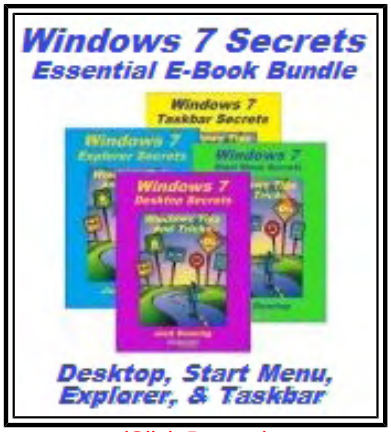
ComputorEdge™ Online — 10/26/12

This issue:
Hot Toys for Holidays, Holiday Shopping Trends, E-Reader Wars, and More!

More little known high tech stories, new Apple products, "Who will buy the iPad Mini?", plus a new AutoHotkey column.



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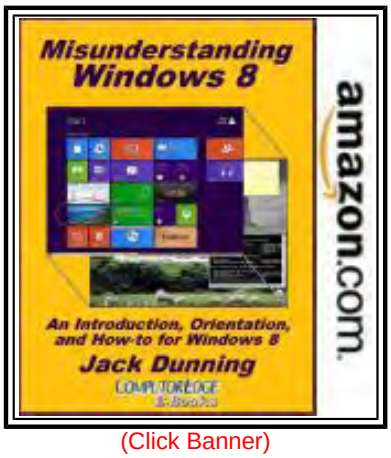

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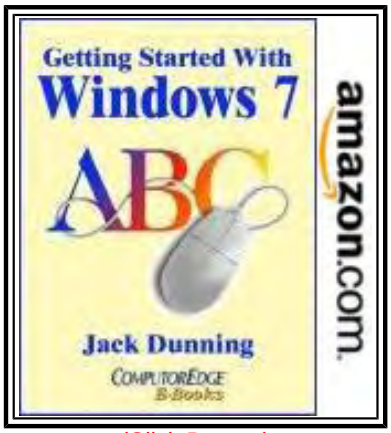

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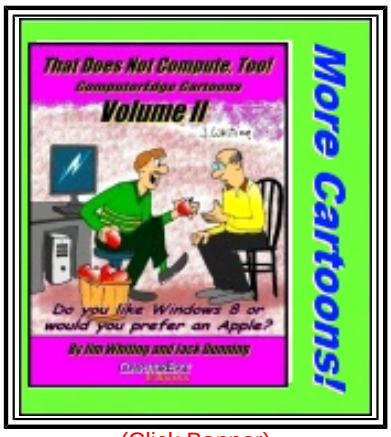

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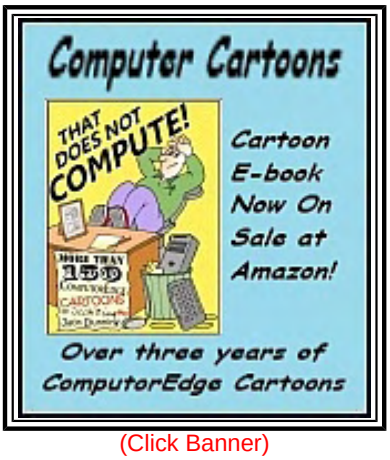

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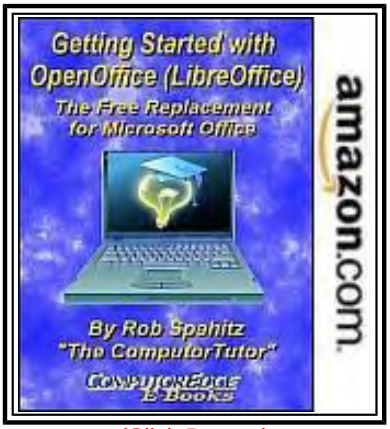

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Digital Dave

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

Dave Is Dave; Redirecting Program Output to Lightning PDF; Remove Wisdom Toolbar.

Hey Dave!

Browsing today through your Web page in the latest ComputorEdge*, after my occasionally missing some issues for a while (shame!), thus wallowing in the mush of digital ignorance. Yet again there was your logo-image, unchanged since first seeing it. It's a good one. And I got to wondering.*

I have been reading ComputorEdge *since the days in old San Diego of 1986, when my hair was dark and there were no lines upon my face (hint, hint). I first learned to compute on a what? PC clone "186" & 5.25 floppy?! Back then,* ComputorEdge *was called* The Byte Buyer*. And you were digitalizing us then and ever since. So now, after all these years, I wonder: With all that logo brown hair, haven't you gotten any older? Did you find that Excelsior of Youth somewhere beneath a microchip or something? Reincarnate yourself as yourself? (Handy little trick if there ever was one).*

Shouldn't there be a little gray stuff in there somewhere by now? Just wondering. Especially when I look at myself in the mirror. While holding up the latest online San Diego edition of ComputorEdge*. (Huh?)*

RJ (A notorious, if not also genuinely likable, "person of interest")

RJ Gardner
Somewhere in the fields of Iowa

Dear RJ,

I don't know what you're talking about. I still see the same person in the mirror.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

What must I do to have my system read all PDF files with my installed Lightning PDF package? I still run across programs that insist on using Acrobat Reader and won't open, instead sending me on the Internet to fetch the Adobe product.

I don't want to download and install the Adobe Reader program when my Lightning PDF program does it all. Is there some kind of redirect I can use that will fool these adobe seeking PDFs to use my product instead?

Confused,

Mark

Dear Mark,

I think that I understand your problem. Even though you have set Lightning PDF as your default for all PDF files, there are specific programs which ignore your defaults and attempt to load Adobe Reader. This means that the call for Adobe Reader is either embedded in the program or one of the registry entries for that program. If the call is embedded in the program then the only way that you could force Lightning PDF to open would be through some type of redirect (as you have suggested). Unfortunately, I'm not familiar with any utility which will intercept calls from a program to redirect to another program. Maybe another reader has run into this problem.

It is quite possible that you could use AutoHotkey to write a short script which would enable a hotkey combination that opens Lightning PDF with the target file, as long as you have a clear identifiable path to the file. It would depend upon the program and the form of the PDF path and name. I haven't tested doing this, but it would most likely involve the AutoHotkey Run command calling out Lightning PDF with the path (URL) and name of the file selected from the running program. If the program doesn't display the location and name of the PDF, then this is not likely to work. (If you're not familiar with AutoHotkey, Jack Dunning has just put out a beginner's guide (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*) based upon the articles he wrote for *ComputorEdge*.)

It is also possible that the default PDF reader for the program is stored in the registry. If this is the case, you should be able to find it with a regedit search (Run => regedit) using the program name. However, you would need to know exactly how it needs to be changed for Lightning PDF to open as a default.

I would probably just install Adobe Reader for those unique situations, then save any files that I needed. If you do this, you will need to make sure that all the defaults are set back to Lightning PDF. Maybe someone will offer us the perfect answer.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave (from a long time admirer!),

How can I get rid of the "Wisdom" Toolbar? It is on my Google Chrome!

Takes a lot of room, and is promoting things that I have no—zero—*interest in!*

Al Donlevy
Vista, CA

Dear Al,

Unlike many of the companies who produce annoying toolbars, Wisdom Software actually has an FAQ for removing its toolbar (*www.wisdom-soft.com/kb/faq.htm#tb*). While it doesn't specifically mention Google Chrome, you should be able to make any necessary changes through the Tools menu.

Don't forget to remove it from both the browser and through Control Panel => Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP).

Digital Dave

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Holiday Gifts and More Little Known High Tech Stories

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Hot Toys for Holidays From Toys R Us

As reported in the *Boston Globe* in September 2012, Toys R Us is already in full frontal assault for the upcoming holidays. They've released their Hot Toy list (*www.toysrus.com/shop/index.jsp?categoryId=2255956*) of 50 toys, which is a curious mix (*www.boston.com/business/news/2012/09/18/tot-tablets-retro-brands-are-toys-hot-toys/7gJF3grtMxEnjeJ8Mel8CJ/story.html*) of electronic tablets, fashion dolls and retro figures.

"We've got a problem! Someone hacked into Santa's Naughty and Nice list!"

Toys R Us is also offering a Hot Toy reservation program (*www.boston.com/business/articles/2012/09/12/toys_r_us_to_offer_hot_toy_reservation_program/?camp=obinsite*), where in-store customers have until the end of October to put 20% down on a Hot Toy, receive an e-mail when the order is available, and have until December 16th to pick it up in-store. "The idea is to help customers avoid a frantic last-minute search for super-popular toys, which are often sold out long before Christmas."

Toys R Us is also offering a layaway program and new ship-to-store program to draw toy shoppers into its stores. Toys R Us is also launching an international shipping option (*www.miamiherald.com/2012/10/10/3044090/toys-r-us-to-launch-*

online-international.html) for online orders to more than 60 countries, in partnership with i-parcel (*www.i-parcel.com/*). Part of this new international option lets shoppers buy toys in U.S. stores, and ship them anywhere in the world.

Holiday Shopping Trends—Stocking up Earlier, and More Store Mobile Apps

According to the *Boston Globe* in October 2012, Staples ran an informal poll (*www.boston.com/businessupdates/2012/10/12/staples-not-too-soon-think-about-getting-ready-for-the-christmas-holidays/pOAf7bCXT89ATAfUiC8Y6O/story.html*) that revealed one-third of respondents claimed that their workplace usually started preparing for Christmas before Thanksgiving. So Staples (*www.staples.com*) is busy stocking up on electronic holiday items, from plasma TVs and game consoles to laptops, e-readers, tablets and personal computers.

The New York Times reported in October 2012 that Internet company Fab (*fab.com/*), an online shop for designer furniture and housewares, is getting 33% of its daily visits through its Android and iPad apps (*bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/11/fab-revamps-its-mobile-shops-anticipating-holiday-demand/?ref=technology*). Consequently, Fab is giving its site a face-lift, adding searches by color, and offering social features that let shoppers see what their friends are saving and purchasing. To prepare for the holidays, Fab is stocking a New Jersey warehouse with goods and a couple hundred workers, to ensure that orders are delivered within a few days.

Unusual Holiday Gift Ideas For Adults

A fun but strange Web site called dudeiwantthat.com (*dudeiwantthat.com*) has some interesting products perfect for all the got-everything and only-unusual-stuff types on your gift-giving list. First up is a functioning, portable fireplace (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/household/miscellaneous/tabletop-fireplace.asp*) to add warmth and coziness anywhere, from tabletops to nightstands. The Anywhere Fireplace (*www.anywherefireplaces.com/*) burns non-toxic, non-polluting bio-ethanol liquid fuel, generating 8,500 BTUs of heat through various tempered glass and stainless steel modern designs. Prices range from $99 to $399, and are available on Amazon.

How about heat-sensitive glass tiles (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/household/bathroom/heat-sensitive-tile.asp*), that go from black at room temperature, to blue-green-yellow when body, water or other heat is applied? Made by Moving Color (*www.movingcolor.net/products_northern.html*), their Northern Lights tiles are pricey (starting at $33 per tile) but perfect for a tabletop or headboard, if you can't afford to re-tile your entire shower. Check out all their unique tiles (*www.movingcolor.net/*).

So you want to get another tattoo, but aren't sure which of several designs you are currently leaning toward that you want to commit to? MoodINQ Tattoo System (*inkarttattoos.com/tattoo-blog/moodinq-programmable-tattoo-system/*) is a programmable tattoo system (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/gear/gadgets/programmable-tattoo-system.asp*), where a surgically-implanted E-ink canvas lets you wave a special wand over that body part, and a new tattoo will appear. About $150 from ThinkGeek (*www.thinkgeek.com/*).

Interesting New Gadgets and Hardware

Gizmag.com reported in September 2012 that LaCie's Rugged line (*www.lacie.com/us/products/*) now offers an external hard drive with a Thunderbolt connection (*www.gizmag.com/lacie-rugged-usb-3-thunderbolt-drive/24323/*) in addition to USB 3.0. The mobile hard drive has incredibly fast transfer speeds, and its shock-resistant case is built to military grade standards. Meaning it is protected from weather and dust, and can survive being run over by a car and/or being dropped from up to four feet.

In September 2012 Proftec.com announced that a new infrared spy camera (*www.proftec.com/cameras/1080p-hd-infrared-spy-camera-fits-your-keychain-and-also-your-budget/*) can fit on your keychain. The Infrared Night Vision HD Spy Cam Car Key has a tiny video camera with an infrared LED for illuminating 1080p HD videos. About the size of a remote car door controller, the unit only weighs 8 ounces, and is sold through USBGeek (*www.usbgeek.com/search?q=infrared+spy+camera&search-button.x=14&search-button.y=13*) for about $60.

Internet Clothing and Fashion

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported in May 2012 that Zoe Damacela—who spent her childhood in homeless shelters—honed her creative flair early by making and selling greeting cards and jewelry on street corners. She is now CEO of her own fashion business (*www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/business/12579200-452/weaving-tech-into-fashion-biz.html*) on the Internet. Melding old and new Chicago business cultures (garment sewers and social-media networking), Zoe Damacela Apparel (*www.zoedamacela.com*) is an online catalog business specializing in custom-made, ready-to-wear clothing, and employs up to 30 contract garment workers to sew the fashions.

In September 2012's *Boston Globe*, Jason Keith's Small Business Blog profiled a unique start-up that reinvents second-hand clothing (*www.boston.com/business/specials/small_business_blog/2012/09/they_say_that_t.html*). Called thredUP (*www.thredup.com/*), the idea is that with kids routinely outgrowing their clothes, and adults staring at old wardrobe they will never wear again, an idea for "online clothes swapping" was born. Today the company is a blend of online shopping and offline delivery and pick-up. People can fill up a threadUP bag for free shipping to their San Francisco headquarters. If the clothes meet the company's standards for resell, they are put on the Web site, with donators getting a portion of the sale, similar to a consignment shop. CEO James Reinhart reports the site is receiving and selling thousands of clothing items every day, and are on-track to have the largest supply of pre-owned children's clothes for sale anywhere on the Web.

Notable New Mobile Apps

Boston Globe reported in August 2012 on a new mobile app for people with the time and gas to perform little tasks (*www.boston.com/business/technology/apptitude_test/2012/08/gigwalk_getting_paid_for_minor_tasks.html*) for businesses for pay. I wrote earlier about ways to make a little extra money, from taking specific photos to renting out your garage. But Gigwalk (*gigwalk.com/*) is a mobile app for quick little tasks businesses want done, from checking out liquor brands in a store to locating electric vehicle charging stations. The gigs only pay $3-$8 at first, with higher rates later for doing a good job and getting known. Payment goes directly into Paypal, which the workers can save, use to buy things, or download the sum into their checking account.

The Boston Globe reported in September 2012, that a new start-up has a slightly different take on fantasy sports (*www.boston.com/business/technology/innoeco/2012/09/fantasy_sports_startup_draftki.html*). DraftKings (*www.draftkings.com/*) has just released their first game app, Big Baller, which only uses virtual-currency. It focuses more on live scores and trash-talk, than slowly building a team and following its progress over a season. Players can draft new athletes daily, and compete with friends or the entire Big Baller community.

E-Reader Wars

In October 2012, the *New York Times* reported on the current state of e-reader products (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/04/technology/personaltech/kindles-paperwhite-e-reader-lets-there-be-more-light-review.html?ref=technology*). Amazon's Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook are currently locked in battle for first place. One major drawback for the original e-readers was lack of lighting for reading in bed. When Barnes &

Noble offered its updated Nook Glowlight e-reader in April, the device offered background light in a soft glow, so people could read in bed and not fumble with flashlights or disturb bed-mates.

Now Amazon has come out with a Kindle Paperwhite that has better interior lighting, and packs in 212 tiny dots per inch (compared to the Nook's 167 dots) for sharper text. Both models have touchscreens, but only the Nook comes with a wall charger. Amazon has also taken the questionable step of putting advertisements on their Kindle. So both e-readers have their own advantages and disadvantages, and both cost around $120. And now e-readers are beginning to merge with tablets. For $200 you can buy a color touchscreen e-reader, for both reading and movie viewing, and $500 can buy an iPad reader, "almost as useful as a laptop." Best news from all these upgrades? You can go on eBay and buy barely-older e-readers for under $100 (*www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_trksid=p2043524.m570.l1311&_nkw=kindle+e-reader&_sacat=0&_from=R40*)—with many under $50.

Gizmag (*www.gizmag.com/*) in October 2012 reported that a German developer, txtr (*us.txtr.com/*) is offering the smallest e-reader in the world, the 4.5 ounce Beagle (*www.gizmag.com/txtr-beagle-ereader/24508/*). Focusing on portability over power, the Beagle has a 5-inch screen, and can fit in a pocket like a cell phone. It offers no touchscreen, backlight, additional programs or Wi-Fi support. But it can store five e-books, and run one year on triple-A batteries. Attached to a mobile service contract, the Beagle could cost as low as $13, and be ideal for occasional or very young readers who don't need all the options.

Start-up Competition in Chicago Trucking

According to the *Chicago Sun-Times* in September 2012, Chicago is a national transportation hub and has become a battleground between mainline truck brokers and start-ups to ship freight at the lowest cost on the quickest routes. Technology is helping, with truckers using mobile apps (*www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/business/15399753-452/apps-for-truckers-on-a-roll.html*) and GPS to find the quickest, congestion-free routes, as well as locate rest stops and the lowest-priced fuel. The fierce competition is killing the smaller third-party logistics companies, but the mid-size and up survivors are growing and rapidly hiring college grads who, I assume, can nimbly handle all the new technology

More Music Goes Digital

The Boston Globe reported in September 2012 on a new app that helps users find live music venues (*www.boston.com/business/technology/appsampler/2012/09/app_finds_live_music.html*) all over the United States. Free from the iPhone App Store, Timbre (*www.timbreapp.com/*) lets users type in their zip code or city name, and a list pops up of live musical acts currently playing nearby. Touch the name of an interesting venue, and it opens up with more information and even a free song sample, with a link to iTunes where you can purchase that sample song.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported in June 2012 about Chicago's bragging rights for being a "leading-edge online network (*www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/entertainment/13448383-452/classing-up-music-online.html*) of classical-music composers." Access Contemporary Music (*acmusic.org/*) is an eight-year-old non-profit in Chicago that welcomes online submissions from young classical music composers from all over the world. They recently combined the submissions of Chinese violinist Xiaogang Ye into an online recital, that resulted in a documentary that introduced his talent to the world. ACM, led by founder and executive director Seth Boustead, offers a $50-a-year Composer Membership Program, weekly programs of online submitted composers' work, and conducts a high school composers' workshop. AMC is also a music school, offering piano and composition lessons.

Older Media Experimenting to Stay Relevant in an Online World

With most people now getting their news online rather than from TV or print media, TV stations and newspapers are trying out new ideas to stay afloat. As reported in September 2012, McClatchy sold its valuable 14-acre Miami bayfront compound, sending both WLRN Radio and the *Miami Herald* newspaper

(who'd shared reporters, scoops and a newsroom) scrambling to find new homes (*www.excellenceinjournalism.org/pdf/handouts/from-competition-to-collaboration.pdf*). The *Herald* moved into a former military complex 10 miles west, and WLRN's news team followed them to keep their collaboration intact.

Another collaboration model is the Knight-funded plan (*www.abpnews.com/culture/media-and-arts/item/7794-mercer-launches-journalism-experiment#.UHsgV65dP4Y*) in Macon, Georgia, to put a journalism school, public radio station, and newspaper all under one roof. The liberal-arts Mercer University Center for Collaborative Journalism is adapting the medical-residency concept to journalism education, in partnership with local media. Industry experts are watching this cutting-edge experiment, hoping it will become a model to help save local journalism in America.

Sometimes innovation and need aren't enough to save a cutting-edge Web site, if the subject matter is too disturbing. *The New York Times* reported in September 2012 on such a struggling Web site, which tracks every murder (*www.nytimes.com/2012/09/10/business/media/homicide-watch-web-site-venture-struggles-to-survive.html*) in Washington DC. Homicide Watch DC (*homicidewatch.org/*) was initially hailed as brilliant, and everyone expected it to be quickly bought out by a large news organization, or that anti-crime foundations would practically throw money at it. Neither happened, and the Web site had to go on hiatus while appealing to Kickstarter for more funds. The site is now back in action with its mission statement: "Mark every death. Remember every victim. Follow every case."

With the long Presidential Campaign Season nearing an end, and criticism being heaped on the thinly disguised subjectivity of the mainstream media, people are looking for more balanced news. *The Seattle Times* Brier Dudley reported in October 2012, that a new Chrome tool (*seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019277892_seeking_balanced_news_profs_ch.html*) could help with locating more balanced news. The Balancer (*balancestudy.org/balancer/*) analyses your Web browsing to show you your political slant. If your news consumption tilts too far one way or the other, the tool will make reading suggestions for a more balanced view. Dudley says the multiple pages of personal survey questions to be filled out before the installation may be a turn-off. So he suggests using the tool with a healthy dose of skepticism, although it might be fun and educational to see if your news consumption is seriously out-of-balance.

Cutting Edge High Tech Still in Development

In October 2012, Gizmag.com previewed the Hop! suitcase (*www.gizmag.com/hop-suitcase/24495/*), which automatically follows its owner. The smart-suitcase has three receivers which communicate with an app running the traveler's smartphone, via Bluetooth. A dual caterpillar track-type system on the bottom of the Hop! provides the motion, and the system can be configured to follow other Hop! units in a line. Its dimensions conform to most airline cabin space requirements, and the internal mechanism doesn't add much weight. Still in development, the designer wants to also introduce a larger suitcase with the same mechanism.

In October 2012 it was announced that the computer science department at the University of Bristol (England), has developed a touchscreen tabletop display (*www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2012/8846.html*) that can show multiple displays at once. The overlay technology is called PiVOT (Personalized View-Overlays for Tabletops), and allows multiple view zones in the same space. For instance, the upper right may be displaying a video for one user, but others could see something entirely different from a different angle. A 3-minute demo video (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMmnfTE7jTA*) on YouTube is a fascinating explanation of the new system.

Better Personal Security

Yahoo Finance reported in September 2012 that PIN numbers for bank accounts are too easy to guess (*finance.yahoo.com/blogs/the-exchange/cracking-pin-code-easy-1-2-3-4-130143629.html*). Data Scientist Nick Berry of Data Genetics (*datagenetics.com/*) discovered that there are 10,000 possible combinations for just a four digit PIN number of 0-9. A staggering 11% of PIN number analyzed were just 1-2-3-4, followed by 1-1-1-1 (6%) and 0-0-0-0 (2%). He further discovered that almost 27% of all PIN numbers could be guessed by attempting just 20 combinations of four digits, including dates starting with 19__. Some of the top "easy guesses" are the curious 2580 (which is the middle column of phone and ATM keypads) and 3141592654 (which are the first digits of Pi).

Futurity reported in September 2012 on advancements to protect your voiceprint (*www.futurity.org/science-technology/how-to-protect-your-voiceprint-from-identity-theft/*) from identity theft. Beyond mere passwords, the advance of voice authentication systems will give smartphone users another layer of protection, with new technology already aimed at protecting against voice-hackers. Carnegie Mellon University's Language Technologies Institute (LTI) has developed a system to let users check in with voice authentication, without their actual voice ever leaving their smartphone. This will prevent the theft of users' voice-biometrics, which later could be used to hack banking, health or other personal accounts.

Futurity also reported in September 2012 on a major advancement in cybersecurity and cryptography (*www.futurity.org/science-technology/quantum-step-toward-trickier-cyber-security/*). A graduate student at the University of California at Santa Barbara (now a postdoctoral researcher in experimental quantum computing at IBM) developed a new quantum processor capable of factoring a composite number into its constituent prime factors. This is a milestone on the road map to building a quantum computer capable of factoring much larger numbers, providing a game-changer in the world of computer encryption.

Modern Art Going High Tech

The New York Times reported in September 2012 that Wade Guyton's artist's tools (*www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/arts/design/wade-guytons-computer-made-works-at-the-whitney.html?ref=technology*) are Mac computers—and the largest printer Epson makes, the Stylus Pro 1188- inkjet. Unable to get noticed a decade ago, today at 40, Guyton's "printed" modern art has avid collectors as well as pieces on permanent display in museums. Along with a handful of other artists, Guyton is approaching art through technology, producing modern art that is deemed both abstract and Pop.

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-*

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* *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: Solving Software Problems

“Windows Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP)**”** by Jack Dunning

Resolving software problems can be tricky. Windows Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP) is a tool that will help with a clean install.

Every once in a while, strange things start happening with a computer program—I don't care how careful you are or what type of computer you're using. It may be that an update to a program starts interfering with other operations, or the operating system itself has become corrupted. Possibly, it's the beginning of a hard drive failure. It can be difficult to determine the problem. A while back, I noticed an issue with a program I hadn't used in a few weeks. When I attempted to load the program, it pretended to start, then (when I wasn't looking) it would disappear. This started happening on more than one computer, but only with that one program. Hmm.

Windows Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP)

Of course, viruses, corrupted files, operating system updates and program updates all came to mind. Even with guidance from the Web, it is difficult to know what to do first. I undertook the standard attempt to Repair the program. This can be done by opening the Programs and Features windows. (Programs and Features can be found at Control Panel => Programs, see Figure 2. Use Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP, see Figure 1.) As you select each program (depending upon which version of Windows you're using), you will see options for Uninstall, Change and/or Repair. Some programs may only have Uninstall as an option, while others may have all three.

The Programs and Features window was first introduced in Windows Vista (see Figure 2) replacing the Windows XP Add or Remove Programs (see Figure 1). It is the primary tool for Uninstalling, Changing, or Repairing a software problem. The Programs and Features window is essentially the same in Windows 7 and Windows 8 as it is in Windows Vista.

Figure 1. Add or Remove Programs window in Windows XP.

If a program becomes corrupted then often the easiest way to repair it is to reinstall the software. However, it is quite possible that you will find a Repair option as shown in Figure 2.

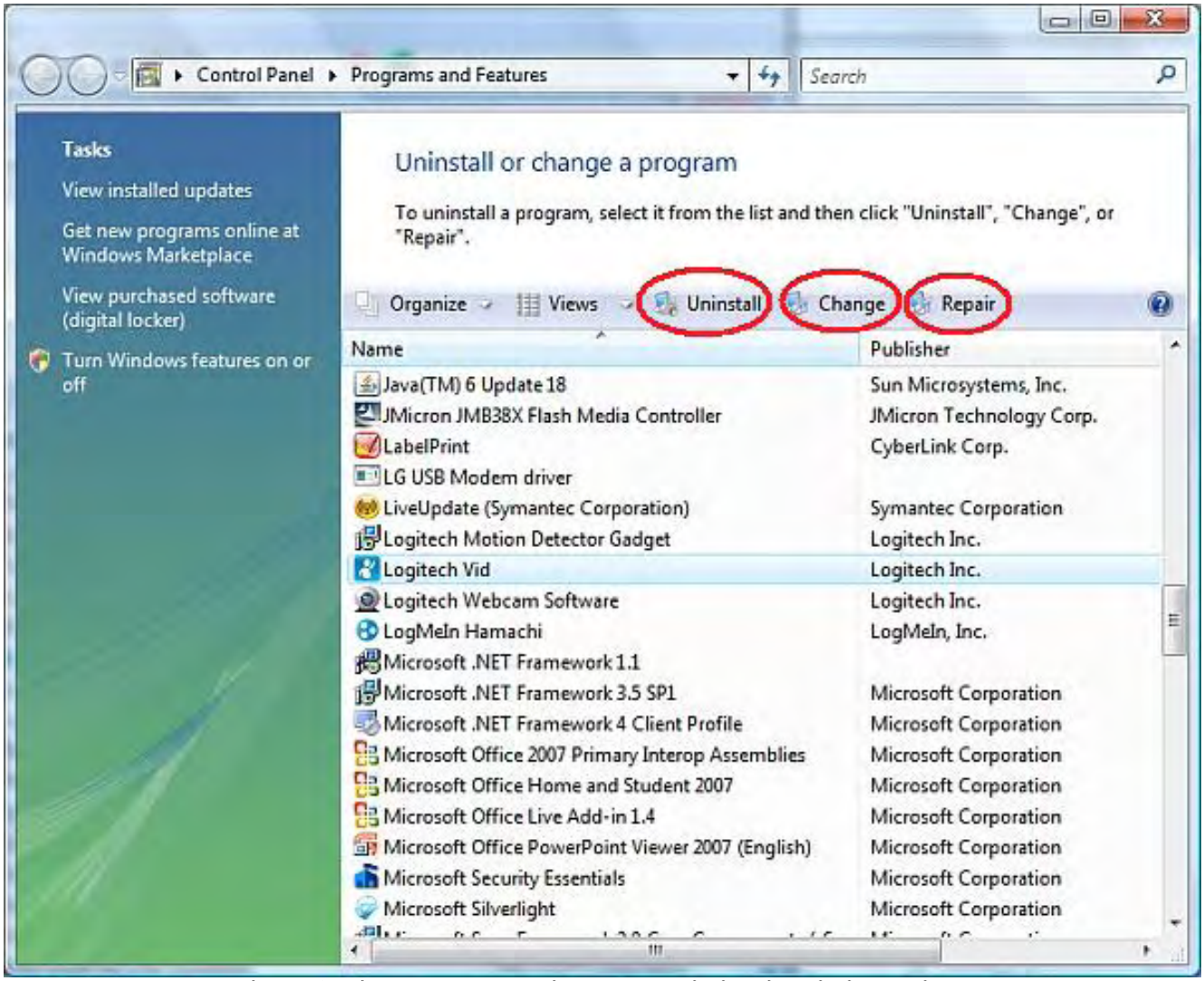

Figure 2. The Programs and Features window in Windows Vista.

Note: If a glitch sudden appears within a computer application, make sure you reload the software and/or restart your system at least once before taking other major steps such as uninstalling and reinstalling. Often a new problem may be the result of a bit dropped (or leak) in the memory. If closing and restarting the program doesn't work, then try rebooting. If neither option gets the program running properly again, then it is time to look at a clean installation of the program and/or restore the system to an earlier restore point.)

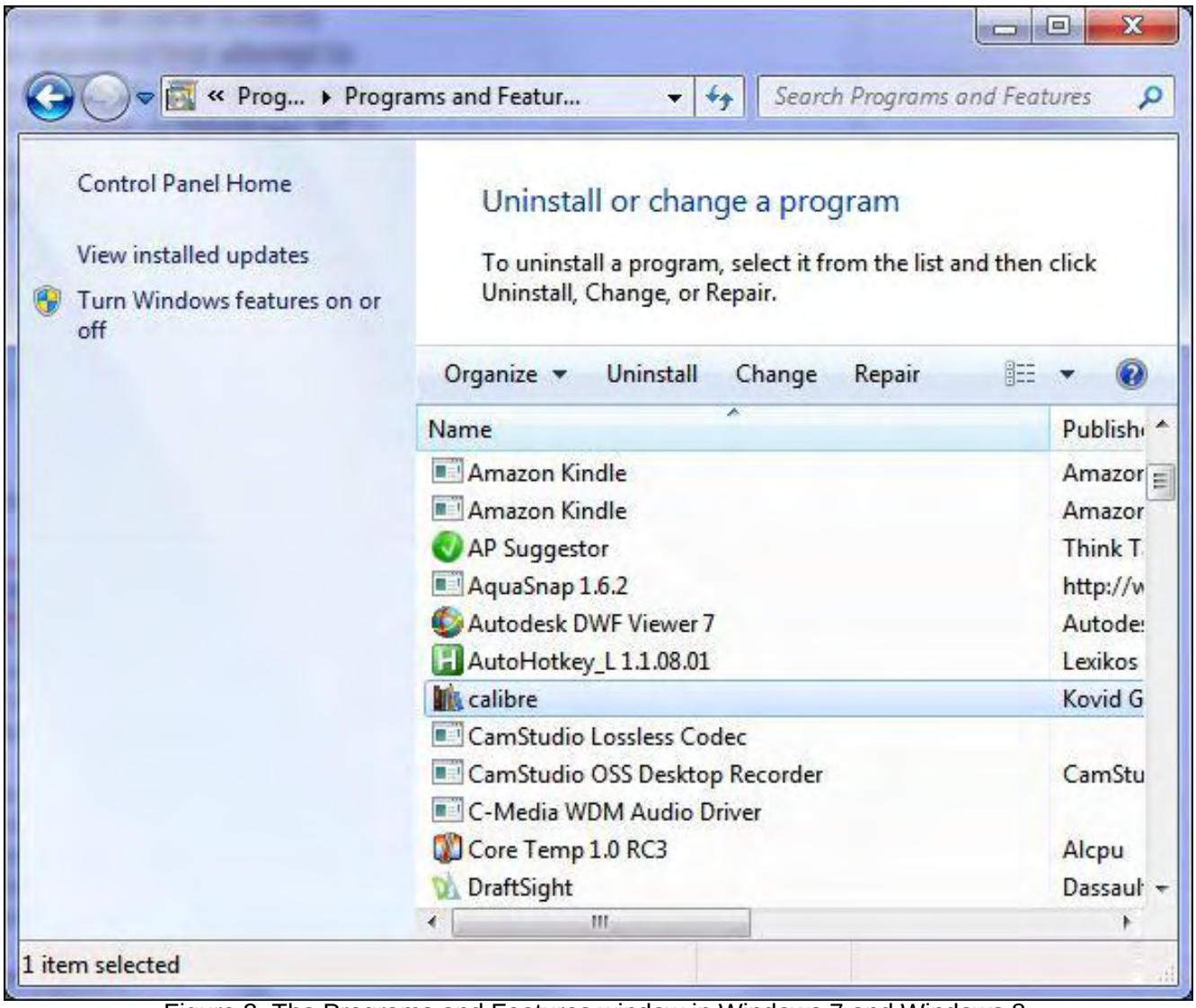

Figure 3. The Programs and Features window in Windows 7 and Windows 8.

If you are having problems with a program, the first step is to attempt to repair it—if the Repair option appears in Programs and Features (see Figure 1). (Some programs may not show the Repair option until you click an Uninstall/Change button and enter the setup program. Windows XP will show the Remove or Change/Remove button at the bottom right of the selected program listing.) If in fact the program can repair itself, then you are way ahead of the game. Unfortunately, in my experience, the Repair option rarely resolves a software problem.

The next step is to reinstall the software. It is possible that you will be able to fix a problem by reinstalling without removing the faulty copy first, but in many cases you will need to uninstall the old program before reinstallation. This is done by clicking the Uninstall button (Remove in XP) and following the steps in the wizard. (Note: If there is an uninstall program provided by the software itself, then you should use it. It will generally do a better job of removing all the extra bits and pieces in an uninstall. If one exists, it should appear in the program folder listed under programs.) Once you have removed the defective program, you are ready to re-install—either from the original disc or an Internet download. This process generally has more success than hitting the Repair button.

System File Checker

If re-installing the software has not resolved the problem, then (if not a virus) you are probably looking at an operating system problem in Windows. It may be corrupted files. There is a tool called SFC (System File

Checker). It is designed to check the integrity of all system files and fix them if there is a problem. To run SFC, open the Command Prompt by right-clicking on the icon and selecting "Run as administrator." In the Command Prompt window type "sfc /scannow" as shown in Figure 4.

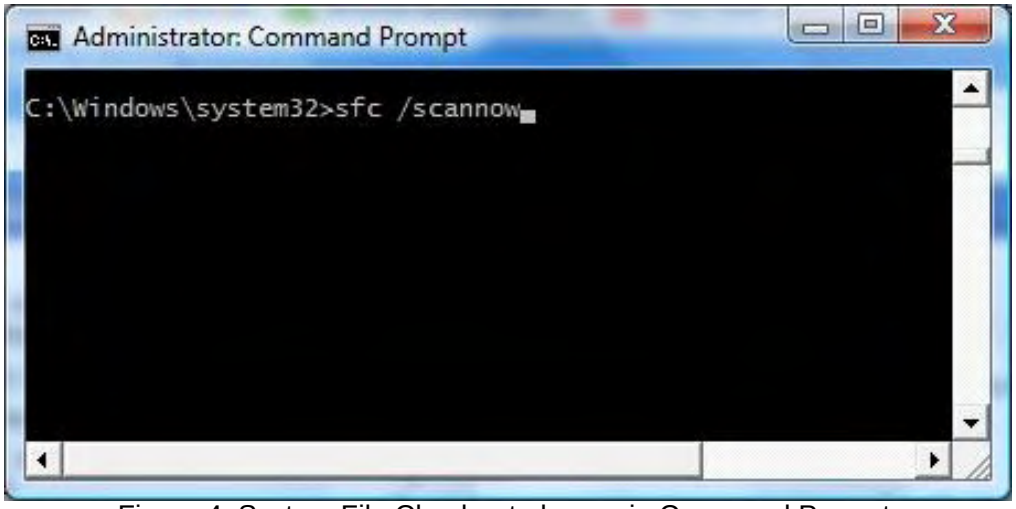

Figure 4. System File Checker to be run in Command Prompt.

It will take a little while to run, but all the system files will be checked by SFC. It may or may not fix the problem. I have no idea what the success rate is, but it's worth a shot.

What worked for me was a system restore. I had to go back about a week, but after I completed the restore, the program worked again.

Windows Features

The "Turn Windows features on or off" link in the left navigation panel is worth noting. (Called Add/Remove Windows Components in Windows XP.) While generally these features will be activated by the programs which use them, there are times when you may need to access these items (see Figure 5). For example, in Windows Vista Business the Games would not be available until activated in this window.

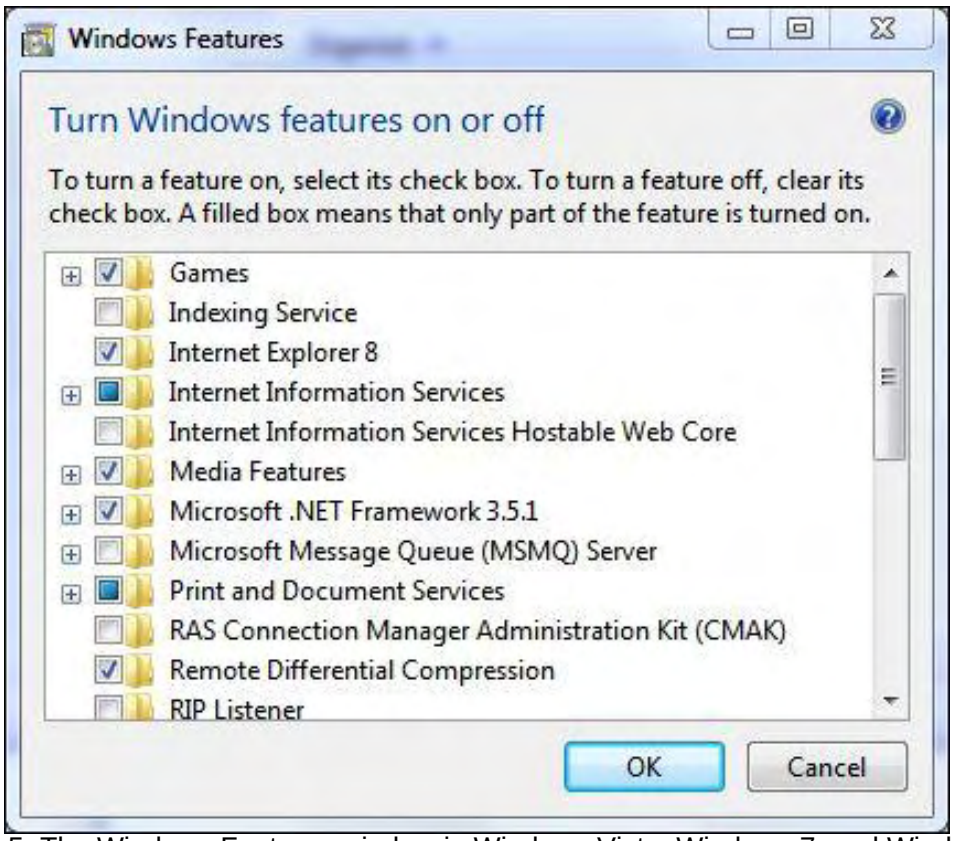

Figure 5. The Windows Features window in Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Windows 8.

Windows Features is also where Media Center and other Windows specific features will appear. If you're wondering if your version of Windows (including Windows 8) has certain features, this is where to look.

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:

Now at Amazon! Jack's *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*).*

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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*).*

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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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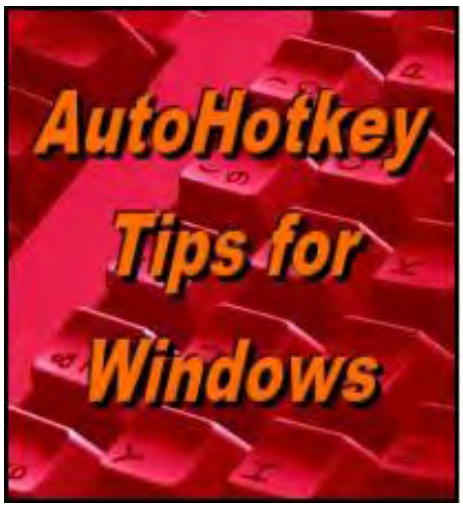


AutoHotkey Tips for Windows: Do a Google Search from Any Program!

“Quick Web Search! Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!” by Jack Dunning

> This is cool! Here is a short, simple AutoHotkey script that allows you to search the Web in any program or window. Anyone can do it!

Rather than continuing to put AutoHotkey tips into the Windows Tips and Tricks column (however appropriate), I'm starting a new column dedicated to offering the most practical ways to use AutoHotkey. Each time this column runs, I will include a routine for adding more functionality to your Windows computer. I plan to concentrate on those snippets useful enough to add to my own systems.

This week, I take a look at the problem of searching the Web for quick answers based upon text selected on your computer screen—regardless of the program you're using. When running almost any Web browser, it is easy to highlight text, right-click, and then search the Web for that text with your default search engine (see Figure 1). Another browser tab opens immediately executing the search. However, what if you're using a word processor, Windows Mail, Adobe Reader, Notepad, Windows Help, or any one of a number of programs? A right-click isn't going to do the job.

Figure 1. Select text and right-click in Google Chrome to search the Web for the selected words.

Of course you can always select text from any window, copy it (CTRL+C), open your browser, paste (CTRL +V) the text into the search field, and then launch the search. Or you can create a simple AutoHotkey combination to launch your search for the selected without leaving the window (see Figure 2).

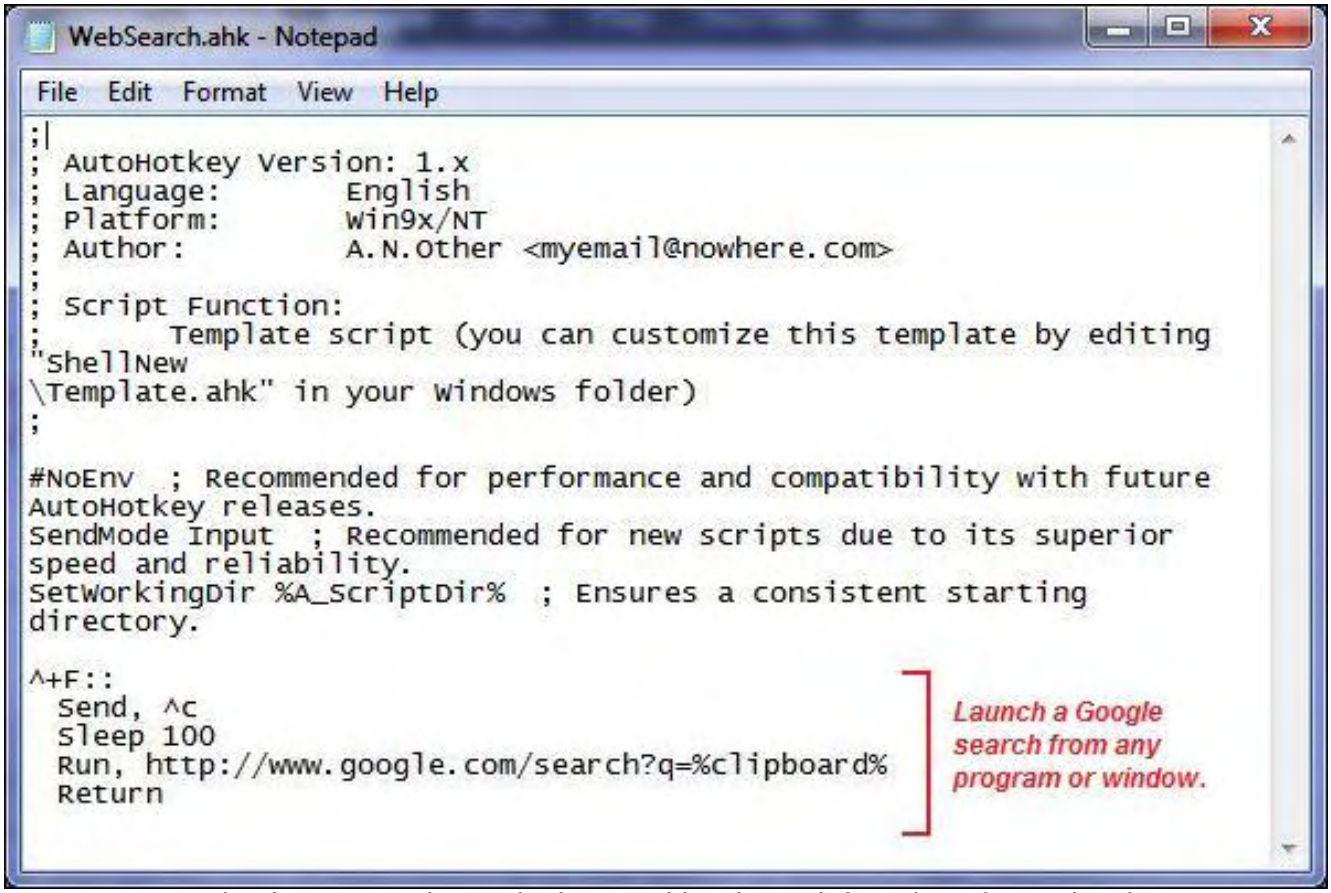


Figure 2. An example of an AutoHotkey script for searching the Web for selected text when in any program or window.

To add the code in Figure 2 to an AHK file, copy-and-paste the following:

```
^+F::
    Send, ^c
    Sleep 100
    Run, http://www.google.com/search?q=%clipboard%
    Return
```

*Note: If you're new to AutoHotkey, see the Web page "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*)" for details on how to get started.*

How It Works

The above routine works by first copying the selected text to the Windows Clipboard. (To select text, click and hold down the left mouse button at the beginning of the text and drag the mouse over the text until the desired portion is highlighted, then release the left mouse button.) The AutoHotkey Run command is used to launch the default browser, opening a new window using Google to search for the contents of the Windows Clipboard.

The first line of code (^+F::) creates the hotkey combination CTRL+SHIFT+F. I used the letter F as the final key because CTRL+F is commonly used for searches. This makes the hotkey a little easier to remember. However, I added the SHIFT key to prevent interference with that popular program hotkey. When deciding upon which hotkeys to create, it is a good idea to add extra keys (in this case the SHIFT key) to prevent

conflicts with regular program or Windows hotkeys. Before activating any hotkeys, test the new combination for conflicts within the programs where you're most likely to use them.

The double colon (::) in that same first line of code marks the end of the hotkey combination and the beginning of the action routine.

The second line of code (Send, ^c) uses the AutoHotkey Send command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm*) to copy (CTRL+C) the selected text to the Windows Clipboard. The Send command is simulating the same CTRL+C that is used when manually saving a selection to the Clipboard. The value of the Clipboard is always available in a standard AutoHotkey variable called *clipboard*.

The third line of code (Sleep 100) pauses the routine for 100 microseconds. This is to prevent the execution of the routine from outrunning the process of saving to the Clipboard. If there is no pause, there is a good chance that the new Clipboard value will not yet be available for the search.

The fourth line of code (Run, http://www.google.com/search?q=%clipboard%) is the heart of the routine. The AutoHotkey Run command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Run.htm*) launches the default browser and executes a Google search for the value of the variable *clipboard*. When the Run command sees "http://" it launches the default browser and opens the URL (in this case www.google.com/search). The contents of the Windows Clipboard is added to the URL by returning the value of *clipboard* (?q=% clipboard%). In this line of code, surrounding the variable *clipboard* with the percent signs (%) tells AutoHotkey to use the contents of the Windows Clipboard.

The last line (Return) simply closes the routine and ends execution.

Once the AutoHotkey script is saved and activated, the hotkey sits ready to launch a search whenever you press CTRL+SHIFT+F simultaneously. For example, if you're using Windows Help and you're curious about searching for more Web information, highlight the target text, then use the hotkey combination (see Figure 3).

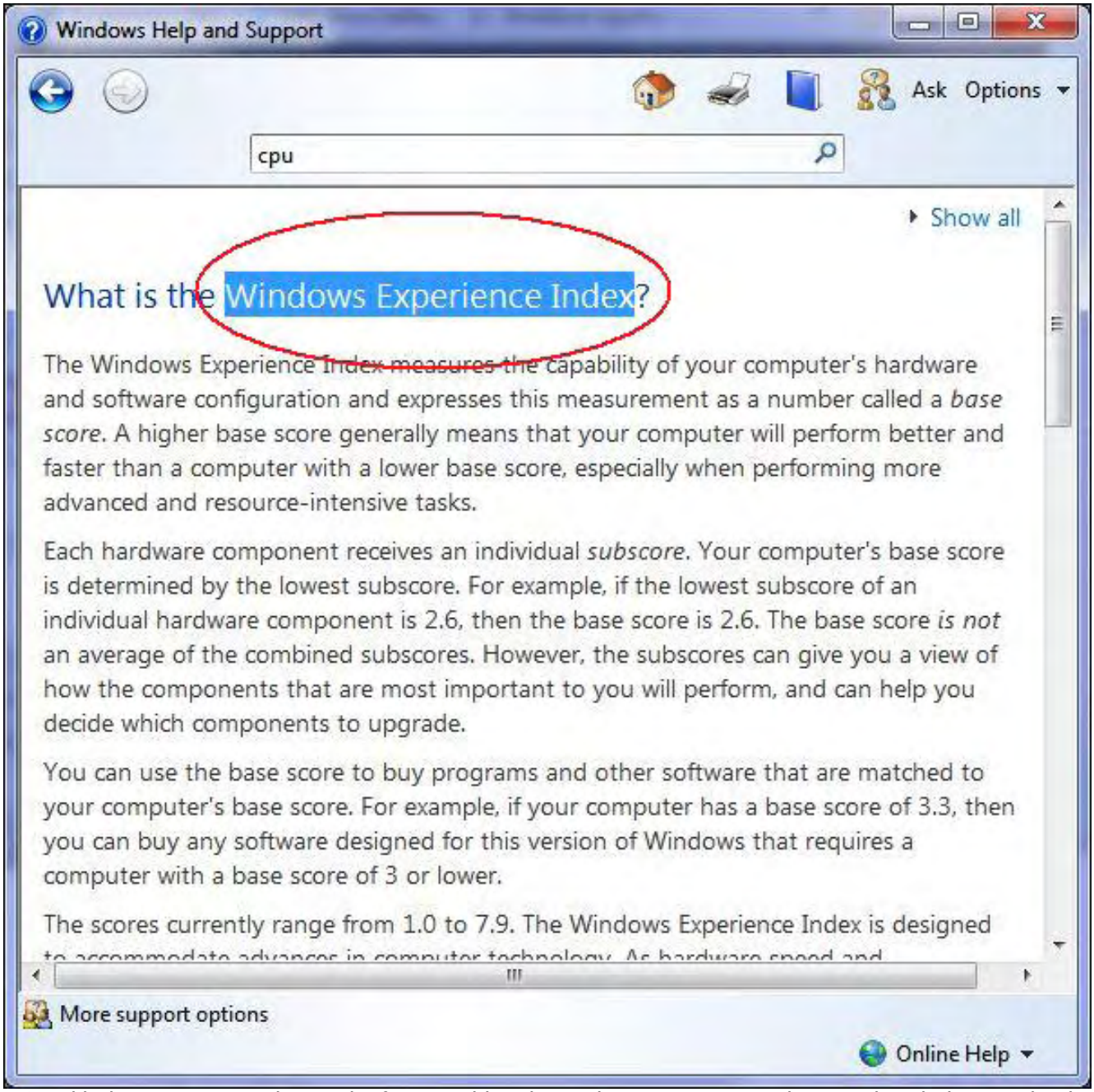


Figure 3. With the new AutoHotkey script for searching the Web you can even select text in Windows Help, then hit the hotkeys.

Next, press CTRL+SHIFT+F at the same time. Your default browser will open Google search with your selected text as the search terms (see Figure 4).

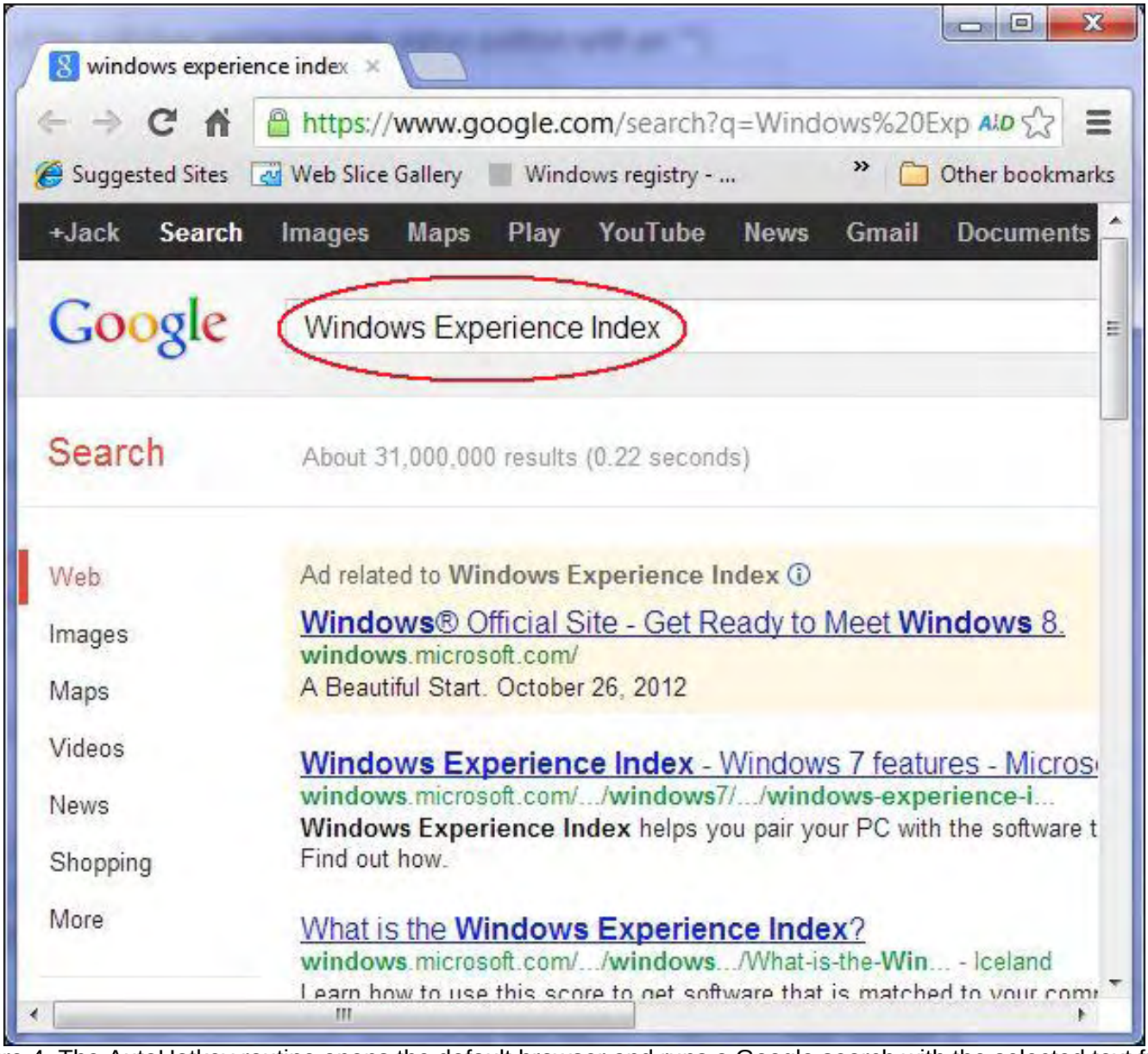
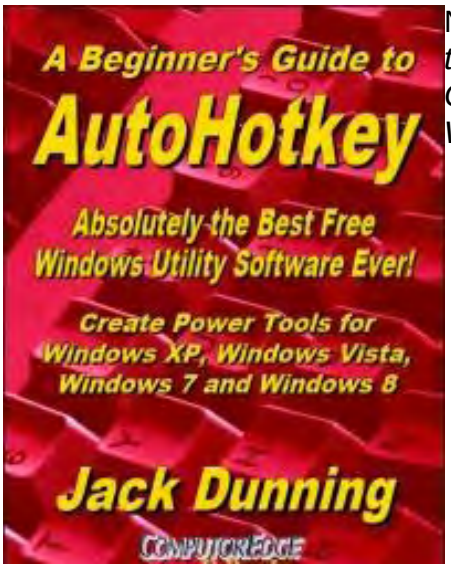


Figure 4. The AutoHotkey routine opens the default browser and runs a Google search with the selected text from another open program or window.

Once you have a universal search hotkey combination, you might be surprised how much you use it.

* * *



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ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*).*

Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while working on the Web. AutoHotkey has a universality not found in any other Windows utility—free or paid.

Based upon the series of articles in *ComputorEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of windows, making any window always-on-top, copying and moving files, and much more. Each chapter builds on the previous chapters.

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:

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“New Apple Products” by Wally Wang

New Apple Products; Decline of a Leader; The Rise of the Tablets; The Dying Book Business; Using Passbook; Newsweek Goes Digital; Notifications on Your Macintosh.

Back in 2010, vocal critics claimed that the iPad was useless. Yet in just 2.5 years, Apple managed to sell 100 million iPads, which makes the iPad the fastest growing product category in history. Now Apple has introduced an iPad mini with a 7.9-inch diagonal screen. The price for the lowest cost iPad mini is $329 with 16GB of storage. If you want a smaller iPad that you can comfortably hold in your hand, then look at the iPad mini in a store to test how comfortable it feels.

Figure 1. The iPad mini fits in one hand.

To further promote the iPad mini along with a slightly modified newer iPad, Apple also introduced version 3.0 of the iBooks app for reading e-books along with version 2.0 of iBooks Author, Apple's free program for creating interactive iBooks.

Besides adding two new widgets for creating sidebars with scrollable text and pop-up text, iBooks Author also includes more templates along with special iBook templates just for creating portrait-only iBooks. Such portrait-only iBooks can help the iPad mini more closely resemble a regular e-reader like the Amazon Kindle. With iBooks 3.0, you now have a choice of either scrolling through text or flipping pages.

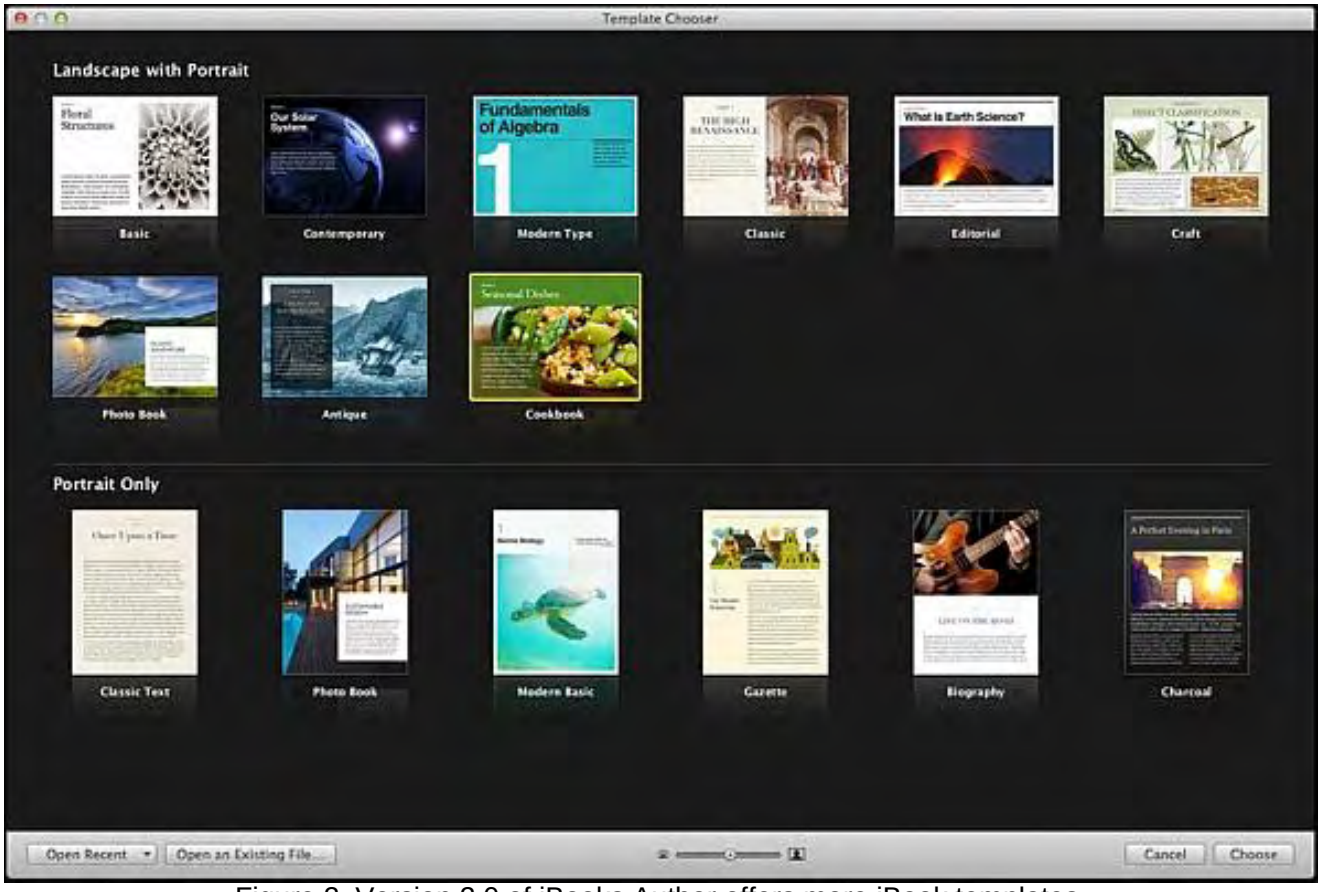

Figure 2. Version 2.0 of iBooks Author offers more iBook templates.

By emphasizing e-book creation and reading, Apple can make further inroads on Amazon's e-book reading market. Teachers can use iBooks Author to create their own textbooks and distribute them through iBooks, which helps cement the iPad or iPad mini in the education market. (Teachers can also create e-books for Amazon's Kindle, but such e-books can only display static text and images with much less interactivity

including audio and video than iBooks. Given a choice between interactivity or static images, it's easy to see how the iPad mini can challenge the Amazon Kindle even though the Kindle costs much less.)

Besides introducing the iPad mini and iBooks Author, Apple also introduced the new 13-inch MacBook Pro with a Retina display ($1,699) along with an updated Mac mini ($599) and iMac ($1,299). If you're interested in either the Mac mini or iMac, be aware that these latest models have dumped the built-in CD/DVD drive so you'll need to buy a separate SuperDrive if you plan on playing CDs or DVDs on your Macintosh.

By eliminating the built-in CD/DVD drive, the latest iMac has slimmed down its profile to just 5 mm. You'll be able to order the latest 21-inch iMac in November and the 27-inch iMac in December, just in time for Christmas.

Figure 3. The latest iMac is now extremely thin.

Now that you can see the latest gadgets that Apple offers for the holiday season, you can compare them to

what the PC world has to offer with their myriad designs of Windows 8 computers and tablets (*www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2012/10/05/gallery-seventeen-supersized-windows-8-and-android-tablets/*).

Decline of a Leader

Five years ago, a Blackberry phone represented elite status as one of the most dominant smartphones in the world, capturing nearly 50 percent of the market. Fast forward to today and Blackberries only represent less than 5 percent of the American market and Blackberry users cringe (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/16/technology/blackberry-becomes-a-source-of-shame-for-users.html?_r=0*) every time they have to use their Blackberry in public.

"I'm ashamed of it," said Rachel Crosby, a Los Angeles sales representative who said she had stopped pulling out her BlackBerry at cocktail parties and conferences. In meetings, she hides her BlackBerry beneath her iPad for fear clients will see it and judge her.

"I want to take a bat to it," Ms. Crosby said, after waiting for her phone's browser to load for the third minute, only to watch the battery die. "You can't do anything with it. You're supposed to, but it's all a big lie."

Victoria Gossage, a 28-year-old hedge fund marketer, said she recently attended a work retreat at Piping Rock Club, an upscale country club in Locust Valley, N.Y., and asked the concierge for a phone charger. "First he said, 'Sure.' Then he saw my phone and—in this disgusted tone—said, 'Oh no, no, not for that.' "

"I feel absolutely helpless," Ms. Gossage said. "You're constantly watching people do all these things on their phones and all I have going for me is my family's group BBM chats."

When Apple introduced the iPhone, the iPhone had zero market share. Now most of the world has settled on the iPhone and Android phones with few people using Blackberries anymore. Just the fact that Blackberries are now looked upon with shame tells how far Blackberries have fallen.

When something better arrives, it's always greeted with derision and resistance. Then as people discover it offers massive advantages over current products, they adopt it. Finally, only the loyalists are left clinging to their delusions of grandeur from the past while everyone else has moved forward because they compared rival products and chose the best one for them without any concern for brand loyalty.

It's easy to see how this happened to Blackberry phones and can happen to any leading product. Right now it's happening to the Windows PC, but one day it will also happen to the iPhone, the Macintosh, and the iPad. As soon as one product dominates the market, that's a sure sign that the end is near soon afterwards.

Of course each time a single product dominates, people foolishly believe it can only continue to dominate from now until beyond the end of time, despite numerous historical evidence that suggest otherwise. Before the world of Apple and Windows PCs falls apart, sit back and watch how much faster and further Research in Motion's Blackberry phones will continue to plummet in popularity.

Nick Mindel, a 26-year-old investment analyst, said he recently joined the wait list for the iPhone 5. When it arrives, he said, "I'm considering removing my BlackBerry battery, pouring in cement, and using the BlackBerry as an actual paperweight."

Five years ago, nobody would ever say anything like that. Today, it not only sounds logical, but desirable as well, which tells you how far Blackberry's brand has tumbled from its once elite status as the smartphone leader of the planet. That's the future for every company that takes its customers for granted and fails to deliver products that people actually want. Just ask U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement why they replaced more than 17,000 Blackberries with iPhones (*www.infoworld.com/d/mobile-technology/us-government-agency-drops-blackberry-in-favor-of-iphone-205465*).

The Rise of the Tablets

Now Microsoft has introduced their Surface tablet starting at $499, Google sells their 7-inch Nexus tablet for $199, and Amazon sells their Kindle Fire for the same price, it's obvious that tablets really can be useful after all. Of course, a few stubborn people will likely claim that the iPad is absolutely useless but other tablets are wonderful because they give you all the mobile computing features just like the iPad!

With so many tablet choices available, you might be wondering what the benefits of each might be so here's a quick summary. If you're mostly interested in reading e-books, then get an Amazon Kindle Fire or Barnes & Noble Nook. Not only are these tablets the least expensive ones you can find, but they're also designed specifically for e-book shopping and browsing, just as long as you don't mind being locked into Amazon or Barnes & Noble's e-book market.

If you just want an inexpensive tablet and e-book reading isn't your primary goal but spending as little as possible is, then the $199 Google Nexus tablet works just fine. If you want to run iPad apps but don't need the size or higher cost of the iPad, get the iPad mini for $329. Since the iPad mini also emphasizes e-books, consider the iPad mini a fancier and more versatile version of the Amazon Kindle Fire.

If you want to do work on a tablet, then your two choices boil down to iPad and the Microsoft Surface tablet. Both are priced at $499 before added accessories and features like a cover, keyboard, or added storage space. If you need a tablet that can connect to a cellular network, then your only option is the iPad since Microsoft's Surface tablet is Wi-Fi only.

The main selling point for the Microsoft Surface tablet is that it comes with a preview edition of Office 2013 where the final version of Office 2013 will be available for free in another month or two. For those who insist on using Microsoft Office, then your only option is the Microsoft Surface tablet.

The big caution for the Surface tablet is that it's running Windows RT, which means it can't run any existing Windows programs unless they're recompiled to run under Windows RT on ARM processors. Initially, don't expect the app selection to be very big for Windows RT, but that should change over time. How fast, though, is anybody's guess.

Windows RT actually holds promise as it dumps the baggage of compatibility that Windows 8 must carry. If you're willing to wait, Windows RT running on Surface tablets could be useful, but only if you don't mind the lack of apps initially.

If you're not willing to wait for apps and want the tablet that offers the most apps and third-party accessories, then the iPad is your only choice. With millions of happy and satisfied customers, the iPad still remains the most popular tablet in the world.

Tablets are here to stay. As more people buy tablets, fewer people will continue buying PCs. If you're currently earning your living through the PC world, it's time to shift to the tablet world as soon as possible. After all, Apple, Amazon, Google, and Microsoft can't all be wrong.

The Dying Book Business

Walk into any bookstore these days (if you can still find one) and notice how many toys, games, and other non-book items the store is selling to stock its shelves and create the illusion of a full inventory. Then notice how many books are placed with the front cover facing out, which takes up more room on each shelf and further disguises the fact that there are fewer books on the shelves.

Stroll through the computer book section and notice not only how small the computer book section has shrunk over the years, but also how many older computer book titles are still on the shelves offering instructions on older programs like Microsoft Office 2007 or iOS 5 (the latest version is iOS 6).

The printed book industry is sinking and e-book sales aren't enough to make up the decline. As B.J. Gallagher mentions in her *Huffington Post* column, the number of books published each year continues to grow, yet the number of books sold continues to plummet (*www.huffingtonpost.com/bj-gallagher/book-publishing_b_1394159.html*). The average U.S. nonfiction book now sells less than 250 copies per year and less than 3,000 copies over its lifetime.

More telling is that most books are sold to the author's social networks and communities rather than through bookstores, and that most authors do their own marketing rather than relying on the publishers. All of this makes self-publishing more attractive and profitable, which means there's little need for publishers anymore.

B.J. Gallagher does offer some hope for the book publishing industry. First of all, there's still plenty of money in the book industry and the low-cost of self-publishing has made publishing available to everyone. Books are now less about making money through sales alone and more about using books as a sales and marketing tool to promote other products or services.

The printed book business is gone for good. For some, this represents a tragedy, but with the introduction of the iPad mini and its emphasis on iBooks, this actually represents a tremendous opportunity. With a copy of iBooks Author on your Macintosh, you can now create interactive e-books that can reach a global market within seconds.

Even if you're just one person, the Internet gives you the same distribution clout as the largest printed book publisher. Instead of mourning the decline of printed books, we should all be celebrating the greater distribution model of self-published e-books as the beginning of a new information era that will make today's printed bookstores seem as ancient as black and white television sets that could only receive three channels through a pair of antennas.

Newsweek Goes Digital

The declining print industry has seen newspapers shrivel up to resemble pamphlets and bookstores becoming ghost towns. Now the print industry is under attack as magazines stop printing paper copies and go towards digital distribution (*www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/10/18/a-turn-of-the-page-for-newsweek.html*) with *Newsweek* being the latest convert. Started in 1933, *Newsweek* will finally abandon printed copies after 80 years.

Newsweek said, "Tablet-use has grown rapidly among our readers and with it the opportunity to sustain editorial excellence through swift, easy digital distribution—a superb global platform for our award-winning journalism. By year's end, tablet users in the United States alone are expected to exceed 70 million, up from 13 million just two years ago."

Tablets let you read e-books, digital magazines, play games, browse the Internet, and even create documents through office suites like iWork on the iPad (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=https%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fpages%252Fid361309726%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) and QuickOffice (*click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=https%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Fquickoffice-pro-hd-edit-office%252Fid376212724%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) on Android and the iPad. Tablets combine the features of dedicated e-readers, laptop computers, and portable game consoles all in a single, lightweight device. Clearly tablets will only get better, which will cause more people to continue buying them.

In the future, people will look back at the introduction of the iPad and acknowledge how the iPad helped

usher in the tablet revolution that includes the Amazon Kindle Fire and Microsoft's Surface tablet. Yet before the history books start painting a rosy image that the whole world eagerly embraced progress embodied by the iPad and other tablets, keep in mind the fresh memories of violent and angry resistance to the iPad initially. Then ask yourself if so many people could have been so violently opposed to tablets back in 2010, what other fields of progress are such equally determined and illogical people blocking today? More importantly, how many people are still denying the impact of tablets on the computer market despite all evidence to the contrary?

For those who prefer denying facts, perhaps they can join the Flat Earth Society (*theflatearthsociety.org/cms/*) that believes there's a global conspiracy to convince people that the world is really round. Then these people can use Windows laptops instead of tablets to prove that the world is really flat and that mobile computing will simply disappear as people discover that lugging around laptops with cellular modems is far more convenient and versatile than using a smartphone or tablet.

Using Passbook

One of the latest apps for iOS is Passbook, which lets you store tickets on your iPhone or iPad. Major League Baseball recently experimented with offering tickets through Passbook and found that Passbook quickly accounted for 12 percent (*sports.yahoo.com/news/digital-age-making-ticket-stubs-a-relic-of-the-past-19190509.html*) of all single-game tickets.

Although people may mourn the loss of actual ticket stubs that they could treasure for years afterwards as reminders of notable events, this is one more sign that the world is moving towards digital information whether people like it or not.

Most likely, apps like Passbook will never completely replace paper, much like television never eliminated stage plays, but more people watch TV every day than attend stage plays. In the same way, more people will likely rely on digital information stored in Passbook rather than worry about carrying paper tickets around anymore.

* * *

If you're using OS X 10.8 (Mountain Lion), there's a new feature called Notifications. This feature lets you briefly see e-mail messages, reminders, and FaceTime calls in the upper right corner of the screen. That way you can see if someone's trying to contact you without completely disrupting whatever you might be working on at the time, such as putting together a spreadsheet.

To customize these notifications, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences to open the System Preferences window. Then click the Notifications icon under the Personal category. Now you can turn off notifications for different programs like FaceTime, or customize the appearance of notifications on the screen.

Figure 4. You can customize notifications on your Macintosh.

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

Watch Out Laptops, Tablets Are Right Behind You!; Who Will Buy the iPad Mini?; Excessive E-Waste; XCOM: Enemy Unknown for PC; Dragon Dictate for Mac 3; More Power to You!

Watch Out Laptops, Tablets Are Right Behind You!

According to GBI Research (*www.gbiresearch.com*):

Insatiable consumer demand for tablet computers will see unit shipments increase almost fourfold by 2016, substantially outpacing the growth of the laptop sector, predicts the latest publication from business intelligence experts GBI Research.

The new report states that 73 million tablets were shipped last year, but by 2016 that figure is expected to reach 275 million, showing an impressive Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 19%.

By comparison, notebook shipments reached 198 million in 2011 and are forecast to hit 318 million by 2016, at a more modest CAGR of 7.6%.

Products such as Apple's ubiquitous iPad and Amazon's Kindle series are taking the world by storm, meeting the needs of casual computer users in smaller, easier to use and often cheaper devices. Correspondingly, laptop manufacturers are increasingly targeting business users who typically require more powerful systems with a wider range of applications.

Tablet purchases are also affecting the replacement cycles of laptops, says the report. When a consumer purchases a tablet they are more likely to wait before replacing an existing laptop, thereby reducing sales.

However, despite the seemingly irrepressible march of the tablet industry, laptops are not giving up without a fight. Thinner, lighter and potentially quicker Ultrabooks represent the future of the laptop industry, and are expected to represent almost half of all sold by 2016.

Soon Ultrabooks with touchscreen technology and ultra-thin keyboards will hit the market, going some way to bridge the gap between the aesthetically and ergonomically pleasing tablet, and the more technologically capable laptop.

Study: Who Will Buy the iPad Mini?

According to Techbargains.com (*Techbargains.com*):

With the iPad mini rumored to be unveiled later this month...you may be interested in survey results revealing who plans to buy the iPad mini and why. TechBargains.com conducted a survey of over 1,330 people and found the iPad mini is less desired than the iPhone 5 and the new iPad. Some of the highlights from the survey include:

• 8% of people surveyed plan to buy the iPad. In comparison, 45% of respondents from the same August

survey were interested in buying the iPhone 5 and 48% of respondents wanted to purchase the new iPad in a survey conducted by TechBargains.com in February before the iPad release.

• Original iPad owners are most likely to purchase the iPad mini.

• Kindle Fire owners and those who don't own tablets are least likely to buy the iPad mini.

• USB Port, Retina Display, Memory Card Slot and Better Speakers top consumer desires for the iPad mini.

TechBargains.com, a deal aggregation Web site for electronic products, released additional results from its iPhone/iPad mini Predictions survey revealing only 18% of the surveyed consumers plan to purchase the iPad mini. 50% of those surveyed are not interested in buying the iPad mini and 32% are undecided. This is compared to 45% of respondents from the same survey who planned to purchase the new iPhone.

Of those who plan to purchase the iPad mini, 14% indicated a plan to wait in line the day it is released, one in five will buy it online as soon as it is available and 66% don't have a set time frame for purchase. The data also reveals original iPad owners are the most likely to pay for the new iPad mini with 27% of them planning to purchase the tablet. Current Kindle Fire owners and those who don't currently own a tablet are least likely to plan a purchase. 16% of Kindle Fire owners surveyed and 16% of respondents who don't own a tablet said they plan to purchase the iPad mini.

When polled on the most desirable features for the new iPad mini, 78% want a USB Port, 77% desire a Retina Screen, 75% hope for a memory card slot and 74% would like better speakers than the current iPad. The survey revealed that about one in four consumers believe the starting price of the iPad mini will be $299 and nearly one in five believes it will start at $399.

Technological Advancements in Tablets and Smartphones Contributing to Excessive E-Waste

Rapid developments in laptops and mobile phones are leading to the equally rapid abandonment of old models which no longer meet the mark, according to new research by GBI Research (*gbiresearch.com*):

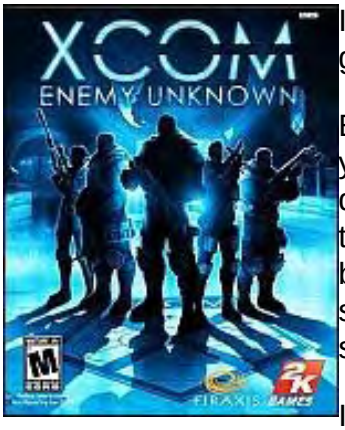
Information and communication technologies represent the top producer of electronic waste (e-waste, or electronic and electrical goods that have been discarded by the original user, or which have reached the end of their productive life) today.

The generation of e-waste has grown sharply in the last two decades and will continue to grow swiftly as technology becomes more advanced. Mobile phones, once merely a tool of communication, now also function as cameras, video recorders, music players and handheld computers. These constant upgrades are increasing the volume of discarded mobile phones, spurring the need for safe disposal of such waste.

Increasing numbers of mobile users now exist and technology is being rapidly discarded from households in both developed and developing economies, with e-waste becoming one of the fastest growing waste streams in the world, according to GBI Research. While developed economies such as the US have a high rate of e-waste generation due to high replacement rates, emerging countries like India and China represent a budding new market for electrical and electronic goods.

The market penetration of Personal Computers (PCs) and mobile phones is still quite low in India, but is expected to grow rapidly in the future. A major source of obsolete PCs in the e-waste market is the large Asia-Pacific Information Technology (IT) industry, as demand for the latest technologies, higher computing speeds and increased efficiency lead to more and more electronics being thrown away. Along with the high generation of e-waste domestically, China and India also receive illegal imports of e-waste from developed countries. These trends will increase the volume of e-waste generated in India, Japan and China in the future, which GBI Research estimates will reach a total volume of 11.9 million metric tons by 2020.

XCOM: Enemy Unknown for PC
(review of single player)



I'm not a big strategy gamer—I generally prefer first-person shooters or adventure games—but XCOM: Enemy Unknown may have changed all that for me.

Enemy Unknown, a sequel to X-COM: UFO Defense game of 1993 (assuming 20 years isn't too long to still be able to assign the designation "sequel"), feels different from the usual click on a square, move there, do this, wait for them to do that style of strategy game. Don't get me wrong, that's still the basic mechanism, but the strategy element coupled with amazing action sequences, gorgeous cut scenes, and tense ground combat is so well done that it feels like the best of several genres rolled into one.

In Enemy Unknown, your basic job is to determine the location and extent of the alien incursion and then build a defense system (called XCOM) to defeat them. The battle gets hot and heavy (not that kind of hot and heavy!) as you carry out more than 70 missions working with agencies and governments around the world to build a global defense strategy, largely through managing a team of elite soldiers, each with a different set of skill sets. Another key component of the game allows you to control a large number of elements having to do with organizing and running your base.

But combat is where it's at. You're forced to make one life-or-death decision after another: How do you organize your support people and material? How do you move them? How do you equip them? What weapons do you use and in what manner?—and countless more.

Like the best strategy games, you'll discover two things: 1) hours pass as minutes and 2) you'll spend a lot of time after each battle wondering what you did wrong and how you'll do it differently next time.

The aliens look great and have a lot of variety. One quibble is that there's not enough of a difference in the

look of varying locales, no matter what country you're in. They all look pretty much the same.

Another small gripe is that I sometimes had problems with the camera. While it generally does an excellent job of providing dynamic close-ups during key parts of battles, at times the camera and movement system made it difficult for me to get my soldiers where they needed to go, especially on more complicated terrain involving multiple levels. For me, the solution was to use the keyboard rather than the mouse wheel. Hopefully this and the above mentioned issue dealing with the look of locales will be resolved in an upcoming patch, if it hasn't been already.

PC is the way to go, if you can. I have a friend with a console whose jaw dropped when he saw how quick my load times were compared to what he'd been experiencing on his Xbox. Also, if you have a high-powered machine, you can't beat the PC's textures and resolution.

For the casual gamer; the guy or gal who gets home from work and just wants to have an hour or two of fun, I thought the "easy" level was just about right. Reading various Web forums, the game can be extremely challenging on higher levels.

Developer: Firaxis Games
Publisher: 2K Games
Web site: *www.xcom.com/enemyunknown*
Price: About $50
Also on: PlayStation 3, Xbox 360
Rating: M for Mature

Dragon Dictate for Mac 3

I have used Dragon Dictate for both the Mac and Windows environments, and find I can move between them without having to think about it too much—although in a sense they are different "languages" developed by separate teams of two separate companies.

However, if you use both, you won't experience a "culture shock" any different from shifting between Macs and Windows computers with other applications.

According to Nuance's chief marketing officer Peter Mahoney, "The operating model is very different for both operating systems. It is sometimes a challenge to phase shift back and forth in designing the two versions. Technically they are different. The Windows model tends to be a little more open."

They have different lineages. The Windows product is about 15 years old and has evolved dramatically. Many of the original developers of Dragon for Windows are still at it. That's not the case with the Mac version.

"The core technology is the same on the Mac but the application was developed by Mac Speech," says Mahoney. Nuance purchased that company and continued to evolve the application.

The only thing we users need to know is that the accuracy of both versions of Dragon continues to improve over what was already a high degree of accuracy. But the newest version is also, as Mahoney notes, "more forgiving and more flexible." This makes it more accessible to people with accents and to younger users. This is not something I have noticed—not having an accent or being a child, but it obviously opens the product to an ever-expanding audience.

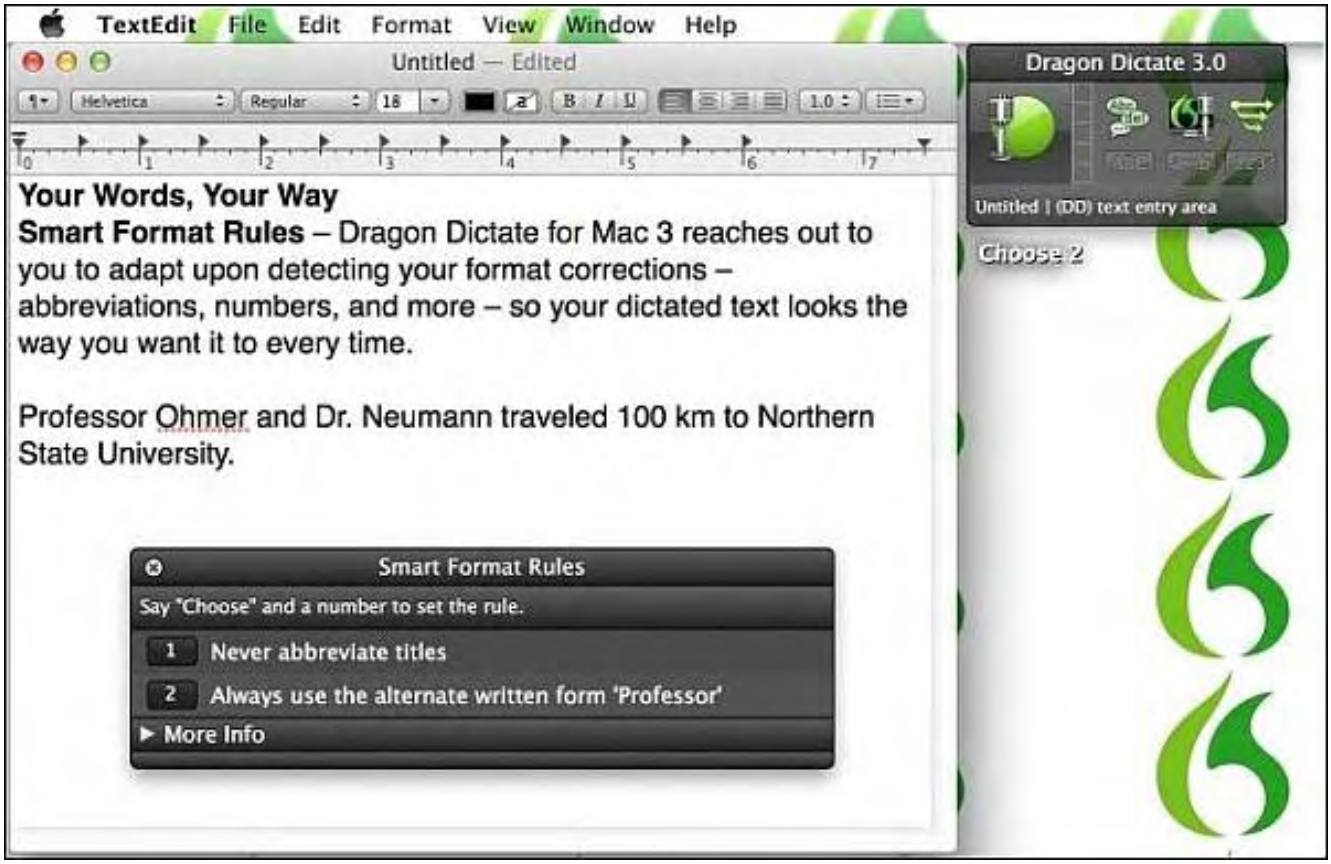
"The earliest versions had two kinds of users, people like doctors or lawyers or who dictated their whole careers or people who didn't have a choice because of a disability or injury," says Mahoney "A large number of people who have a language-based learning disability such as dyslexia, physical disabilities or injuries, tend to be some of our most rabid fans. They also push us the farthest. We start with a lot of users that way."

As a journalist it is important to me that the product can transcribe recordings I make on a digital recorder

in the car or while walking. Recently when I had a herniated disk that limited my keyboarding for some months, Dragon was a Godsend. It still hasn't reached the stage where it will transcribe interviewer and subject. It can't separate speakers yet. But given the technological progress of the last dozen years, that can't be far away.

"Every professional writer has asked for that and it is something we are working on it," says Mahoney, who notes, "many writers use digital recorders to write drafts of some of their work and then edit it on the computer."

You can dictate with a digital voice recorder once you establish a user profile for it. You can do the same for iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. Dragon Dictate for Mac supports .wav, .m4a, .m4v, .mp4, .aif, and .aiff audio file formats, and any recorded notes using the free Dragon Recorder app for iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. It also supports 16kHz wideband Bluetooth wireless headset microphones. When it detects the mic it offers "Enhanced Bluetooth" as an audio source type, eliminating the need to repeat voice training.



When I took the most recent iteration, Dragon Dictate for Mac 3, out of the box, I noticed increased accuracy. Mahoney claims 20 percent more accuracy. "We find that many people can get to ninety-nine percent accurate with little training and some practice. What happens with every turn of the crank is that the software is more forgiving and gets to that level of accuracy faster," he says.

One thing that has bothered me about the Windows version of Dragon in past iterations is its tendency to spread its tentacles throughout my operating system—making it difficult to delete the program.

Mahoney defends this ubiquity, in order to do things such as richly control text with your voice. Microsoft has made it easier and more standard to do these things, he says. "We want to be a good citizen of the operating system. You should be able to deeply control things, but we also want to be able to remove it entirely without difficulty."

Dragon Dictate for Mac 3 adapts even more to the way people speak with Smart Format Rules. According

to Mahoney, "It understands how you pronounce words, the language you use and understands your user preferences. We took that to the next level: It looks at how you format certain words, abbreviations or contractions, and if you change what it has done, it asks if it should remember that. It personalizes how Dragon adapts to you so it not only gets what you say but displays it exactly on the screen as you would like it to be shown."

The program has plug-ins for things like Microsoft Word, Gmail and Hotmail to accommodate clients who want to be able to control Web-mail with their voice. The program's Express Editor lets you dictate into a text field for which it does not have Full Text Control. From there you can transfer the text to the application. It supports Mac OS X Mountain Lion, and has built-in commands for the new Notes and Reminders applications of that release.

Dragon Dictate (*www.nuance.com/dragon/contact-sales/index.htm*) for Mac 3 retails for $199.99.

Review contributed by David Ross

More Power to You!

Just about everyone knows the feeling of being near the end of their phone's or tablet's battery charge with nary a wall socket or cigarette lighter in sight. With the IOGEAR GearPower Mobile Power Station external battery pack, you're always covered.

The tiny 4 x 2.2 x .4 inch 4 oz. unit provides 2000mAh of juice where no AC adapter can go. Keep it charged and tucked in your glove box, purse, or travel bag for those situations where you need to charge up your device or use the GearPower Mobile Power Station to power it on the spot. (Keep in mind, though, that rechargeable devices will eventually lose their current even if unused, so be sure to fully charge the unit every month or so.)

The GearPower Mobile Power Station itself takes about ten hours to fully charge using your desktop's or laptop's available USB port, delivering enough power to last my phone easily all day. Just about everything hooks up to it thanks to several included tips and standard USB and miniUSB inputs. That includes most smartphones, Blackberries, cellphones, tablets—even MP3 players, digital cameras, and portable gaming systems.

If you're a frequent habitué of planes, trains, or the backseats of automobiles where someone is using the cigarette lighter to charge his own gadget, this is an essential part of your travel kit.

Features (from IOGEAR):

• Lightweight and portable mobile battery pack
• High capacity and reliability
• Work with most PDAs, mobile phones, Bluetooth headsets, MP3 players and other mobile devices
• Recharges your device up to two* charges to your mobile device on a fully charged GearPower
• Built-in short-circuit, over-charge, and temperature protection
• Smart LED capacity display
• USB output for most USB charging devices
• Battery life of up to 800 rechargeable cycles
• Includes multiple connectors for different mobile devices

Package contents:

• Mobile GearPower
• USB charging cable
• Carrying case
• Five connectors
• Quick start guide

Manufacturer: IOGEAR
Model: GMP1001B
Web site: *www.iogear.com/product/GMP1001B/?src=mobilepage*
Price: about $40

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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ComputorQuick Reviews

News and Reviews from Readers and Staff

ComputorQuick Update: Windows 8 Pro Purchase Summary

"Information on $15 and $40 Upgrades to Windows 8 Pro**"** by ComputorEdge Staff

If you are thinking about moving to Windows 8 Pro, here is what you need to know.

New Windows 7 PC $15 Upgrade

Friday, October 26, 2012 through January 31, 2013 you can upgrade to Windows 8 Pro from Windows 7 online including free Media Center at Windows.com (*Windows.com*) for $15 if your PC was purchased after June 2, 2012 with Windows 7.

Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 PC $40 Upgrade

Friday October 26, 2012 through January 31, 2013 upgrade to Windows 8 Pro from Windows 7, Vista, or XP installed OS with a known Product Key, as long as the PC has hardware compatible CPU with the NX (Never eXecute) bit (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NX_bit*) (also called XD bit, for eXecute Disable, or XN for eXecute Never)*, graphics, RAM, online from Windows.com (*Windows.com*) including free Media Center, for $40 or in local stores excluding Media Center, for $70 up to January 31, 2013, or $199 after January 31, 2013.

**The NX bit is set in the BIOS. Depending upon the CPU and motherboard, this setting may appear in the BIOS with any of those names listed. See also "What is PAE, NX, and SSE2 and why does my PC need to support them to run Windows 8? (*windowsupgradeoffer.com/en-US/Home/Faq*)" in Windows 8 FAQ "Windows 8 System Requirements."*

How to Upgrade

1. When online with Windows 8 Pro choose "from media", save ISO image to C:.

2. Locate and write down on paper the new ProductID from e-mail.

3. Burn DVD disk from ISO image as normal files extracted from the image.

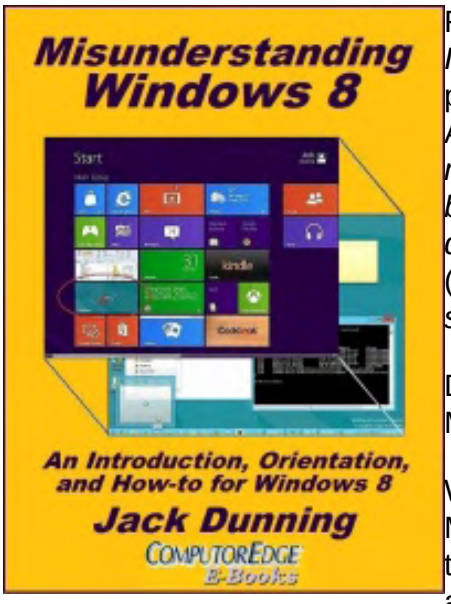
4. Boot DVD disk, choose either Upgrade to replace C: Windows 7 with Windows 8 Pro, or choose Custom, if dual booting a separate partition not main C: partition.

Note: VLC Player free online download replaces missing Media Center.

Avoid These Two Versions

- Windows 8 Pro N means NO Media Center is included.
- Windows 8 Pro RT means Windows Desktop (real Windows) is excluded.

* * *



For more information on Windows 8 see, *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*)* at Amazon. Also available at iTunes (*itunes.apple.com/us/book/misunderstanding-windows-8/id517331413?ls=1*), 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*).

Deciphering the madness of Windows 8, the new operating system from Microsoft, while comparing it to Windows 7.

Whether you're an old-line Windows user or merely curious about what Microsoft is up to, this book gives clear guidelines for understanding and tricks for using the new Windows 8 operating system. Jack Dunning, author of *Getting Started with Windows 7 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007AL672M/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007AL672M&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)* and other Windows 7 Secrets books (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00801M5GS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*), provides an objective appraisal of Windows 8 while comparing it to Windows 7.

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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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Stereoscopy," "Wiping Hard Disk Data VS. Drilling Holes," "Mac Security," "Wally Wang's Perspective"

Stereoscopy

[Regarding the October 5 Beyond Personal Computing column:]

Actually, Stereoscopy, is a term created by the Ancient Greeks, but it does *not* translate as "dizzy-eyeballs." "Stereo" means "solid" (as in 3-dimensional solidity) and "scope" is "an instrument for viewing." The suffix "y" means a "process." *stereoscopy* translates to "The process of using an instrument that produces solidity."

-Allen, Albuquerque, NM

Allen -

Thanks for the correction, but I'm well aware stereoscopy doesn't translate as "dizzy eyeballs." It was an attempt at humor.

-Marilyn

Wiping Hard Disk Data VS. Drilling Holes

[Regarding the October 12 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

To wipe a hard drive well and fully, I use Darik's Boot And Nuke. Free from DBAN (*www.dban.org/*).

It's an ISO, that is, a CD image file you burn to a CD (double-click on the ISO file after downloading, and your CD burning software should come up in the correct setup to burn the image to the CD, you don't want to just burn the file itself to a CD). Then boot the CD on the system you want to wipe.

Various wipe levels, including up to DOD standards.

I recommend removing any/all disks you do *not* want wiped to ensure you don't accidentally wipe something you want to keep.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Mac Security

[Regarding the October 19 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Wally:

You say "Take a Macintosh laptop with you to a public place like a library or coffeehouse and you may be surprised to see the names of unfamiliar computers showing up under the Sharing category in the left pane of the Finder. This occurs when people have file sharing turned on by default on their laptops, which

essentially opens their Macintosh up for anyone to access and drop a file into that person's public folder."

That's about as big of a security hole as I can imagine. My Win 7 PC laptop doesn't dare assume that, but you're saying that this is the Mac OS default!? Shouldn't this Mac security problem rate a banner headline on the *ComputorEdge* cover?

-Ed Price, El Cajon

The file sharing default simply lets people access a public folder as clearly stated in the article:

"While the Macintosh keeps people from accessing your main folders and erasing files or installing and running programs without your permission, you probably don't want to give anyone access to your computer when you're in public."

The public folder only lets people dump files in there but you'd still need to run anything malicious to cause any damage. Yes, it's a security hole which is why I did mention it and explain how to close it, but it still requires the user to take action and run something found in that public folder.

-Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Perspective

[Regarding the September 28 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

Well, if you need to put lipstick on a pig, this article on Apple's current flaps does provide Apple's perspective on keeping ahead of the competition despite some lumps and bumps. Thanks, Wally. I'm linking to his Apple Farm article in our Denver Apple Pi newsletter.

-Joyce Etherton, Lakewood, CO

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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