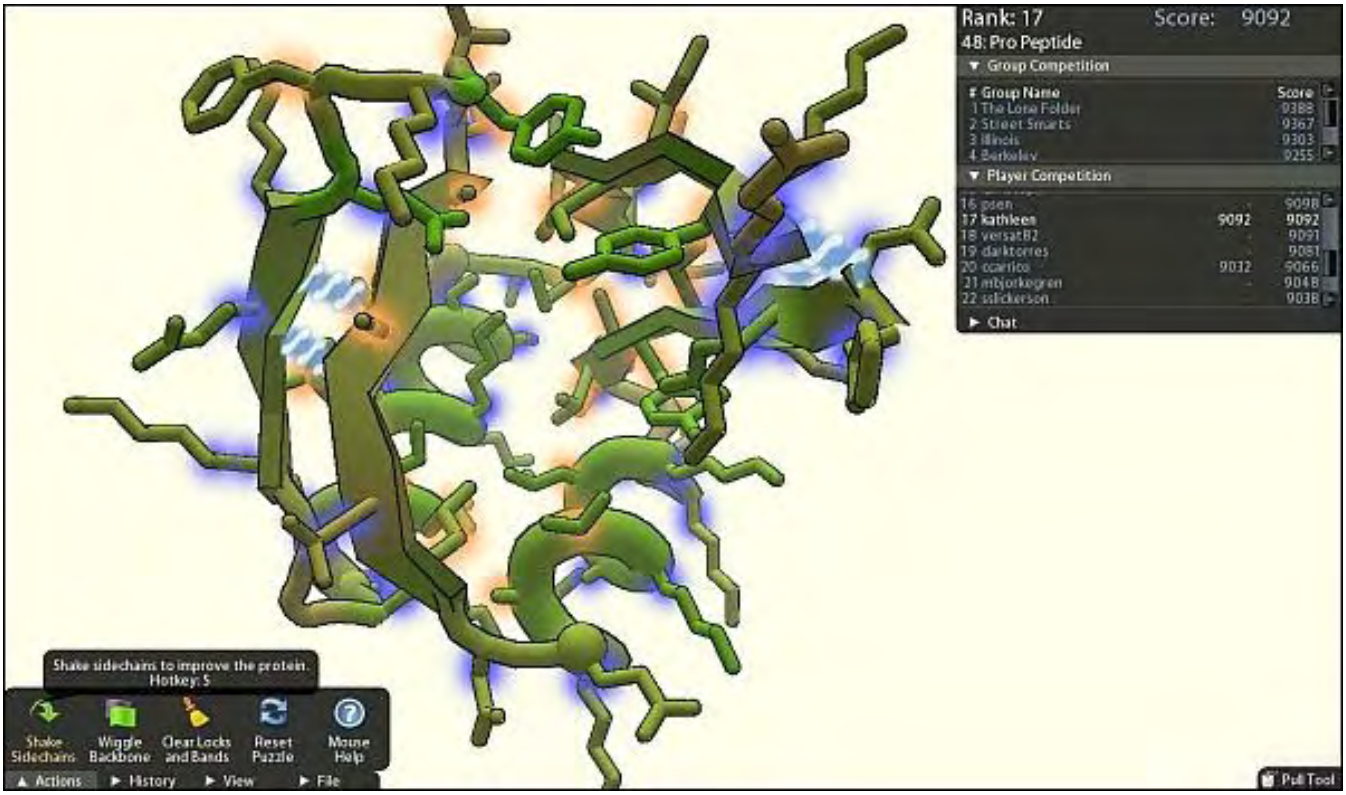


Figure 1. FoldIt lets you see your results compared to the best protein folders around the planet.

The Economist reports that companies are even using games to recruit prospective employees (*www.economist.com/node/21555952*). The idea is that by watching how someone plays a game, they can determine what skills they possess and whether they should be hired or not.

Having fun is critical to performing any task more effectively. If you're not having fun doing something, you probably won't do a very good job. If you are having fun performing a certain task, you'll probably be willing to spend more time doing it while achieving better results as well.

If your job is something you tolerate rather than something you love, it's time to find what you love so you can do a great job, be happier, and make more money than just accepting mediocrity in your life. Naturally, this may not be easy, but your other option is to accept a life of dullness and boredom and then angrily convince others to validate your decision by not pursuing their dreams either.

Sadly, there will always be an army of people filled with negativity willing to tear you down as their only form of enjoyment in life. Usually they pepper their arguments with something seemingly logical like, "Well, some of us have to work for a living," which ignores the possibility that you can work for a living and still have fun while doing it if you just take the time to find the right job for you.

For the rest of us who actually want to enjoy what we're doing, it's time to adopt gamification in all areas of our life. If you can make your entire day feel like an exciting game, you'll not only have more fun out of your day and your life, but you'll probably be more efficient and productive at the same time. Then the financial rewards will come as a by-product of your activities instead of the sole reason for your activity.

If you need direction on how to live what author Brendon Burchard calls a charged life, read his latest book *The Charge (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1451667531/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1451667531&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*).* As a young man, Brendon survived a near fatal car accident that opened his eyes to making his life worthwhile. Then he became a motivational coach and best-selling author to spread his message that life could end at any moment so it's important that you spend your time making a difference, however you define that for yourself.

By doing what you love, having fun, and helping society through the best skills you have to offer, you can take your life out of its stale routine and make it truly special, just like playing an interesting video game except with stakes that are real.

The Dying Inkjet Printer Market

Lexmark recently announced that they're leaving the low-cost and low-margin inkjet printer business (*www.pcworld.com/article/261564/lexmark_exits_the_inkjet_market_are_printers_doomed.html*). At one time, people bought inkjet printers as an inexpensive way to print color. Now with color laser printers dropping in cost (while being more cost efficient to operate) and the reduced need for many people to print anything at all, the inkjet printer business is fading away. Lexmark simply wants to get out and focus on the higher margin and more profitable enterprise and laser printer business instead.

As inkjet printers fade in popularity, expect all those businesses selling inkjet replacement and refill cartridges to suffer as well. With fewer companies selling inkjet printers, expect the cost of inkjet printers to increase, driving more people to color laser printers.

Just look at the minuscule dot-matrix printer market. During the height of its popularity, dot-matrix printers were cheap and plentiful. Now that only a few people need dot-matrix printers because they can print carbon copies of forms, dot-matrix printers are expensive and hard to find. That's likely the direction inkjet printers will head towards as well.

Inkjet printers were often inexpensive to buy, but expensive to maintain through the constant need to buy replacement ink cartridges. Hopefully color laser printers will continue dropping in cost while increasing in quality, and then we can all forget about the hassles of buying expensive inkjet cartridges every few weeks.

While you watch the inkjet market evaporate, look for signs that other industries will soon disappear. If inkjet printers can go from a must-have item to a niche product, expect change to catch up and eliminate other industries in the near future. If you still insist that life won't change rapidly, invest your money in an inkjet cartridge refilling business or any of these struggling retail stores (*money.msn.com/investing/latest.aspx?post=83576500-fcb8-4d99-b0b3-d485490ea3d1*) and see how long you can last.

Running Windows on an iPad

For some odd reason, many people cling to the belief that until Microsoft Office arrives on a tablet, then all tablets, including the iPad, must be useless. For those people who believe that Microsoft Office is necessary to make the iPad useful, there's now a way to run Microsoft Office on an iPad.

First, you'll need to buy and install Parallels 7 or 8 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008YTAKJA/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B008YTAKJA&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*) on your Macintosh. Next, you'll need to open the Parallels Preferences window, click the Mobile icon, and type in the e-mail address and password you used to register your copy of Parallels. Now install any operating system on Parallels such as Windows 7. Then install any version of Microsoft Office on your Windows virtual machine running on Parallels.

Figure 2. Parallels Mobile lets you run any virtual machine stored on Parallels on your Macintosh.

These steps effectively connect your Windows virtual machine to the Parallels servers. With your virtual machine available on a server over the Internet, you can now connect your iPhone or iPad to your virtual machine through the $19.99 Parallels Mobile app (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fparallels-mobile%252Fid295531450%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*).

Figure 3. Parallels Mobile lets you control your virtual machine through touch gestures on the iPhone or iPad.

Through Parallels Mobile on an iPhone or iPad, you can see and control any virtual machine on your Macintosh. From within your iPhone or iPad, load any Microsoft Office program (or any Windows program installed on your virtual machine), and you can run any Windows program on an iPhone or iPad. Obviously the user interface of a Windows program like Microsoft Access or Word might not be optimum for touch gestures, but you have full control over Windows through Parallels Mobile.

Figure 4. By typing on the iPad's virtual keyboard, you can create text on any program running on your virtual machine.

Go on a trip to another city, leave your virtual machine running on your Macintosh, and you'll be able to use Microsoft Office on your iPhone or iPad anywhere you can get an Internet connection. Copy text out of any Windows program and paste it into any iPhone or iPad program if you wish. Despite the technical details necessary to pull off this ability to run a virtual machine over the Internet, Parallels Mobile is surprisingly responsive and easy to use.

If you insist that you can't do any useful work on an iPad until you can use Microsoft Office, Parallels Mobile puts that excuse out of its misery for good (although people will still cling to this outdated complaint anyway out of stubborn defiance of reality).

If you prefer the old style interface of pull-down menus, install Microsoft Office 2003 on your Windows virtual machine. If you prefer the more modern interface, install Microsoft Office 2010 on your virtual machine. With Parallels Mobile, you won't have to wait for Microsoft to release an iPad version of Microsoft Office since you can run the real thing on your iPhone or iPad any time you want.

Besides letting you run Microsoft Office on your iPhone or iPad, Parallels Mobile also lets you run and view Flash on your Windows virtual machine, which you can see on your iPhone or iPad as well. With Parallels Mobile, your iPhone and iPad can now run everything a Windows PC can run. Now the real question is can another tablet run everything Windows and an iPhone/iPad can?

Still Waiting for the Paperless Office

When computers first became popular people kept talking about the future of a paperless office. While e-mail and PDF files have made paper less important than it might have been in the past, people still use paper to jot down notes. You can take your notes and retype them into your iPad, but that's often a waste of time. A better solution might be to use the 99 cent Paper Notes app

(*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fpaper-notes%252Fid528460221%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) instead.

The idea behind Paper Notes is simple. Rather than force you to turn your paper notes into digital text, Paper Notes lets you take pictures of your paper notes and organize those images in the Paper Notes app. You can rearrange the images of your paper notes in any order and collect them into groups so paper note images of one project remain separate from the paper note images of another project. Once you've trapped your paper notes as pictures, you can save them as color or grayscale PDF files so you can send them to others.

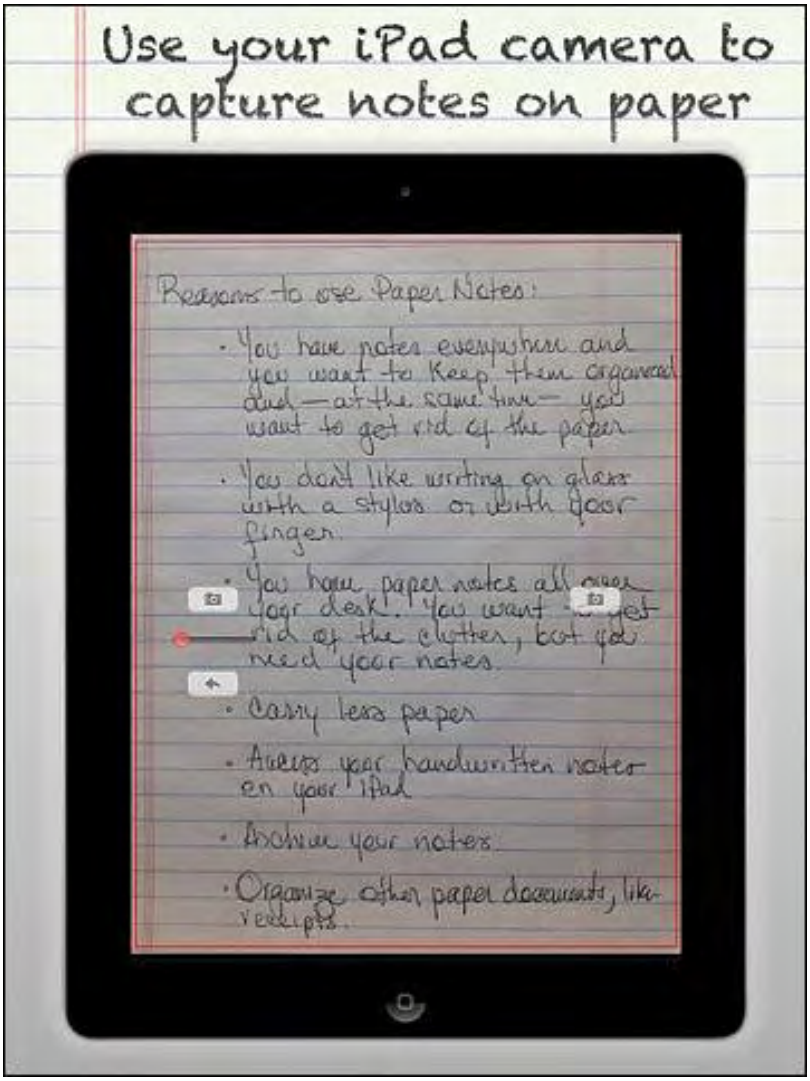


Figure 5. Paper Notes lets you take pictures of your written notes.

If you tend to scribble notes and drawings on paper and need a way to keep them organized, try Paper Notes for the iPad 2 or higher since you need a camera to capture your paper notes as digital images. By using Paper Notes, you can take digital images of all your paper notes wherever you take your iPad.

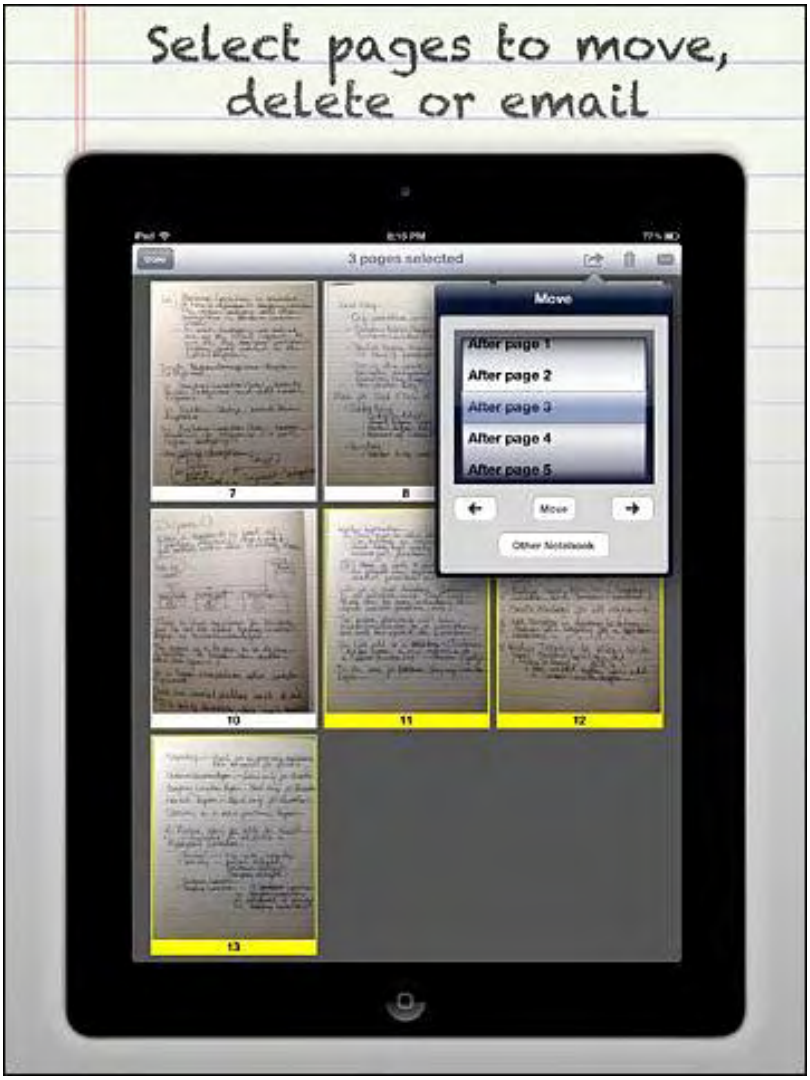


Figure 6. Once stored as digital images, you can view, sort and rearrange your notes.

Mac OS X Catches up to Vista

According to NetMarketShare (*www.netmarketshare.com/operating-system-market-share.aspx?qprid=10&qpcustomd=0*), the combined total of Mac OS X 10.6, 10.7, and 10.8 users has finally caught up to the market share of Vista users. That's partly due to the popularity of Macintosh computers but also due to the less-than-stellar reputation that Vista has endured all these years.

Given a choice between Vista and Windows 7, there's no reason not to switch to Windows 7 (other than having to pay for Windows 7). More surprisingly is that NetMarketShare also reports that the number of Windows 7 users now roughly equals the number of Windows XP users.

If you're still clinging to Windows XP, it's time to move on to Windows 7. Since Windows 7 has proven stable and reliable, expect businesses to settle on Windows 7 while everyone waits to see how Windows 8 performs in the market. In the meantime, expect to see Mac OS X users continue growing as more people discover the Macintosh. Given a choice between learning an entirely new user interface with Windows 8 or switching to something else, you can be sure a percentage of Windows users will turn away from Windows 8 and try a Macintosh or Linux. The question is how many people will avoid Windows 8 and how many Macintosh and Linux users will go back to using Windows once Windows 8 becomes available?

News From the World

Most people now get their news from the Internet, but that news often comes from news wires and newspapers. Unfortunately,

newspapers often focus solely on topics that appeal to their market, which often means completely ignoring anything that happens somewhere else. This lack of news from around the world may be one reason why so many American high school students can't even find the United States on a map and don't know anything beyond the latest pop culture and celebrity gossip.

To avoid getting more ignorant of the world despite faster communication, download the 99 cent World Newspaper app (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fworld-newspapers%252Fid363274510%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) for the iPhone or iPad. This app lets you search for newspapers by name or randomly let the app pick a newspaper for you. By reading newspapers from different parts of the world, you can see news that you'll almost never read about in your local city newspaper. More importantly, you can often read news that contradicts or provides a different point of view from what you may read in American newspapers.

Figure 7. The World Newspapers app lets you find and read newspapers from around the world.

After reading newspapers from around the world, your only excuse for remaining ignorant is through your own closed mind. Of course for many people, that's been their biggest problem from the very beginning.

Bad News for Samsung

After losing their patent trial against Apple, Samsung has now been accused that some of their Chinese suppliers have been using child labor (*in.reuters.com/article/2012/09/03/net-us-samsung-china-idINBRE8820BW20120903*). While this isn't surprising, it is surprising that other companies will now have to worry about improving the conditions of their workers just like Apple has been forced to do. In the meantime, we have to wonder if other companies are not relying on poor worker conditions to make their products or if the news just isn't bothering to cover this story since it's not as interesting unless a major

company is involved.

Samsung also reportedly invited bloggers to attend the IFA 2012 conference at Samsung's expense, but when the bloggers showed up, they were told to promote Samsung's products (*news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57505050-93/samsung-to-bloggers-promote-our-products-at-ifa-or-walk-home/*) or risk losing their hotel and airfare.

If Samsung informed these bloggers ahead of time that they would only pay for their travel expenses if they promoted Samsung products, that wouldn't have been a problem since the bloggers would know what they were expected to do. However, to invite bloggers to the conference and then suddenly surprise them by threatening to yank away their hotel and airfare seems a bit underhanded.

Many people say they hate Apple because of Apple's treatment of workers at their suppliers' factories. so now these same people can start hating Samsung for the exact same reasons. Most likely these people won't hate Samsung for the same reason simply because they're really just looking for an excuse to hate Apple. For that same reason, people will ignore that Foxconn, a major supplier of Apple products, also makes products for other companies such as Nintendo and Microsoft. A while back, Foxconn workers assembling Microsoft Xbox game consoles threatened mass suicide (*seattle.cbslocal.com/2012/01/10/hundreds-threaten-suicide-at-microsoft-supplier-plant-in-china/*) over pay increases, so if you're truly concerned about worker conditions in Chinese factories, you can start hating Microsoft too.

* * *

One way that Mac OS X tries to avoid overwhelming users is by hiding all available options. While this can keep novices focused on the task, it can also hide options that aren't initially visible.

When printing, you can toggle between clicking the Hide Details button and the Show Details button. The Hide Details lets you focus on printing while the Show Details button gives you additional options for modifying the page size or printing in reverse order.

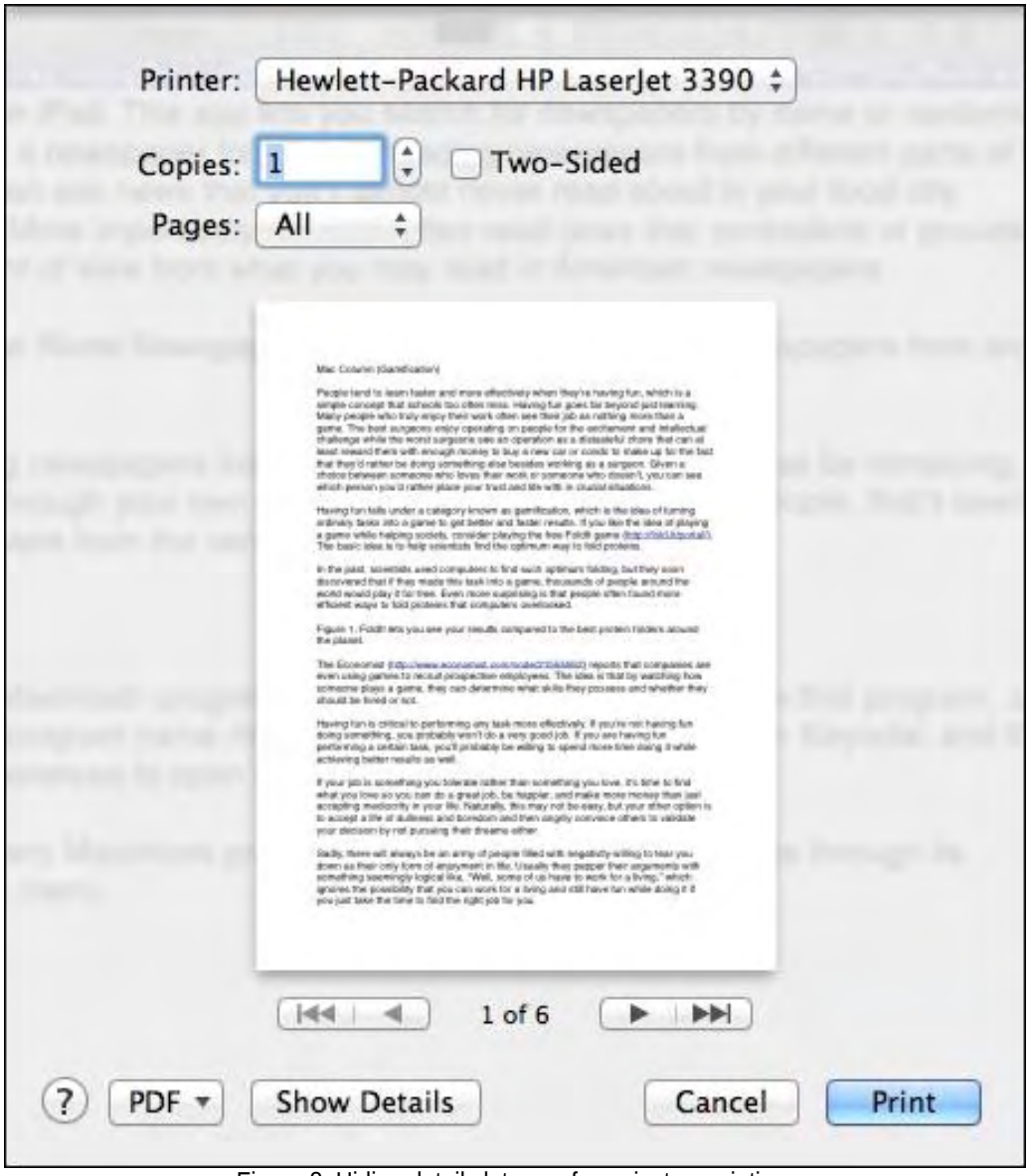


Figure 8. Hiding details lets you focus just on printing.

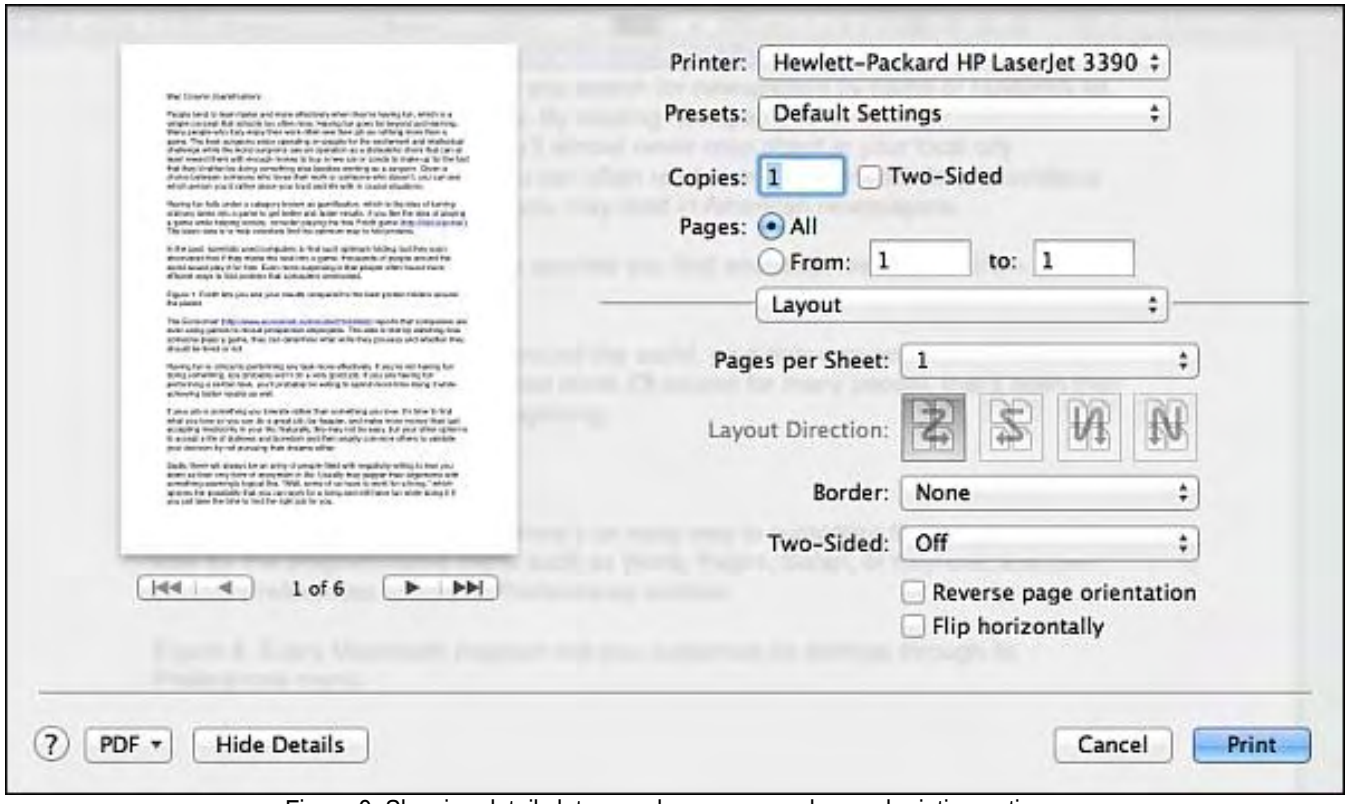


Figure 9. Showing details lets you choose more advanced printing options.

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*.

Return to Table of Contents

Beyond Personal Computing

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

The Misunderstood Middleman: The Miracles of Modems

Among the many mysteries about successfully connecting to the Internet is the middleman—the modem. So just why do we need that dang little box anyway?

Modem Addiction Anonymous in the Days of Dial-up

It started when your wife blind-sided you as you came home from work one day. "The phone bill is over $400! That's twice the monthly payment for your computer!"

But "Modems Addiction Anonymous" was born for guys like you! They suggested you set up your own remote bulletin board service. Then all your friends and modem addicts would be phoning you—and their wives could nag *them* about their $400 a month phone bills!

Help Desk Questions from the Void

"So are you on dial-up, Sir?" "Uh, no," the user replied. "It's a touch phone."

"How fast does your modem go, Sir?" asked a Tech on the phone. The user paused, then answered, "Uh, it's not moving at all. It's just sitting there."

"What type of modem do you have, Ma'am?" The phone customer replied, "I don't know, but they came over and installed this cell phone in my computer."

"My modem can't see my Windows. Is that why it's not working?"

"What brand of modem do you have, Sir?" asked the Tech over the phone. "Just read me the brand name off your new modem's packaging." A sound of rustling, then the customer replied, "Here's the packaging. Looks like a Ziplock brand modem."

"So if I hook up two of these 9600 baud modems, will I get a 19200 baud?"

An irate customer called up his Internet Service Provider (ISP), instead of his computer Help Desk. "How dare you!" he sputtered. "I paid a lot of money for this computer, and I'll see you in court if you don't initialize this machine this instant!" The ISP Tech replied, "Uh, excuse me, Sir? What exactly does it say?" The customer answered, "It says 'Cannot Initialize Modem.'"

"Hi there! I'm thinking about getting a T1 modem for my home. And I was wondering where I could purchase one, and how much

it would cost?" (A T1 is a fiber optic line into an office building, that can carry 24 digitized voice channels, or can plug into a network's router to carry data at a rate of 1,544 megabits per second. Think this was the same guy who wanted to download the entire Internet?)

A young lady marched into a computer store and put a modem cable (not the modem) on the counter. "I need a new modem," she said. "This skinny one is broken."

Weather Intrusions: Ever Heard of a Surge Protector?

"My modem was hit by lightning. Can you e-mail me another one?"

"There was a bad thunderstorm here last night, and lightning struck the telephone pole outside while I was online. Ever since then, your modems haven't been working. When are you gonna get them fixed?"

Confusing Connections

An older gentleman plunked his newly bought modem down on the counter of the computer store where he'd bought it. "This modem doesn't work! I can't get to the Internet!" The Tech tried to be helpful, "Did you plug it into the right port on your PC?" The older gentleman blinked. "I don't have a PC, son." The Tech ventured, "So, uh, what did you plug the modem into, Sir?" The older man replied, "Well, I plugged it into the electrical outlet, plugged my phone line in, and put it on top of my TV. And nothing's happening."

"Hello? Help desk? I keep getting 'receive no carrier from modem' on my screen. But I *am* hearing all this music on my phone line." The Tech responded, "Well, there's your problem, Ma'am. You have line noise. Sounds like a radio station coming through your phone line." The customer was unsure how helpful this revelation was. "So...I have to wait 'til it goes off the air?"

"Um, Sir, you need a computer to send and receive e-mail," one ISP Help Desk Tech was telling a user on the phone. "A modem won't work by itself." The customer got angry. "Well, dammit it, I bought this modem and the guy at the store said it was all I'd need to get online! So just cancel my account! I'm not gonna go out and spent thousands of dollars on a computer just for e-mail!"

Another user called up his ISP to complain that he couldn't get to the Internet. The ISP Tech checked out the modem, drivers and configuration, but couldn't find the problem. "Which socket at the back of the modem did you plug into, Sir?"asked the confused Tech finally. "Oh, neither," the user cheerfully replied. "I didn't want to incur any overseas toll charges, so I didn't hook the modem into the phone line. To get rid of those annoying 'No Dial-tone' error messages, I looked through the manual and decided to use the ATX3 command." (ATX3 command disables Waiting for Dial-tone. But he wasn't hooked into the phone line anyway.)

Of Course I Know My Computer from My Modem

A tech-savvy teen was arguing with a friend. "No, your game pad can ***not*** be connected to your modem! Game pads connect to a game port. Modems don't have game ports." The friend was defiant. "Does too! I have a tower modem, and everything connects to it!"

Trying to troubleshoot for a user who said her computer wasn't connecting to the Internet, a Help Desk Tech asked her to turn her modem off then back on. "OK, the screen is black now," she reported. The Tech was confused. "Did you just turn off your modem—or your computer?" "My modem," she answered. "And how big is your modem?" the Tech prodded. "Well, it's about two feet high and about a foot wide," she answered.

Tech Support got a call one day from a frustrated customer with a modem problem. He suggested she reset her modem, using a pen or screwdriver to press the Reset button on the back of the modem. The user got her computer and modem confused, and stuck the screwdriver into the power supply port on her computer. She survived. Her computer did not.

Kids to Parents - Yes, We Really Do Need a Modem

One teenager begged his mother for months to sign up for Internet access. She finally and reluctantly said "Alright." The teen

was overjoyed, grabbing his coat to head out to "go price some modems." Mom suddenly frowned, "Hold on a minute! What's all this talk about modems?" The teen explained that in order to connect their computer to an Internet Service Provider, they'd need a modem. Mom was having none of this new expense! "We'll get the Internet now, but that modem will have to wait until next year."

A family got their first computer and it wasn't long before the kids were anxious to explore the larger world of the Internet and e-mails. The kids all begged Mom relentlessly, and she finally gave in. She just had one last question: "So should we get America Online or a modem?"

Bye Bye America Online

(sung to the tune of "American Pie")

So bye bye to America Online
Drove my modem to a domain and it's working just fine.
And good old geeks are cheering users offline
Saying this'll be the day that they die
This'll be the day that they die...

Did you write the book of TOS
Will you send your password to PWD-BOSS
If an IM tells you so?
And will you believe the Motley Fool
When he tells you that the service rules
And can you teach me how to Web real slow?

Misunderstanding Modems

Not long ago, a woman purchased an Internet Service Provider (ISP) from a kiosk at her local mall. The next day she returned the modem. "I want a refund. This thing makes all these strange noises that I'm sure are scratching up my hard drive!"

"So do I put the CD in my modem?"

"I think my modem needs a new hard drive."

A few decades ago, a guy found out that his public library had a dial-up modem card catalog. He asked the Librarian for the phone number and log-in information. She dutifully wrote down, "8 databits, no parody, and 1 thought bit."

"Gosh, I thought I had a long distance modem."

"Why do I have to go buy a modem?" a teen asked a friend. "Can't you just copy yours for me?"

Helpful (?) Answers to Online Forum Modem Question

Q: How can I disable the modem whirring when a client dials in to OSR5?

A-1: Read the modem manual, find the codes to turn off the speaker and set them in the modem's NVRAM.

A-2: Rip all the technobabble pages out of the modem manual, wrap them around the modem and secure with duct tape.

A-3: Open the modem with a screwdriver or can opener. Cut wire going to the loudspeaker. Reassemble modem with remaining screws or duct tape—whichever is more convenient.

A-4: Find an ice pick. Stab speaker until dead. (Note: This may void your warranty.)

A-5: As a Rep of your modem's manufacturer, I can assure you it's a feature, not a bug. That noise is there for your own good.

And yes, we know what's best for you. This feature will be fixed in the next release.

A-6: My three-year-old suggests you position the modem with the speaker facing upward. Pour pancake syrup into the speaker. This will greatly reduce the high frequency response of the speaker, thus attenuating the sound.

Someday-in-the-Future Modems

"I'm looking for an error packing and data correcting modem." (Aren't we all?)

"Well, why can't I call more than one BBS with one modem at a time? This *is* a multi-tasking modem isn't it?"

"Oh! You mean that new 17-inch color modem?"

"Hi there! I just bought a modem for my MacIIsi. Can you tell me how to use it to do virtual reality?"

"I've got a virus in my BIOS, and I figured out it must have come from you guys—and I know how you're doing it. Your computers are sending the viruses straight to my hard drive through the "modem subcarrier" between keystrokes, while I'm dialed into my shell account."

(Most of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple Internet sites. But special thanks to Rinkworks.com (*Rinkworks.com*), Netfunny.com (*Netfunny.com*) and Justfunnies.com.)

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

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*).

Return to Table of Contents

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Windows 8 Metro Interface," "Internet Explorer and New Windows, Etc.," "Statistics," "Videos in Firefox," "The Real World and Welfare Recipients"

Windows 8 Metro Interface

[Regarding Jack Dunning's August 24 article, "Microsoft's Windows 8 Release is Closing in":]

The Metro interface won't work on PC's *non*-touchscreen and the mouse may not work. The Metro interface should only come up on hardware that supports touchscreen otherwise it should be the Windows Start Menu!

-Walter, San Diego, CA

The Metro Start Screen does work with a mouse on non-touch screens. Don't want Metro? Get Windows 7.

-Jack Dunning

Internet Explorer and New Windows, Etc.

[Regarding the August 17 Digital Dave column:]

Yup, dump Internet Explorer to get windows that do what you want them to do instead of what Microsoft thinks you should have them do.

I'm sure Chrome and Safari work similarly, but my current Firefox opens the Ask Dave window in a new tab in whatever size my Firefox window is set to, so no issues with sizing at all.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Statistics

[Regarding the August 24 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Reading the tete-a-tete between Wally Wang and Rich Ernst brought to mind two things: 1) There are lies, damn lies, and statistics. (I believe a Mark Twain quote); and 2) A good statistician asks you what do you want 2+2 to equal?

-Wes Nelson

Videos in Firefox

[Regarding the August 17 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

The person having problems with video in Firefox, ensure you have the latest flash player from Adobe. I go to adobe.com and at the lower right (sometimes you have to scroll), click on the link for the Flash player to verify it's the latest.

Also, *right*-click on the flash window you're having problems with, then click on settings (not Global settings). *un*check "enable

hardware acceleration." I had to do this and haven't had any problems since. Also haven't noticed any difference in playback speed.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

The Real World and Welfare Recipients

[Regarding the August 24 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

I haven't read too many of Wally's columns in the past because I belonged to the other world. However, I just switched to the real world earlier this month (I bought a MacBook Pro 8/8/12). Now, I have started to read them and I like them. Of course, since he writes for *ComputorEdge*, he has to be good. I've been reading you since December of 1988 when I got my first computer. The other computer magazines of back then only managed to keep me subscribing for a year or two. I started with an iPod Touch (4th Gen), then an iPhone 4S and now, the MacBook Pro Retina.

-Chris Clarke, El Cajon, CA

"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."

Say what? Wally, Please don't confuse your technological expertise with wisdom. Your comment concerning welfare recipients is a real low point for *ComputorEdge* and a disgraceful thing to say. You may know a thing or two about Apple, but you are no sociologist or astute politician.

-Joe Piluso, San Diego

Why do you believe that it's a low point stating that some welfare recipients complain that waiting to cash their check is a real hassle? Are you claiming that no welfare recipients have ever complained that waiting to cash their check is a hassle? Are you claiming that it's a false statement that some people complain about everything?

The fact is that welfare helps many people, but many people do take advantage of it. What exactly are you complaining about?

-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/*).*

Send mail to ceeditor@computoredge.com with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to cewebmaster@computoredge.com with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2012 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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