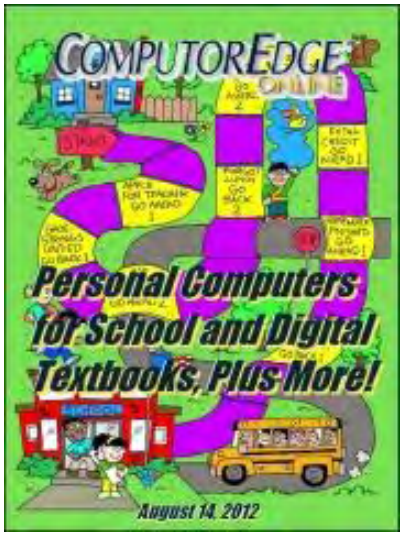
ComputorEdge™ Online — 09/14/12



This issue:
Personal Computers for School and Digital Textbooks

More little known high tech stories, plus Digital Dave, Wally on the iPhone, and a tip for cleaning up the Windows Desktop.

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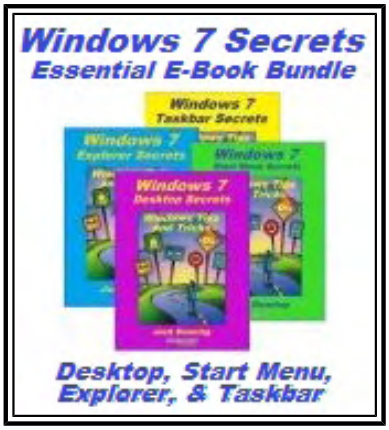

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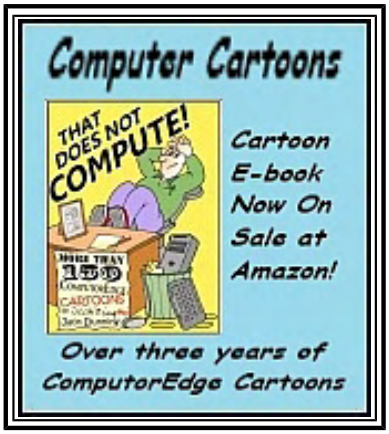

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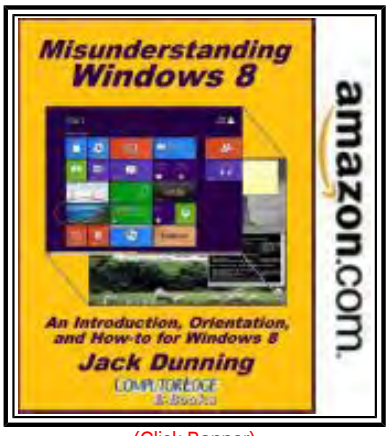

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Digital Dave

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

Antivirus and Browsers; Clean Up Taskbar Shortcuts—How to Remove?; Defeating Annoying Features in Internet Web Pages.

Dear Digital Dave,

Some time ago I asked you if it mattered which browser you use when you download an antivirus program and you said it didn't. Now I see when I go to the Internet using Internet Explorer and try to go to our local newspaper's Web site, my copy of Ad-Aware boots up and stops me. Yet, when I use Firefox it opens that site with no problem. What gives? Thanks much for your many good tips and advice.

Joe Piluso
San Diego, CA

Dear Joe,

While it does not matter which browser you use to download antivirus, there can certainly be different interactions between the antivirus program and the various browsers. That interaction is heavily dependent upon how each browser (and possibly the antivirus software) is set up.

I would check the security settings in Internet Explorer. It's possible that you have them set at a higher level than Firefox or there is something the newspaper site is doing which causes Ad-Aware to choke in Internet Explorer. It is also possible that there is a setting in Ad-Aware that causes the problem, although I'm not familiar enough with that program to give a recommendation.

Quite frankly, many hours can be spent hunting down an annoying problem without results. My solution is often to forget the glitch and just use the browser that works—in your case Firefox.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

*My system includes Windows XP, AT&T Internet, Motorola 3360 modem (*newly *installed by AT&T tech support), 3GB speed (allegedly).*

Sad history as follows: Upon fourth contact with tech support, a service person came to the house to check their line from house to cable box. Tested OK. Said company rep swapped out original modem with new unit. Boot up time remains 2X slower than before subscribing to "High Speed Internet."

I'm advised that no improvement in connection speed will be possible while the shortcuts on the Taskbar remain. Three of the original seven have been removed. These four remain: Windows Messenger, Canon, Panda IS and "anti-phishing disabled." I'm not sure how that got itself lodged on the Taskbar.

My plea: How would I remove/clean up the Taskbar? I could open and use these from the programs folder when needed.

Thank You,

Joe Mcguire
San Diego, CA

Dear Joe,

Web browsing is so easy and efficient for modern computers that I don't think a few programs running in the background can be the problem here, especially if Web pages loaded fine before the switch to high speed on the same computer. To test, see if other programs without connectivity requirements run fine (music or photo software for example). If they do, then a browser should have no problem. If you have a router behind the modem that doesn't work well or needs an update (firmware or hardware), or your network card is coincidentally failing in a subtle way, or AT&T high speed is no good in your area, then any of those could be the issue.

Having said that, if the problem is not with the Internet connection than it is possible that the computer is otherwise occupied causing slow loading Web pages. If you have tried a number of the various browsers (Google Chrome, Firefox, etc.) and experience slow speeds in all of them, then you could need to look at the programs automatically loaded by Windows on startup and running in background. (I also can't rule out malware as the source of the problem.)

I'm assuming that the items you mentioned located on the Taskbar are in the Notification area on the right side. Depending upon how it does its job, Panda Internet Security could be the issue since your antivirus software is always active. However, you can't just disable your antivirus software. You need something. Maybe other XP users who have used Panda can comment on their experience.

To check this out, you can open the System Configuration Utility by entering "msconfig" (no quotes) into the Run dialog selected from the Start menu. Select the Startup tab (see Figure 1).

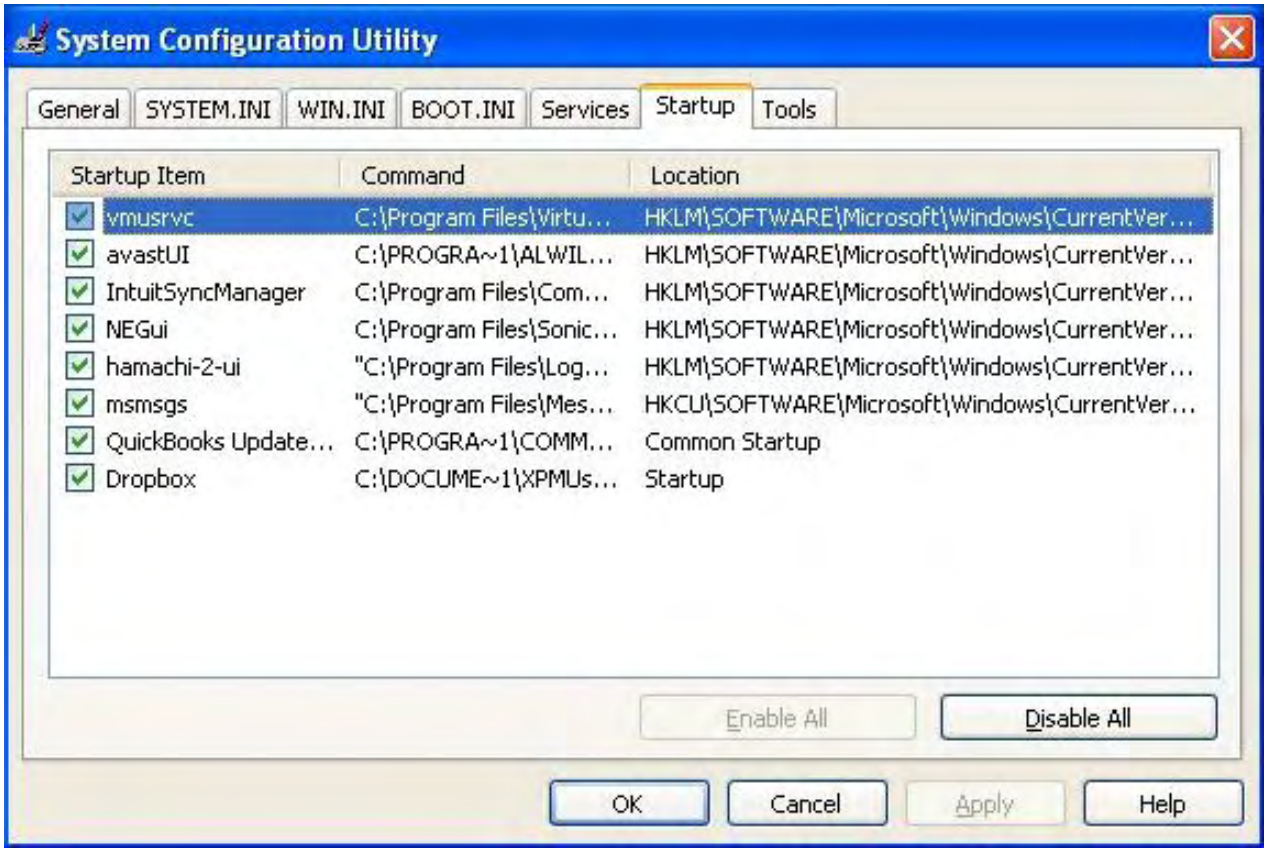

Figure 1. The Startup tab in the System Configuration Utility window in Windows XP.

Disable any programs you don't feel you need. Reboot and test your browsers again.

You can also take a look at the Service tab, but don't disable anything that might be required for the system.

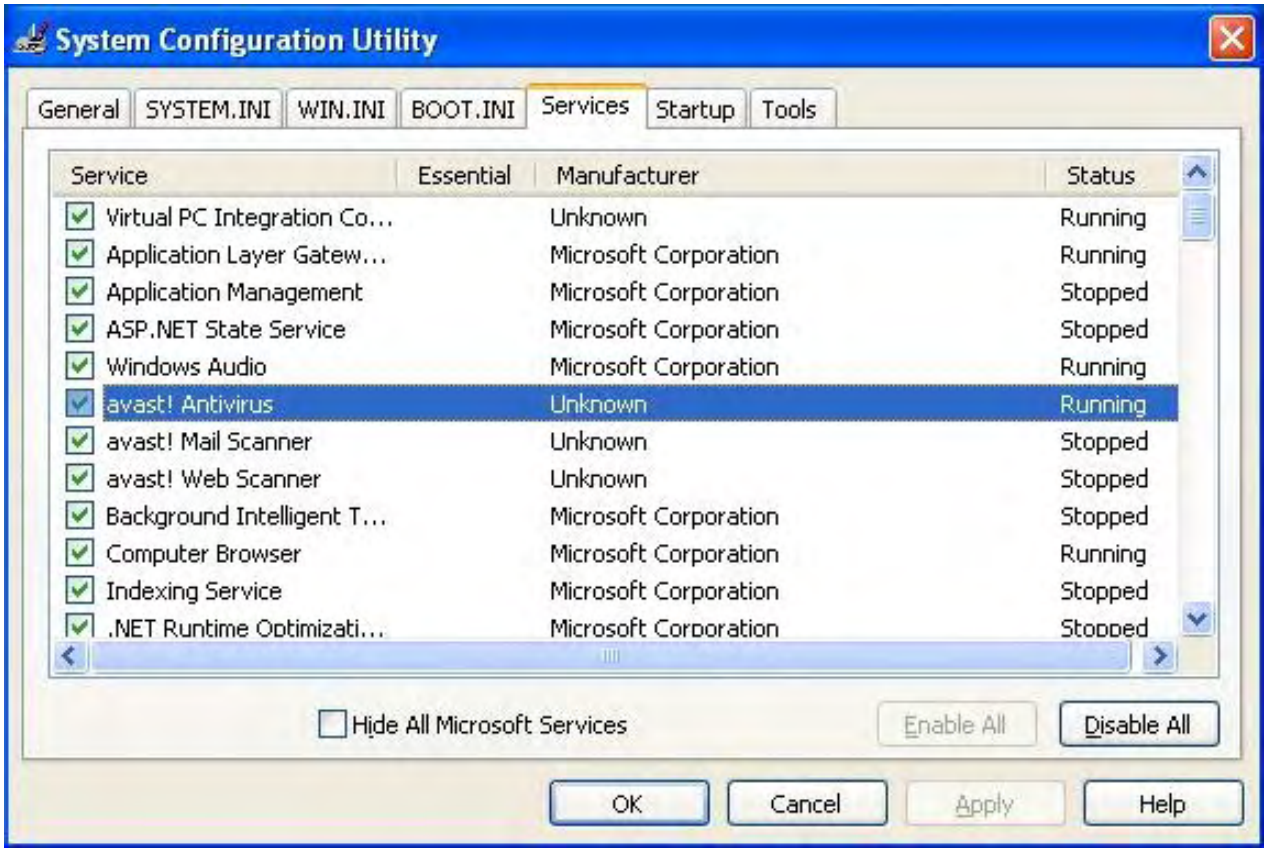

Figure 2. The Services tab in the System Configuration Utility window in Windows XP.

I don't know that any of these changes will help. I suspect that AT&T may have too many customers on the same subnet which could cause slowdowns during peak hours. There is chatter on the Web about problems for AT&T customers when they upgraded to "High Speed Internet"—although I didn't find any solutions other than switching to another Internet provider.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I had to rebuild my hard drive and lost many of my preferences that I have accumulated over time. Thought my backup would have covered me, but I was not so lucky. One of the features I implemented was to enter specific Web sites into the restricted sites security feature of Internet Explorer. I seem to recall you had an article about this subject many years ago but I was not successful in my search of past articles. Is this method the best to "defeat" some of these annoying "features" on some Web sites?

Thanks in advance for advice. I always enjoy your articles.

Joe
Pinole, CA

Dear Joe,

There are a couple of ways to cut down on annoyance from Web sites. The first is the Pop-up Blocker. Most browsers include pop-up blockers in some form. In Internet Explorer you can turn the blocker on and off directly from the Tools menu, or you can find it in Internet Options (also in the Tools menu) under the Privacy tab (see Figure 3). If you click settings, you can enter sites for which you want to allow pop-ups. There are reasons to allow pop-ups for sites that you trust or need to use.

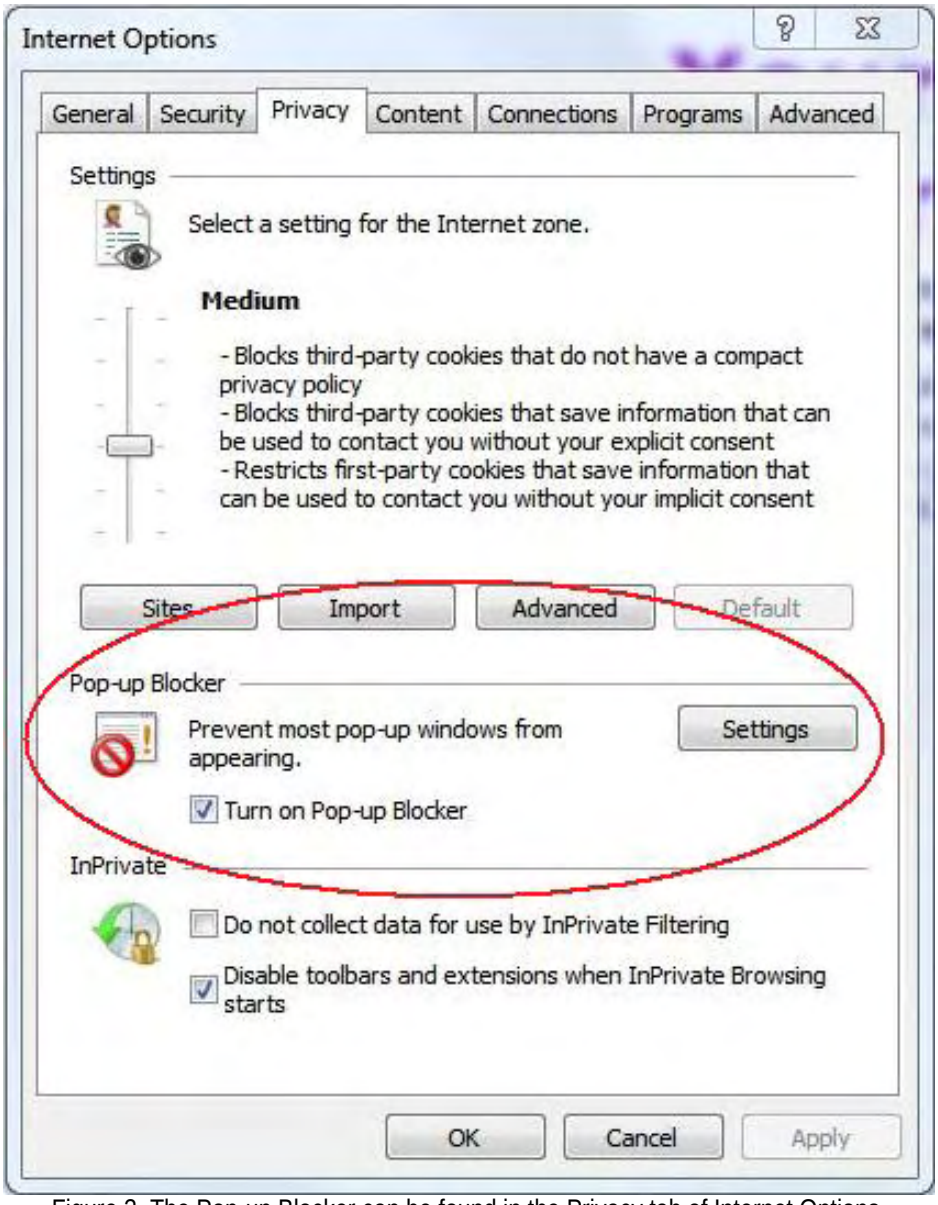

Figure 3. The Pop-up Blocker can be found in the Privacy tab of Internet Options.

To restrict specific sites click the Security tab in Internet Options and click Restricted Sites (see Figure 4).

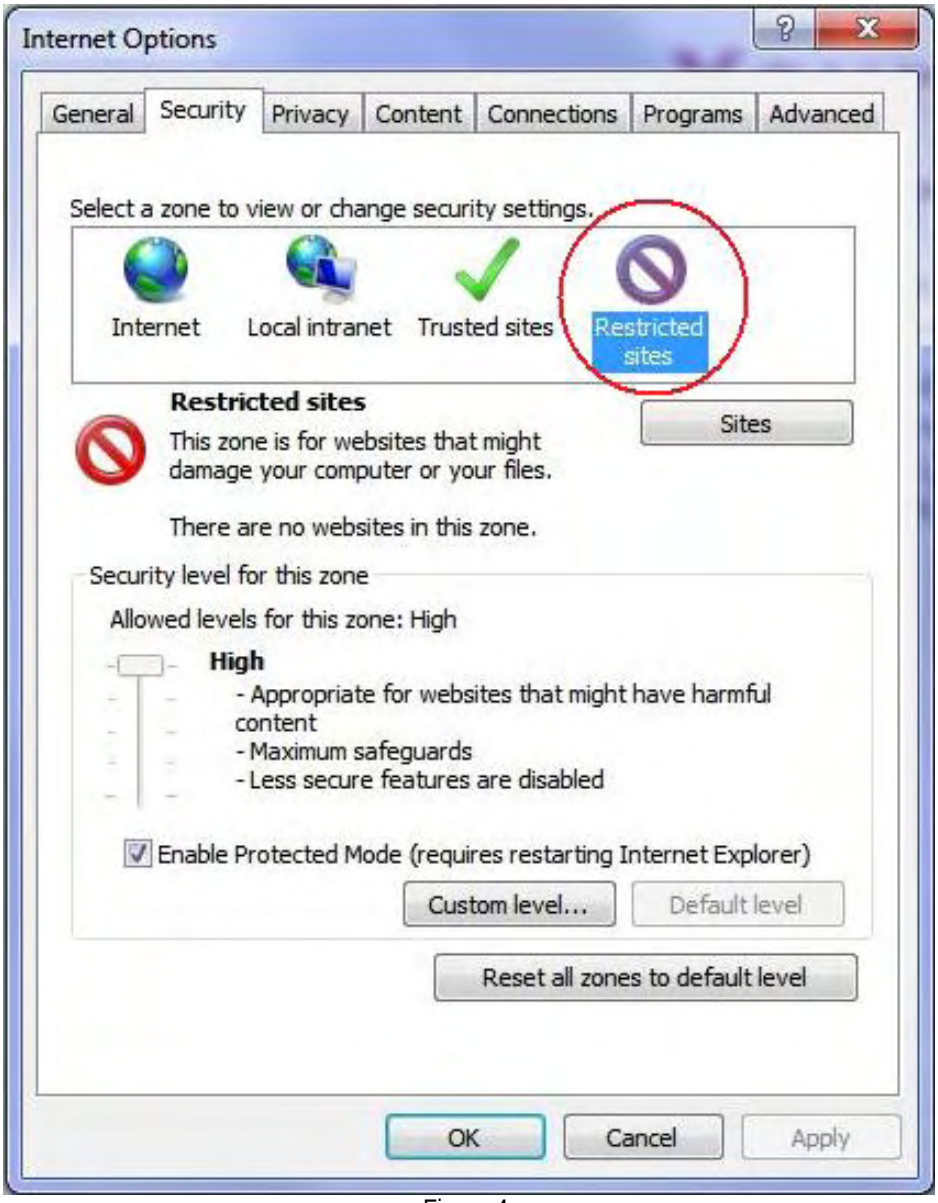

Figure 4.

Next click the Sites button (see Figure 5). This will allow you to add Web sites you want to restrict.

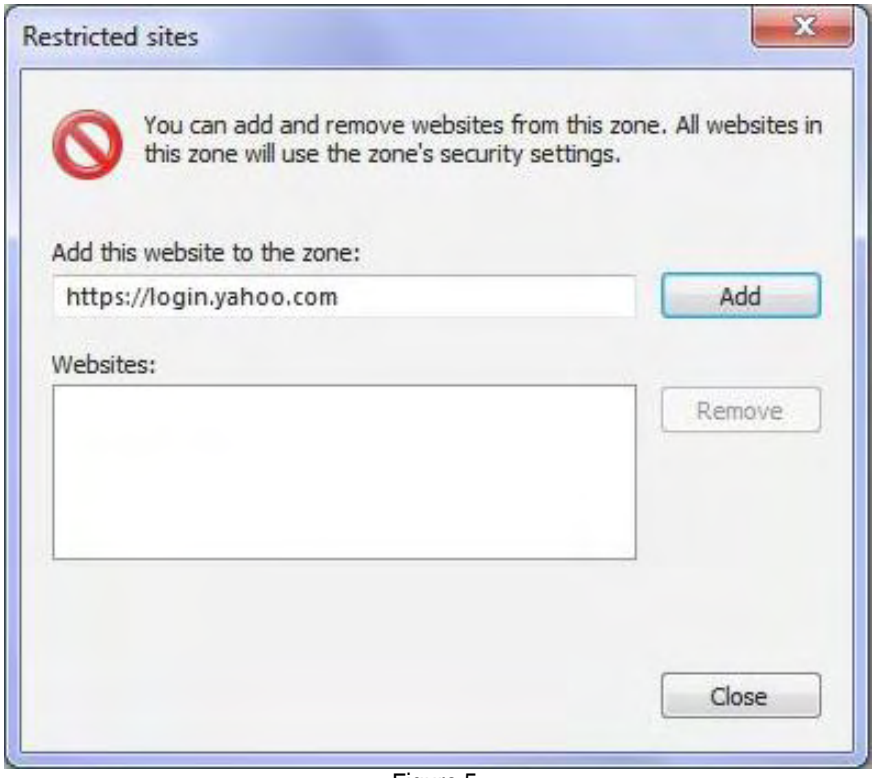

Figure 5.

The Trusted sites options will allow you to enter sites that you always trust.

It's unfortunate that you lost all of your settings. Whether you save everything or not is dependent upon the type of back up you do. Many forms of backup only copy the data files since these are usually the hardest to reproduce. Settings will be saved with Restore points, but these are usually on the same drive which means you lost them when you rebuilt the drive. The best protection is a drive image. However, these can be quite large—everything on the drive—and will only include settings as of the last time the system image was made.

Digital Dave

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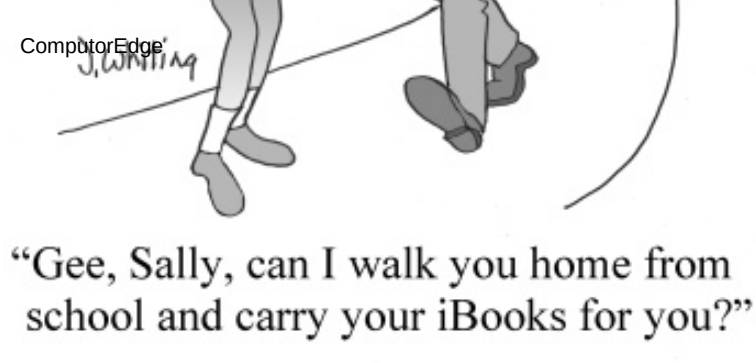
"Back-to-School, Remote Cat-Play, 3D Meat, and Prison-Power" by Marilyn K. Martin

Personal Computers for School, and Digital Textbooks; Back to School; Digital Pet Play; 3D Bio-Printed Meat; Apps for the Outdoors; Internet Lobbyists; Medical Technology; New Metal Alloys; Venture Capitalists; Third World Sanitation Tech; IBM's Next Gen Computers; Prison Power; Military Tech.

Personal Computers for School, and Digital Textbooks

Technology now marches back to school, alongside pencils and pens and crayons. *Boston Globe* separates the computer hype from the basic computers your kids will do best with (*www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2012/08/09/best_in_class_computers_for_back_to_school*) in school. Kids are taking tablet computers to school, even as schools are buying them up to preload with textbooks and teaching apps. But tablets are second-rate when it comes to all the typing/writing kids are required to do in school. Laptops are preferred for students of all ages, since they have adequate storage plus an optical drive which is handy for installing software or watching videos. The reviewer suggests that any laptop running Microsoft Windows in the $500-$800 range is sufficient.

According to the *New York Times* in August 2012 a new line of digital textbooks (*www.nytimes.com/2012/08/20/technology/discovery-invests-in-digital-textbooks-in-hopes-of-growth.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120820*) (called Techbooks) are not coming from traditional educational publishers, but from the cable TV company Discovery. Discovery (*dsc.discovery.com/*) already offers educational videos to school districts, and decided to get in on digital textbooks "as a growth opportunity too good to pass up." Other media companies are also opening educational divisions, as movies, television, newspapers and magazines continue to decline. But traditional educational publishers are also introducing their own digital products with a strong ally. Apple is seeking to bolster its iPad sales by offering digital high school textbooks through its iBooks store, partnered with



"Gee, Sally, can I walk you home from school and carry your iBooks for you?"

three traditional textbook publishers.

Back to School—Stem Programs to Social Media

There is a lot of discussion today about how to get students more interested in science and technology, to be prepared and anxious to step into the high-tech jobs of the future. Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland was just awarded an $60,000 grant to test a new STEM (*washingtonexaminer.com/prince-georges-to-push-science-tech-to-younger-students/article/2506238#.UD5alqBcf4Y*) (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program by teaching it to first and second graders in ten schools. "The students are testing the Engineering is Elementary model, which combines their usual science lessons with technology and engineering projects." The hope is that by introducing STEM to the youngest elementary students, it will lead to an interest and willingness to keep studying STEM subjects throughout their schooling, and into college.

Parents are more likely than couples without children to use social media (*specialsections.suntimes.com/education/prek12/13626989-555/status-update-parents-keeping-tabs-on-school-happenings-via-social-media.html*). A survey by *Laptop Magazine* found that 55% of parents use social media to watch their kids' online activities. Parents also use social media as a bulletin board to keep track of their children's school events, to check around to see if anyone has the spelling words for the week yet, and even to peruse guest lists of birthday parties their kids are invited to. It's also a good way for parents to connect with the parents of their children's classmates, or even to set up Parents' Night Out events.

Digital Shelter Pet Play

The Bideawee Animal Shelter (*www.bideawee.org/About*) in New York City, is trying out a new program to let anyone with a computer and Internet access play with their shelter cats (*healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2012/03/14/remote-playtime-with-shelter-cats.aspx*). Their kitty playroom has three remote-controlled cat toys made by iPetCompanion (*www.ipetcompanion.com/*) that can be maneuvered by anyone with digital access. A Web cam captures the cats playing with the toys manipulated by the online visitors, and each visitor gets 2 minutes of play time. Despite some cats becoming bored with the remote-controlled toys, the shelter reports that their kitten adoptions increased significantly after the toys were installed.

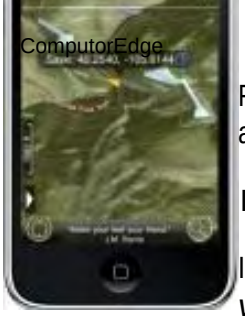
3D Bio-Printed Meat

A new company called Modern Meadow (*gust.com/c/modern_meadow*) intends to use 3D bioprinting to create an edible prototype (*nextbigfuture.com/2012/08/peter-thiel-invests-in-3d-bioprinted.html#more*) as a replacement for meat. Their grant proposal reads in part, "Biological assemblies form after deposition of the discrete bio-ink particles, through morphogenetic processes akin to those evident in early embryonic development, such as cell sorting and tissue fusing. The resulting construct is transferred to special purpose bioreactor for further maintenance and maturation to make it suitable for use."

Apps for the Outdoors—Marathons to Hiking

Boston Globe reports on a new app from marathon legend (*www.boston.com/business/technology/apptitude_test/2012/08/half_marathon_training_app.html*), Hal Higdon. The Hal Higdon half Marathon Novice 1 app (*www.halhigdon.com/*) costs $9.99. It is a training app, claiming to get a runner ready for a half marathon in just 12 weeks. The app tracks the runner's distance and pace through their smartphone's GPS, and music can play through the app interface. The app also syncs with a Training Peaks Web site (*home.trainingpeaks.com/*) to track workouts and food intake.

A *Mercury News* writer reviewed the best apps for hikers (*www.mercurynews.com/business/ci_20967639/apps-hikers-smartphones-great-outdoors*) in a June 2012 article. Top of the list is NeoTreksGPS, followed by AccuTerra (*accuterra.neotreks.com/index.php*) which has been acquired by NeoTreks and has 5 million square miles of unique recreation maps for the U.S. Other favorite hiker apps let you mark way points to the map, geo-tag photos and videos to key them to your route, and upload to



Facebook and Twitter. Coming soon will be the ability to stack multiple layers of maps, merging aerial photos and forest service maps with topographical maps.

Internet Lobbyists

In July 2012, TechCrunch announced that Internet lobbyists (*techcrunch.com/2012/07/15/two-victories-in-one-week-the-internet-flash-lobby-becomes-a-political-force/*) have become a force to be reckoned with. This is a group of digital lobbyists who band together in force to stop anything threatening the freedom of the Internet, and they recently stopped SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act). Like a flash mob, they can band together through social media for a Cause, then just as quickly disband.

However, by early September the White House was circulating the draft of an Executive Order about cyber-security (*thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/248079-white-house-circulating-draft-of-executive-order-on-cybersecurity*), possibly to bypass Congress and the netizen-protesters.

Medical Technology—on the Move

MIT's *Technology Review* recently announced a break through software that can amplify aspects of a video and show what is usually undetectable by the human eye (*www.technologyreview.com/news/428498/software-detects-motion-that-the-human-eye-cant/*). A video or real-time view of a human face can measure a pulse by the way the blood is flowing across the face. The software should be available by now, and besides medical diagnostics, it might also have applications in engineering and other fields that could benefit from detecting minute motions on video.

A new medical robot from InTouchHealth (*www.intouchhealth.com/*), the iRobot is designed to make tele-medicine (*www.technologyreview.com/view/428623/irobot-puts-telemedicine-on-auto-pilot/*) as simple as pressing an iPad screen. Called RP-VITA, the robot uses an iPad as the primary interface for doctors to remotely diagnose and treat hospital patients. The hope is that more doctors and hospitals will gravitate toward robots for tele-medicine, especially with future projections of doctor shortages (*www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-29/doctor-shortage-may-swell-to-130-000-with-u-s-cap.html*) in the U.S.

With the rise of tele-medicine and some medical testing starting to be done in-home, mobile medical labs are another aspect of taking medical testing to people on the street. The latest is a mobile DNA testing van cruising around New York City with a teasing question painted on its side: Who's Your Daddy? (*www.foxnews.com/health/2012/08/24/who-your-daddy-paternity-testing-van-offers-quick-dna-results/*). Operated by a New York company called Health Street (*www.health-street.net/?utm_expid=30364690-1*), they offer on-the-spot DNA testing for $299. Mandatory prescriptions for the tests from a customer's physician can be faxed to the van. Samples are sent to a laboratory in Ohio, with results in 3-5 business days. With births to unwed mothers increasing, most of the demand for DNA testing comes from state child-support agencies. The van also performs other functions, from drug tests to background checks.

Reuters announced in early September 2012, that a paralyzed British woman was the first person to take home a robotic exoskeleton (*www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/04/us-science-exoskeleton-idUSBRE8830RZ20120904*) to enable her to walk. Bionic exoskeletons have been used in hospitals and rehabilitation centers, and the U.S. military has investigated them to allow soldiers to carry more equipment. But Claire Lomas is the first to take the ReWalk suit developed by Argo Medical Technologies (*www.argomedtec.com/*) home for everyday use. Argo, in conjunction with others, is also working on a "brain interface to allow more intuitive thought control of the exoskeleton."

Mathematical Shortcut to New Metal Alloys

Yahoo reported in late August 2012, that scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have come up with a mathematical model (*news.yahoo.com/scientists-mathematical-shortcut-create-metals-193421358.html*) to predict what kinds of metal alloys will be stable. This mathematical model cuts through the laborious process of making the alloys just to try them out. Three MIT researchers developed this model to map a given element's stability at certain temperatures. So now

metallurgists can see what other elements they can add to a base metal, to get stable structures and keep them intact at high temperatures.

Venture Capitalists and Kickstarter

In August 2012 the *New York Times* reported that new security start-ups are outperforming bigger names (*www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/technology/computer-security-start-ups-catch-venture-capitalists-eyes.html*) in initial public offerings. Imperva (*www.imperva.com/index.html*) had its shares jump 30% on their first day of trading, and remains 37% above the offering price. Splunk (*www.splunk.com/*) has jumped nearly 65% from its offering in April, and went on to raise $331 million in a secondary offering. The reason? People are realizing that traditional network security is not working very well, and security start-ups might be worth the risk if they are small and flexible enough to offer better ideas and edgier technologies.

The Seattle Times reported in August 2012 that the project financing Web site Kickstarter (*www.kickstarter.com/*) is starting to get more donor money (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/businesstechnology/2018935277_apustecfundraisingwindfall.html*) than asked for, for some projects. The largest of dozens of sites devoted to crowd-funding, Kickstarter lets inventors, artists and entrepreneurs post their proposed projects, usually with a video presentation. A fixed duration for the fundraising is set with a dollar goal. Some goals aren't met, and the projects are cancelled. For others, their dollar goals are surprisingly surpassed. There are now nine Kickstarter projects who asked for $50,000 to $100,000—and got over a million dollars each in return.

Third World Sanitation Tech

Reuters reported in early September 2012 that a former NASA engineer came up with an Android app to instantly test global water supplies (*www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/03/us-app-water-idUSBRE8820AP20120903?feedType=RSS&feedName=scienceNews&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter&dlvrit=309301*). He designed an app called mWater (*play.google.com/store/search?q=mWater+app*) that is still in beta testing. It records the data results of water quality tests and maps the locations. Users can also leave notes for others, and even upload photos. The U.N. Habitat funded a study in Tanzania to test mWater's ability to monitor water quality on a local level, and were happily impressed.

Sanitation is a major problem in most Third World countries, with untreated urine/feces easily contaminating drinking water and causing disease. Without a plumbing infrastructure, conventional toilets are useless. So the Gates Foundation recently held a Reinvent the Toilet Challenge (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2018918018_toilets15m.html*). The winner was a team from the California Institute of Technology (CalTech), announced in mid-August 2012. They designed a multi-functional toilet that operates on solar power—and also generates hydrogen and electricity.

IBM's Next Gen Computers

At the end of August 2012, IBM introduced a new and powerful mainframe computer (*seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/businesstechnology/2019008139_apusibmmainframe.html*). The zEnterpriseEC12 (*www-03.ibm.com/systems/z/hardware/zenterprise/zec12.html*) is what IBM calls its most powerful and technologically advanced mainframe ever. It can sort through Big Data quickly and securely, with a processing speed 25% faster than the previous model.

After four years developing Watson, the computer that beat the human players on *Jeopardy!*, the novel IBM system (*nextbigfuture.com/2012/08/ibm-watson-20-for-your-smartphone-and.html*) has been cloned to go on and crunch financial information for Citigroup, and analyze cancer data for WellPoint. With improved technology, a mobile Watson could become an extension of services IBM already offers business customers. IBM is also promoting analytics software to help teach the Watsons to become experts in certain areas. The hope is that eventually the Watsons can recommend an answer to a problem, and show the user the evidence it based its answer on.

Prison Power

In 2010, a guard at a prison in Manila, Philippines came up with a unique way for prisoners to generate power (*newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/metro/view/20100619-276504/Jail-guards-invention-saves-on-power*) as they exercised. While prisoners pedal on stationary exercise bikes, a battery attached to the bike stores energy that can later be used by

the inmate to power fans, light bulbs and heat morning coffee water.

A July 2012 article reported how inmates at Brazil's Santa Rita do Sapucai prison are also multi-purpose pedaling (*www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/weird-wide-web/brazilian-prisoners-can-pedal-their-way-freedom*) on stationary exercise bikes. But in addition to generating power to store on batteries that are later taken into the community to power streetlights, these Brazilian inmates can also shave one day off their sentence for every 16 hours of pedaling. While using the stationary bikes is not mandatory, prison officials say the prisoners are lining up to participate in the Pedal Program.

Also, in July 2012 it was reported that a new prison in Alameda Country, California, has its own micro-grid (*www.technologyreview.com/news/428533/microgrid-keeps-the-power-local-cheap-and/*) that can operate independently of outside centralized power plants. By integrating fuel cells, solar panels, wind turbines and diesel generators (all located in the jail complex), the micro-grid can keep power on when storms shut down the larger outside power complexes—essential for safety at the maximum security facility. And the blending of multiple green-energy power sources compensates and covers for the occasional "fail" of one power source.

Military Tech Updates

According to Gizmodo in July 2012, the U.S. Army is now outfitting combat soldiers with blast sensors (*gizmodo.com/5929625/the-us-army-is-outfitting-solders-with-blast-sensors*). U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan should now be wearing a 2-pound Soldier Body Unit with four blast sensors to collect medical data on concussions and brain injuries. Forty-two Army vehicles were also fitted with floor and seat-mounted accelerometers to measure the effects on soldiers inside when the vehicles hit IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). The data collected will be sent to the Joint Trauma Analysis and Prevention of Injury in Combat database.

In July 2012 it was announced that the Pentagon was still grappling with how to write the rules for a cyberwar (*www.foxnews.com/us/2012/07/25/pentagon-still-grappling-with-rules-cyberwar/*). Especially issues such as when computer-based attacks warrant counter-attacks, and whether the response should be digital or physical. Congress is pushing for these rules of cyberwar, saying that there likely wouldn't be time for Congress to pass a Declaration of War if/when a massive computer-based attack happens. The current ground rules for cyber operations were written in 2005, but technology has advanced to the point that those rules are now outdated.

Federal Computer Week reported on how smartphones, computer tablets and their apps are proving to be extremely useful for soldiers (*fcw.com/microsites/2012/snapshot-c4isr/02-smartphones-apps-for-soldiers-warfighters.aspx*) in combat zones. A Network Integration Evaluation last Fall (2011) proved how valuable these gadgets can be to soldiers in terms of situational awareness, as well as the potential to lighten their load by finally dumping more cumbersome equipment which well-app'd smartphones and tablets can replace. Smartphones let combat soldiers receive alerts and updates to adjust points of attack, send and receive raw intelligence, monitor positions of forces, and even call for artillery support at the touch of an icon.

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*).

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Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: Cleaning Up the Desktop

“A Tip for Organizing Windows Desktop Clutter and More Power with AutoHotkey Replace**”** by Jack Dunning

Use program icons to quickly recognize new folders used for common file types, plus use AutoHotkey for e-mail addresses and adding "boilerplate."

Over the past number of weeks, I've created a number of AutoHotkey scripts on the Desktop. I notice that the Desktop is getting more and more cluttered with the test scripts and their compiled versions. If you're creating a lot of different files, it's just not practical to keep them all on the Desktop. It's time to move them into their own folder where they are all together and easy to find.

Note: I use the AutoHotkey files as an example, but this simple technique applies equally well to any set of files with common characteristics.

The first step is to create a new folder. This can be done on the Desktop or within any folder in Windows Explorer (+E). Simply right-click on the Desktop or on an empty spot within another folder selecting New => Folder. (In Windows 7 Explorer click "New folder" on the top toolbar at location where the files will be stored.) Appropriately name the new folder—in this case "AutoHotkey" (see Figure 1).

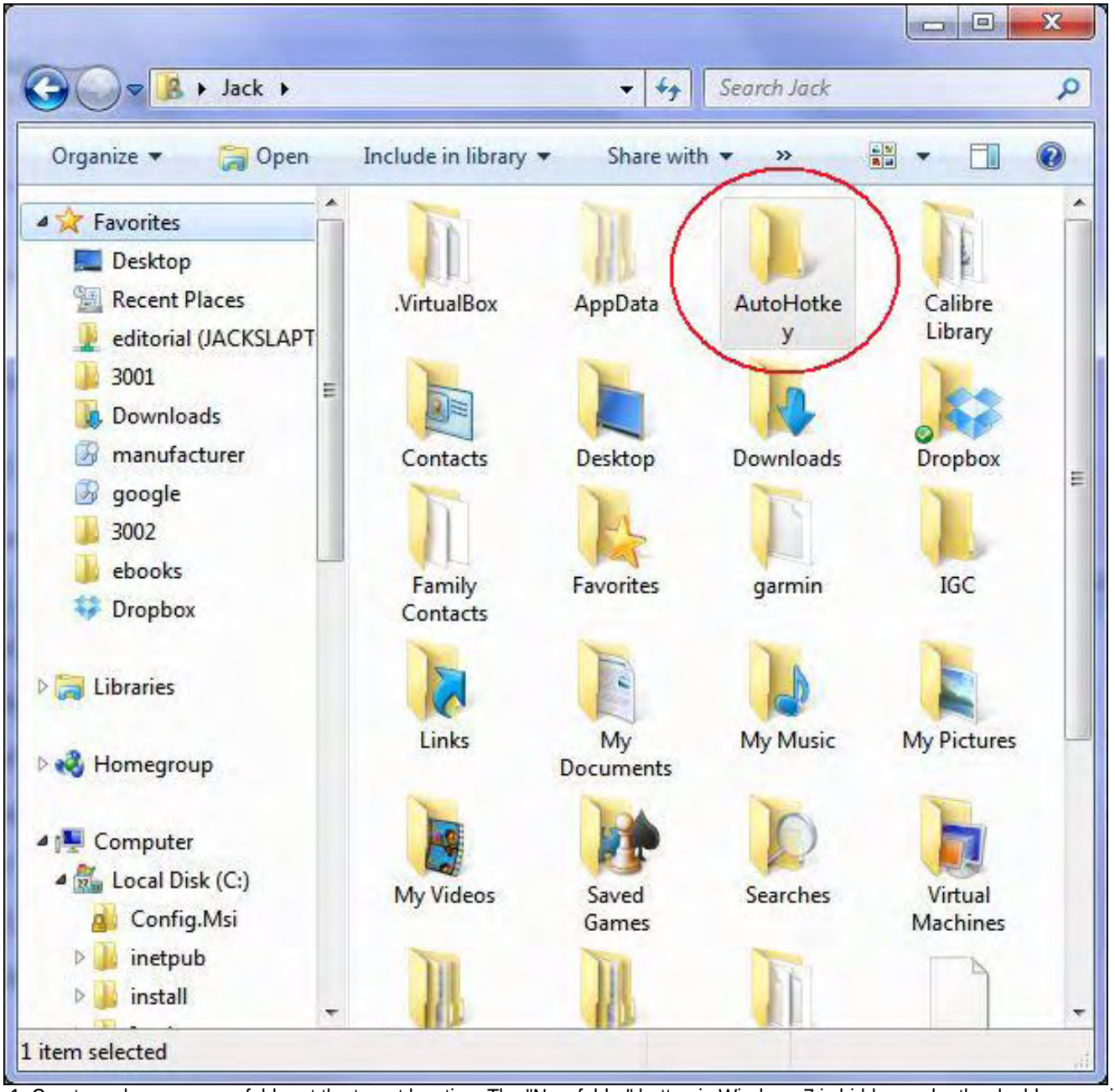

Figure 1. Create and name a new folder at the target location. The "New folder" button in Windows 7 is hidden under the double arrow in the top toolbar.

If you want to make a folder easy of find, then it's helpful to change the icon to something not nearly so bland as the common file folder icon. That way whether sitting on the Desktop, a link in Favorites, or a subdirectory in Windows Explorer, the custom folder will be easy to see. The first step is to right-click on the current folder icon and select Properties from the menu. Click on the Customize tab to access "Folder icons" (see Figure 2).

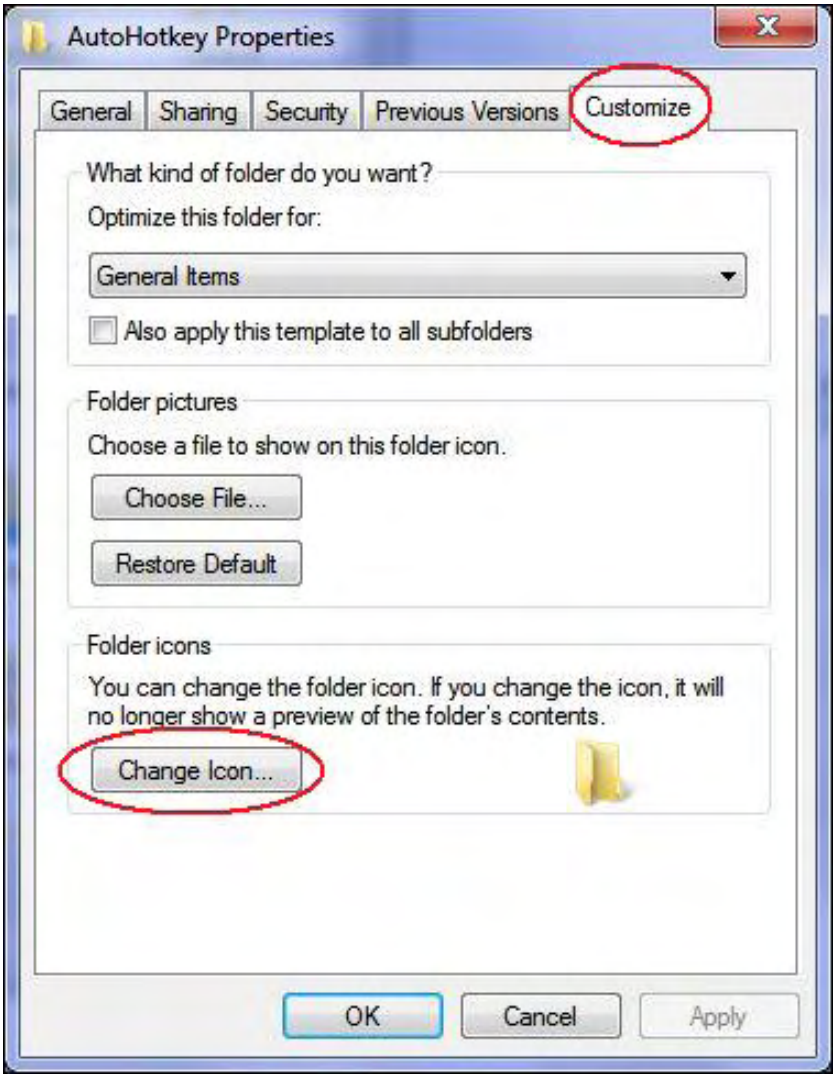

Figure 2. Open the folder's Properties window to access "Folder icons."

Click "Change icon..." to start investigating your icon options. Initially, a set of standard icons will appear. One of these may be suitable for you. However, if you want something more specific to the files, navigate to the Programs folder and find the relevant program file. Click on that file and Open. Icons associated with that program are displayed (see Figure 3). Select one, then OK.

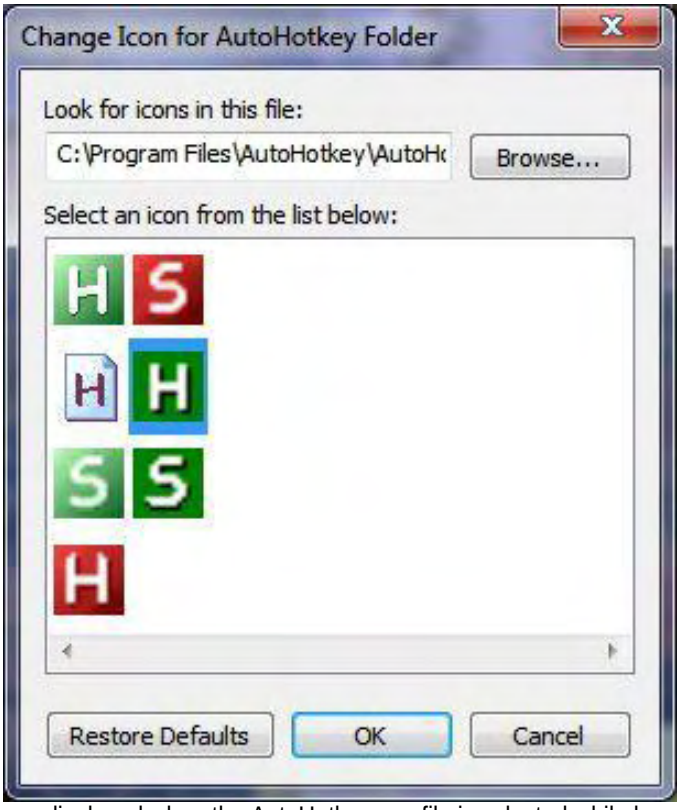

Figure 3. AutoHotkey icons are displayed when the AutoHotkey.exe file is selected while browsing for more icon choices.

The new icon image is reflected on the Desktop and in all views in Windows Explorer. For even more convenience, dragging the new folder to Favorites will make it immediately available any time Windows Explorer is open (Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8) (see Figure 4). The link in Favorites displays the same selected icon image.

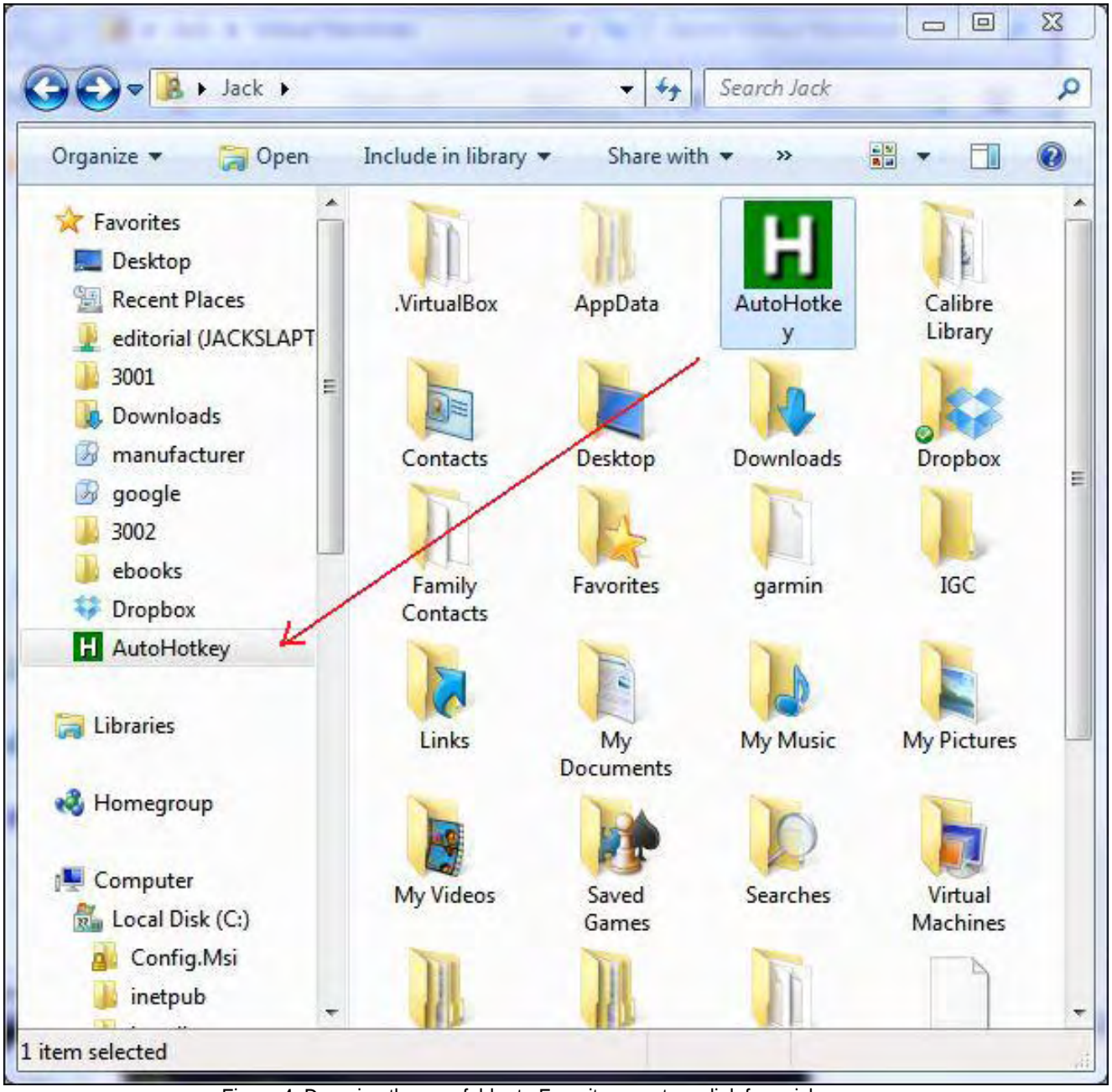

Figure 4. Dragging the new folder to Favorites creates a link for quick access.

Click on the Favorites shortcut, then drag each of the associated files on the Desktop into the new folder (see Figure 5).

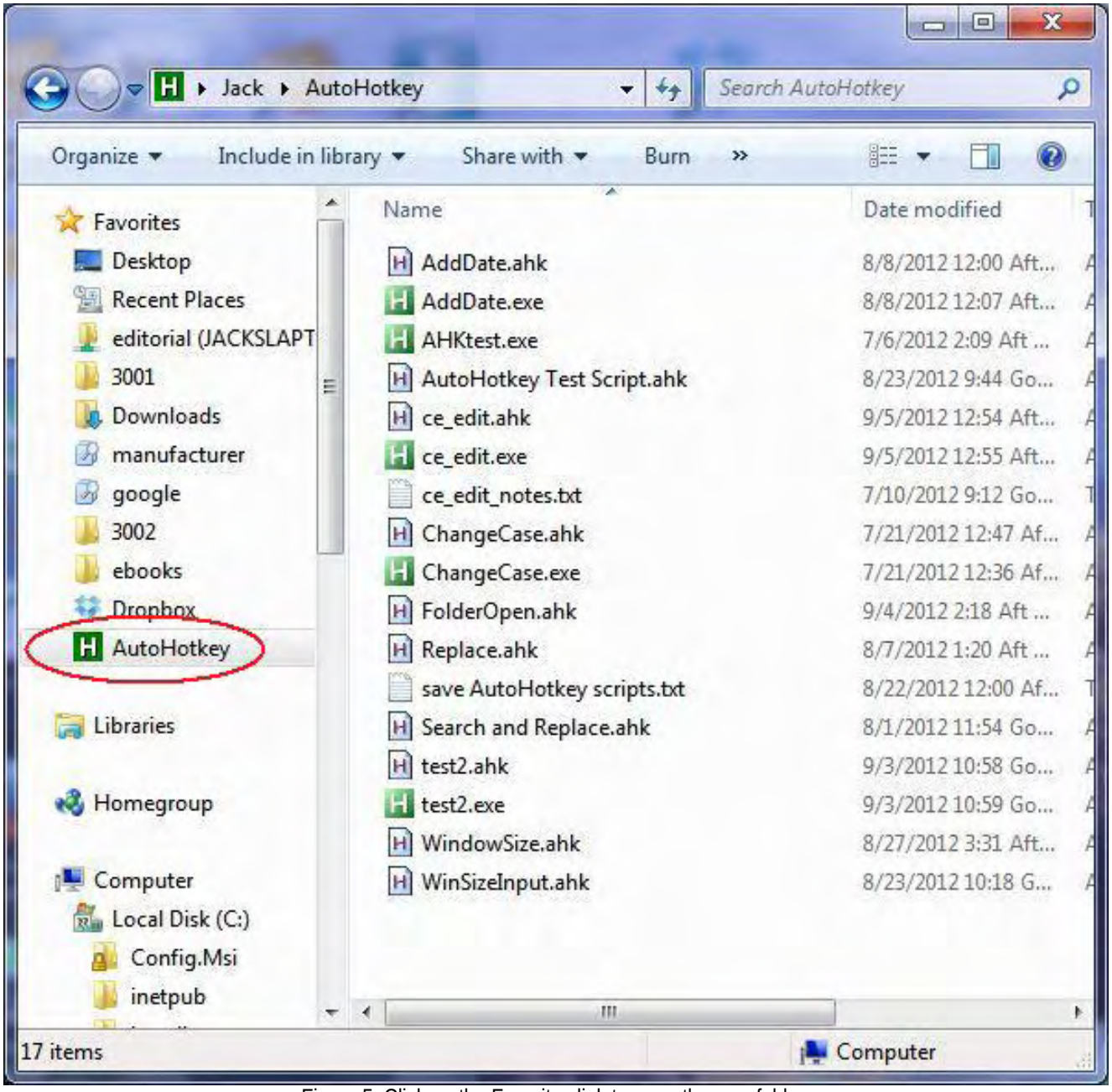

Figure 5. Click on the Favorites link to open the new folder.

Once you have all of your files corralled together, you can move the entire folder anywhere you like—including the Desktop.

* * *

Making Auto-replace More Useful for E-mail Addresses

While setting up and using the AutoHotkey replace is simple (::lol::laugh out loud), I found that there are times when I don't want the space, period or comma sitting at the end of the inserted text. In particular, e-mail addresses, unless embedded in other text, are most often added on their own without any extra space or punctuation. Another reason for not adding the space or punctuation to the string is it's easier to add a letter (changing singular to plural without first back spacing) or add a suffix. I took a closer look at Hotstrings and Auto-replace (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/Hotstrings.htm*) to reviews the possibilities.

The Options for hotstrings and auto-replace listed in the linked page above are added by placing the option character(s) between the first two colons in the replace script line. For example, the letter O between the colons (:O:) tells the replace command to omit the ending character. This immediately solves the space problem in the e-mail address.

```
:O:ja::jack@myaddress.com
```

After typing "ja " (ja with a space), the replace would be "jack@myaddress.com" (space omitted).

Another useful option is the asterisk (*) inserted between the colons (:*:) causes the hotstring to immediately execute when the last character is keyed. For example:

```
:*:ja::jack@myaddress.com
```

When "ja" is typed, "jack@myaddress.com" (no extra space) replaces "ja" the second the "a" is struck. The problem with this is if you are typing the word "adjacent" it will come out "adjack@myaddress.comcent" since the "ja" will immediately be replaced inside the word. For this reason it is better to use a special character such as "@" to end the input sequence

```
:*:j@::jack@myaddress.com
```

Then, after activating the AutoHotkey script to input my address, I type "j@" to get "jack@myaddress.com" inserted (immediate and no space).

If all you want to do with AutoHotkey is input your long e-mail address, you can quickly set up and activate (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*) the command.

Inserting Boilerplate

From Wikipedia: "Boilerplate is any text that is or can be reused in new contexts or applications without being changed much from the original. Many computer programmers often use the term boilerplate code."

If you're a lawyer, write software licenses, or deal in almost any business that uses standard paragraphs, then you use boilerplate (preset text) on a regular basis. Rather than retyping and editing paragraphs of the same text, you cut-and-paste the words directly into your documents. In some cases, you may start with a template of boilerplate and insert names and dates. In AutoHotkey it is especially simple to set up boilerplate (long replacements) for your business.

For example, suppose you have a number of e-mails to send out yet you don't want to send blind copies (BCC) because each has a little tailoring required (name, address, name of dog). You can set up a long replacement by putting the long text in parentheses.

```
::dogtext1::
(
Hi [insert name],
I recently noticed that when you were out walking your dog,
[insert dog's name], after he did his business, you failed
to take the necessary steps to ensure that he was not seen as
a rogue in our neighborhood. While I do appreciate that a dog
must do its business, it is much better if it is not left in my yard.
I'm sure that this was an oversight on your part, since you would
never deliberately shirk your responsibilities. Therefore, you may
think that I have made a mistake. I assure you that I have not erred
and I would be happy to show you the video I took.
Respectfully,
The Happy Gardener
)
```

After activation, whenever "dogtext1" followed by a space is typed, the boilerplate will be inserted into your e-mail, chat window, text editor, online Blog, or any other form of text input on your Windows computer.

*Note: I've set up a separate Web page (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*) for quickly reviewing the installation of AutoHotkey and writing your first simple AutoHotkey script. Hopefully, this will be helpful to those who are either new to AutoHotkey or would like to review how to create a script from scratch.*

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.*

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.

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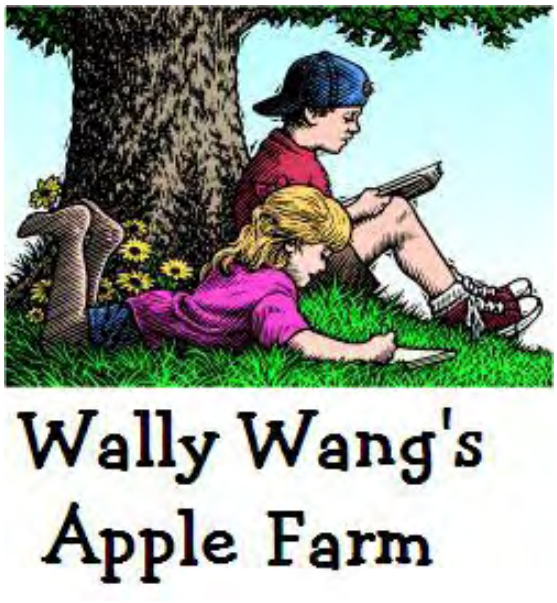


Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"The iPhone Business" by Wally Wang

The iPhone Business; Still Following Apple; Nokia Caught Lying; Remembering 9/11 with the Explore 9/11 App; Back on the Air; Android vs. iPhone.

Since its introduction back in 2007, the iPhone has dominated the smartphone market while former smartphone leaders like Nokia and Research in Motion struggle to compete. According to CNN (*money.cnn.com/gallery/technology/2012/09/07/apple-iphone/index.html*), the iPhone business alone makes more money than all of Microsoft's products combined.

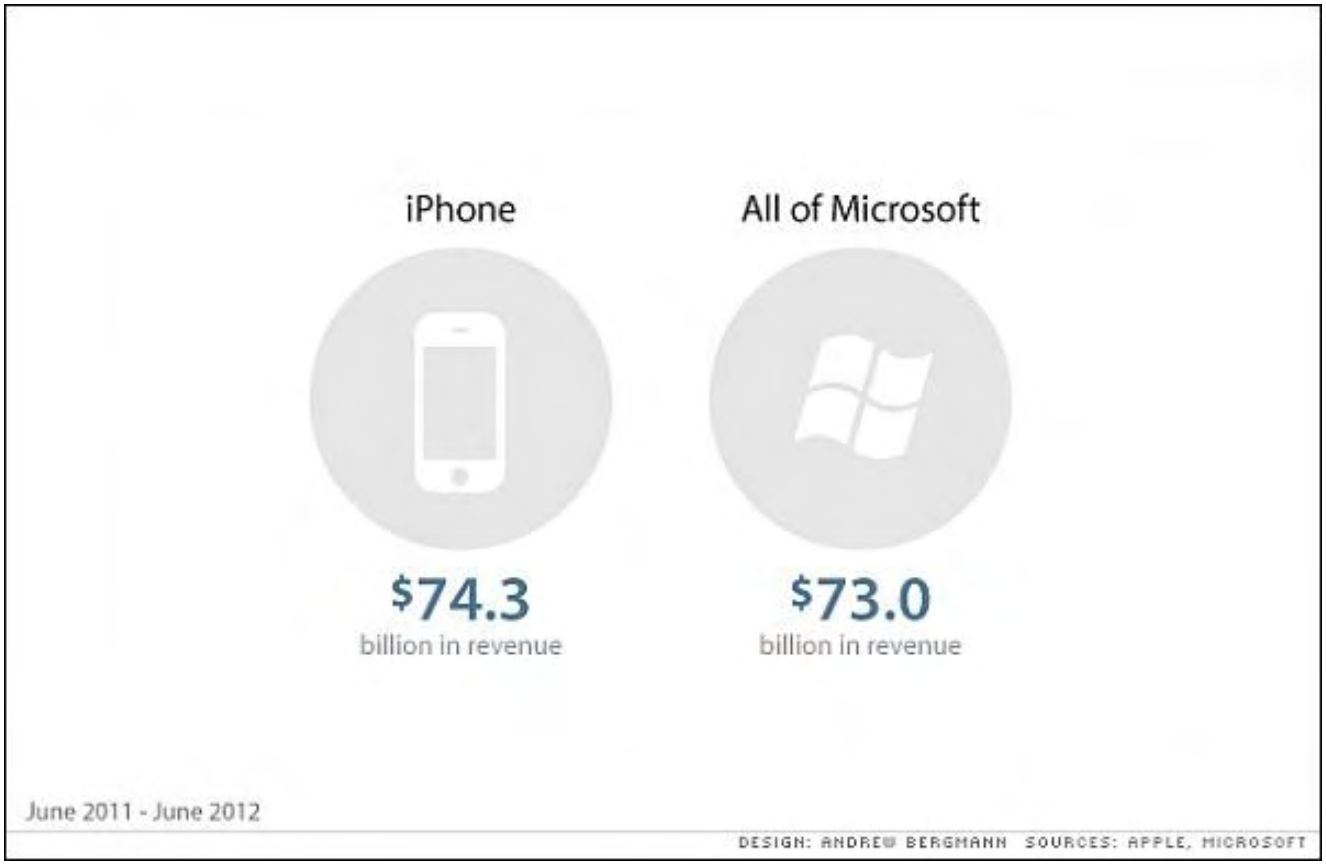


Figure 1. The iPhone business alone is worth more than Microsoft.

What's amazing is that just five years ago, Apple had zero share of the smartphone market while Nokia and Research in Motion held the lion's share of the market. Now both Nokia and Research in Motion hold minority shares of the market while the iPhone and Android hold the major share. Not only should this rapid rise of the iPhone indicate that smartphones are more than just mobile telephones, but they're also sophisticated handheld computers. Seeing the impact of the iPhone shows that the leader in any

market can stumble no matter how large their current market share might be. Just ask Microsoft's CEO, Steve Ballmer, how he laughed at the iPhone (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=qycUOENFIBs*) initially. Then ask him if he would still laugh at the iPhone today and whether he's still happy at Microsoft's mobile phone strategy that he gloated about back in 2007.

If the iPhone business were separated from Apple, it would be a Fortune 50 company all by itself. As part of Apple, the iPhone represents nearly half of Apple's revenue. Combined with the iPad, Apple's business is no longer the Macintosh but mobile computing.

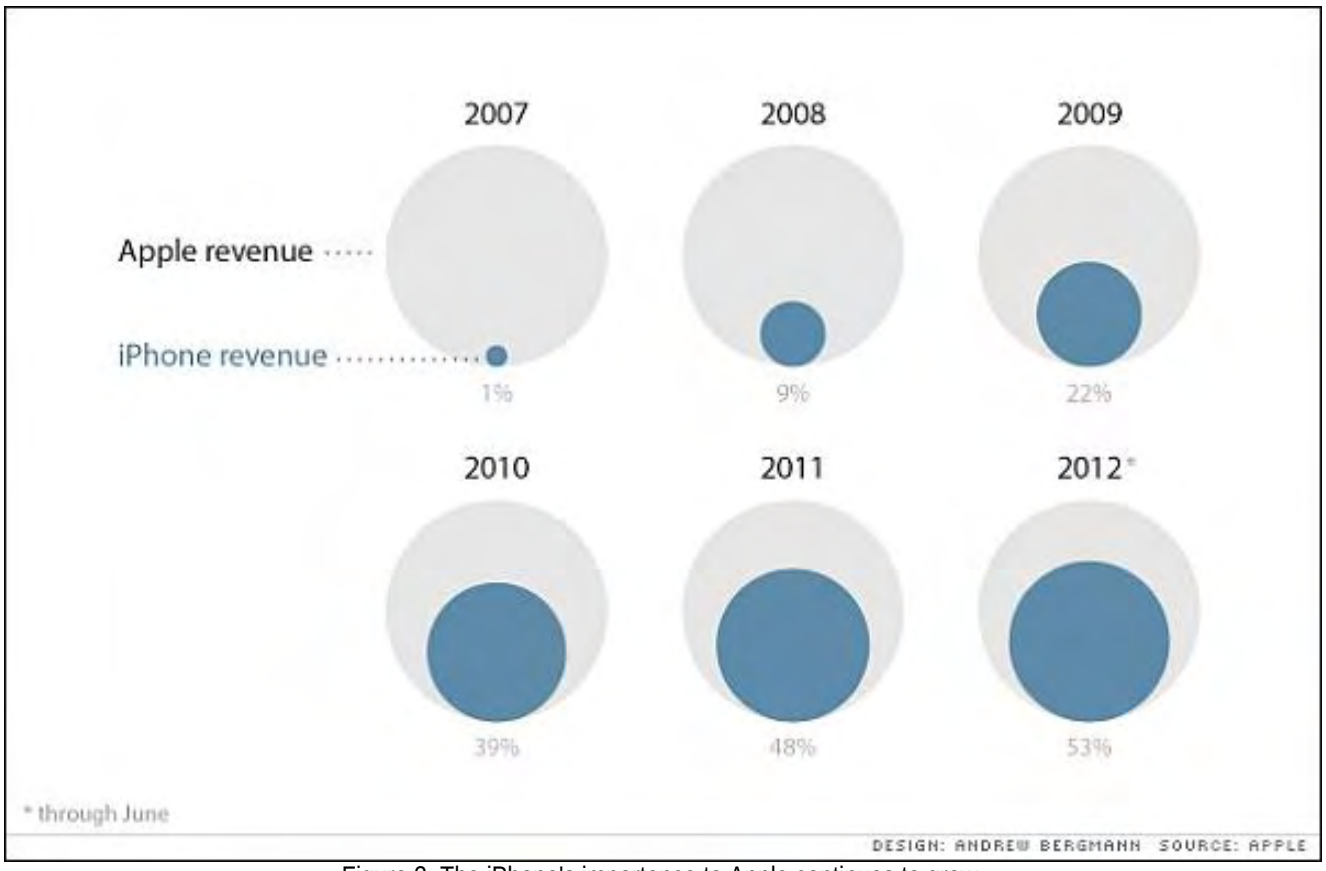


Figure 2. The iPhone's importance to Apple continues to grow.

While the iPhone decimates the smartphone competition, the iPad has been gathering momentum, taking away sales (*news.cnet.com/8301-13579_3-57506171-37/apples-ipad-overtaking-pc-sales-in-schools/*) from regular computers, especially in the education market. Of course, Macintosh sales remain steady in the United States while PC sales have dropped (*tech.fortune.cnn.com/2012/09/04/charlie-wolf-apples-ipad-is-clearly-cannibalizing-pc-sales/*). The only part of Apple's product line that's declining are its iPods, but with a built-in iPod inside every iPhone and iPad, the market for dedicated music players is on the decline anyway, but Apple has released new iPod Nano and iPod touch models. If you want iPhone-like features without a two-year phone contract, get an iPod touch instead.

To maintain their dominance in the smartphone market, Apple recently announced their new iPhone 5. Like the previous version, the iPhone 5 has a Retina display of 326ppi but now has a 4-inch screen and 1136x640 resolution. The iPhone 5 is also 7.6mm thin (18% thinner than the iPhone 4S) and weighs 112 grams (20 percent lighter than the iPhone 4S) while working on the latest 4G LTE networks as well and including a new A6 processor that's twice as fast as the processor in the previous iPhone 4S.

Toss in an 8-megapixel camera and you can take sharper photographs than before. With a new panorama feature, you can aim and sweep your iPhone 5 to capture a panoramic view.

While none of these features by themselves are new or unexpected, cramming it all into a thinner and lighter device makes it more appealing than lugging around a heavier, bulkier phone just to get a bigger screen.

Despite the added features, the new iPhone 5 gets 8 hours of 3G talk time and browsing, and LTE browsing, 10 hours of Wi-Fi

browsing, 10 hours of video, 40 hours of music, 225 hours of standby time. To provide more room, the iPhone 5 has gotten rid of its old connector dock and replaced it with one that's 80 percent smaller, dubbed Lightning. If you have any devices that require the old 30-pin connection dock, just use an adapter to plug in your iPhone 5.

Best of all, the iPhone 5 costs the same ($199 for 16GB, $299 for 32GB, and $399 for 64GB, along with 2-year carrier contract). If that price is too high, get an older iPhone 4 for free (with a two-year contract) or an iPhone 4S for $99 (also with a two-year contract). Even though you can get an iPhone 4 for free with a two-year contract, expect critics to still complain that Apple prices are way too high.

The iPhone 5 goes on sale September 21 so you can pre-order online starting September 14 or wait in line starting at 8am at your favorite Apple Store on September 21. (You may be able to avoid crowds by visiting your local AT&T, Sprint, or Verizon store instead.) No matter what critics might say about the iPhone 5, you can be sure smartphone rivals will be taking notes.

Still Following Apple

Before the iPhone, early Android designs looked more like Blackberry clones. After the iPhone came out, Android looked more like the iPhone. Samsung even went so far as to make some of their smartphones and tablets look nearly identical to the iPhone and iPad while other Android smartphone and tablet manufacturers did not.

Continuing the curious lack of imagination among the non-Apple world, Hewlett-Packard recently unveiled their new all-in-one PC that looks strangely similar to an iMac (*www.appleinsider.com/articles/12/09/10/hp_taken_to_task_for_releasing_imac_clone*), right down to replacing the mouse with a wireless trackpad.

Figure 3. Hewlett-Packard's Spectre One PC looks like an iMac.

Why Hewlett-Packard felt the need to make a computer look similar to an iMac remains questionable. Certainly there are other ways to design an all-in-one PC that doesn't look like an iMac as demonstrated in this article (*techland.time.com/2012/09/12/pc-makers-have-some-pride-dont-rip-off-apple/*) from *Time Magazine*. So many companies closely mimic Apple's designs for computers, smartphones, and tablets that you have to wonder if any of these other companies can have an original idea of their own.

If one or two products happened to look like an Apple product, that could be a coincidence, but for so many products to keep slavishly copying the look for Apple products simply makes these other companies look creatively bankrupt.

Figure 4. Other companies have copied the look of the Mac mini.

If people hate Apple so much, they should also hate the designs of Apple copycat products and refuse to buy products made by Intel, Google, Hewlett-Packard, and other companies. Since this rarely happens, anti-Apple critics will simply need to find another lame excuse to hate a company for no apparent reason since they never seem to use actual logic to justify their decision.

In the meantime, people can buy products that mimic Apple products while continuing to boast that there's nothing by Apple that appeals to them. While they're happily using Apple copycat products, they can also insist that everything Apple makes is junk so that's why they only buy products that look and behave just like an Apple product. If this logic makes sense to you, then perhaps you'd like to buy a fake Rolex watch while claiming that real Rolex watches are junk and completely useless and nobody in their right mind would want to wear one.

Nokia Caught Lying

Nokia recently introduced their new Lumia 920 with still photographs and video demonstrating the phone's impressive camera. Through the sharp eye of bloggers who caught the reflection of a cameraman in a car window, Nokia later admitted that the still photographs and video were actually taken by a different camera (*online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444273704577639722171451042.html*) instead of the Lumia 920 as originally claimed. Why Nokia felt the need to lie remains another head scratcher.

The Lumia 920 camera actually is impressive enough that Nokia didn't need to fake the photographs and video. Why Nokia didn't trust the actual technical capabilities of the Lumia 920 camera seems like a colossal blunder that has hurt Nokia's reputation for now.

Then again, lying seems to be a perfectly acceptable advertising tactic these days. Many non-Apple smartphones and tablets used to advertise the full and complete Flash experience without telling potential customers that Flash actually didn't work (*www.*

theverge.com/2012/8/14/3241727/flash-for-android-dies) flawlessly on mobile devices, which even Adobe (the makers of Flash) eventually admitted. Even customers who bought such mobile devices rarely complained that Flash didn't work. Instead, they also touted the ability to run Flash as an advantage over Apple products, which is like claiming that the poor mechanical reliability of a Yugo car engine is actually a desirable feature over a car that actually works.

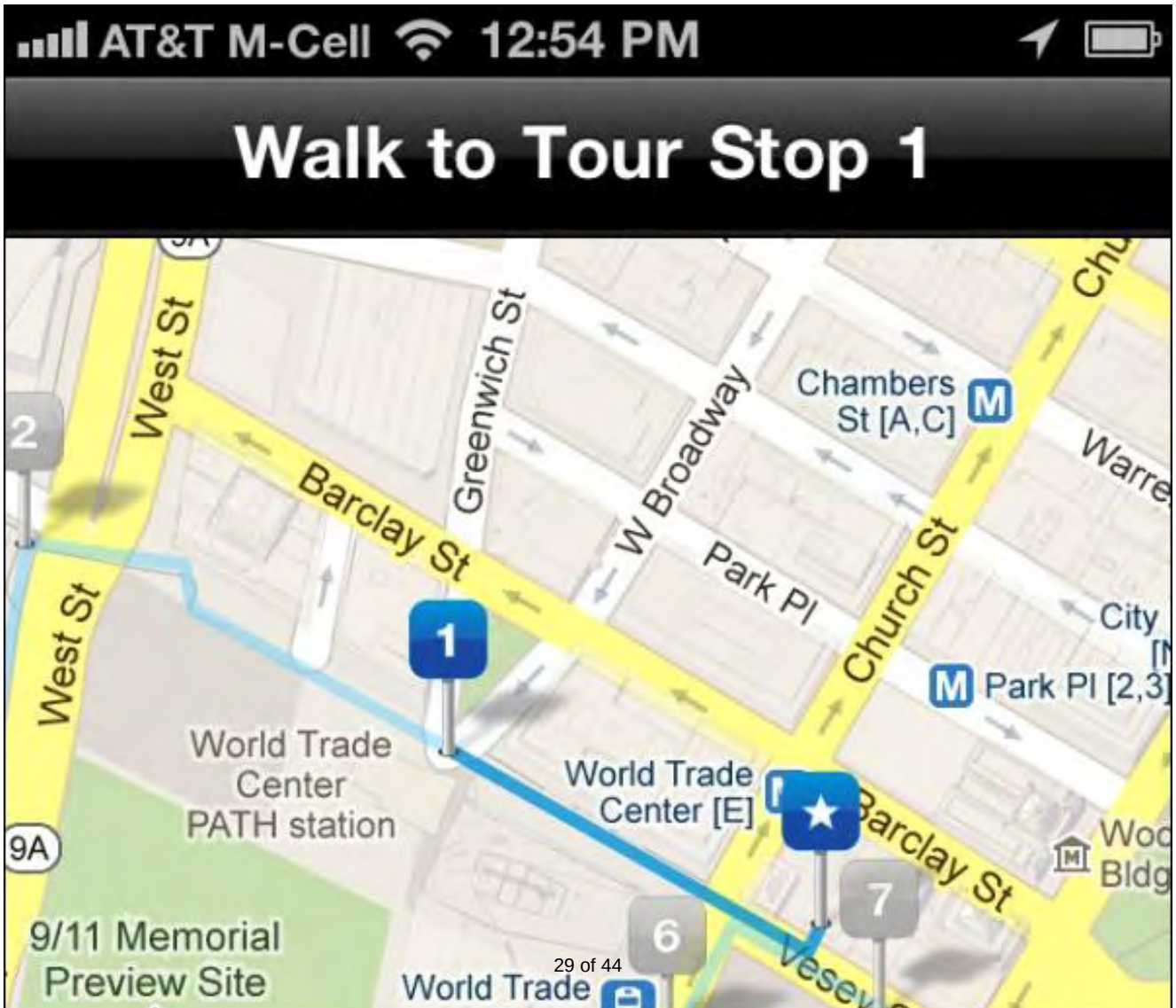
When companies (and people) deliberately lie, that simply indicates they don't trust the truth. If you don't trust facts, then what's the point of pretending they don't exist or distorting them beyond recognition? Just ask your favorite anti-Apple critic this question and be prepared to sift through the answers you receive, which may or may not be based on any actual facts.

Remembering 9/11 with the Explore 9/11 App

For many young children, the events of 9/11 aren't even memories but something they can only read about in history books. In case you want to learn more about the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, download the free Explore 9/11 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%252Fexplore-9-11%252Fid387986451%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) for the iPhone. This app consists of three parts: Tour, Explore, and Timeline.

Figure 5. The Explore 9/11 app lets you learn about the 9/11 terrorist attacks through eyewitness accounts.

The Tour portion of the app gives you walking directions around New York so you can see pictures and listen to audio from eye witnesses explaining what happened in each area that you walk through. By exploring the Tour section of the app, you can walk around New York and relive history.



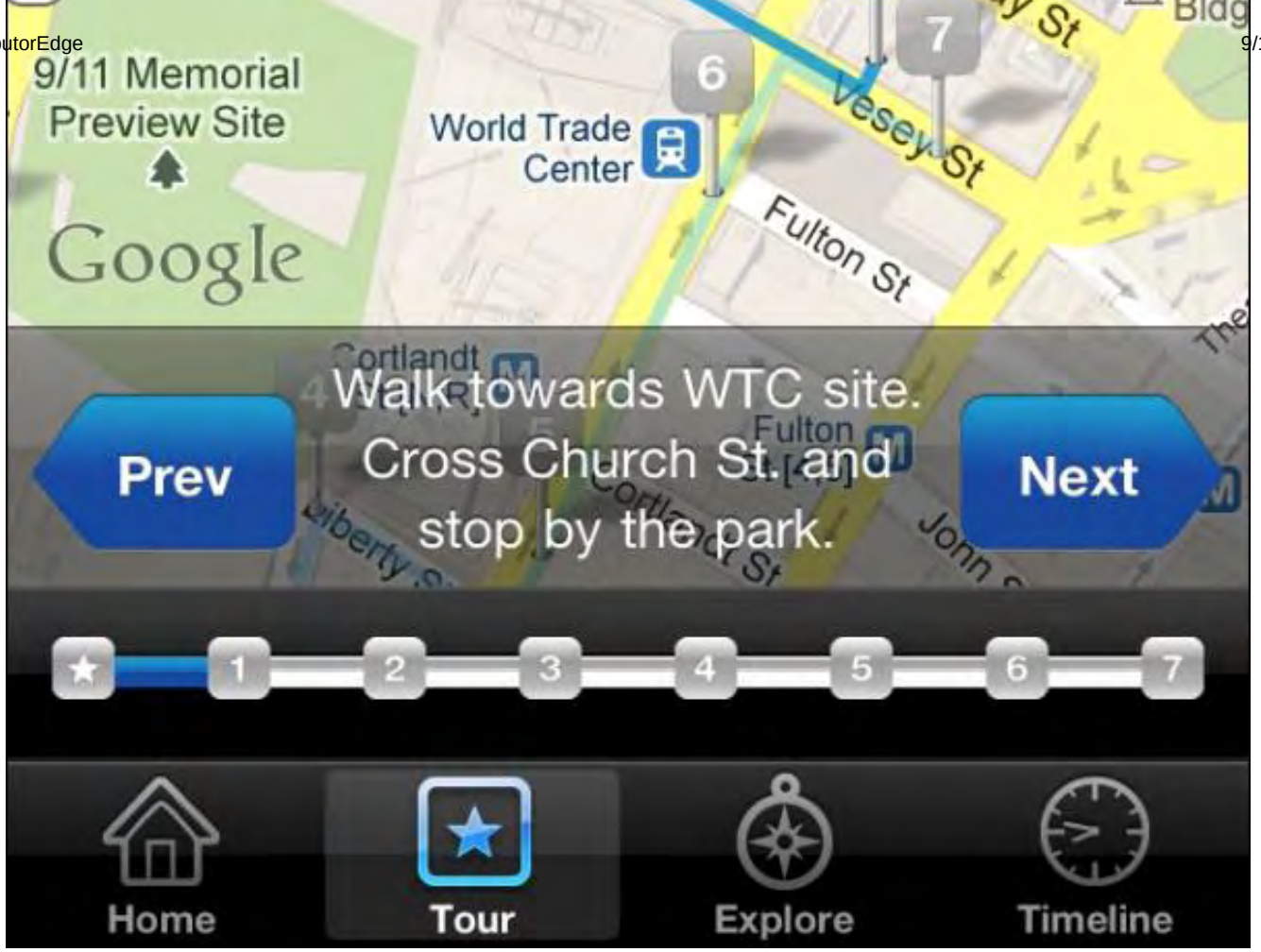
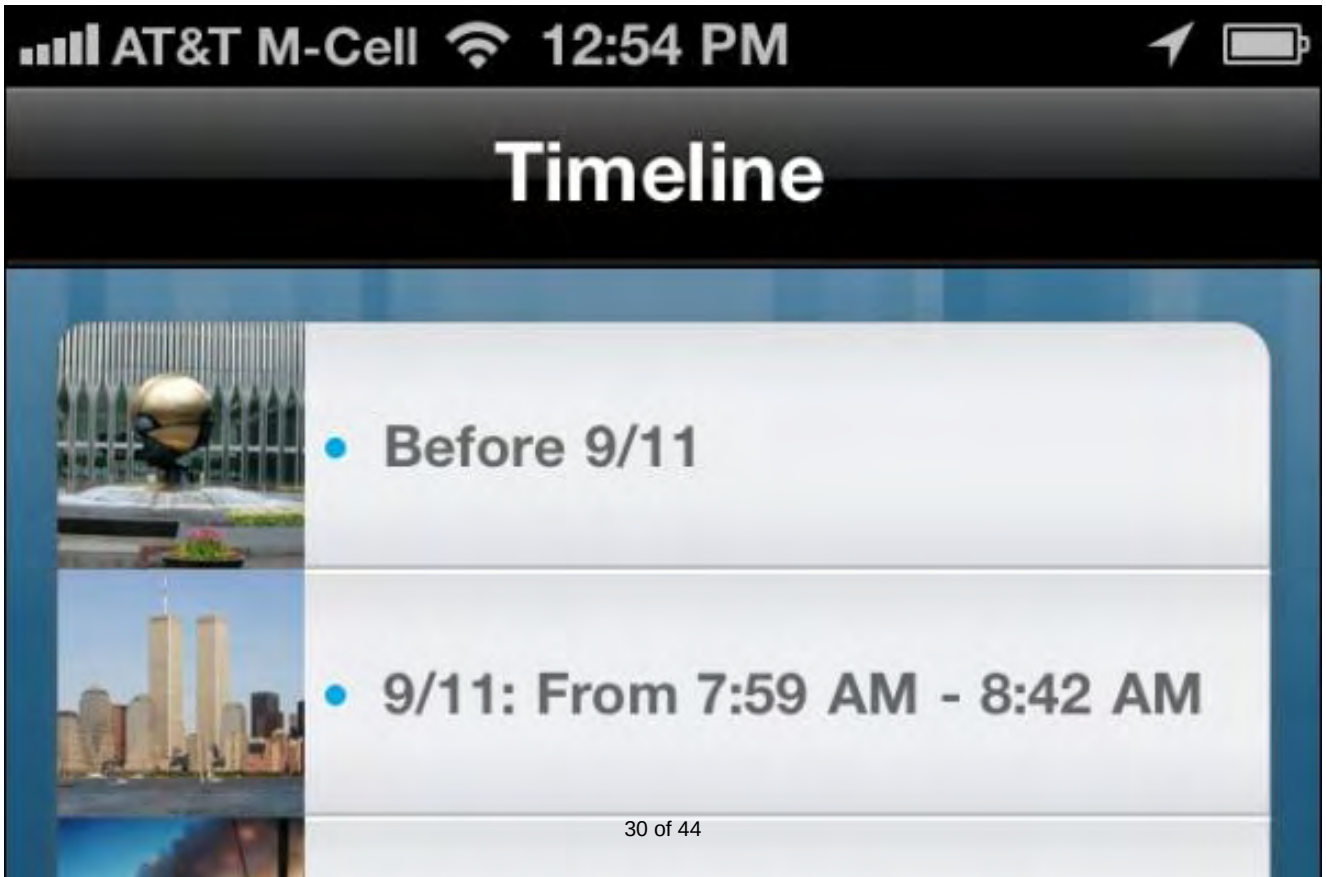


Figure 6. Walk through New York and experience the 9/11 events through eyewitness accounts.

The Explore portion lets you view different pictures of the event. The Timeline portion shows you pictures so you can see how the events unfolded on that day. For children too young to remember the actual events on that day, the Explore 9/11 app can give them a glimpse of what happened without getting too graphic.



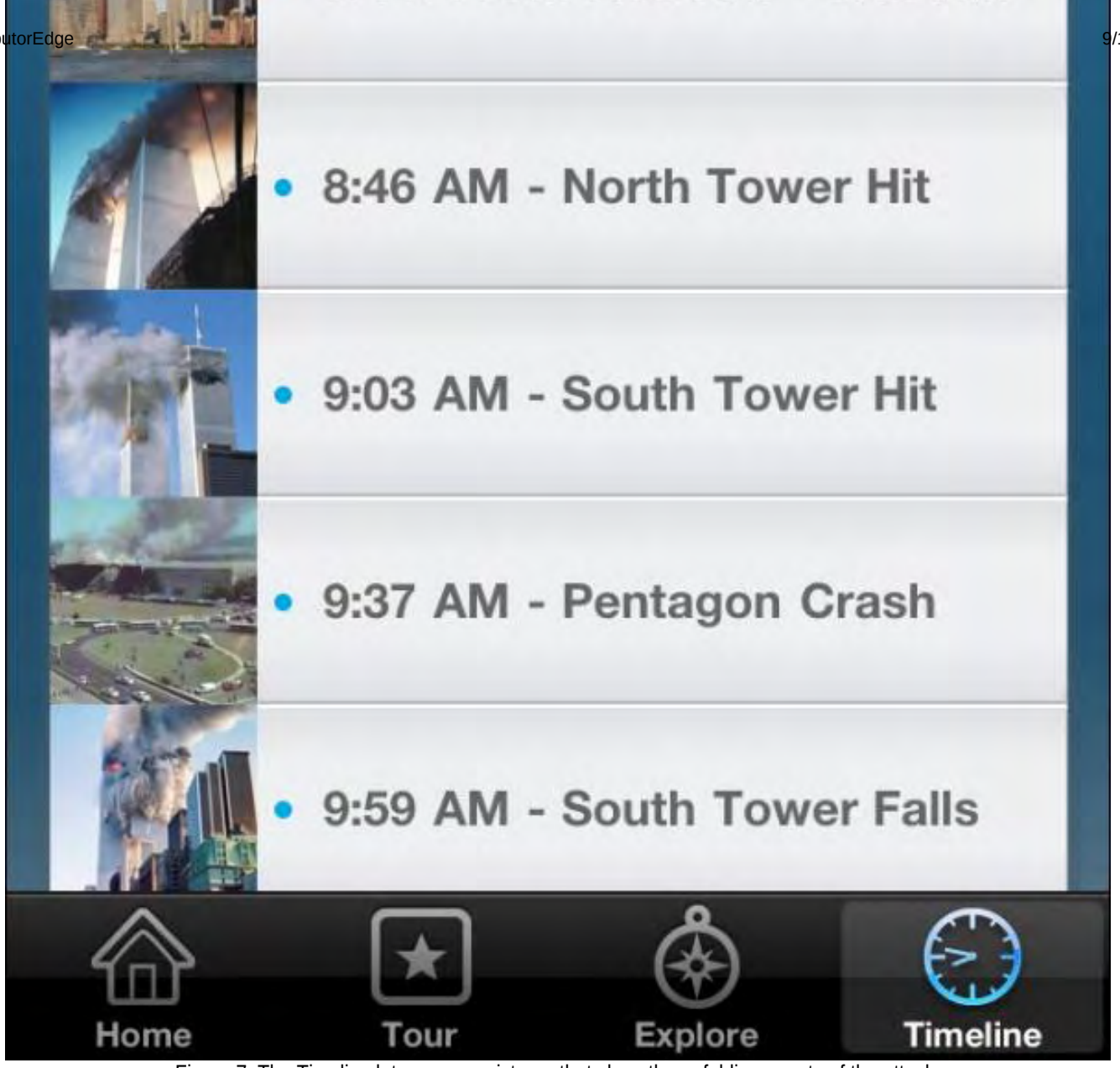


Figure 7. The Timeline lets you see pictures that show the unfolding events of the attack.

Since the Explore 9/11 app is free, you have nothing to lose by downloading it and browsing through its contents. The events of 9/11 won't easily fade from memory, but an app like Explore 9/11 can give you a fresh new look on your old memories.

Back on the Air

Back in 2007, I had the opportunity to co-host a radio show with three of my friends. This show, dubbed "Keeping It Weird," focused on the unusual such a tugboat captain whose dream was to create tugboat museums in every city in America, a UFO cult that built an airstrip for flying saucers to land on when they finally decide to make contact with the human race, and a creationism museum that sold coloring books of Noah leading dinosaurs on to the ark. That radio show lasted about a year before the station switched from a talk show format to an all-music format and kicked us off the air.

Then in 2009, I teamed up with one of my friends from the first radio show and got another radio show on the local ESPN station in San Diego. This radio show, called "CyberSports," focused on video games and sports of all kind. That radio show lasted about a year before fading away, but did give me a chance to attend the E3 conference in Los Angeles that features all the latest video games.

Now after a three-year absence from the radio waves, I've teamed up with two of my friends from the original radio show and the ESPN show to appear on 107.9 FM in Alpine (*www.my1079.com/programs/comedy/notes-from-the-underground*), which is a small community east of San Diego. This new radio show, called "Notes From the Underground," offers a talk show

format about controversial topics that too often get ignored by the mainstream media such as genetically modified foods and the possible cooperation of IBM collaborating with the Nazis during World War Two to track down and exterminate Jews, which you can read about in a book called *IBM and the Holocaust (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0914153277/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0914153277&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*).*

(The book *IBM and the Holocaust* talks about how IBM's punch card technology combined with the German census bureau's data allowed the Nazis to hunt down the Jews. This shows you the danger of government databases and more importantly, the danger of trusting that your government might actually be looking out for your welfare when it collects information about you.)

To listen to the live, streaming audio of the show every Saturday from 12 noon to 2:00 pm, visit My107.9 FM's site (*www.my1079.com*), make sure your browser has Java installed, and you can click on the Streaming Audio link to hear the station at any time, or tune in specifically to hear the show. For those who like contributing their own ideas to the conversation, call in to the show at 619-445-1079 and comment or chat back.

While the show is recorded live, we record some segments ahead of time using an ordinary Macintosh computer and the free Audacity audio editing program (*audacity.sourceforge.net*). Using the built-in microphone on a Macintosh, we can create short promotional audio clips. In the past, we would need expensive recording equipment to do this, but now we can do it on any computer.

For those who like the idea of running their own radio show but can't get a radio station to grant them access, just ignore the radio station altogether and start your own podcast. With a podcast, you just need to record a show on your computer, then post the audio file on iTunes so anyone can download and listen. Podcasts give everyone a chance to express their opinions whether they have the backing of an expensive radio station or not.

With computers eliminating the barriers to radio (through podcasts), television (through video sharing sites like YouTube), and newspapers (through Web sites and blogs), there's no reason why everyone can't broadcast their opinions to the rest of the world. All you need is a reason to state your opinions in a way that others will actually want to listen to you.

Android vs. iPhone

The mobile analytics company Apsalar (*apsalar.com*) recently organized their data to treat Android and iPhone sales as if they were candidates running for election. Based on this data, Apsalar created a map that determined which states Android would win and which states the iPhone would win.

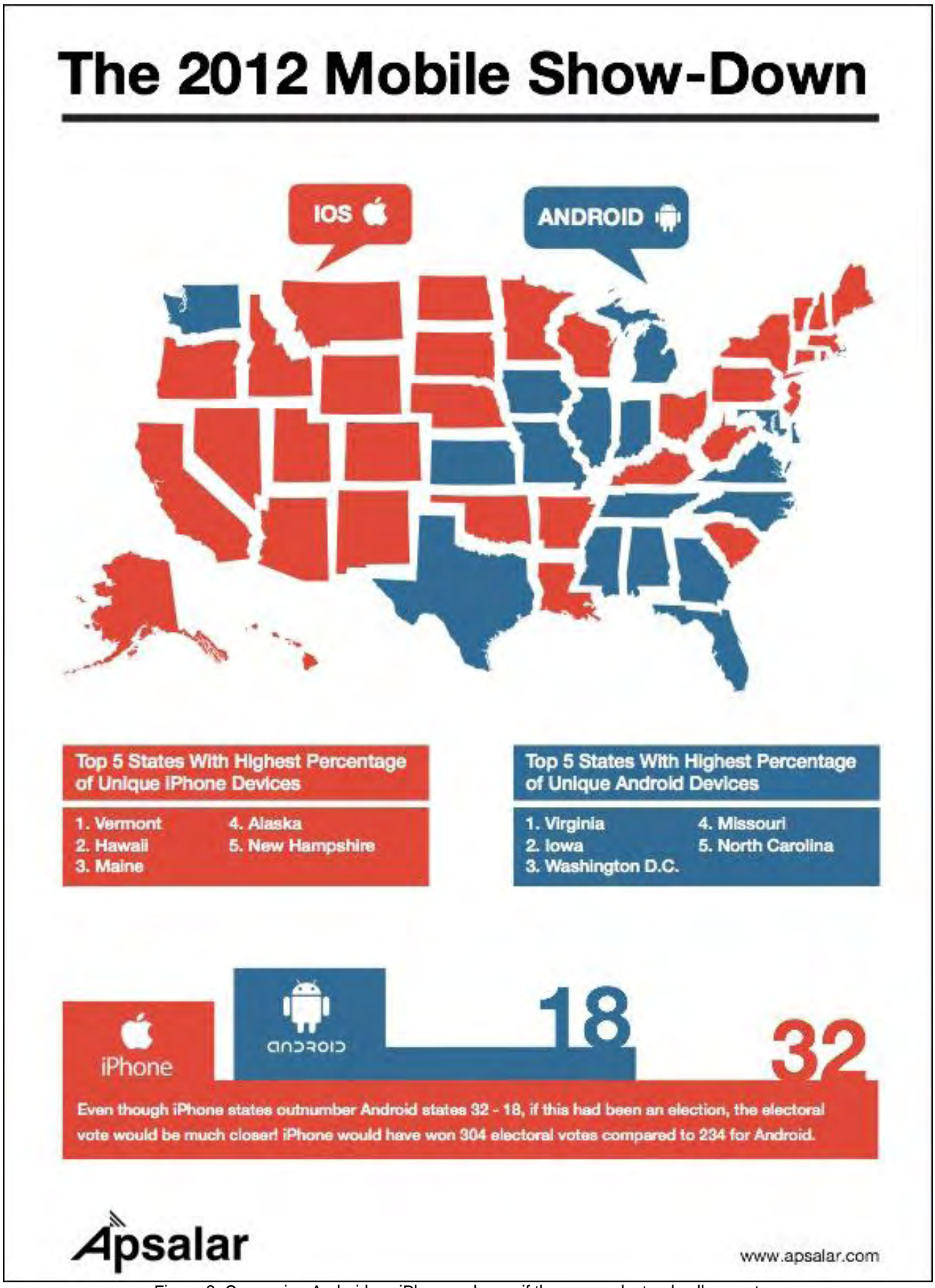


Figure 8. Comparing Android vs. iPhone sales as if they were electoral college votes.

Not surprisingly, California was predominantly an iPhone state, but Texas was predominantly an Android state along with much of the South and Midwest. While such results don't mean anything in particular, they are interesting to ponder why a particular state

like North Carolina would gravitate towards Android while Alaska and Hawaii would favor the iPhone. Depending on which state you're in, look around to see which phone most people seem to use. Whatever the results, you probably won't find many people using Blackberry or Nokia Symbian phones any more.

* * *

When you receive a file attachment while using the Mail program that comes with every Macintosh, you have three options. First, you can click the Quick Look tab to view the contents of a file without actually opening it. This can be a safe way to examine any file to make sure it's not a phony file designed to trick you into downloading and running it to install malware on your computer.

Second, you can click the Save tab and Mail will store the file attachment into your Downloads folder (or whatever folder you designated for Mail to store files). However, if you click on the downward pointing arrow to the right of the Save tab, a menu appears and you can choose Save All. This Save All command lets you save a file attachment in any folder you choose so you're not just limited to the Downloads folder.

Figure 9. The Save and Quick Look tabs help you manage file attachments.

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*.

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Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

Not Easy Proving Illegal File Sharing; One Remote to Rule Them All!; Audiobooks.com Got a Whole Lot Better as He Was Writing the Review!; Viewsonic VP2765 Monitor—How Inexpensive Big and Beautiful is Becoming.

Not Easy Proving Illegal File Sharing

The folks at the University of Birmingham (UK) write in this week:

Research by computer scientists at the University of Birmingham has found that the monitoring of online file sharing is more prevalent than previously thought. They also conclude that in many cases, the evidence gathered through monitoring is not admissible in court.

To provide legal evidence of file sharing, a monitoring company must make a direct connection to a suspected file sharer and log their activity. This three-year study is the first to look at the behavior of monitors that make direct connections.

The researchers' findings include:

• Massive monitoring of all of the most popular illegal downloads from the PirateBay has been taking place over the last 3 years.

• On average an illegal file sharer, using BitTorrent to download the most popular content, will be connected to and have their IP address logged within 3 hours of starting a download.

• Poor collection methods mean the evidence collected by monitors may not stand up in court.

The research was carried out by developing software that acted like a BitTorrent file sharing client, and logged all the connections made to it. Careful analysis of the logs revealed the presence and behavior of file-sharing monitors.

Most large-scale monitors hide their identity by using third party hosting companies to run the searches for them, but other monitors are identifiable as copyright enforcement organizations, security companies and even government research labs. The researchers also found that the use of third party hosting companies allowed the monitors to avoid block lists that attempted to stop known monitors from connecting to file sharers.

Dr Tom Chothia, researcher at the University of Birmingham's School of Computer Science, says, "This work reveals the full scale of the monitoring of illegal file sharers. Almost everyone that shares popular films and music illegally will be connected to by a monitor and will have their IP address logged. What is done with this information in the long term only time will tell."

With the number of prosecutions of file sharers increasing there is a legitimate concern of the standard of evidence used in these cases. Dr Chothia continued: "All the monitors observed during the study would connect to file sharers believed to be sharing illegal content and verify that they were running the BitTorrent software, however they would not actually collect any of the files being shared. Therefore, it is questionable whether the monitors observed would actually have evidence of file sharing that would stand up in court."

One Remote to Rule Them All!

OK, this little missive is not going to be about the spiffy new Harmony 700 remote that Logitech sent us a couple of weeks ago. It's

for their Harmony model 300, the relatively humble sibling of the 700, which has a very cool color LCD screen and does about a hundred cool things the 300 doesn't do—which we'll get to in an upcoming review.

The purpose of this review is to finally get you off your duff (like I finally did; see picture I took) and get rid of that slowly but inexorably growing number of remotes that appear to be breeding like chinchillas on that little table you keep to the side of your La-Z-Boy or the coffee table in front of your sofa.

Let money no longer be the reason. For about 18 smackers, including shipping, you can pick up a Harmony 300 on eBay or Amazon and, in about an hour, learn how to do everything you're currently doing juggling three or four remotes on just the one device.

And I mean *all*. In my own case, I took command of my plasma TV, my DVD player, my Dish Satellite DVR, and—get this—even every single function of my Xbox 360. (No, you can't practicably play games using the 300, but you can control all of the entertainment features of the Xbox like playing music and watching slideshows and videos.)

Here's how it works: Go to the Harmony site (*myharmony.com*), install a small program, then plug your remote into one of your computer's USB ports using the included cable. From there you simply enter the model numbers of the devices you want to control and assign any action to pretty much any button—although most if not all will already have been assigned for you. If you want to perform an action the Harmony program doesn't already include in its database, simply point your old remote at the 300 and push the button that controls the action you want the 300 to learn. It's called teaching/learning. Before you know it, you'll actually be enjoying jumping up from your chair and running over to your computer to fine tune what the new remote does.

I honestly don't know how this remote or Logitech's teaching/learning process could work better, but I'm holding back half a globe to leave room for the Harmony Remote 700 to wow me even more (assuming it does).

Audiobooks.com Got a Whole Lot Better as He Was Writing the Review!

Since I'm a regular customer of Aubible.com (*Aubible.com*), I found it useful to compare that service with that of a new service: Audiobooks (*www.audiobooks.com*). Like Audible, the Audiobooks.com library is immense, with over 10,000 titles, including

bestsellers like *The Hunger Games* trilogy. And more are added all the time. But there are significant differences. For example, for one monthly fee Audible lets you have one downloadable book that is yours to keep and reread. For one monthly fee of $24.95 with Audiobooks, you get an unlimited number of books, but you listen to them by streaming.

This can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your circumstance, and depending on whether you have access at all times to an Internet connection. I listen to recorded books largely when I'm driving. I have a nearly one hour commute and so I get to go through lots of books. I asked the customer service people if there was any way to download the books onto my iPhone or iPod for listening when I don't have Internet available and they replied at that time that theirs was primarily a streaming service. They did advise me to check back with them in a couple of months for these applications.

Hold the presses! This info just in from Audiobooks:

Audiobooks.com now offers free apps available to Audiobooks customers that allow them to stream ***and*** download audiobooks to their devices that they can enjoy anytime, anywhere on their mobile devices from Apple's App Store for iPhones, iPod Touch, and iPads and Google Play for Android devices.

Members who want to enjoy audio books on the go can download up to two audio books at a time on their mobile device. The new apps are designed to give members maximum flexibility, providing custom settings so users can automatically stream or download books via Wi-Fi or cellular networks and save books to their personal reading list so they'll always have an audio book to enjoy.

One unique Audiobooks.com innovation is an automatic bookmarking feature that ensures users never lose their place; users can always pick up wherever they left off—across all devices. Always responsive to customer needs, Audiobooks.com has also added a sleep timer to meet member demand. This allows users to set a time when they want to enjoy an audio book after they turn in for the night and ensure that the audio book won't continue playing indefinitely if they fall asleep.

Another unique Audiobooks.com feature is the apps' integration with user device native operating system functionality, which gives Audiobooks.com apps the ability to automatically pause listening when the user receives a phone call. The apps let users browse and play book previews without logging in, and the apps are designed to optimize 3G/cellular usage.

Now, that's a lot better!

Review contributed by David Ross

Viewsonic VP2765 Monitor—How Inexpensive Big and Beautiful is Becoming

The ViewSonic VP276527" LCD LED monitor (*www.viewsonic.com/products/vp2765-led.htm*) (about $500) is part of the company's professional series displays, but you'll figure that out all by yourself after using it for about 11 seconds.

One of the VP2765's primary features is something called AMVA or Advanced Multi-domain Vertical Alignment. Basically, all you need to know is that the thing looks incredible with accurate, rich colors; a fantastic MEGA contrast ratio of 20,000,000:1, a native full HD 1080p image (1920x1080 resolution with a 16:9 aspect ratio), and a ridiculously wide viewing angle of up to 178°—all at about half the energy consumption of the standard cold cathode fluorescent lamp display you're probably using right now.

Cold Cathode Fluorescent Lamp

LED: Light Emitting Diode

I would not hesitate to use the VP2765 for any professional application including photography, graphic design, film editing, CAD/CAM, and a host of business applications and environments where a sharp picture helps make long, eye-straining workdays more pleasant.

The VP2765 features a full complement of DisplayPort, DVI, and VGA inputs. Interestingly, no HDMI; but there are adapters for that. There's a 4-port USB hub, useful for connecting digital cameras, flash drives, and any number of things you don't want to digging around the back of your computer to plug in. Virtually every ergonomic function is at your control: 120° swivel, 20° tilt, and about half a foot of height adjustment. Like many monitors, you can also rotate the VP2765 90° (in conjunction with your graphic card's software).

The VP2765 also features a very slim bezel so that you can lash a bunch of them together with, I would assume, bailing wire to create a nearly-seamless wall of gorgeousness. And it's VESA compliant so it's easy to find a third party wall mount.

It's really pretty incredible to think you can buy an LCD this large in size, this big on features, for this little money (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00535CD5C/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00535CD5C&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*).

In addition to being an editor and columnist for *ComputorEdge* 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 ComputorEdge Staff

"LibreOffice File Associations," "Killing Retail One Store at a Time," "Aluminum Most Common Metal," "Copying Good and Bad"

LibreOffice File Associations

[Regarding the August 24 Digital Dave column:]

Since OpenOffice isn't being supported well any more, I've switched to LibreOffice so not sure if this applies to OO. LibreOffice's install has a page where it gives the option to set file associations. I'm not positive, but I suspect a reinstall or update to current release would give the same options.

Lastly, uninstalling the Microsoft Office trial should lessen any possibility of associations going back to trying to start those programs.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Killing Retail One Store at a Time

[Regarding the August 31 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

Wally Wang wrote:

"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."

Montgomery Wards started their mail order business in 1872, 50 years before their brick & mortar stores (1924). They went online in 2004 at http://wards.com.

-Dennis, San Diego, CA

Aluminum Most Common Metal

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

Great intro/trivia on aluminum. Did you know that it's the *most* common metal in the earth's crust? And the third most common element?

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Copying Good and Bad

[Regarding the August 31 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

I think that copying other company's ideas is a two-faced sword.

Copying someone's source code without permission is bad.

However, copying something that works that doesn't really infringe on the other's profitability, meaning a green icon with a white phone, I think should be not only OK, but preferable. Imagine if every telephone manufacturer had to organize their numeric keys in a different order because one company decided to lay them out in numeric order and decided it's their "innovation"? I'd *much* prefer standardized icons so if I need to someone else's phone, I don't have to figure something out (especially in an emergency) just to dial.

Lots of other instances of this, imagine if a car company patented/trademarked/copyrighted/whatever having four wheels on a vehicle? But you get my drift, there's a big difference between duplicating a company's hardware and software, and duplicating the "look and feel" if done with their own hardware and software. If a look and feel works well, I think it *should* be copied.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

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/*).

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