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Does the smartphone camera spell the end of the stand-alone compact digital camera?

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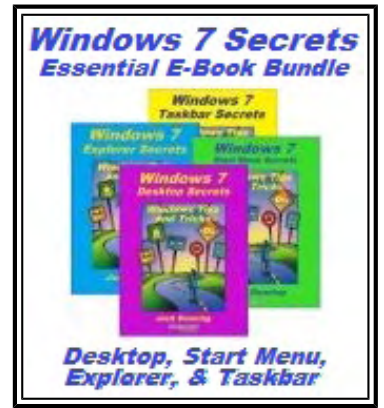
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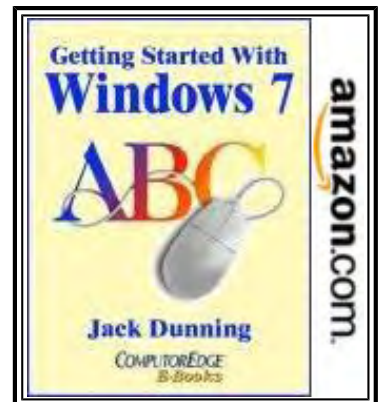
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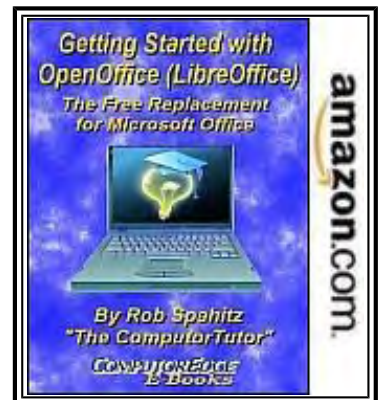
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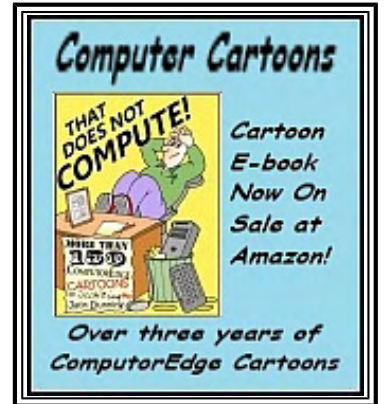
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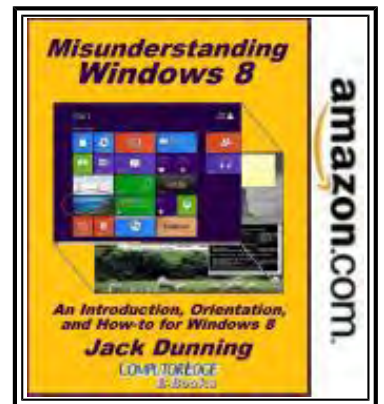
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Digital Dave

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

Desktop Heat; E-Mail Virus in Preview?; Receiving E-Mail on Corrupted Computer.

Dear Digital Dave,

Last week we had several days where the temperature was in excess of 90 degrees. My computer case was very warm to the touch. Most desktop cases are made to open on one side or the cover can be removed altogether. I removed the side from mine and turned a room fan on the open case. Immediately the steel case cooled down and I assume the CPU, disk drives etc. ran cooler too.

Is there any danger or harm in using this method to temporarily cool a computer?

Thank you,

*Bob
San Diego, CA*

Dear Bob,

If your case fans are in good working order and the vents are not clogged with dust, the PC should run cooler with the cover on. Good PC cases direct cool airflow through them to where they are needed and blow hot air out the back. The room fan that you directed into the case probably helped a little, although you shouldn't need to remove the cover to cool down your computer.

You should use a program for monitoring your CPU temperature to see if you are actually running too hot. CoreTemp (www.alcpu.com/CoreTemp/) is free and seems to work well (see Figure 1). There is also a related gadget for Windows 7 and Vista, as well as, readings added to the Taskbar Notification area. Be careful when installing to avoid the extras the installer tries to load on your computer. An alternative for Intel CPUs only is Real Temp (www.techpowerup.com/realtemp/).

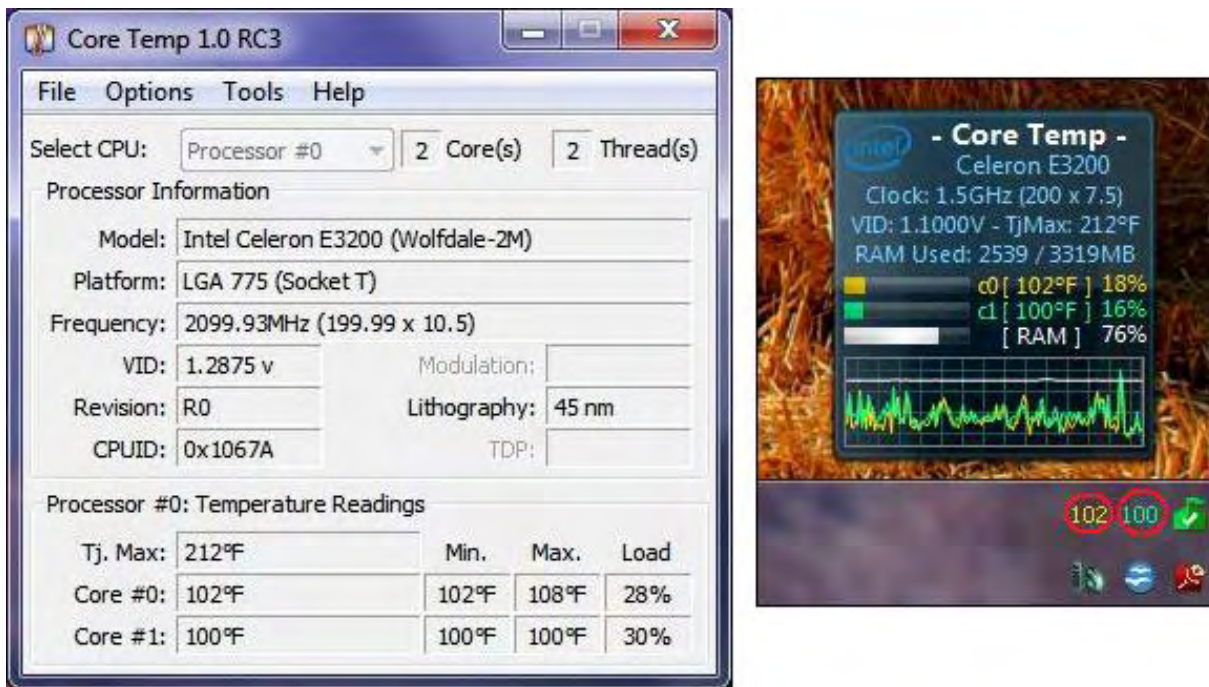


Figure 1. CoreTemp CPU temperature monitoring program plus the Windows 7 and Vista gadget. Taskbar Notification area readings are circled in red.

If the CPU is running too hot, make sure there's no dust accumulation and that the vents have room for air flow (not right up against a wall). I hope you also blew out all of the accumulated dust when you had the cover off. The buildup of dust on the various heat sinks and components can cause heat problems. Dust is an excellent insulator, blocking the flow of air. Cooling a PC is all about airflow. If you open it up, then there is no airflow and you can easily have pockets of heat.

I would check to be sure that all the cooling fans are still operating (CPU, power supply, high power video card, and case fan if you have one).

Another major danger to removing the cover comes from external objects which may enter and cause other problems. Paper clips, your foot (if you keep the computer on the floor under the desk), children, sniffing dogs, and flying baseballs come to mind.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

This question seems older than the hills, or in my case the mountains, but it keeps coming up with those I do tech support for. Question: Does viewing a client based e-mail (example Outlook) in the "Reading Pane" constitute opening the e-mail subjecting one to viruses or other malware?

Thanks, as always,

*Gary Weinstein
Groveland, CA*

Dear Gary,

It is generally safe to view e-mail in the preview pane as long as you don't have settings which will automatically download attachments. The preview is very similar to viewing a Web page in your browser. As long as you don't follow unknown links or download and open/run attachments, there is very little risk to your computer. There are additional settings in most e-mail programs which will protect you even more.

Some programs allow you to set "Read all messages in plain text" which will disable any HTML code and most links. However, this could make many e-mails unreadable since HTML has become a common form of business communications.

Another step you can take is to "Block images and other external content in HTML e-mail," generally in the security settings. While HTML and images are not dangerous in themselves, when they come from an external source it is possible for your IP address to be captured at the source. However, even without this setting most e-mail and security programs already block external image downloading until you give permission to the site.

The two most important concerns with incoming e-mail are attachments and links. Attachments are by far the most dangerous because, if you don't absolutely know the source, they could contain malware in the form of an executable file. The links need the same caution as you would use when navigating the Web. Don't go anywhere that doesn't look right. Don't follow a link in an e-mail and then enter your username and password. If you need to get to one of your account sites, navigate there yourself through a known good bookmark or link.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a general computer question and I thought you might be a good resource. If a computer is corrupted, can it receive an e-mail that was meant for a different computer?

Doreen

Dear Doreen,

If you are lucky enough to receive **any** e-mail on a corrupted computer, it is highly unlikely that the e-mail was meant for a different computer. While Spammers often attempt to disguise who they are and to whom they are sending e-mail, anything you receive was meant for your computer.

In reality your computer does not receive e-mail, but picks it up. All e-mail is received by an e-mail server—your ISP server, Gmail, Hotmail, etc. The e-mail sits on the server until you (or your computer) go pick it up, either with Web mail or through your e-mail program. Your computer will only pick up mail sitting in your account(s) on the e-mail server. This makes it very difficult for you to get any e-mail that was not sent to you—even if your computer is corrupted.

The one exception I would make is if the corruption is caused by malware which is giving Trojan or hacker access to your computer. If you suspect that this may be happening, disconnect your computer from the Internet until you can resolve the problem. Hackers cannot access a computer which is not connected to the Internet.

Digital Dave

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Digital Cameras for the Neophyte Photographer

“Which Camera Is Right for You Depends on What You Plan to Do with the Photos” by Jack Dunning

Jack takes a non-expert look at what's available on the digital camera market.

While I'm not an expert on digital cameras or digital photography, I've taken thousands of pictures with my Panasonic DMC-TZ4 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0011Z6D86/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0011Z6D86&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)—mostly of my grandchildren—which qualifies me to talk about my own experiences. I have a growing respect for “real” photographers who take and produce great photos. It's not easy to take a good picture—even with a point and shoot camera.

Types of Digital Cameras

There are a few categories of cameras. The first category consists of the cameras which are now standard on the smartphones and many tablet computers. Since the smartphones are attached to the Internet, pictures (and video) can be sent directly to Facebook and other sites—much to the embarrassment of everyone in the room. The cameras in smartphones and tablet computers take pretty good pictures. They are certainly more than adequate for most social situations and relieve the photographer of the burden of carrying both a phone and a separate camera. Thanks to smartphone cameras, almost any event of any significance (or insignificance) is instantly broadcast worldwide. (Don't do anything stupid!)

The quality of the smartphone cameras are so good now that some people are predicting that the demise of the stand-alone camera.

Point and Click Cameras

Point and shoot cameras (www.amazon.com/mn/search/?_encoding=UTF8&brr=1&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&node=330405011&rd=1&tag=comput0b9-20), also called compact cameras, are the next step up from the smartphone camera. These cameras are distinguished by a much larger lens than you get with a camera phone. The lens usually protrudes from the camera when turned on and retracts when turn off. A compact camera often includes a zoom capability. Point and shoot cameras are distinguished by numerous additional features and settings for various lighting conditions and usually costs between \$100 and \$300 dollars depending upon the included features. Some of the more high-powered compact cameras may be priced at \$600 or more.



Figure 1. A point and shoot camera from Canon.

My Panasonic camera would be classified as a point and shoot. I bought it a number of years ago at Costco (I'm sure I had a coupon). I'm happy with it. I don't use most of its features, but will highlight a couple I do. The current model is the Panasonic LUMIX DMC-ZS19 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00814CAS2/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00814CAS2&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) (\$280) which has even more features and a more powerful optical zoom. The Panasonic LUMIX FH25 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004NBZ8DQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B004NBZ8DQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) a less expensive point and shoot version at \$160.

I did some checking around and one of the most highly rated compact cameras is the Canon PowerShot SX260 HS (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0075SUK14/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0075SUK14&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) (currently \$267 at Amazon). See Figure 1. CNET and a number of other sites had it at the top of their list. If I were currently looking for a new camera, I would check the 10 top digital cameras (www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_kk_1?rh=i%3Aelectronics%2Ck%3A10+top+digital+cameras&keywords=10+top+digital+cameras&ie=UTF8&qid=1347908192&tag=comput0b9-20) and reviews at Amazon before making a decision.

Most people don't need the highest priced point and click camera. There are numerous settings on my camera that I never use and today's cameras have even more. I don't even know what some of the settings do. For the vast majority of people who want to take good quality pictures without much effort, the compact digital camera priced between \$100 and \$200 will be more than enough.

Single Lens Reflex Cameras

The Single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single-lens_reflex_camera) are the high-end of cameras. These cameras are for people who are serious about their photography (or people who want other people think they are serious about their photography). SLR cameras are usually priced (www.amazon.com/mn/search/?_encoding=UTF8&brr=1&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&node=3017941&rd=1&tag=comput0b9-20) between \$600 and \$3,000.



Figure 2. A Single-lens reflex (SLR) camera from Nikon priced at \$2697.

If you're interested in SLR cameras, then you probably already know more about cameras and photography than I do. The compact camera has plenty of power for my purposes.

Camera Phones Versus Point and Shoot Cameras

The cameras in the latest smartphones are capable of producing some very good quality pictures. The digital technology is absolutely ingenious and compensates for the mistakes that we would normally make. For the casual photographer, the smartphone camera will do the job. However, ultimately it is physically impossible for the camera phone to compete in quality with a decent compact camera. Capturing a crisp, clear image is all about light gathering power. That means size does matter—that is the size of the lens.



While the digital technology behind the camera, whether in a smartphone or compact camera, is amazing and quite powerful, the ability to take sharp images is highly dependent on how big of a lens you can put in the camera. (These days the number of pixels available—and advertised—is not nearly as relevant as it used to be. Most cameras offer plenty of pixel resolution for all purposes.) The more light that can pass through a lens, the better and sharper, higher speed photos can be captured. Unless larger lenses are placed on smartphone cameras (which is not practical), ultimately they will never compete with their stand alone brethren for quality. This is a physical fact of optics and not merely a technological issue. This is why the SLR cameras have even larger (and better) lenses than those on the compact cameras.



Does this lens size difference matter to you? It depends upon how you plan to use the pictures. If your primary purpose is to post to the Web and view digital photo albums, then stick with the smartphone camera. After all, if you already own the phone, it has a camera, and you carry it everywhere, what could be more convenient? However, if you like to print photos for sharing or putting them in hardbound albums, just want a little better quality picture, or want to capture the fleeting expressions on a baby's face, then you may want to invest in a camera with a bigger lens and more features.

Clem decides he needs a more powerful digital camera for his iPad.

Getting a Great Picture from a Digital Camera

In the old days we were limited by the film in the camera. Every time we took a picture we used up a part of the film—which cost us money. If we liked a scene we took *one* picture. If it was a really good scene, maybe we took two pictures. Of course, we wouldn't know how the photos would turn out until we had them developed. (Again, we had to pay for them all—even the bad ones.) Part of the art of getting a great picture was in setting the scene and having a good eye. Today much of that has changed. The secret to getting that great quality digital photo is quantity. (Of course you still need to pay attention to lighting conditions and the scene.)

There is no longer a cost associated with taking an individual picture. Therefore there's no reason to skimp on the number of pictures you snap. The more you take, the greater the odds that one of them will be worth printing. This is especially true when photographing people who tend to blink, sneeze and otherwise occupy themselves. When we're visiting our kids and grand kids, I put the camera in its automatic mode letting the camera make all the setting decisions for me (auto-focus, light settings, face finding, etc.). I then click one picture after another. Rarely are they posed shots. I will occasionally turn the auto flash on or off if I think the camera is making the wrong decision for the situation. (The beauty of the camera screen is reviewing photo just taken for acceptability.) Taking a large volume of pictures is one way I ensure that I have a few worthwhile shots. Of course, later I am forced to go through the photos to cull out the best of the best, but at least I have a choice.

I always keep a large SD chip in my camera—currently four gigabytes. This serves two purposes. First the chip has plenty of space for hundreds of photos (and a little video) without running out of room. Second, I've found that the easiest way to unload photos is to just plug the SD chip from the camera directly into my laptop computer SD slot. Working with a direct camera USB connection to the computer is always a bit of a hassle.

The Burst Mode

One feature that helps me to capture those rapidly changing expression that people (mostly babies) make is the burst mode on my camera. In the burst mode, pictures are taken in rapid succession with only a split second between them. This is great for capturing photos of people doing cartwheels, but even better for getting the best part of a baby's changing expressions (see Figure 3).

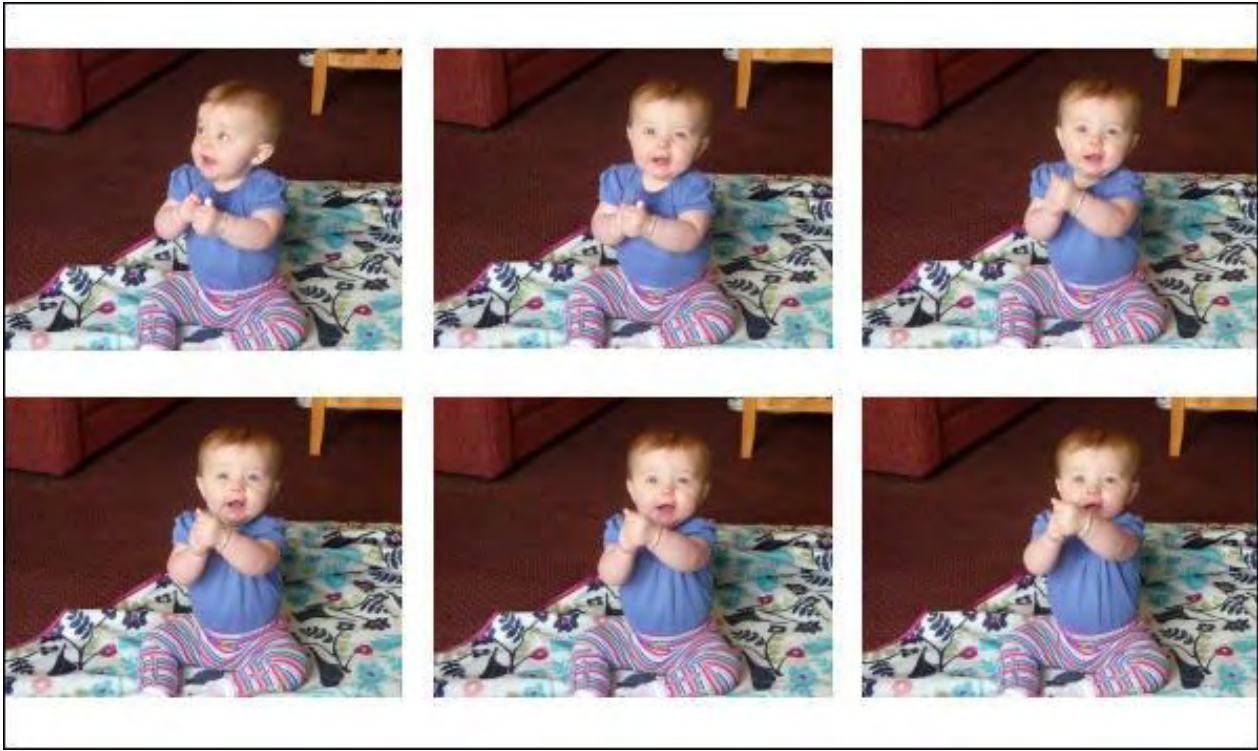


Figure 3. Pictures taken with the burst mode.

I try to avoid angles that cause problems such as the sun behind the subject. I think that there is a feature on my camera for back-lit situations, but I haven't played with it. I noticed a mode for taking pictures at night. I'm sure that there are other camera features that I could use, but this technique of taking quantity to produce quality has worked out pretty well.

My camera can also make videos. I've taken movies from time to time, but I tend to forget the feature is there. Working with the movies after they are captured is always a little more work. I would be interested to hear which features in your point and click digital camera you have found most useful.

The Work Only Starts with Taking the Picture

It drives me crazy to see a picture—even if it's only posted on Facebook—where everyone in the photo has red-eye (caused by the camera flash). Red eye is one of the easiest flaws to remove from photos and almost every image editing programs has a tool for removing it. Cleaning up photos takes a little time. If you have hundreds of photos to review and process it can take a lot of time. This is why most people don't do it.

Yet, if you want the best pictures, it's worth the time to work on them before printing (or posting). Even shots with poor lightning conditions or other flaws can be saved with the proper cleanup techniques. When making images acceptable for printing, there are a few steps I take (including the removal of red-eye). They are not the extraordinary efforts followed by professionals, but I do enough to produce a few photos that are worth framing. (Those cleanup techniques will be the subject for an article in the next couple of weeks.)

The Future of a Digital Photo

Once taken, the plight of most digital photos is never to be seen again. If saved at all, it will sit in an obscure folder on a hard drive or SD chip. If it's lucky it might make it to the Web for others to see. The best of the best will be deemed worthy of printing and adding to a "real" photo album or possibly framing. If this is the type of photo that you want to produce, then you may want to consider a compact digital camera rather than settling for the camera that came with your smartphone.

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

Currently only at Amazon.com, *Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to*

Get Started! (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20).

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

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

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Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: Disabling Annoying Windows Hotkeys

“It's Easy to Delete All When the Control Key Is Next to the Shift Key” by Jack Dunning

While most Windows hotkey combinations are very useful, there are times when you may want to disable one or two of them. There is a quick and easy way to do that in AutoHotkey.

Jerry Hughes sent in the following question:

Hello,

I constantly hit the wrong buttons on my keyboard and "poof" all my typing is erased. I assume this is because I unintentionally hit some "hotkey" on the keyboard. Is there a way I can disable all hotkeys so the keyboard acts like just a regular keyboard?

Thank you!

This is a good question because this is a relatively common problem—depending on the layout of your keyboard and how you type. The problem is the proximity of the SHIFT key and CTRL key. I suspect that you are accidentally hitting CTRL+A when you want to capitalize an "a" which selects the entire text (all text is highlighted). Then hitting any key will delete everything else. If you type pretty fast, I would guess that you won't even see the highlighting prior to hitting the next key. I can understand why you would want to disable certain hotkeys.

I did some checking and found that you can disable the Windows logo (🌈) hotkeys with help from Microsoft (support.microsoft.com/kb/216893). In Windows 7 and Windows 8, you can use the Group Policy Editor to turn off the Windows (🌈) hotkeys. Run (🌈)+R. Ironic isn't it?) and enter "gpedit.msc" (without quotes) and navigate to User Configuration => Administrative Templates => Windows Components => Windows Explorer. Find "Turn off Windows+X hotkeys" as in Figure 1 and select Edit from the Action menu and Enable the feature.

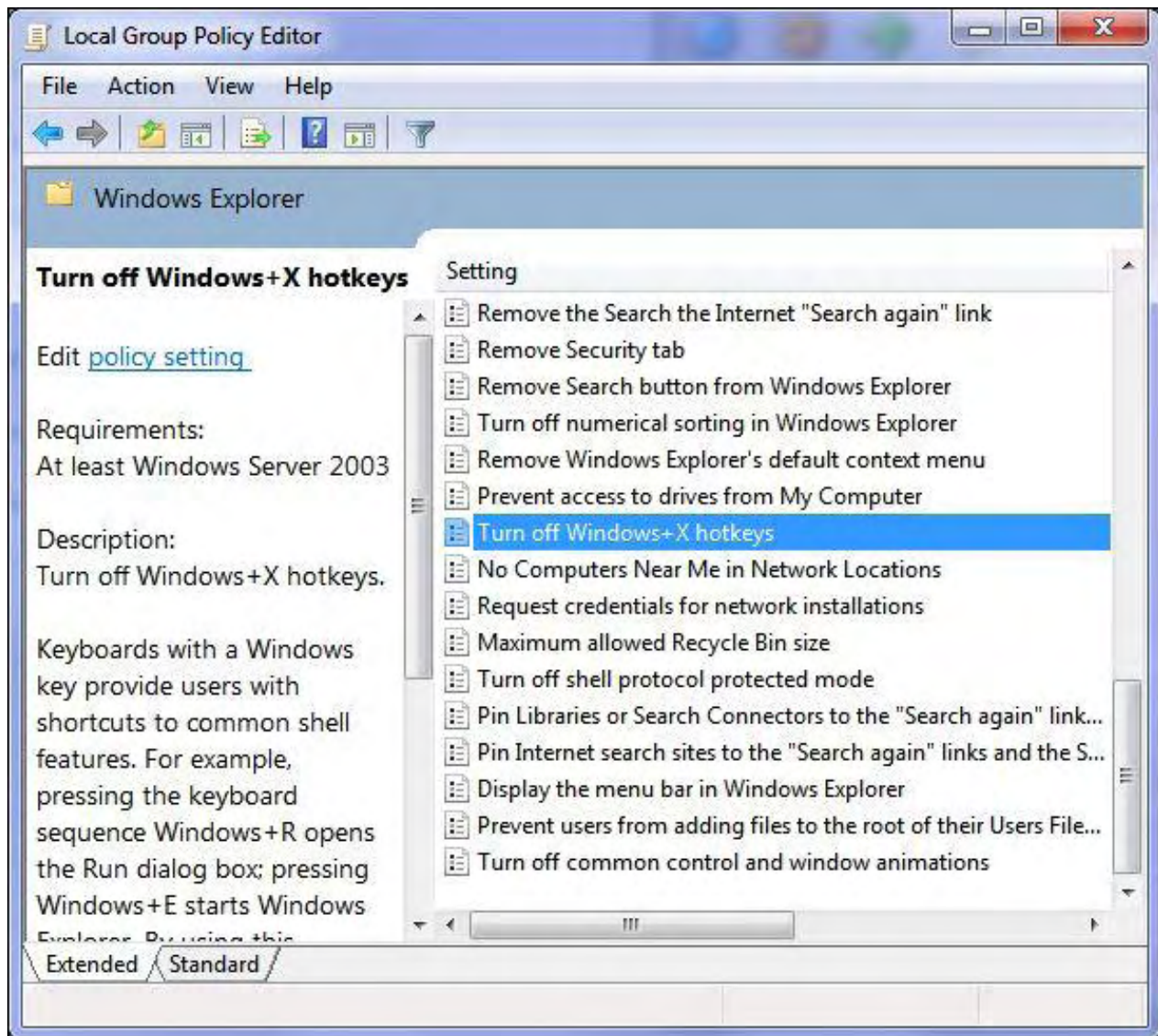


Figure 1. Windows logo hotkeys can be disabled in Windows 7 from the Group Policy Editor.

However, it's not so easy to disable standard Control hotkeys (CTRL+A = select all, CTRL+X = cut, CTRL+C = copy, CTRL+V = paste), which is what you need. These Control hotkeys are universal, used in most computer systems and programs. I did not find a way to immediately disable them. There is a program called KeyTweak which will remap a keyboard and would probably do the job. However, I do have a much easier method with AutoHotkey.

This is one more reason why I have become an AutoHotkey lunatic. I still think that it is "possibly the best free Windows utility ever" and this technique just adds fuel to the fire. It was fairly easy to find an answer to a common problem (www.autohotkey.com/docs/misc/Override.htm).

Using AutoHotkey to Override Windows Hotkeys

All that is required after creating a new AHK file by right-clicking in the AutoHotkey folder (or on the Desktop) is to add: ^a::

In Figure 2, the hotkey code Control+A (^A) which is used for Select All in most Windows programs is replaced by the same AutoHotkey code thereby overriding the system hotkey. The text at the top of the file is "boilerplate ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boilerplate_\(text\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boilerplate_(text)))" code automatically added to each newly created AutoHotkey AHK file. To activate the AutoHotkey script Save, right-click, then select Run Script. The green AutoHotkey icon will appear in the Notification area. (If you haven't used AutoHotkey before, see "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.htm).")

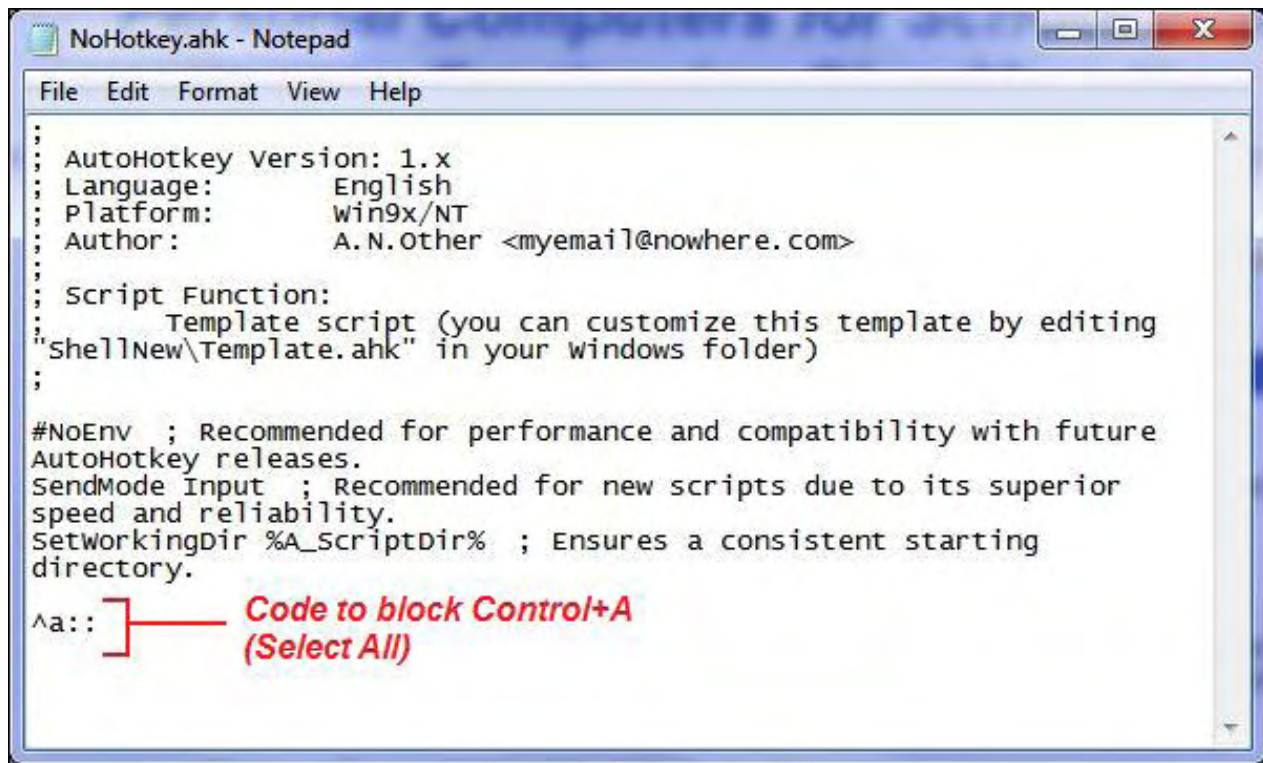


Figure 2. AutoHotkey code for disabling CTRL+A Select All.

If you wanted "a" to assume another function, then add that code after the double colon (:). In Figure 3, code to create a pop-up warning is added. This will let the user know that the hotkey has been deactivated every time it is used.

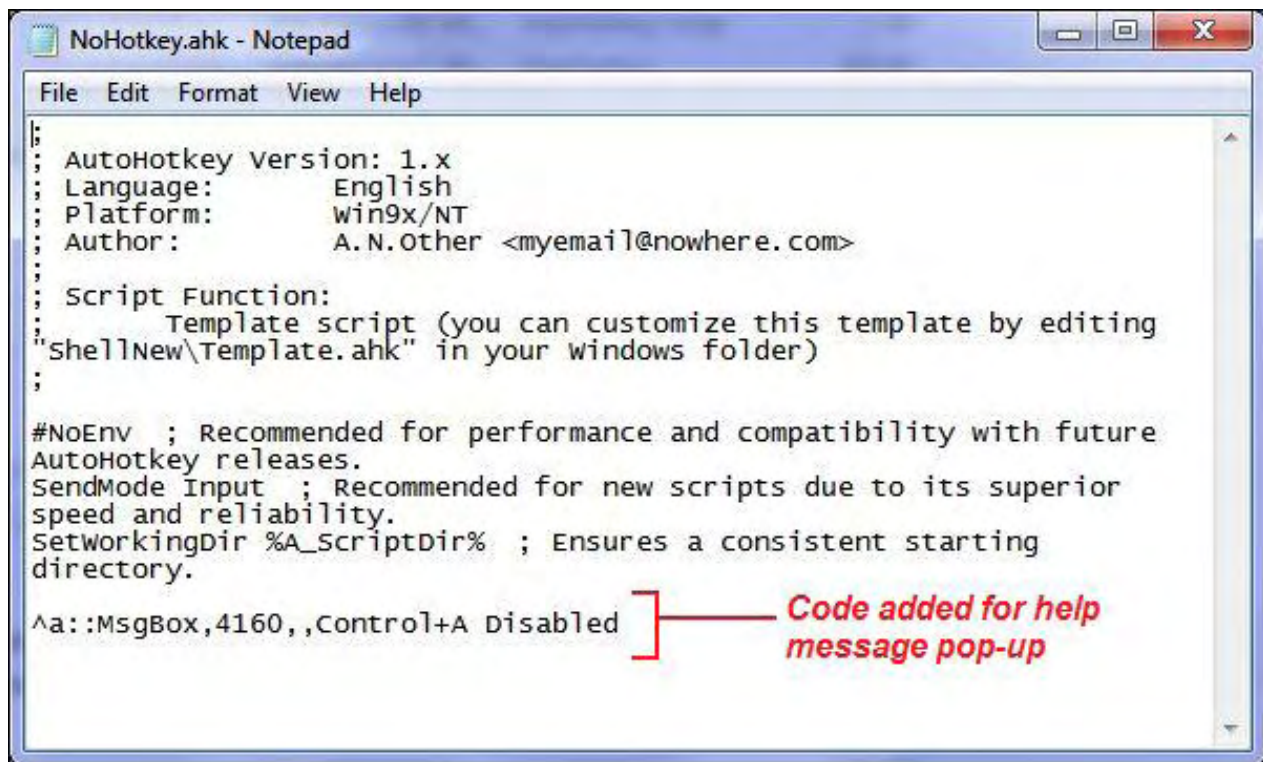


Figure 3. AutoHotkey code for disabling CTRL+A Select All with a warning pop-up that the hotkey is disabled.

After making changes to a AutoHotkey script which is currently active, Save, right-click on the active AutoHotkey icon in the Notification area of the Taskbar, and select Reload This Script. The active script will then display the pop-up (see Figure 4).

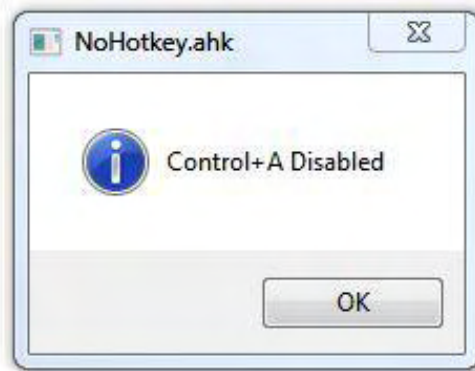


Figure 4. AutoHotkey pop-up message when CTRL+A is disabled.

Of course this can be done for any combination of hotkeys, one line of code for each disabled hotkey. Personally, I like having all the standard hotkeys available. I'm more likely to mistakenly hold down the Shift key when I want to execute a cut, copy, or paste, than accidentally hit the Control key when I want to capitalize.

If you want this hotkey available on other Windows computers without installing AutoHotkey on each computer, right-click on the save file icon and select Compile Script. This process will create a new executable file (EXE) which can run on any Windows computer without the AutoHotkey program. This compiled file is a completely independent Windows program. Copy to another computer, double-click on the file name, and the program will load—adding the green AutoHotkey logo to the Taskbar Notification area. If you want to disable the disabling of the hotkey, right-click on the icon in the Taskbar Notification area and select Exit.

The program in Figure 3 has been added to a Dropbox folder (www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7) which is accessible to anyone. You can download either or both the source AHK file (NoHotkey.ahk) and the program file (NoHotkey.exe). If you have trouble downloading any file, you can download them all in a ZIP file by clicking in the Download button in the upper right corner and selecting "Download as .zip" from the menu. There are also a few of the example files from earlier articles.

Remember, double-click the EXE file to immediately activate an AutoHotkey compiled script. (Right-click on the Taskbar Notification area icon and select Exit to deactivate.) The AHK files require the AutoHotkey program to be installed to run, however you can edit and modify these files to suit your needs.

* * *

To start from the beginning with the first AutoHotkey article see "Possibly the Best Free Windows Utility Ever!" Begin 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 *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

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

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

Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007AL672M/?&tag=comput0b9-20),

Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7 (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00758J4L6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

and *That Does Not Compute!* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Mobile Computing Evolution” by Wally Wang

The Mobile Computing Evolution; The Problems with Microsoft's Business Model; Hewlett-Packard Acknowledges the Obvious; Upgrade Your iPhone; Panoramic Views; Possible Windows 8 Tablet Prices; See All Your Tabs.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Despite not offering any revolutionary new advances, the iPhone 5 sold out (articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-09-14/business/chi-sales-surge-delays-delivery-of-lighter-faster-iphone-by-week-20120914_1_new-iphone-apple-shares-apple-products) within an hour. While critics claim that people just buy anything with an Apple logo, the popularity of the iPhone 5 is no different than the early days of the PC processor advances.

The first IBM PC used an 8080 Intel processor. The next leap forward was Intel's 80286 processor, which offered greater speed, but nothing necessarily revolutionary. Yet people rushed out to buy faster PCs anyway even though the bulk of the available software still ran fine on 8088 processors.

Then Intel introduced the 80386 processor and once again, sales of PCs spiked as people snapped up faster PCs. Did the 80386 processor offer revolutionary features over the 80286? From a user's point of view, it just offered more of what the 80286 processor already had, but that was enough.

When Intel announced the 80486, sales of PCs skyrocketed once again, despite the fact that the 80486 offered more evolutionary advances rather than revolutionary ones. After the 80486, Intel introduced the Pentium processor. The upgrade cycle in processors continued with each new processor pushing PC sales up despite the fact that each new processor only offered evolutionary improvements.

Sound familiar? Each new version of the iPhone isn't necessarily a revolutionary improvement, but an evolutionary one. Yet each new version spikes sales while critics complain that the latest iPhone doesn't offer anything new. These same critics would likely have criticized Intel for not offering anything revolutionary in the 80286, 80386, 80486, Pentium and so on.

Both the smartphone and tablet markets are following the same trajectory as early PCs. Each new improvement will spike more sales as the market continues to grow. Notice that when Intel introduces new processors today, they don't spike PC sales any more. The PC market has matured while the excitement has shifted to the mobile computing market.

Eventually, the mobile computing market will also mature and slow down. When that happens, you can bet that another market will take off instead with its own gradual evolutionary improvements, and critics will start complaining that those new products aren't offering anything revolutionary either.

The Problems with Microsoft's Business Model

For decades, people touted Microsoft's business model as superior to Apple's because Microsoft grabbed the dominant personal computer share of the market. Yet Microsoft owes its success to the exact same business model that's causing it to stumble in today's world.

By licensing out their software to other companies, Microsoft must rely on the creativity and marketing savvy of these other companies to sell their products. As we've already seen with Hewlett-Packard copying (thenextweb.com/apple/2012/09/10/hp-imac/) the iMac design with their Spectre One PC and Samsung mimicking (arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2012/08/apples-case-that-samsung-

copied-the-iphone-and-ipad-in-pictures/) the design of the iPhone and iPad, relying on third parties to define your product's brand can be risky at best. This is the reason why Microsoft had to announce their Microsoft Surface tablet to prod their hardware partners into taking a chance creatively.

Even worse, licensing out your software to others turns all partners against each other. If everyone can sell a PC running Windows, what's the difference between an Acer PC, a Hewlett-Packard PC, and a Dell PC? In most cases, there's no difference other than price, which leads to slashing prices until everyone suffers from razor thin margins and designs created more out of economic need than aesthetic appeal.

When you rely on others to define your brand, chances are good you'll be disappointed. During the heyday of PCs, operating system alternatives were either too expensive or too limited, which made MS-DOS and later Windows the most cost-effective solution. Yet even then, PC manufacturers often resorted to trotting out the same tired beige boxes rather than try anything new or different.

Perhaps the biggest problem with relying on third parties is the lack of oversight. On the legal side, many PC manufacturers burden their PCs with programs known as bloatware, which foul up the typical Windows PC experience right from the start. On the illegal side, many PC manufacturers cut costs by using pirated copies of Windows.

Besides the piracy aspect that denies Microsoft their royalty, counterfeit copies of Windows are also prone to malware infections. Microsoft recently discovered that cybercriminals had infiltrated the supply chains of PC manufacturers and were installing malware (www.slashgear.com/microsoft-makes-major-progress-in-fight-against-nitol-botnet-13247527/) on brand new computers.

Today, there are alternatives to using Windows and that alone has tossed a monkey wrench into Microsoft's business model that relied on lack of choice to succeed. (Ironically, many PC enthusiasts fanatically embrace choice as their reason to stick with PCs, not realizing that lack of viable operating system choices is what helped Windows PCs thrive in the first place.)

Instead of the computing world limited to Windows, people can now choose between Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, iOS, and Android. In many cases, these other operating systems have advantages that Windows can't match such as price (Linux and Android), apps geared for mobility (iOS and Android), true openness and customization (Linux), and greater reliability (Linux, iOS, and Mac OS X). With more people able to meet their computing needs through non-Windows devices, sales of Windows PCs have predictably dropped and won't likely magically return.

Today's successful business model relies on controlling the customer experience from start to finish with both the hardware and software. Microsoft did that with their Xbox and is doing that with their Microsoft Surface tablets. They can't completely eliminate their partners in the PC business, but that PC business keeps dropping so it may not matter that much any more.

Microsoft's success is now proving to be their undoing. As the world shifts to mobile computing, people will depend less on bulkier desktop and laptop computers where Microsoft remains dominant. Commanding over 90 percent of a stagnant market (the desktop/laptop computer operating system market) no longer looks as appealing as controlling the majority of a growing market (the mobile computing market).

Wait until the end of October to see if Microsoft's strategy (www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-09-12/microsofts-frantic-race-for-third-place-in-smartphones) of morphing Windows 8 into both desktop and mobile computing devices will work. Strangely, Microsoft plans to release Windows 8 tablets running ARM processors in October, but it will only come with a preview edition (www.infoworld.com/d/applications/what-office-windows-rt-wont-deliver-202382) of Office 2013. After November, they plan to ship the final version of Office 2013. Why Microsoft couldn't coordinate the official release of Office 2013 with Windows 8 remains a mystery, especially since Office 2013 is considered the main reason for getting work done on a tablet in the first place.

In the mean time, plenty of people are already taking advantage of mobile computing through smartphones and tablets, and the chances that trend will suddenly reverse is about as likely as the chance that PC sales will suddenly skyrocket upwards.

Many merchants are replacing (allthingsd.com/20120917/square-says-retailers-picking-ipads-over-registers-at-alarming-rate/) their old cash registers (typically run on a PC) with iPads. "The era of standalone machines is over," says Square's COO Keith Rabois. "Everyone will be migrating to iPads and comparable devices, which will be powered by an app—that is, hopefully, Square." In case you didn't know about Square (squareup.com), they sell a card swiping device to allow merchants to process credit cards on an iPad, iPhone, or Android device.

While waiting for Windows 8 to arrive on October 25th and rescue the sagging PC industry as it moves into the mobile computing market,

you can read Steve Ballmer's rosy predictions about the future (seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2019168601_microsoftballmer16.html?syndication=rss) from his vantage point as CEO of Microsoft.

Hewlett-Packard Acknowledges the Obvious

After buying Palm Computing for \$1.2 billion specifically to get their webOS operating system, and then allowing it to languish as an open source project, Hewlett-Packard has finally realized the obvious. Meg Whitman, Hewlett-Packard's CEO, recently said, "We have to ultimately offer a smartphone (www.zdnet.com/hps-whitman-we-have-to-offer-a-smartphone-7000004269/) because in many countries of the world that would be your first computing device."

Market research firm, IHS iSuppli, states that for the first time since the 1980s, personal computers no longer account for the majority of demand for DRAM (mybroadband.co.za/news/hardware/59963-smartphones-trump-pcs-for-dram-demand.html) memory chips. Only 49 percent of all new DRAM chips were used to make personal computers in the second quarter. By the end of 2013, PCs are expected to soak up just 42.8 percent of DRAM chip production, with the rest split between phones, tablets and other devices.

Hewlett-Packard is finally recognizing the mobile computing trend (www.mobilemag.com/2012/09/17/hp-bender-android-smartphone-surfaces-thanks-to-gbenchmark-sighting/) that Microsoft saw when they redesigned Windows 8 to run on everything. The question is how will Hewlett-Packard jump back into the mobile computer market? Will they rely on their webOS operating system that they paid \$1.2 billion to get? Will they rely on Windows 8? Will they try Android?

Whatever Hewlett-Packard tries, they're already late. The mobile computer wave is already engulfing companies still stuck in the PC era of desktop and laptop computers. Meanwhile, smartphones and tablets are fast becoming the new computers of the future (www.cnn.com/2012/09/13/world/africa/mobile-phones-change-africa/index.html?hpt=hp_c1), especially in Africa as people skip expensive landlines and opt for less expensive and more versatile mobile phones instead.

If you use public transportation run by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, you can download a variety of mobile phone apps to help you track bus schedules (www.mbta.com/rider_tools/apps/) and find the nearest transit stations. This type of application would have been impractical to use on a regular computer unless you could suddenly convince thousands of people to lug a netbook around with them hooked up to the Internet through a cellular modem.

An entire generation is growing up with smartphones and tablets. What are the odds they'll toss them aside and just rely on PCs to do everything like people had to do before smartphones and tablets arrived?

Upgrade Your iPhone

When you get an iPhone, you typically sign up for a two-year contract that spreads out the cost of the iPhone over the next twenty-four months. When that two-year contract ends, should you upgrade or stick with your current iPhone model?

Here's one way to look at your options. If you don't upgrade but keep your current iPhone, you'll save money by not buying another phone. Of course, you'll still be indirectly paying the subsidized fee for the latest iPhone even though you don't have the latest iPhone. Once you go beyond your original two-year contract, you'll be paying extra money to the phone company for nothing.

So here are three options. Keep your current phone and continue paying your monthly bill. Second, upgrade to the latest iPhone 5 and pay at least \$199 for the basic model. Third, upgrade to an earlier iPhone 4S for \$99 or an iPhone 4 for 99 cents.

Apple iPhone 5

16GB
 Black White
\$199.99
FREE Shipping!
 Your iPhone 5 16GB will be shipped in 14-21 business days
 Pre-order Now

32GB
 Black White
\$299.99
FREE Shipping!
 Your iPhone 5 32GB will be shipped in 14-21 business days
 Pre-order Now

64GB
 Black White
\$399.99
FREE Shipping!
 Your iPhone 5 64GB will be shipped in 14-21 business days
 Pre-order Now

Other iPhone models

Apple iPhone 4 - 8 GB - Black
\$0.99
 Buy Now

Apple iPhone 4 - 8 GB - White
\$0.99
 Buy Now

Apple iPhone 4S - 16 GB - Black
\$99.99
 Buy Now

Figure 1. AT&T offers the choice of upgrading to an iPhone 5, iPhone 4S, or iPhone 4.

Your monthly fee will subsidize the cost of an iPhone whether you get another one or not. If you don't want to upgrade, at least upgrade your iPhone's operating system to iOS 6, which will give you some of the latest features, depending on how old your current iPhone might be.

If you have an iPhone 4S, there's probably little reason to upgrade to the iPhone 5. However, if you have an iPhone 4, you won't get all the features of the iPhone 5 even with the new version of iOS 6. If you have an iPhone 3GS or earlier, then you'll definitely need to upgrade to the iPhone 5 unless you absolutely don't want to spend any money buying a new phone.

In general, just upgrade every two years when your two-year contract runs out. Then you can consider not only a new phone but a new carrier as well.

Panoramic Views

One of the new features on the iPhone 5 is the ability to capture a panoramic view just by aiming your iPhone across an area. If you want this feature but don't want to buy an iPhone 5, try the 99 cent Panorama 360 Camera 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%252Fpanorama-360-camera%252Fid495611109%253Ffmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30).

Just aim your iPhone or iPad, run this app, and it displays a red frame on the screen. Now align your iPhone/iPad camera to place the current image (outlined in blue) within the red frame and the app automatically captures an image and stitches it together. While capture images may not align up perfectly, a little practice can capture a pretty good panoramic image.

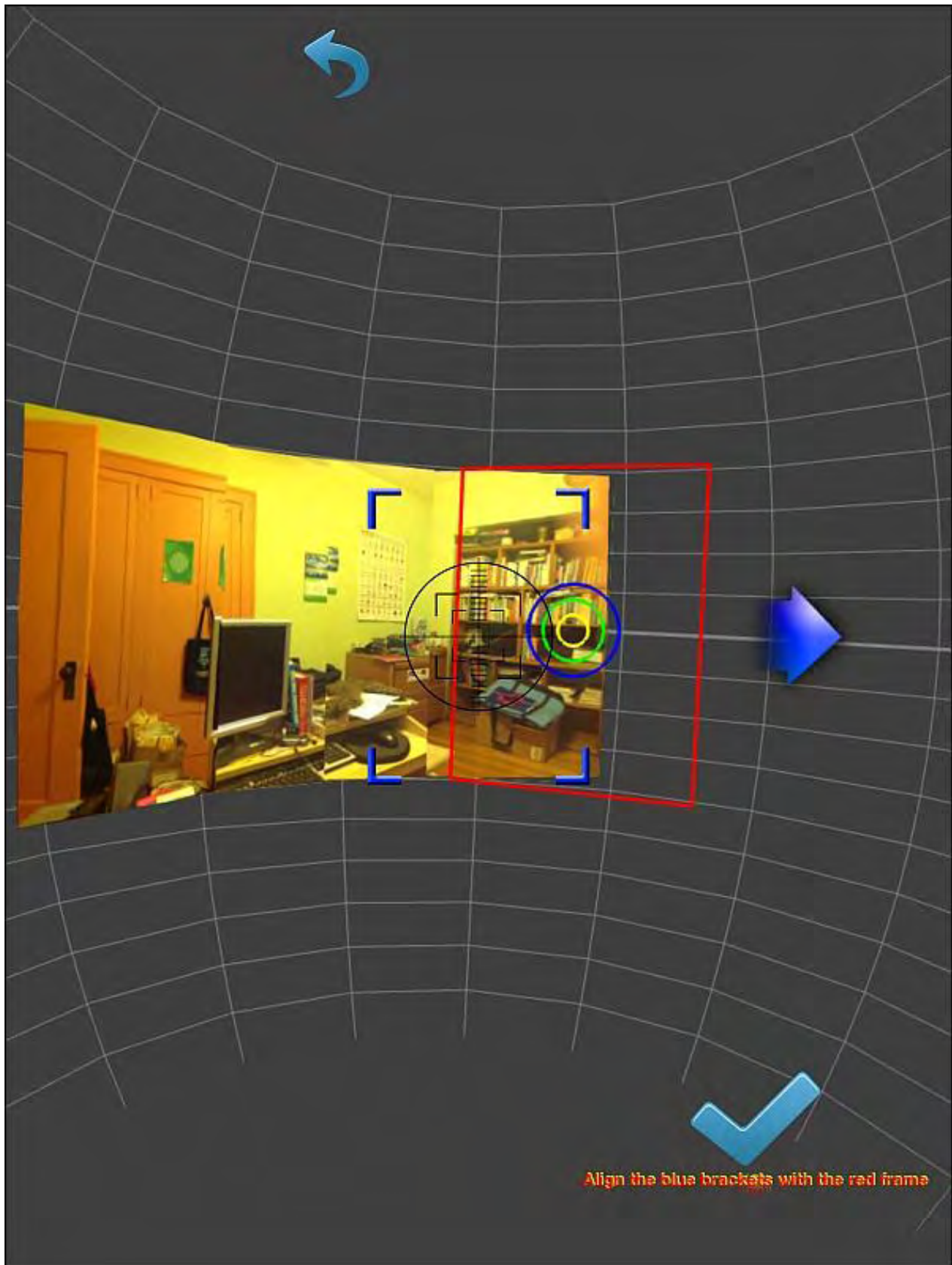


Figure 2. Capture panoramic views from your iPhone/iPad.

When the actual iPhone 5 arrives in the stores, try its panoramic camera feature to see how well it works. You might find that the 99 cent Panorama 360 Camera app could save you the cost of buying an iPhone 5, unless there's another iPhone 5 feature you really need or want.

Possible Windows 8 Tablet Prices

Asus recently leaked information about their Windows 8 tablets and if true, the lowest priced Windows 8 tablet (using an ARM processor) will cost \$599 (news.cnet.com/8301-10805_3-57514548-75/prices-high-for-asus-windows-8-tablets-demand-likely-low/). Keep in mind that the lowest priced iPad is \$499 so a Windows 8 ARM-based tablet could be more expensive if these prices turn out to be true.

A \$100 difference may not deter corporations from looking at Windows 8 tablets, but it will likely discourage many consumers. Given the choice between spending \$100 less and getting an iPad with plenty of third-party support in accessories and apps or spending \$100 more for a Windows 8 tablet with much less third-party support, it's an easy decision to get an iPad instead.

If Microsoft is serious about challenging the iPad, they need to get the price of their Microsoft Surface tablets down to a reasonable level such as \$299 or \$399. Of course, if they get the price that low, they'll undercut their own PC partners. If they price the Microsoft Surface tablet at the same range as other Windows 8 tablet manufacturers, they risk discouraging mass adoption from consumers.

If Asus can't get their Windows 8 tablet prices down below \$599, then wait to see what Microsoft charges for their Surface tablets. For many people, the lack of apps for Windows RT (the version of Windows 8 that runs on ARM processors) might make a regular Windows 8 laptop look more attractive.

Watching sales of Windows 8 PCs, tablets, and smartphones should be fun this winter. By the beginning of next year, we'll all know for sure how well Windows 8 has sold over the holiday season. Anyone want to guess that people will flock back to Windows 8 PCs, Windows 8 smartphones, and Windows 8 tablets and abandon Android and iOS?

* * *

When browsing in Safari, you can open multiple Web pages in tabs. To see what's on each tab, you have to click on each tab. For a faster way to see all your tabs, choose View > Show All Tabs. This displays all your open tabs as thumbnail images that you can swipe horizontally to view them one at a time.



Figure 3. The View > Show All Tabs command lets you browse through all your open Web pages.

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)

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)

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)

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)

20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702)

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

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541)

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

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)

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

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894))

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

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70))

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

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M))

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

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/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A)

[ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A))

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

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

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

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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Beyond Personal Computing

“A Look at the Human Side of Computing”

by Marilyn K. Martin

The Misunderstood World of Computer Viruses

IT departments and government cyber-warriors are deep into daily battles with international hackers and their cyber war foreign pay masters. And news stories abound over an invisible nightmare world of trojan and worm mega-viruses that can shut down nuclear plants, sift through billions of people's private online histories at one time, and even self-delete before getting caught. To the average computer user, however, there's a little confusion over exactly what a "computer virus" really is...

Do-it-Yourself Virus Theory

A user called up Tech Support and asked, "So is there a spray I can buy for my new computer?" The Support Tech thought a moment and asked, "You mean a can of compressed air to clean out your machine?" The user responded, "No, I mean a spray that could kill all the viruses." "Uh, no," replied the Tech. "Computer viruses are just a name we give to malicious software. These viruses aren't, like, alive or anything. So, no, there's no such thing as a computer antivirus spray."

A school girl was complaining to a friend that her father's laptop had a virus. The friend asked, "Did anyone put a disk in that had a virus?" "No," the girl replied. "Our discs are all clean. But I think I may have caused it by plugging his laptop into a different electrical outlet than in our house."

A student walked into his high school English computer lab one day to see two teachers staring at a computer screen that said "Non-system disk error. Remove and press any key." One teacher looked at the other and said, "It's got to be a virus. Those damn kids are always putting those things on our network."

A young man found a "boot sector virus" in his computer. He tried to get rid of the problem by changing the motherboard. But he was totally baffled when the virus keep reappearing.

A user walked into a big box electronic store and gravitated toward a demo Playstation game unit. He started to try it out but discovered that the controller had been disconnected from the game unit. He stopped a passing salesman who explained, "It's disconnected because the controller has a virus. We had to move this display from near the computer section of the store to see if it would get better."

Collecting Viruses for a Hobby

One Techie runs old computer viruses on a stand-alone PC. He studies and records the effects, and then uploads his results to YouTube as a free service. A friend thought he was doing too much work, and e-mailed him some simple advice: 1) Open the computer's registry; 2) Delete anything that looks "strange."

Well, That's What I Learned in Microbiology

After wrenching a 3-inch diskette from a computer, a college computer lab tech handed the damaged disk (without its metal protector) back to the student. "Make another copy of this damaged diskette as soon as possible. Since this one is no longer protected from airborne

viruses."

In a school computer lab, one student asks the student next to her, "Could you move your discs a little farther away from my discs? You know, so your discs can't give mine any viruses?"

A student had to take a document on a 3-inch diskette to the principal's office. As the student waited before the principal's desk, since she was on the phone, the student played with the springy metal shutter. When the principal finally hung up, she sternly warned the student to stop that, "or the diskette will catch a virus."

A corporation's Finance Director put in an urgent call to IT, since one of her discs had caused her computer's virus checker to flash an alarming message. The Tech told her to put the offending disc aside until he got there. When he arrived she pointed to a side table, where a cardboard box containing the one infected disc had a post-it note saying "Quarantine."

A corporate IT got a call one day from an employee saying he had a bug in his computer. When the Tech got there, he saw a picture on the employee's computer screen, of a hand holding an insect. The Tech explained that it just meant that the antivirus software had done its job and discovered a virus on the system. The employee then asked for another computer temporarily, "So this one can rest and recover for a few days."

A woman called a Help Desk and was told that her computer was infected with a trojan virus. She hung up in a panic, then called back an hour later about disinfecting. The Tech tried to ask her about software and antivirus programs. But all she wanted to know was if she'd done the right thing by dismantling her entire computer, and was standing by with Lysol to wipe down all her computer parts.

That "Stoned Virus" Really Messed Me up, Dude...

"Hi, I think my son's been storing pebbles in the back of my computer. The screen keeps saying "Your PC is Stoned!" (This was the message displayed on computers infected with a "Stoned" virus. It was a boot sector virus which was very common and widespread in the early 1990s.)

"Hi, I'm the administrator for floor 27. Can you tell me if we'll be getting that Michaelangelo virus here at the bank?" (The Michaelangelo virus first appeared in Australia in 1991. It too was a boot sector virus that only came to life on March 6th—Michelangelo's birthday—and was a variation of a Stoned virus. It had been eradicated by 1997.)

Keeping Viruses All in the Family

A matronly woman walked into a computer store and announced, "Hi, I'd like to buy a virus." The store clerk replied, "Don't you mean an antivirus program?" "No," the woman replied firmly. "My son said very specifically that I need to buy a virus." The store clerk remembered the saying, that The Customer is Always Right. "Well, that's fairly easy, and totally free," the clerk replied with a smile. "Connect to the Internet and download a few gaming toolbars. You'll have lots of viruses!"

A mother marched into a computer store with her teen-gamer son, and asked for a "virus killer" for his gaming system. When the Tech asked what system the teen played on, the boy named an older system with no disc drives. So the Tech explained to the woman that her son's gaming system couldn't possibly have any viruses, since there was no transference capabilities. The woman got irate, telling the Tech that the virus was on her son's friend's more-modern gaming computer, that her son had played on. So obviously the virus got on her son from that computer, and when he came home, the virus had transferred from her son to his gaming computer. When the baffled Tech tried to explain the difference between biological viruses and computer viruses, the woman turned abruptly and departed. "Never mind! I'm going to find a computer professional who understands what I'm talking about!"

Virus Alert for Husbands

Some poor Computer Tech got a little too tangled up in his personal life. He decided to warn his friends with an unusual Virus Alert: "All users should be aware that Wife 1.0 has an undocumented bug. If you try to install Mistress 1.1 before uninstalling Wife 1.0, Wife 1.0 will delete MS Money files long before doing the uninstall itself. If that happens, Mistress 1.1 won't install and you will get an "insufficient resources" error message. To avoid the aforementioned bug, try installing Mistress 1.1 on a different system and *never* run any file transfer applications (such as LapLink) between the two systems."

Virus Questions to Tech Support

"I need you to tell me what browser I'm using. Is it Netscape 2.0? 'Cause I read that Netscape 2.0 distributes a virus called Java."

"Is it possible to have a virus attached to a printed file? And can it infect my computer if I scan the doc back into the computer?"

"So are you doing anything differently, that might be why your floppies aren't being read?" asked a patient Help Desk Tech. "Well, since I heard about computer viruses," the user replied, "I keep the paper sleeve on my floppy discs when I put them in the disc drive, so they won't catch a virus."

Random Thoughts About Computer Viruses

Norton: Incoming Virus—(D)ownload and save, (R)un after download, (P)remium upgrade to delete.

Have you heard about the Homeland Security virus? It feels threatened by all the other files on your computer, and erases them "in self-defense."

How come when your computer catches a virus you're the one who misses work?

E-mail Viruses: Essential Misunderstanding

A corporation's computer security team forwarded a warning about a dreaded "RedTeam" e-mail virus to all employees, alerting them that they had also been sent protection software. A tech-savvy employee strenuously objected, trying to explain that a virus couldn't (then) be sent by an e-mail, only in an attachment. And that the inoculation software sent with the warning most likely contained the real virus. He was ignored. And he was right.

Another employee opened an e-mail from his company's Human Resources Department one morning, warning about a dreaded e-mail virus. The tech-savvy employee shook his head, and then queried HR for more information in order to, you know, protect his computer. HR responded by forwarding him a copy of the supposedly infected e-mail.

"Yeah, everyone's talking about these e-mail viruses that arrive with certain subject lines, like ILOVEYOU. So I got an e-mail like that and, you know, I just had to open it to see what all the fuss was about."

Overheard Virus Talk

"Yeah, I had to call IT because my monitor screen was shaking so bad. The IT guy said it was because of my desk fan. So I had to move my fan, since it has got a virus and I don't want it to infect my computer."

"My laptop is running too slow and keeps crashing. I'm going to take it to the repair shop to have it checked for viruses." His companion replied, "Oh, I don't worry about viruses. Not many people know that viruses work in the back of the memory. And Windows is in front of the memory. So I doubt your laptop has a virus."

"Hey, I saw something on TV last night about that ILOVEYOU virus. Do you think you could write a virus?" The friend shrugged, "Yeah, if I wanted to." The guy was enthused now. "So could I! They showed all those letters and symbols on the TV story last night, saying it was the virus. But they don't mean anything, do they?"

Reasons Why Windows is Not a Virus

- 1) Viruses are free.
- 2) Viruses don't take up most of your hard drive.
- 3) Viruses don't need 80 megs of RAM.
- 4) Viruses don't have major bugs.
- 5) Viruses don't have three different sets of documentation.
- 6) Viruses don't leak info to the press about the upcoming Jerusalem 95, to keep people from switching to Michelangelo/2 Warp.
- 7) Viruses aren't on every computer.

8) Nobody cares if a virus turns out to be 16 bit, even though it is advertised as 32.

9) Viruses install themselves!

(Most of these amusing anecdotes can be found on multiple online joke sites. But special thanks to Rinkworks.com (*Rinkworks.com*), Computer-jokes.net (*Computer-jokes.net*), and Bitoffun.com (*Bitoffun.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.demonicctome.com). And in January 2012 she had a SF Police Procedural appearing in *Cosmic Crime* magazine, and a SF Dystopian Romance appearing in the *Strange Valentines* anthology. She also has almost seventy articles on Helium.com (www.helium.com/users/573405/show_articles), and is writing a humorous Young Adult SF series, *Chronicles of Mathias* (www.amazon.com/Chronicles-Mathias-One-Reptilian-Rebirth/dp/1598249002). Volumes One and Two have received a "Gold Star for Excellence" from TeensReadToo.com (www.teensreadtoo.com/ReptilianRebirth.html), and are available from most on-line bookstores.

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

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

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

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* *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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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Bypassing Metro in Windows 8," "Microsoft Keyboard Macro," "Decline of Inkjet Printers," "Shielding Users from Mistakes"

Bypassing Metro in Windows 8

[Regarding the August 31 Digital Dave column:]

Absolutely right, no point in upgrading to Windows 8 unless you need/want some specific feature it offers that Windows 7 doesn't.

However, for those who don't want to see the Metro screen in Windows 8, and would like a start/programs/search very similar to windows 7, there is a free utility I've only tried on the latest release preview, but it works great. Again, it's free.

It's called Classic Shell and can be downloaded from classicshell.sourceforge.net/.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Microsoft Keyboard Macro

[Regarding the August 31 Digital Dave column:]

Wow, I have the MS 4000 keyboard and its associated software and I was positive it would have the feature requested, that is, assign a simple string of characters to one of the keys.

Not!

And, apparently they've "upgraded" the software and it's horrible to use. Fortunately, I disabled the FWD and BACK Web keys before it got upgraded or I'd have had problems finding how to do so. **Horrible** new interface.

Apparently **some** of the keys will allow a macro, but not the obvious ones at the top of the keyboard. And that macro can just have a string of text. Again, **way** too complicated.

So your suggestion of AutoHotkey is the best solution.

Lastly, I tried help, got nowhere, tried MS Web site for help and to give feedback on the current MS Mouse and Keyboard Center program, no luck. And I'm an experienced computer person! Good luck if you're not.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Decline of Inkjet Printers

[Regarding the September 7 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Personally, I believe inkjet printers will be around for a long time due to photo enthusiasts, semi-pro and pro photographers wishing to print their own photographs. In fact, this facet of photography is steadily growing because of bigger, better and cheaper pro quality printers coming online from makers such as Epson and Canon to name two. Also, the choices of more varied and improved photo papers is helping to stimulate this sector of the market. True: a SOHO [**S**mall **O**ffice/**H**ome **O**ffice] isn't going to go out and buy a \$1,000 printer to print garage sale postings on cheap \$2.00 per ream office paper. Also, with the advent of viable tablets now and cloud services, one can create PDF's, docs and photos for instant access.

-Andrew Kliss, San Marcos, CA.

Shielding Users from Mistakes

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

Interesting article, and as a computer pro, I agree with most of your comments. I don't think comparing an airplane's cargo hatch failure with accidentally deleting a file, however... :)

I especially liked your Vista/recycle bin deletion example, undoing or recovering from something you did by mistake should definitely be easy. Good examples of this are in Firefox where if you close a tab by mistake (I just did it... :)) there's an "undo close tab" option. And in Gmail, if you delete an e-mail or calendar event, there's an undo option at the top.

However, I actually *use* the option to delete files at times via the file open or save boxes and would miss that option should I ever move to a Mac. And the default for most programs (including MS Office) in Windows *only* shows the default files it can open. The user would have to deliberately change the "Files of type" box to show all files before they'd be able to delete them via that interface.

I guess I have to realize that most computer users are just that, users, with no interest or thought to anything beyond the task at hand. I'm not saying that's bad, just that it's not how my mind works. I really like having lots of options.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

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