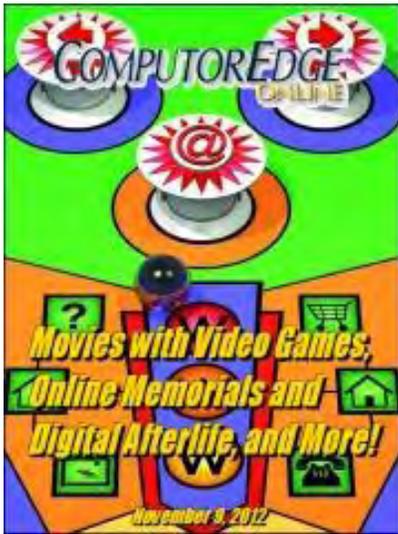


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 11/09/12



This issue:  
 Movies with Video Games,  
 Online Memorials and Digital  
 Afterlife, and More!

More little known high tech stories, plus Digital Dave, Wally on iPad mini and Microsoft Surface, Windows tips, and comparing tablet performance.

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[Worldwide News & Product Reviews](#) by Charles Carr

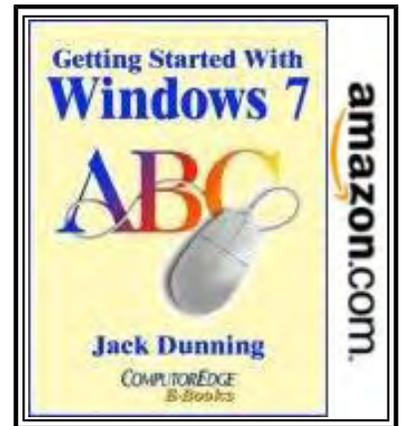
The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.  
Survey: Win 8 Considered Safer but Few Desire to Buy a New Win 8 PC; Comparing Surface, iPad Mini, and iPad 4th Gen Browser Performance; Android Rising; Lucius for PC; GO with Wireless Earphones.

DEPARTMENTS:

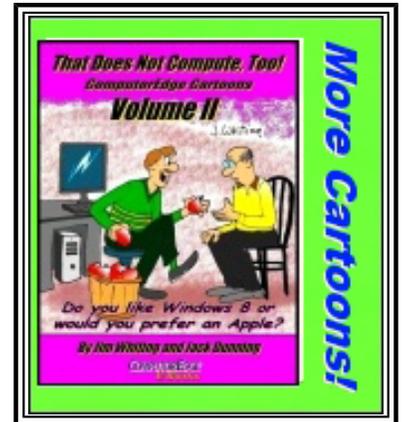
[Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers](#) by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Programmable Tattoo," "7Zip and Win7," "Browning Today," "A Soundcloud Set to Accompany the Column," "Programs Not Running Correctly"



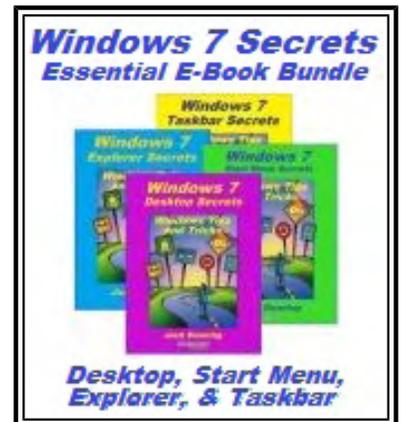
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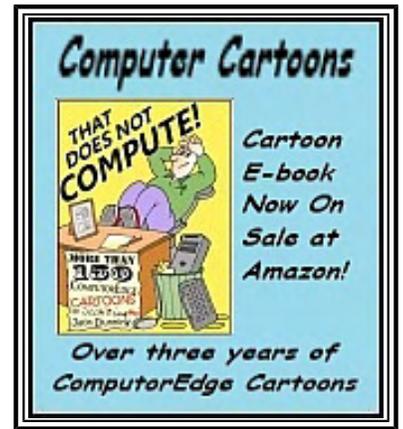
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**Computer Cartoons**

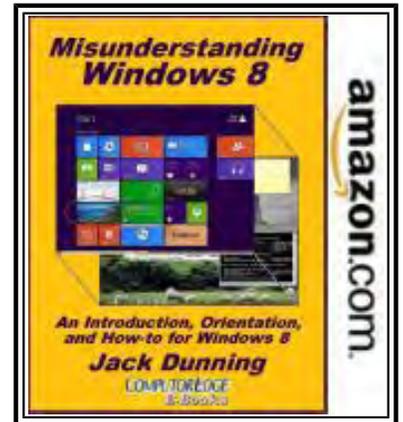
**THAT DOES NOT COMPUTE!**

Cartoon E-book Now On Sale at Amazon!

Over three years of ComputerEdge Cartoons

The advertisement features a cartoon illustration of a man sitting at a desk with a computer. A sign on the desk says 'WHEE TRY! 150 COMPUTER CARTOONS BY JACK DUNNING'. The background is light blue.

(Click Banner)



**Misunderstanding Windows 8**

amazon.com

An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8

**Jack Dunning**

COMPUTEREDGE E-Books

The advertisement shows a screenshot of the Windows 8 Start screen with various colorful tiles. The Amazon.com logo is on the right side.

(Click Banner)



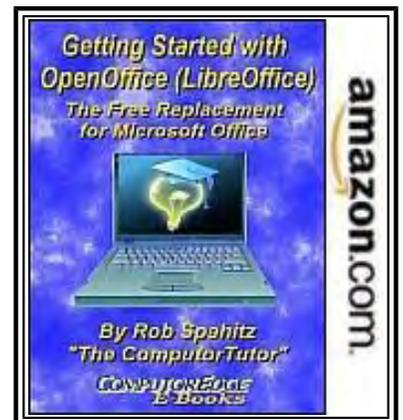
**Digital Dave's Product Links!**

Answers with Links to Stuff

COMPUTEREDGE E-Books

The advertisement features a cartoon character named Digital Dave with a beard, sitting at a computer. The background is yellow.

(Click Banner)



**Getting Started with OpenOffice (LibreOffice)**

The Free Replacement for Microsoft Office

amazon.com

By Rob Spahitz "The ComputerTutor"

COMPUTEREDGE E-Books

The advertisement shows a laptop with a glowing question mark on the screen. The Amazon.com logo is on the right side.

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## Digital Dave

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

Keyboard Button Change; Find a Laptop with Windows 7; Screen Display Distorted First Twenty Plus Seconds.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*Can a keyboard button be changed to something other than what is indicated on it?*

*I use the numerical keypad a lot, and tab between boxes to make my entries. Rather than go all the way to the tab button on the left, can a button next to the number keypad, like the + or Insert button, be changed to a tab?*

*Thanks for all your help over the years. I hope this one adds to the list.*

*David Levine  
Colorado Springs, CO*

Dear David,

That's an excellent question. I can see how someone who makes great use of the numeric keypad would want to have other important keys nearby. Then you can really fly just like those payroll clerks on the old mechanical calculators. I like the idea of changing the INSERT key into a TAB key. The INSERT toggle key is pretty much a waste of space on my keyboard.

There are a number of ways to remap Windows keyboard keys. Some of the early ways involved Windows Registry hacks. There is a program which makes the Registry changes a little easier called Sharpkeys ([www.randyrants.com/2006/07/sharpkeys\\_211.html](http://www.randyrants.com/2006/07/sharpkeys_211.html)). The program looks to be about six years old and I've never used it, but it should work with Windows 7 (I'm guessing). However, this is yet another problem which Jack Dunning would say can be quickly solved with AutoHotkey ([www.autohotkey.com/](http://www.autohotkey.com/)).

In AutoHotkey saving the characters *Ins::tab* to a simple text file and activating it with the main program will turn the INSERT key in a TAB key. Done! (For getting started with AutoHotkey, see "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script ([www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing\\_AutoHotkey\\_and\\_writing\\_your\\_first\\_script.html](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html)).") The *Ins* designated the INSERT key as the hotkey. The double colon (::) marks the beginning of the action code. The *tab* tells the computer to tab every time the INSERT key is hit.

*(For the convenience of people who don't want to learn anything about AutoHotkey, I've put the code that turns the useless INSERT key into TAB in a compiled executable file—the AutoHotkey program is not required. You can find it at Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com/sh/lok98mu7oa3gryk/gfkU9DgbWp](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/lok98mu7oa3gryk/gfkU9DgbWp)) in a ZIP folder. Download and extract the file MakeTab.exe. Put the file onto your Windows Desktop and double-click the icon to activate it. That's all there is to it. Right-click on the icon in the notification area at the bottom right of the Taskbar and choose Exit to deactivate it.)*

If you want the function key F11 to tab: *F11::tab*

If you want the plus sign to tab: **=::tab** (The equals sign is the same as the plus key for hotkey purposes. Using + as part of a hotkey would actually represent the SHIFT key. I wouldn't recommend this one since both = and + would become a TAB key, although it would not affect the + on the numeric keypad—*NumpadAdd*.)

For other alternatives, see the AutoHotkey key list ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/KeyList.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/KeyList.htm)).

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*Where can I buy a new laptop with Windows 7 (32-bit or 64-bit) installed? I don't want Windows 8!*

*My current laptop has Windows 7 (32-bit) and is on its last legs; I would like to do a direct transfer to a new laptop. Is this possible? I'm too old, poor, and dumb to buy a tablet and learn a new operating system.*

*Ed Rubin  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Ed,

You should be able to get a Windows 7 laptop anywhere that you can buy a Windows 8 laptop. The choice of operating system is merely an option. I would guess that computer businesses would have laptops in stock with either Windows 7 or Windows 8 installed.

It would be foolish for any computer business not to offer both versions of the Microsoft Windows operating system. There are many people who are not interested in the new Windows 8 Modern (formerly Metro) interface which replaces the old Start Menu in Windows 7. There is no rush to get into Windows 8 and the early numbers show that most people are only mildly curious. (For those who are curious, Jack Dunning has published the introductory overview e-book *Misunderstanding Windows 8* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007RMCRH8&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007RMCRH8&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)).

As for transferring your old files, e-mail, pictures, and settings to the new computer, it should be remarkably easy. Windows 7 includes a program call Windows Easy Transfer ([windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer](http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/products/features/windows-easy-transfer)). (If someone is transferring from a Windows XP or Windows Vista computer, they will want to download the appropriate version to install on the older computer.) You will still need to reinstall your outside software and programs.

The easiest way to find Windows Easy Transfer is to type "easy" (without quotes) into the "Search programs and files" field in the Windows 7 Start Menu (). It should appear at the top of the list. After clicking Next in the introductory window, there are three transfer options: an Easy Transfer cable, a network, or an external hard disk or USB flash drive (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Windows Easy Transfer has three options for moving files and settings to a new Windows computer.

For a new computer the most direct option is using an Easy Transfer Cable ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0050TPVMY/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0050TPVMY&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0050TPVMY/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0050TPVMY&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)) which is designed to connect between USB ports on the old and new computer.

If you can put both computers on the same network, then this will eliminate the need for a special cable. Plugging both laptops into the same router should suffice, although you may need to share the drive on the new computer for Easy Transfer to write to the new laptop.

The final option is to use an external hard drive or USB flash drive (if you have one large enough to hold all of your files). The process would first copy all of your files and settings from your old computer to the drive, then, after moving the drive to the new computer, copy the files to the new computer. This method is required if you're upgrading a single computer. Also, it has the added benefit of creating a backup of your files and settings, just in case something goes wrong.

You can also plug your old drive into the new computer with the appropriate cable and just copy the files. However, this will not copy settings nor recreate a separate backup.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I'm writing for my physically disabled brother, Andy. Suddenly, when Andy goes online, (Chrome, Firefox, IE, e-mail) the display goes to a snowy, static display with hundreds of diagonal lines, like an old TV with the vertical hold out of kilter. This lasts about 20-25 seconds, and then everything is fine, unless you go to another online program or site. Everything is fine using offline apps, i.e. Word, Excel, etc. The problem is only clicking on anything connecting to online services. I also downloaded and installed the newest display drivers. Any idea what the problem could be?*

*Rob Macfie/Andy Macfie*

Dear Rob and Andy,

This is indeed mysterious. When you go online and see this distortion there are three pieces of hardware involved: the monitor, the video card and the network card. (I doubt that it is a software problem since it reliably occurs whenever you access the Internet regardless of the program.) With video problems we always look at the video card and monitor first. Yet the timing suggests that there could be something more involved.

My first thought is that it's trying, but failing to switch resolutions. The timing seems right for the timeout dialogue that switches you back. Weird problem. Upgrade all relevant drivers (as you have already done) and swap out parts, but try a different monitor first.

Otherwise, there appears to be some sort of interaction or interference between components which shows up when only when the network card is activated. It is possible that the network card is starting to fail and giving off unusual EMI (Electromagnetic Interference) which distorts your video signal. You could also be having a problem with your video card which is responding when the network card is active.

Since your brother is disabled, is there other special equipment that is activated when going online? If so, then that would be another possible source of the problem.

The easiest way to resolve the issue is to swap out the cards one at a time to see if it continues. If it is a desktop computer then this is fairly easy to do—as long as you have replacement parts. If it is a laptop or the devices are built into the motherboard, you may need to disable the feature in Device Manager before adding a new card. There could also be a problem with the monitor.

Another possible source of interference could be a wireless router if your computer is sitting too close to it. Try moving the computer to other locations.

All of this may be a bit too confusing and can become expensive if you're buying parts just to swap them out. If you don't have the resources yourself, sometimes it's just better to take the computer to an expert to get it fixed.

Digital Dave

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## More Little Known High Tech Stories

“Digital Afterlife, Zombie Gift Ideas, Hacker and Gaming Updates” by Marilyn K. Martin

Holiday Gift Ideas for Zombies and Huggers; Hacker Updates; Movies with Video Games; Colleges and Digital Demand; Electronic Bactericides and Tele-Medicine; Chicago Ideas Week; Supercomputers; Federal Rules; New Convertibles; Online Memorials and Digital Afterlife; Video Game Industry; Technology and Your Romantic Relationship; Best Movie Monitors.

### Holiday Gift Ideas for Zombies and Huggers

For the Zombie-wannabes on your gift-list, [dudeiwantthat.com](http://dudeiwantthat.com) (*dudeiwantthat.com*) has just the ticket. Check out a Sawblade Frisbee ([www.dudeiwantthat.com/entertainment/sporting-goods/sawblade-frisbee.asp](http://www.dudeiwantthat.com/entertainment/sporting-goods/sawblade-frisbee.asp)). Or maybe some Bloodbath Wallpaper ([www.dudeiwantthat.com/household/decor/blood-bath-wallpaper.asp](http://www.dudeiwantthat.com/household/decor/blood-bath-wallpaper.asp)), only \$53 from Pixers Bloody Moon collection ([pixersize.com/wallmurals/bloody-moon](http://pixersize.com/wallmurals/bloody-moon)). Or how about a Blood Bath Shower Curtain ([www.amazon.com/dp/B0037X6P6A/?tag=relprods-20](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0037X6P6A/?tag=relprods-20)) or Flayed Flesh Garters ([www.dudeiwantthat.com/style/costumes/flayed-flesh-garters.asp](http://www.dudeiwantthat.com/style/costumes/flayed-flesh-garters.asp)), only \$40 from Etsy ([www.etsy.com/](http://www.etsy.com/))? (Sadly, the Zombie Apocalypse Bedding and Fetid Monster LightSwitch Plates, both from Etsy, are sold out.)



But if immersion in the faux-bloody world of the hungry undead is too intense for you and you really treasure the softer side of Life, how about a vest that hugs ([techcrunch.com/2012/10/07/like-a-hug-facebook-connected-vest-lets-the-wearer-know-they-are-liked/](http://techcrunch.com/2012/10/07/like-a-hug-facebook-connected-vest-lets-the-wearer-know-they-are-liked/)) you whenever you get a Facebook Like. Designed in the MIT Media Lab, Tangible Media Group, Like-A-Hug ([www.melissakitchow.com/Like-A-Hug](http://www.melissakitchow.com/Like-A-Hug)) explores "how social media might push past the traditional graphic user interface (GUI)."

This concept/prototype generated controversy and got a lot of press, but is yet to be turned into a saleable product. So for now, check out Huggable Gifts at Zazzle ([www.zazzle.com/huggable+gifts](http://www.zazzle.com/huggable+gifts)), Hug Gifts at Cafe Press ([www.cafepress.com/hug-gifts](http://www.cafepress.com/hug-gifts)).



## Death and his friends sign into their favorite social media site, NoFacebook.

[cafepress.com/+hug+gifts?](http://cafepress.com/+hug+gifts?), or Huggable Teddy Bears ([www.huggableteddybears.com/](http://www.huggableteddybears.com/)).

### Hacker Updates

A September 2012 story originating from *The New York Times* said that the 1 million stolen ID numbers ([seattletimes.com/html/](http://seattletimes.com/html/)

[businesstechnology/2019119198\\_bluetoadxml.html](http://businesstechnology/2019119198_bluetoadxml.html)) for Apple mobile devices did not come from the FBI, but an Orlando, Florida company. Blue Toad ([www.bluetoad.com/BlueToad/](http://www.bluetoad.com/BlueToad/)) works with thousands of publishers to translate printed content into digital and mobile formats. Hackers had breached its systems, and stolen the file with the ID numbers from Apple. Hacker group AntiSec (a sub-group of Anonymous) continued to claim the data was stolen from an FBI laptop. But Apple said it never gave such information to the FBI, and that Blue Toad had nowhere near the 12 million ID numbers AntiSec claimed to have stolen. Besides, Apple has recently changed their device identifiers (UDIDs) anyway.

Also in September 2012, *The New York Times* reported that the recent attack on U.S. banks must have had substantial help ([bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/hackers-may-have-had-help-with-attacks-on-u-s-banks-researchers-say/?ref=technology](http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/hackers-may-have-had-help-with-attacks-on-u-s-banks-researchers-say/?ref=technology)) to take down those major banking sites. The hacker group that claimed responsibility (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Cyber Fighters) had enlisted volunteers for the attack with messages left on several Web sites. Security experts suspect the hackers also had major help from a foreign nation-state or botnets (networks of infected zombie computers secretly doing the bidding of cybercriminals), which can be rented or loaned. Senator Joe Lieberman said in an interview that he believed the attack was sponsored by Iran.

The U.S. government continues to wrangle over cyber-security. Congressional bills for better cyber-security were shot down because of added provisions giving the president ill-defined "emergency powers" to shut down the Internet ([threatpost.com/en\\_us/blogs/cybersecurity-act-2012-introduced-without-emergency-presidential-powers-provisions-021512](http://threatpost.com/en_us/blogs/cybersecurity-act-2012-introduced-without-emergency-presidential-powers-provisions-021512)), and create a special White House cyber-security office. These bills never passed, and a presidential Executive Order was supposedly circulated instead in Summer 2012. Infighting over cyber-security between various governmental agencies also adds to the confusion. Defense Secretary Panetta made a big speech in mid-October 2012 announcing that the DoD is "acting aggressively to get ahead (of cyber attacks)," investing more than \$3 billion annually to bolster U.S. cyber-security ([www.clearancejobs.com/defense-news/923/cybersecurity-news-round-up-dod-adopts-new-rules-for-defending-us-in-cyber-space](http://www.clearancejobs.com/defense-news/923/cybersecurity-news-round-up-dod-adopts-new-rules-for-defending-us-in-cyber-space)).

The latest hacker-attack ([news.cnet.com/8301-1009\\_3-57541481-83/millions-of-ssns-lifted-from-south-carolina-database](http://news.cnet.com/8301-1009_3-57541481-83/millions-of-ssns-lifted-from-south-carolina-database)) of note came in October 2012, when millions of social security numbers were stolen from a S. Carolina Dept. of Revenue database. The name of the hacker/group is unknown, but was partially identified as "an overseas computer criminal," who allegedly then contacted S. Carolina demanding a ransom.

### Movies with Video Games



An interesting article in *The Boston Globe* in October 2012 discussed the Top Ten Movies ([www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/2012/10/27/when-video-games-movies/1hFVHrxfOreON3MIJyll/story.html](http://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/2012/10/27/when-video-games-movies/1hFVHrxfOreON3MIJyll/story.html)) where video games play a big roll. No one seems to have liked movies based strictly on a video game, but movies where video games played a major role in the plot are better liked. The first movie with a video game, strangely enough, was 1973's Science Fiction movie *Soylent Green*, where an arcade game

(Computer Space) made a cameo. After that, video games made more significant appearances in movies from *Star Wars* and *Tron* to *War Games* and *The Last Starfighter*. Disney will release *Wreck-It Ralph* ([www.imdb.com/title/tt1772341/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1772341/)) on November 2nd, where an animated video game villain sets out to be a hero, bringing havoc to the whole arcade where he lives.

### Colleges and Digital Demand

*The Chicago Sun-Times* reported in August 2012 how private colleges are retooling their curricula ([www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/governmenteducation/14665705-452/web-savvy-draws-big-for-college.html](http://www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/governmenteducation/14665705-452/web-savvy-draws-big-for-college.html)) to educate students for in-demand jobs in computer technology. One such re-tooled liberal arts college is Chicago's Lake Forest College, which draws 40% of its applicants from just their Web site offering an online application. The college also uses smartphone apps in a variety of languages to give prospective students a virtual campus tour, and their professors network with educators in China and Eastern Europe. Today Lake Forest College boasts 15% foreign students, and offers accelerated programs for bachelor's degrees in three instead of four years.

*The Seattle Times'* Brier Dudley reported in September 2012 that plenty of software engineers are currently available ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2019169973\\_briercolumn.xml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2019169973_briercolumn.xml.html)) for start-ups and relocated companies in the Seattle area. With the demand for software engineers outpacing the output of college computer-science programs, there are state and national efforts to boost science and technology education.

Brier Dudley (*Seattle Times*) also reported in October 2012 that the size of the University of Washington's computer science program will increase 25% ([seattletimes.com/html/technology/brierdudleysblog/2019515276\\_uw\\_touts\\_computer\\_science\\_grow.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/technology/brierdudleysblog/2019515276_uw_touts_computer_science_grow.html)) this year. Boosted by \$1.6 Million from the state Legislature, and generous grants from local companies like Amazon, undergraduates accepted into the U of W's computer science program will go from 160 a year to 200 a year. In addition, the school has successfully recruited a top-tier faculty, and is also doubling their acceptance of both Masters and PhD students.

## Electronic Bactericides and Tele-Medicine

In September 2012, NextBigFuture reported on unique medical electronics created by DARPA ([www.darpa.mil/](http://www.darpa.mil/)) that can fight infection ([nextbigfuture.com/2012/09/electronics-that-fight-infection-and.html](http://nextbigfuture.com/2012/09/electronics-that-fight-infection-and.html)), then simply dissolve away. Using ultra-thin sheets of silicon and magnesium encapsulated in silk, these implantable devices act as "non-antibiotic, programmable bactericides" that prevent surgical site infections by simply dissolving into the body—which could literally save lives in remote combat situations. These "transient electronics" could also provide localized antimicrobial therapy around larger implanted devices, like pacemakers, and might even help against antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

*The Chicago Sun-Times* in April 2012 reported on a proposed system to let patients with chronic illnesses send their vital signs ([www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/health/11299638-452/vision-to-ease-chronic-illness.html](http://www.suntimes.com/technology/innovation/health/11299638-452/vision-to-ease-chronic-illness.html)) to medical personnel without having to own a computer. Sherrod Woods, who already has his own company called 3 Net Wise ([3netwise.com](http://3netwise.com/)), won the Chicago State University's Entrepreneurial Idol ([www.csu.edu/business/eicompetition/](http://www.csu.edu/business/eicompetition/)) contest this year, to help make remote medical care easier and quicker. The new system uses a patent-pending communications device to read vital signs from off-the-shelf wireless devices (like weight scales or blood pressure monitors) and send the encrypted readings in real-time to a secure Web server.

Tele-medicine has been around for a while, with about 200,000 people nationwide now getting home treatment through mobile monitoring devices, according to the American Telemedicine Association ([www.americantelemed.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3281](http://www.americantelemed.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3281)). The Department of Veterans Affairs has had a Telehealth program ([www.telehealth.va.gov/](http://www.telehealth.va.gov/)) for years, in conjunction with caregivers in the home and community. But 3 Net Wise is the first to link medical personnel to home patients who may not have caregivers or computers.

## Chicago Ideas Week—2012

Started in October 2011 by Groupon co-founder Brad Keywell, Chicago Ideas Week ([www.chicagoideas.com/](http://www.chicagoideas.com/)) is a non-profit, dedicated to being a "platform for world-class ideas," to aid the city's culture ([www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/10/chicago-ideas-week-2012-o\\_n\\_1953962.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/10/chicago-ideas-week-2012-o_n_1953962.html)) of start-ups and innovation. More accessible to the general public than the similar, invitation-only TED Conference annually in California, Chicago Ideas Week costs anyone only \$15. There were talks about everything from "disruptive innovation" to a "sharing economy," with speakers ranging from General Colin Powell to Tom Brokaw.

According to *The Chicago Tribune* in late September 2012, "Chicago Ideas Week" had one deadly serious aspect ([www.tribune.com](http://www.tribune.com)).

[chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chi-chicago-looks-to-twitter-for-answer-to-gun-problem-20120929,0,7427635.story](http://chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chi-chicago-looks-to-twitter-for-answer-to-gun-problem-20120929,0,7427635.story)). Chicago used the platform to ask their residents for ideas on how to get illegal guns off the streets—in under 140 characters on Twitter, using the hashtag #whatifchicago. The city is already paying an anti-violence group, CeaseFire ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CeaseFire\\_\(Organization\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CeaseFire_(Organization))), \$1 million to mediate conflicts in gang neighborhoods.

## Supercomputers—Conventional to Quantum

In September 2012, Forbes reported on the seven supercomputers that are changing the world. IBM's Watson, of *Jeopardy* fame, can process and understand natural language, and is being programmed with cancer data at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, to one day be able to aid in diagnostics and offer targeted information to cancer physicians. The current fastest supercomputer is Fujitsu's K computer, conducting more than 10 quadrillion calculations per second, using more than 12 megawatts of power. The U.S.'s Jaguar supercomputer is undergoing a massive upgrade. Renamed Titan, the Department of Energy's supercomputer will be able to perform 20 quadrillion calculations per second—twice as fast as the Fujitsu's K supercomputer.

*The New York Times* in September 2012 announced that Australian scientists have given their country the lead in the intense international competition to build a working quantum computer ([www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/technology/australians-surge-in-quest-to-build-quantum-computer.html?ref=technology](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/technology/australians-surge-in-quest-to-build-quantum-computer.html?ref=technology)). A team of scientists at the University of New South Wales has apparently "constructed one of the basic building blocks of modern quantum computing, by relying on manufacturing techniques now used by the modern semiconductor industry." Quantum computers could lead to a new generation of supercomputers by offering speed to deal with problems today's non-quantum computers can't address.

## Federal Rules and Regulations Catch up to the Digital Age

*The New York Times* reported in September 2012 that U.S. federal regulators are starting to crack down ([www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/technology/ftc-moves-to-tighten-online-privacy-protections-for-children.html?ref=technology](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/technology/ftc-moves-to-tighten-online-privacy-protections-for-children.html?ref=technology)) on data miners collecting too much online information about children—without their parents' awareness or permission. The concern is that the information could be used to identify and/or locate individual children. So the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is moving to overhaul their rules, which have not kept pace with the explosive growth of the Internet and mobile apps.

Also in September 2012 *The New York Times* announced that the five-member Federal Communications Commission (FCC) unanimously approved a proposal to reclaim public airwaves and auction them off ([www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/technology/fcc-approves-auction-process-for-spectrum.html?ref=technology](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/technology/fcc-approves-auction-process-for-spectrum.html?ref=technology)) for use in wireless broadband networks. This move will help satisfy the booming demand for wireless Internet capacity. And will help prevent dropped calls, connection delays and slower downloads, since mobile broadband traffic is projected to increase thirty-fold by 2015. The auctions probably won't happen until 2014, and could help provide the \$7 billion needed to build a nationwide emergency communications network for public safety officials—a yet unfulfilled recommendation of the 9/11 Commission.

*The Denver Post* reported in September 2012 that crowdfunding is expected to explode in 2013 when federal rules are adopted to let companies freely sell securities online ([www.denverpost.com/business/ci\\_21603212/startups-look-scor-investors-through-state-level-crowdfunding](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_21603212/startups-look-scor-investors-through-state-level-crowdfunding)). The federal JOBS Act (Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act) will start in 2013, and let companies bypass state-level forms and solicit investments nationally.

Using a little publicized procedure in Colorado's current security laws called SCOR (Small Company Offering Registration), two Colorado start-ups have already partnered to launch the nation's first equity crowdfunding deals. Usually, access to funds for small companies is difficult, so they naturally gravitate toward crowdfunding. Filings for Colorado's SCOR program only cost \$100 and are on the rise, but companies can only raise up to \$1 million over a 12 month program. So bigger companies will benefit most from next year's JOBS Act.

## New Convertibles

In October 2012 *The Seattle Times*' Brier Dudley previewed the upcoming line of Windows 8 Convertibles ([seattletimes.com](http://seattletimes.com)).

[com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019387024\\_meet\\_yoga\\_lynx\\_and\\_twist\\_lenov.html](http://com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019387024_meet_yoga_lynx_and_twist_lenov.html)). Like I wrote about last time with Rugged Laptops, these are laptops that can convert to tablets, with a display that rotates and/or folds down over the keyboard to become a touchscreen tablet. Although Lenovo's Idea Tab Lynx is an 11.6-inch tablet for about \$600, for which you can buy the matching optional keyboard for \$149. They are all going on sale between the end of October and late December, for anywhere from \$600 to \$1,000.

## Online Memorials and Digital Afterlife



*The Mercury News* reported in September 2012 on the growing popularity of online memorials ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_21635908/popularity-online-memorials-grows](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_21635908/popularity-online-memorials-grows)). A San Francisco advertising executive used a new Facebook app called EverTalk ([www.everta.lk/about/](http://www.everta.lk/about/)) to create an online memorial to his deceased mother, inviting relatives around the world to add their memories and photos to the site. Under "Digital Legacies" at the end of the article, other online memorial companies are mentioned, ranging from free to fee-based, with many more digital memorial companies online.

Attention is increasingly being paid to what happens to one's digital assets ([rockcenter.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/06/01/11995859-digital-afterlife-what-happens-to-your-online-accounts-when-you-die?lite](http://rockcenter.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/06/01/11995859-digital-afterlife-what-happens-to-your-online-accounts-when-you-die?lite)) upon death. It comes into sharp focus over teen suicides, since grieving parents are frantic to find clues to answer the Whys. And since most young people share their most intimate thoughts online, parents soon come into conflict with social media sites like Facebook and Google, who are protective of their users' contracted privacy instructions. But everyone needs to think about who will inherit their passwords and online accounts upon their death. A law professor at George Washington University says that there is "almost no binding legal precedent out there" when dealing with a deceased's digital assets. Only five states (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Indiana and Idaho) have estate laws that extend to digital assets, and they vary greatly.

## Video Game Industry in Trouble? Or Just Evolving?

*The New York Times* in October 2012 ran a distressing story that video game sales have dropped 20-30% ([www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/arts/video-games/video-game-retail-sales-decline-despite-new-hits.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit\\_th\\_20121007](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/arts/video-games/video-game-retail-sales-decline-despite-new-hits.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20121007)) in the U.S. this year, and that this may end up the worst year for video game software sales since 2005. The reasons range from a struggling U.S. economy that hit the core-gamers (young males) the hardest, to the growing popularity of less expensive digital downloads of games. Expert Stephen Totilo also blames the release of inferior games this year. Expert Chris Suellentrop agrees, and adds that this country is facing a fiction crisis—from movies to books to games—or a general lack of creative innovation in story-telling. Can the release of Nintendo's Wii U kickstart the gaming industry out of its slump, like it did in the 1980s? Or is the gaming industry simply evolving, with \$60 games-on-disc finally losing out to better technology?

Also in October 2012, *Seattle Times'* Brier Dudley rolled out all the stats on the drop in gaming sales ([seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019408377\\_video\\_game\\_sales\\_dive\\_again\\_do.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019408377_video_game_sales_dive_again_do.html)). He does note, however, that the doom-and-gloom figures don't include the sales of digitally distributed games and subscriptions, which were nearly \$700 million last month. Nor the fact that PC games are doing well, with sales up 12% through September 2012.

In another October column, Dudley initially questions the wisdom ([seattletimes.com/html/business/2019375888\\_briercolumn08.xml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/2019375888_briercolumn08.xml.html)) of Nintendo releasing a new \$300 game console amidst the slumping economy and game sales. But after a visit to Nintendo's headquarters and a demonstration of the Wii U, an impressed Dudley thinks Nintendo is again ready to release a product that will transform the field of gaming. He thinks the Nintendo Wii U is the first of a new generation of consoles, which are not just for gaming, but are also engaging portals to live TV and online video.

## How Technology Can Kill Your Romantic Relationship

In October 2012 the CafeMom explored a touchy subject about how current technology might mess up ([thestir.cafemom.com/technology/144748/10\\_ways\\_technology\\_can\\_kill?utm\\_medium=sm&utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_content=technology\\_rssfeed](http://thestir.cafemom.com/technology/144748/10_ways_technology_can_kill?utm_medium=sm&utm_source=rss&utm_content=technology_rssfeed)) a significant relationship. According to the essay, couples are now breaking up over such dire situations as "He followed his ex-girlfriend on Twitter—but he wouldn't follow me on Twitter!"

With technology now so important in romantic relationships, the author lists eleven seemingly innocent habits that could cause a break-up. The suggestions range from not texting a constant stream of random nonsense to not "Friending on Facebook" a dozen people you've casually met in one evening at one bar. "Friending" someone on Facebook after one date might suggest you have control-freak issues, but refusing to change your Facebook status after multiple dates to "In A Relationship" is equally suspicious. And beware of meeting a seemingly nice new date-material, who starts tweeting hysterical anti-government messages in all caps, or who password-protects absolutely everything—from iPads to their front door.

## Best Movie Monitors

In October 2012 *The Miami Herald* recommended the best monitors for watching movies ([www.miamiherald.com/2012/10/24/3063375/best-monitors-for-movie-watching.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/10/24/3063375/best-monitors-for-movie-watching.html)). Rated on a five-star scale, Good to Excellent, their favorite (4 out of 5 stars) was the Apple Thunderbolt Display ([www.apple.com/displays/](http://www.apple.com/displays/)). Only compatible with Thunderbolt Macs, it has a super-fast connection and a gorgeous 27-inch, high-resolution backlit display, with a FaceTime HD camera, high-quality audio, and three USB 2.0 ports. It is about \$1,000 from the Apple Store ([store.apple.com/us/product/MC914LL/B/apple-thunderbolt-display-27-inch?](http://store.apple.com/us/product/MC914LL/B/apple-thunderbolt-display-27-inch?)). The reviewer also liked the Very Good (3.5 out of 5 stars) Samsung Syncmaster S27A750D, and Syncmaster T27A950 displays for movie watching. Cost ranges from about \$300 to over \$1,000.

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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/](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.teensreadtoo.com/ReptilianRebirth.html)), and are available from most on-line bookstores.

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

\* *Computer Confusion in Paradise: Lo! And in the Beginning There Was Total Befuddlement!*, in both EPUB format ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Confusion-in-Paradise-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0001-1.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://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](http://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](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Hardware-Parts-Is-Parts-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0002-1.htm?sourceCode=writer)) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Hardware-Parts-Is-Parts-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0002-2.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Computer-Hardware-Parts-Is-Parts-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0002-2.htm?sourceCode=writer)) for Amazon Kindle.

\* *Computerholics Anonymous: PC Users, Abusers and Confusioners*, in both EPUB format ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Computerholics-Anonymous-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0003-1.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/My-Computer-My-Nemesis-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0004-2.htm?sourceCode=writer)) for Amazon Kindle.

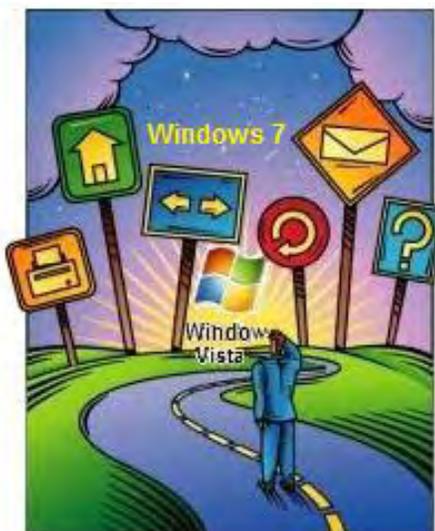
*My-Nemesis-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0004-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

\* 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](http://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: Windows Computer Management Console

“Computer Management Gives Quick Access to Key Windows Troubleshooting Tools” by Jack Dunning

Need to find Task Scheduler, Device Manager, Disk Manager, or Services? Or, maybe just check recent computer activity. Try Windows Computer Management.

There are so many tools in Windows that it is often difficult to remember how to find them. A few of the more important tools for diagnosing setup problems are Device Manager for checking hardware, Disk Management for working with drives, and Services for starting and stopping systems features. Microsoft has a console called Computer Management which includes these plus other system evaluation tools. See Figure 1 for Computer Management in Windows XP.

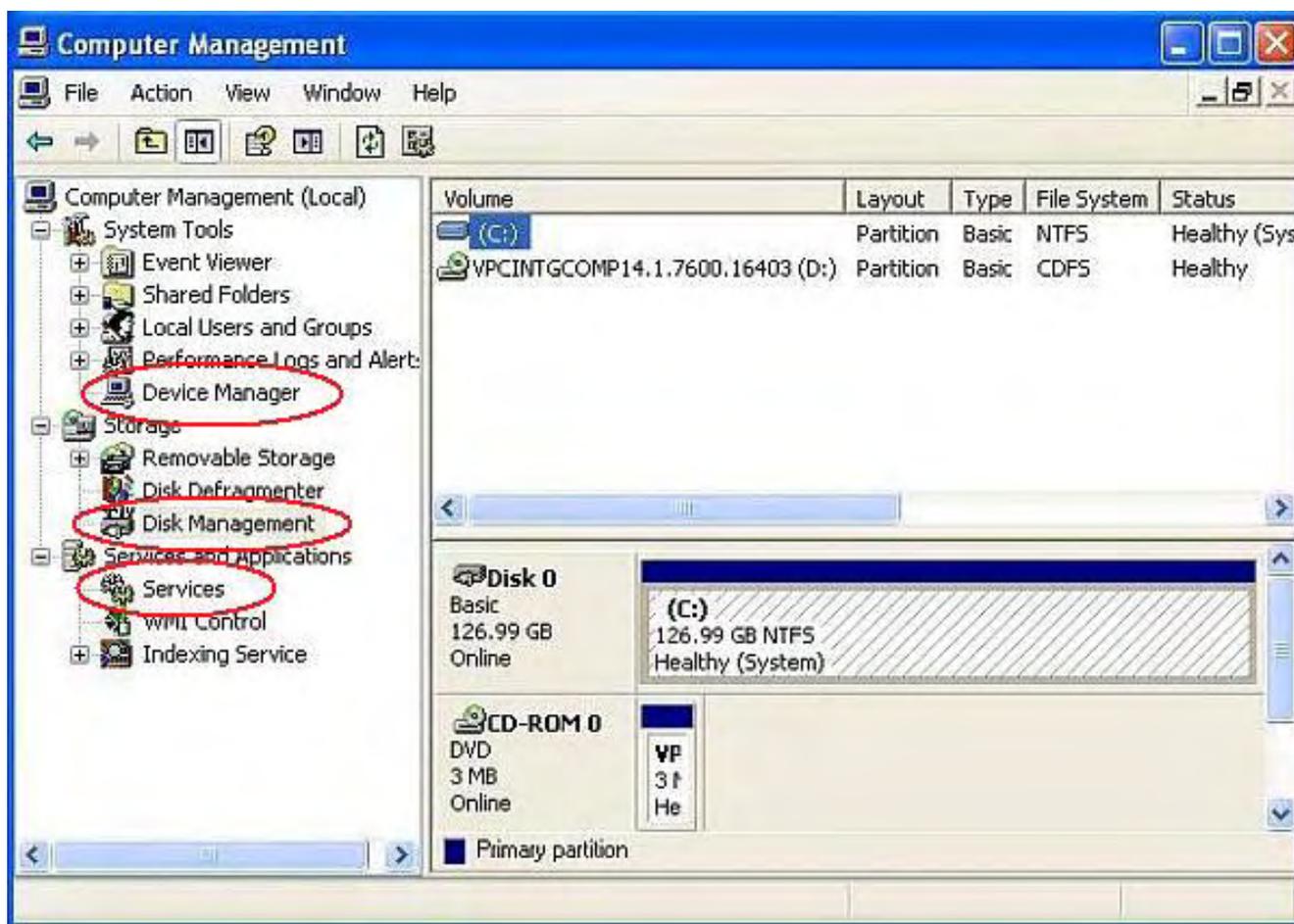


Figure 1. Computer Management window in Windows XP.

Windows Computer Management

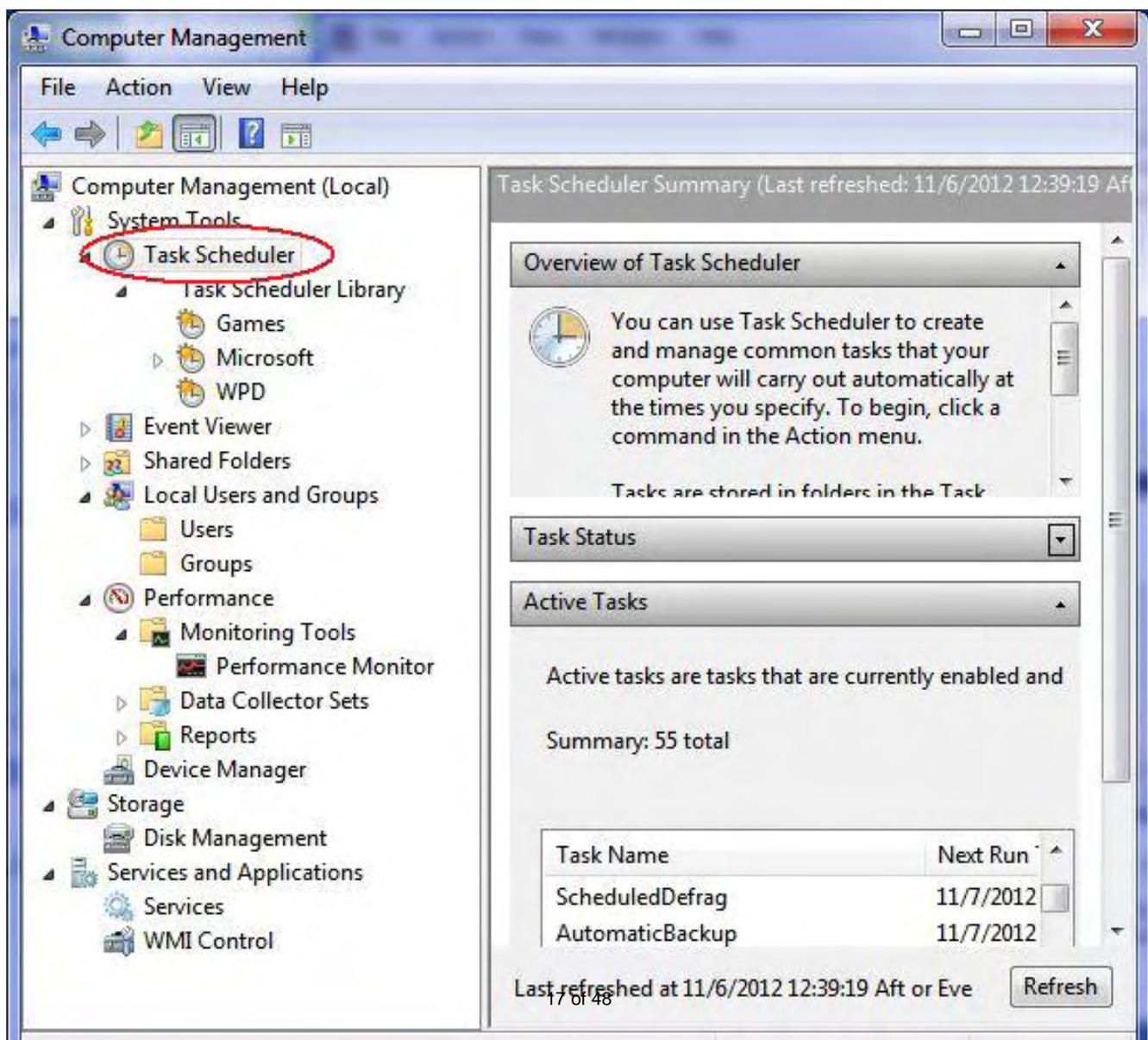
Windows Computer Management is a tool for systems administrators. One of its key features is that it can connect to other computers on the network to make adjustments and monitor activity—as long as the remote administrator has appropriate rights on the host machine. However, for most people Computer Management can be a convenient way to explore issues in their local computer.

Computer Management groups many tools into one window, making it easy to dig around in the inner workings of your computer and the operating system—in some cases, maybe too easy. To open Computer Management, select it from Control Panel => Administrative Tools => Computer Management. For Windows Vista and Windows 7, you can also type "computer," "management," or merely "com" or "man" into the Start Search field (or in the Search Screen for Windows 8), and select it from the top of the Start Menu. Another easy way to open Computer Management is Run (⊞+R), type *compmgmt.msc*, then OK. In Windows 8 WIN+X (⊞+X) will open a pop-up menu in the lower left-hand corner of the screen with Computer Management as a selection option.

There are three major categories in Computer Management:

- Systems Tools
- Storage
- Services and Applications

System tools includes Event Viewer, Share Folders, Local User and Groups, Performance and the Device Manager. As can be seen these features are methods for viewing activity, setup and users. In Windows Vista and above, Task Scheduler was added to System Tools in Computer Management (see Figure 2).



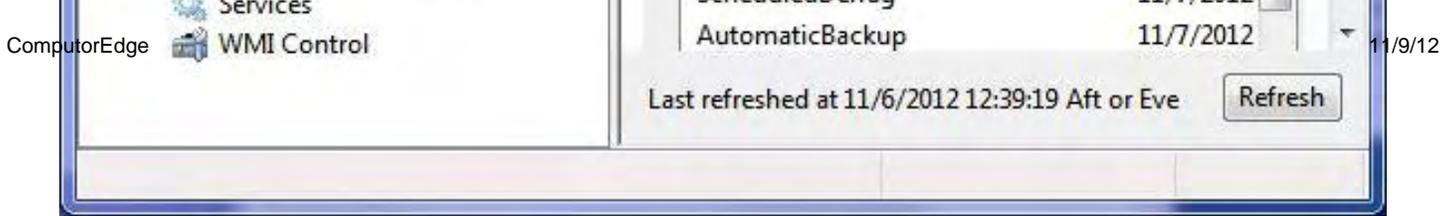


Figure 2. Computer Management window in Windows 7.

Task Scheduler was an important addition since the automatic features of the Windows operating system such as Disk Defragmenter were removed from Storage (as found in Windows XP). These Windows scheduled operations and settings can be found in Computer Management through Task Scheduler => Task Scheduler Library => Microsoft => Windows.

Of particular interest is the Event Viewer section which includes Custom Views, Windows Logs, and Applications and Services Logs. This area provides various types of information about events, errors, and cautions that are occurring in your system. However, it is possible to drive yourself crazy with too much information. Many of the events are cryptic and difficult to evaluate unless you're an expert. If your computer is doing what it is supposed to do, then I wouldn't worry too much. However, if you are experiencing problems, then you may be able to get some insight here.

The Storage section contains a program called "Disk Management" in all versions of Windows. This is a primary category for working with storage media. It is a convenient way to change logical drive letters of USB flash drives and other removable media.

Services and Applications is a gateway to controlling the starting and stopping of Windows systems with Services features.

Note that Computer Management in Windows 8 is essentially identical to that of Windows 7 (see Figure 3).

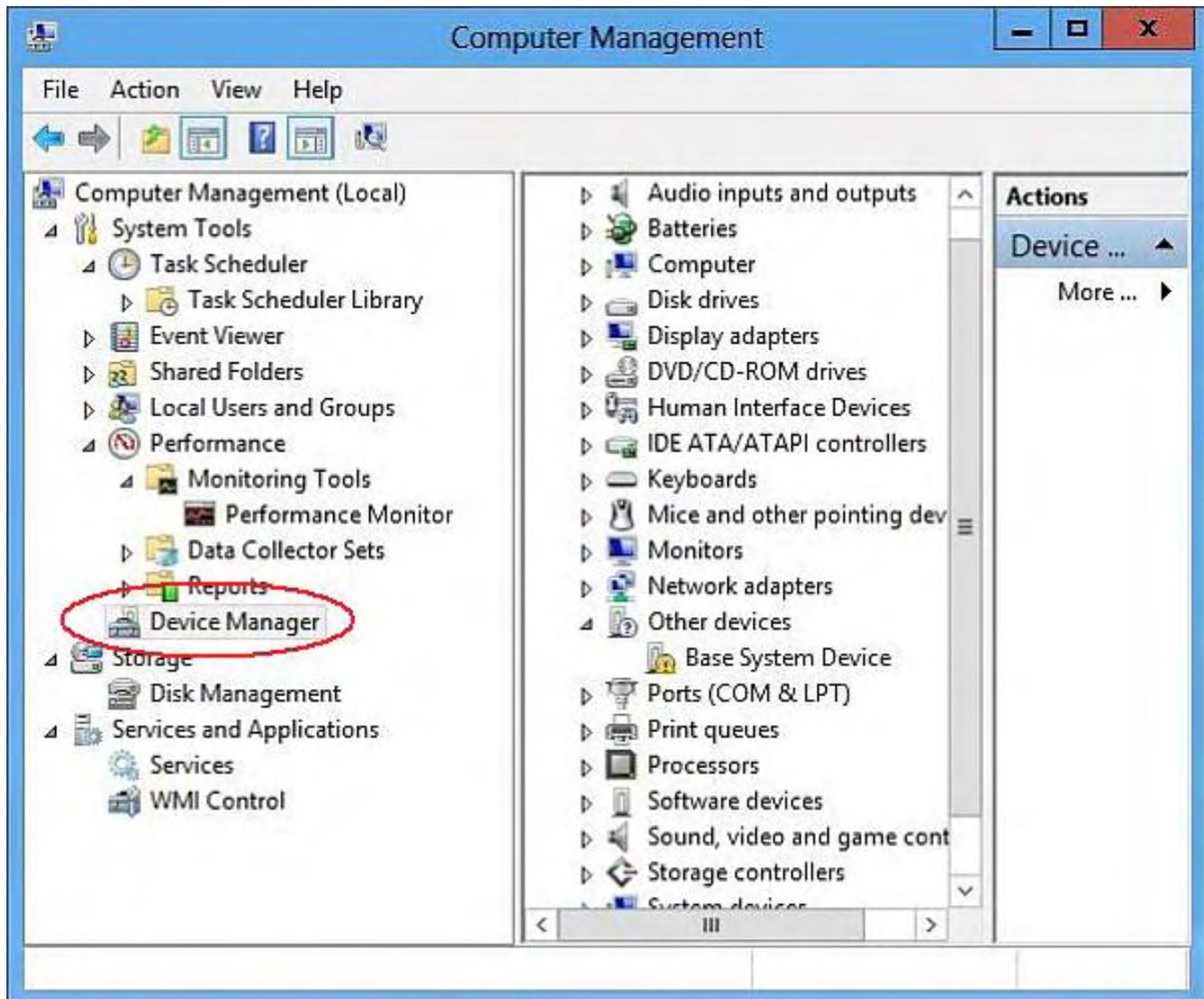


Figure 3. Computer Management window in Windows 8.

Windows Computer Management is yet another way to access Task Scheduler, Device Manager, Disk Manager, and Services with the addition of tools and logs for viewing computer activity. Many of these tools are very useful for when you run into trouble, or if you just need to make a minor change.

Explore the various parts of Computer Management (it doesn't hurt to look), but unless you are comfortable with what you're doing, hesitate when making changes. There are many pieces that can affect how your computer runs.

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Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto: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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)).

Our second compilation of stupid *ComputerEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20))

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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)).

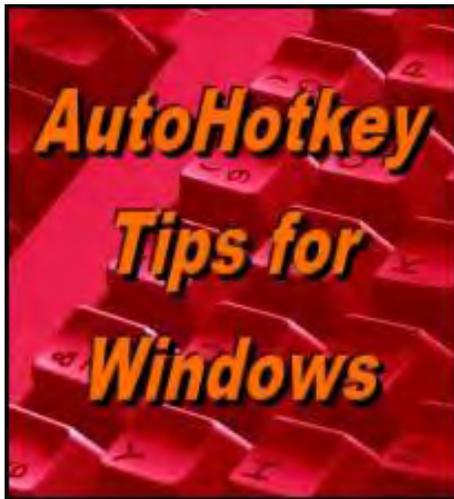
Available from Amazon, *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20))! Also available at Barnes and Noble ([www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463)) and ComputerEdge E-Books ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks\\_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer)).

Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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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# Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!

## Adding Quotes and Brackets with AutoHotkey

“Yet One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!” by Jack Dunning

Whether quoting from a Web page or adding parenthetical remarks, AutoHotkey makes it easier to surround the text in a document or edit window.

There are times when writing or editing that quotation marks or parentheses need placing around text. Maybe it is a quote copied directly from another document or a Web page. Possibly an aside must be placed in parentheses. If you're a programmer, square brackets or curly braces are often required for arrays or expressions. Rather than positioning the cursor at each end and adding the characters individually, with AutoHotkey you can write a script which will surround any selected text with quotes using one hotkey combination. Plus, the same script will automatically add quotes to any text that you have copied from another source when you insert it in your working document.

Figure 1 shows three different examples for adding the quotes, smart quotes, parentheses, or any other enclosing symbols to selected text. Generally, they work by first selecting the target text, then hitting assigned hotkey combination. The text is first copied into the Windows Clipboard, the symbols are added to each end of the Clipboard contents, then pasted back into the document. (In the second case, the contents of the Clipboard are Sent to the document without altering the contents of Clipboard. This is often a preferable method as explained below.)

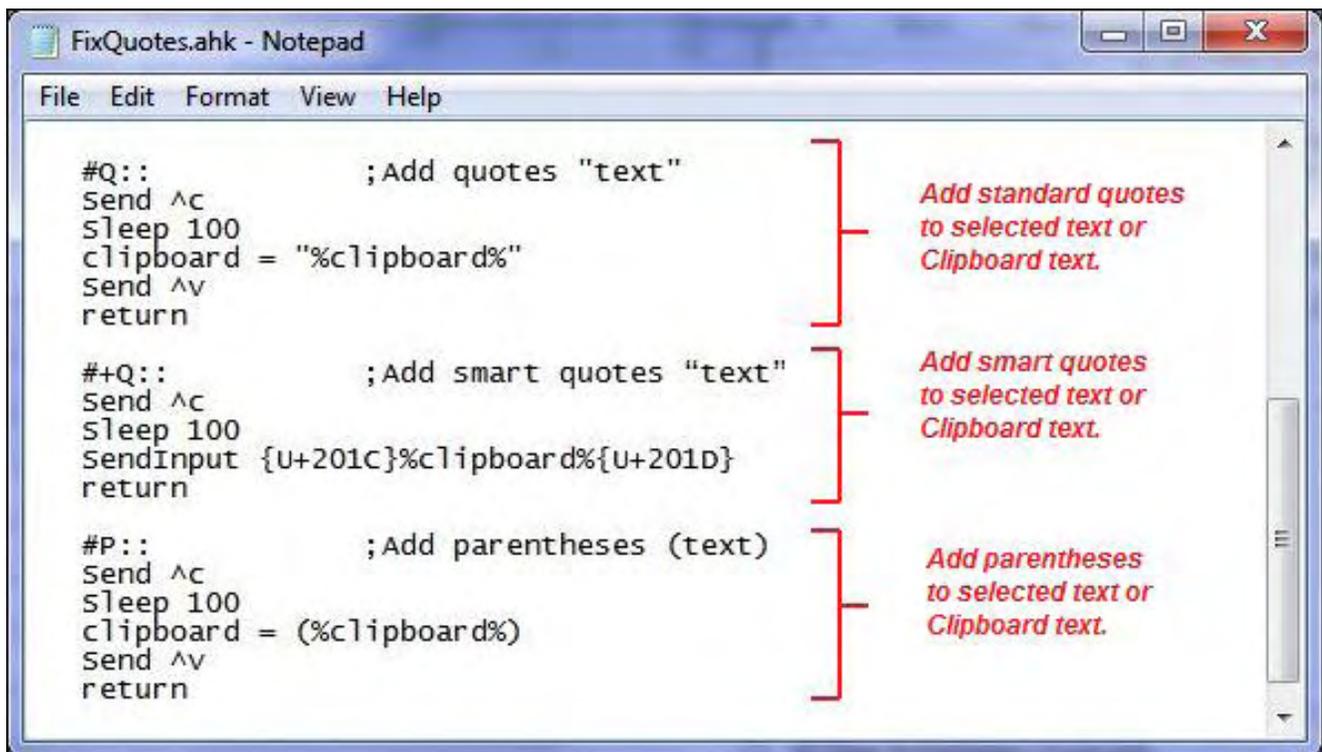


Figure 1. AutoHotkey routines for surrounding text with quotation marks or parentheses.

*Note: If you're new to AutoHotkey see our Web page "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script"*

([www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing\\_AutoHotkey\\_and\\_writing\\_your\\_first\\_script.html](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html))" for *how to get started*.

One of the benefits of any of these routines is their dual nature. If you select text within a working document, the hotkey combination returns text with the surrounding punctuation. However, if you copy (CTRL+C) text from another document or Web page, position the cursor in your editing window without selecting any text, then your copied text is inserted along with the surrounding punctuation. This works because the copy function (CTRL+C) only changes the Clipboard when text is actually selected. Otherwise, the original contents of the Clipboard are used.

## Adding Straight Quotes

Placing regular quotations marks (") around text is one of the most common uses of this AutoHotkey substitution. This is done by adding the following routine to an AutoHotkey script:

```
#Q::                ;Add quotes "text "
Send ^c
Sleep 100
clipboard = "%clipboard%"
Send ^v
return
```

The hotkeys WIN+Q (+Q) copies (CTRL+C) the selected text to the Windows Clipboard, adds the quotation marks to the text in the Clipboard, then pastes (CTRL+V) the Clipboard contents to the editing window.

## How It Works

The first line of code (#Q::) designates WIN+Q as the hotkey. The number sign (#) represents the Windows logo key (). The double colon marks the end of the hotkey combination and the beginning of the routine—in this case beginning on the next line.

The second line of code uses the Send ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm)) command to copy (CTRL+C) the selected text to the Windows Clipboard. Again, if no text is selected, the routine will use whatever was previously stored in the Clipboard (i.e. copied from a Web page or other source).

Third line uses the Sleep ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Sleep.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Sleep.htm)) command to briefly pause the routine (1/10 of a second) to ensure the copy command is completed and stored to the Clipboard before continuing. Hint: If you find that you're getting inconsistent results from some of your scripts, it could be due to the script outrunning itself. Often adding a short pause (Sleep) will resolve the problem.

The fourth line of code sets the value of the Clipboard contents (*clipboard*) to the Clipboard plus the surrounding quotes ("% *clipboard* %"). The surrounding percent signs (%) evaluate the enclosed variable. In this case all that is needed is the quote character (") on each end.

The fifth line of code uses the Send command to paste (CTRL+V) the Clipboard text (with the quotes) into the editing windows.

The last line of code uses the Return ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Return.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Return.htm)) command to mark the end of the routine.

## Adding Curly (Smart) Quotes

In the second routine for adding smart quotes the Windows Character Map was used to find the Unicode values for each curly quote (U+201C for left mark and U+201D for right quote mark). See Figure 2. (See last week's column for discussion of how to use Character Map.)

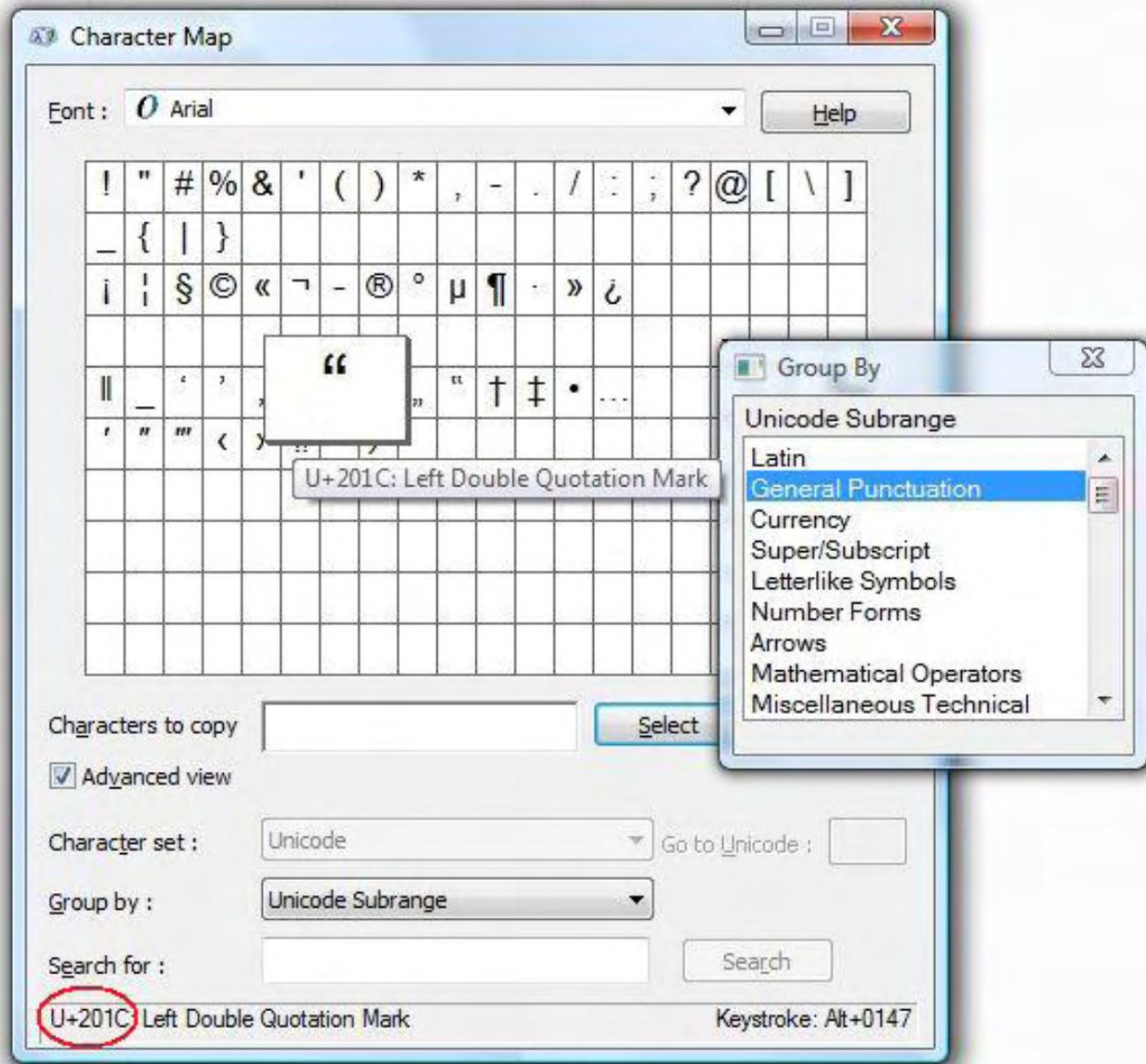


Figure 2. Using Windows Character Map to find the Unicode values for smart quotes.

The Unicodes are used for smart quotes primarily because the curly quotes do not appear on most keyboards, plus they do not react the same way in all programs or Web editing. Using the Unicode values adds more consistency when using the hotkeys in various programs.

```
#+Q:: ;Add smart quotes
Send ^c
Sleep 100
SendInput {U+201C}%clipboard%{U+201D}
return
```

The other major change from the first routine is replacing both the altering of the Clipboard variable by adding quote marks and sending the paste (CTRL+V) command with a one line SendInput ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm)) command.

In most cases, this is a more robust routine since it does not need to alter the Clipboard contents and uses the speed and buffering of the SendInput command. If you need to add the text in quotes to more than one location, simply place the cursor and

hit the hotkey combination. In the first routine, each time you used the hotkeys, additional quotes would be added to the contents of the Clipboard. Using SendInput inserts the text with the quotes without altering the Clipboard contents.

Note that I simply added the SHIFT key (+) to the hotkey combination from the first routine keeping the letter Q (for quotes).

You could also put the curly quote characters directly into the AutoHotkey script (as shown in Figure 3).

```

^#+Q::          ;Add smart quotes "text"
Send ^c
Sleep 100
clipboard = "%clipboard%"
Send ^v
return
    
```

Figure 3. Adding curly quote characters directly to the routine. (This form of the script is displayed with an image since the ComputerEdge Web editing program automatically strips out curly quotes replacing them with straight quotes. This eliminates potential compatibility problems with other programs and systems.)

### Adding Parentheses

The last routine is identical to the first except that it surrounds the selected text with parentheses rather than quotation marks. The letter P (for parentheses) has been used in the hotkey combination.

```

#P::          ;Add parentheses (text)
Send ^c
Sleep 100
clipboard = (%clipboard%)
Send ^v
return
    
```

Alter any of these routines to add hotkey combinations for curly brackets ({}), square brackets ([]), or any other characters for enclosing text.

\* \* \*

Now available in e-book format from 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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?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 *ComputerEdge*, 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 *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto: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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)).

Our second compilation of stupid *ComputerEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20))

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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)).

Available from Amazon, *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20))! Also available at Barnes and Noble ([www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463)) and ComputerEdge E-Books ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks\\_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer)).

Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Limitations of the iPad mini and Microsoft Surface” by Wally Wang

The Limitations of the iPad mini and Microsoft Surface; ARM vs. Intel and AMD; Donate to the Victims of Hurricane Sandy; iPad Apps for Screenwriters; Dealing with the Illogical; Display Windows as Thumbnails.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Back in 2010, there was only the iPad if you really wanted a lightweight, portable tablet. (There were clunky Tablet PCs available with screens that twisted around and folded flat over the keyboard, but such devices proved bulky, heavy, and expensive, which explains why sales never took off.) Today, there are plenty of tablet choices available with two of the newest being the iPad mini and the Microsoft Surface. Both have their limitations so make sure you know what you're getting before you buy either one.

The Microsoft Surface runs Windows RT, which is the version of Windows compiled for ARM processors, the same type of processors used in most smartphones and tablets. The main advantage of ARM processors is that they consume less power and generate much less heat than Intel/AMD processors, so devices can be lighter and thinner. The disadvantage is that the Microsoft Surface can only run Windows apps specifically designed for ARM processors, which means none of your existing Windows programs will work on the current version of the Surface tablet. If you want to run regular Windows programs on the Surface tablet, wait until January when Microsoft will introduce the slightly heavier and more expensive Surface Pro, running Windows 8.

The greatest strength of the Surface tablet is that it comes with Microsoft Office 2013. Toss in another \$100+ for either the Type Cover or Touch Cover keyboard (which you'll need), and the Surface running Office 2013 acts like a dedicated Office 2013 device. If you need to use Office 2013 on the go, then the Surface tablet will meet your needs.

If running Office 2013 most of the time on the road isn't a high priority for you, then the Surface tablet may be far less useful with its limited app selection. Either wait for the Surface Pro in January or look for another tablet.

The iPad mini is amazingly small and light, about the size of a typical trade paperback book but much thinner. All current iPad and iPhone apps run on the iPad mini but just appear on the smaller screen. If you need a tablet mostly for content consumption (watching movies, listening to music, reading Web pages and e-books), then the iPad mini is far easier to carry at all times while being less expensive than the regular iPad (\$329 vs. \$499).

If you need to type anything on a regular basis, the iPad mini still displays the virtual keyboard, but its smaller size makes it more suited for typing with your thumbs than through regular touch typing using both hands. If you need to type notes on an iPad, either get the full size iPad or get an external keyboard to pair up with the iPad mini.

If you buy the iPad mini thinking you can type comfortably on its virtual keyboard, or if you buy a Surface tablet without the need for Office 2013, you're probably buying the wrong product. The iPad mini is a true content consumption device while the regular iPad can both create and consume content (despite the constant denials of critics who insist otherwise, completely disregarding the mountain of evidence against them).

The Surface tablet is more of a mini-laptop dedicated to Office 2013 and little else. That's not to say you can't watch movies or read e-books on the Surface. It's just that the Surface's strengths lies with Office 2013 and everything else is secondary. If you're

not going to use Office 2013 heavily on the road, then there's little point in getting the Surface tablet when other tablets are less expensive, smaller, and lighter such as a Kindle Fire or a Google Nexus tablet.

One point to keep in mind is that Microsoft's license forbids you from using Office 2013 on a Windows RT device for commercial purposes, unless you purchase a separate Office 2013 license ([www.zdnet.com/microsoft-office-for-windows-rt-how-to-move-to-a-commercial-use-license-7000005893/](http://www.zdnet.com/microsoft-office-for-windows-rt-how-to-move-to-a-commercial-use-license-7000005893/)). If individuals use a Surface tablet and Office 2013 in their business, Microsoft has no way of tracking this down, but larger corporations will need to be aware of this legal issue.

A more technical issue to consider is that Windows RT is only a 32-bit operating system while Windows 8 is a 64-bit operating system. Microsoft is already working to develop a 64-bit version ([www.infoworld.com/d/microsoft-windows/arm-microsoft-collaborating-64-bit-windows-version-206261](http://www.infoworld.com/d/microsoft-windows/arm-microsoft-collaborating-64-bit-windows-version-206261)) of Windows RT, but will you be able to upgrade your copy of Windows RT in the future or will the 64-bit version of Windows RT require new hardware?

From a user's point of view, this distinction is meaningless, but if you want your Surface tablet to keep up with the future without having to buy a new one, then this might give you reason to pause. After all, just look at all those early Windows Phone 7 adopters who can't upgrade their phones to run Windows Phone 8.

Also be aware that Microsoft Office 2013 on Windows RT does not include Outlook, but does include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. Office 2013 on Windows RT is basically a recompiled version of Office from Windows 8, so it's still far easier to use with a keyboard and a trackpad or mouse than through touch gestures alone.

The least expensive Surface tablet comes with 32GB of storage, but after subtracting space needed by Windows RT and Office 2013, you'll be left with 16GB of storage ([www.pcworld.com/article/2013549/available-storage-on-microsoft-surface-rt-less-than-advertised.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013549/available-storage-on-microsoft-surface-rt-less-than-advertised.html)) for your own needs although you can always use a microSD card to add up to 64GB of extra storage. In comparison, an iPad with 32GB of storage will leave you 28GB of free space but with no way to add more storage later.

By now, nearly everyone has accepted the idea that tablets can be useful, even all those vocal critics who once insisted that tablets could not possibly be useful. Pick your tablet wisely because they won't all work equally well despite the manufacturer's advertisements that may insist otherwise. Getting the right tablet can make your life easier, but getting the wrong tablet will simply waste your time, money, and patience, which is just like getting the wrong computer and wrestling with its many faults on a daily basis.

## ARM vs. Intel and AMD

If you still insist that mobile computing isn't taking over the computing market, you might want to look away from more evidence that indicates otherwise. Intel has been reporting stagnating sales for some time and AMD keeps reporting losses as the traditional PC market remains flat. Now ARM processors, used in smartphones and tablets, are threatening to invade the server world ([readwrite.com/2012/11/01/arm-vs-intel-servers-the-size-of-a-smartphone](http://readwrite.com/2012/11/01/arm-vs-intel-servers-the-size-of-a-smartphone)) as well.

While the typical Intel server processor needs 80 watts of power to run, a typical multi-core ARM SoC (System on a Chip) processor only needs 4 watts of power to run. That means less power needed to run and cool the servers and less space needed to pack the servers in racks. Instead of bulky boxes, an ARM server could be the size of an ordinary smartphone.

Dell Computers recently showed off an ARM server prototype ([www.pcworld.com/article/2013429/dell-testing-64bit-arm-server-with-chip-from-appliedmicro.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013429/dell-testing-64bit-arm-server-with-chip-from-appliedmicro.html)) while AMD plans to start selling ARM-based servers ([www.pcworld.com/article/2013277/amd-to-sell-armbased-server-chips-in-2014.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/2013277/amd-to-sell-armbased-server-chips-in-2014.html)) by 2014. AMD knows they can't compete against Intel, so their best option is to switch to ARM processors instead.

As mobile computing devices get smaller and thinner, it only makes sense that servers should also get smaller and thinner. That favors ARM processors and cuts out traditional Intel and AMD x86 processors.

In case you're curious about the history of ARM processors, you can read about the history ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ARM\\_architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ARM_architecture)). Acorn Computers created the original ARM processor architecture and in the late 80s and early 90s,

Apple worked with Acorn Computers to further the design of ARM processors. Eventually, Apple used these early ARM processors for their Newton personal digital assistant.

So if you refuse to use any product influenced by Apple, you can now start tossing out any smartphone or tablet that uses an ARM processor. If you want to continue denying the impact of ARM processors driving the mobile computing revolution, you can hope that Intel will make their processors consume as little power as possible just like ARM processors. Intel keeps trying ([techland.time.com/2012/07/16/arm-vs-intel-how-the-processor-wars-will-benefit-consumers-most](http://techland.time.com/2012/07/16/arm-vs-intel-how-the-processor-wars-will-benefit-consumers-most/)), but who knows if they're already too late?

### Donate to the Victims of Hurricane Sandy

Load up iTunes and you will see a link letting you donate money to the Red Cross to help the victims of Hurricane Sandy. Of course, you could just skip iTunes altogether and go straight to the Red Cross Web site ([www.redcross.org/charitable-donations](http://www.redcross.org/charitable-donations)) to make a donation as well.



**American Red Cross**

### Help Superstorm Sandy survivors by making a monetary donation to the American Red Cross.

Click the Donate button under the amount you wish to donate. iTunes will transfer 100% of your donation to the American Red Cross. Because iTunes is not sharing your personal information with the American Red Cross, the American Red Cross is unable to further acknowledge your donation. You will receive an email receipt from the iTunes Store which will serve as your only acknowledgement of your donation. The donation will also appear on your credit card statement as a transaction with the iTunes Store. You do not purchase any goods or receive any services from iTunes by making a donation. Any donation collected by iTunes is collected in the name and on the account of the American Red Cross. This donation may not qualify for any tax deduction or other tax benefits. iTunes Store credit cannot be used to make a donation.

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DONATE

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The American Red Cross name and emblem are used with its permission, which in no way constitutes an endorsement, express or implied, of any product, service, company, opinion, or political position. Your gift to American Red Cross Disaster Relief will support disaster relief efforts to help those affected by disasters such as Superstorm Sandy. Your support will enable the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to victims of all disasters. On those rare occasions when donations exceed American Red Cross expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used to prepare for and serve victims of other disasters. For more information about the American Red Cross, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Figure 1. You can donate to the Red Cross within iTunes.

Just be wary of anyone soliciting donations by e-mail or phone calls. Many con artists take advantage of disasters to contact people and take their donations for themselves. Be especially wary of organizations with Web site addresses that look legitimate but may be fakes with similar spellings.

By going through iTunes or directly to the Red Cross Web site, you can insure that your money will be going to a legitimate organization. Now you just have to hope that the Red Cross actually uses your donation wisely instead of wasting it on administrative costs that don't help anyone but the pocketbooks and bank accounts of the administrators.

### iPad Apps for Screenwriters

One of the most popular screenwriting programs in the world is Final Draft ([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%252Ffinal-draft-8%252Fid457112770%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Ffinal-draft-8%252Fid457112770%253Fmt%253D12%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)), which is a \$249 program that much of Hollywood uses to write movie and television scripts. In the old days, screenwriters used to print screenplays out and mail them to agents and studios, but in today's digital world, it's much easier to send out scripts as digital files instead. You can send files out as PDF files, but it's more common to send screenplays out as Final Draft files.

To read a Final Draft file, you either need Final Draft or a rival screenwriting program that can open and edit Final Draft files. However, with many people carrying iPads around with them, you can now download the Final Draft Reader app ([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%252Ffinal-draft-reader%252Fid497421221%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Ffinal-draft-reader%252Fid497421221%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)). This reader program simply lets you open and view a Final Draft file on an iPad. If you want to edit and write a screenplay in Final Draft format using your iPad, you'll need to download the \$49.99 Final Draft Writer app ([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%252Ffinal-draft-writer%252Fid526135686%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Ffinal-draft-writer%252Fid526135686%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)) as well.

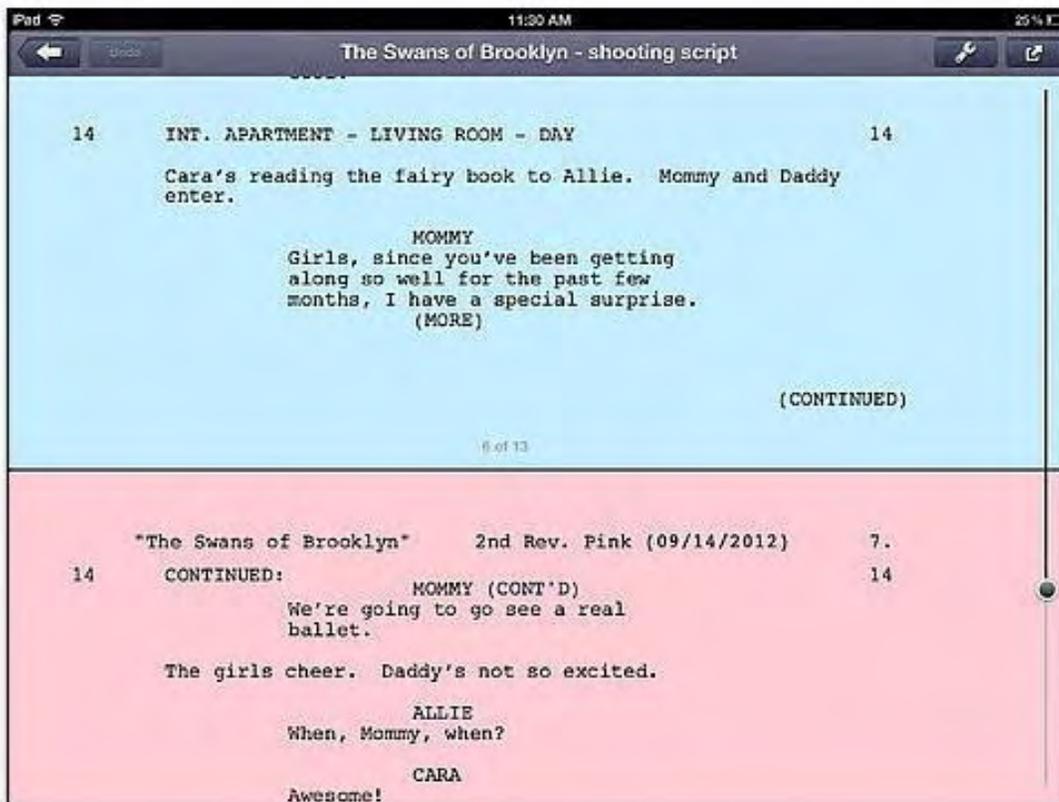
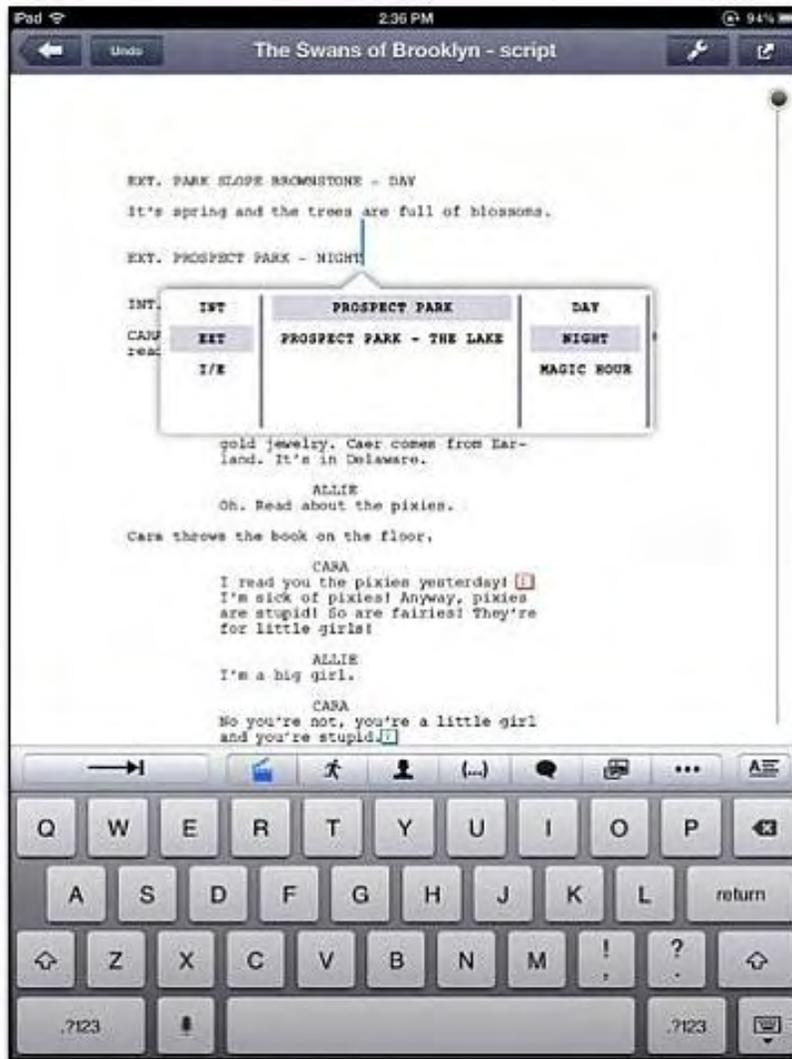


Figure 2. Final Draft Writer lets you display revisions in different colors.

However, there are less expensive options for writing screenplays on your iPad, especially if don't need all the fancy features of Final Draft Writer. First, there's the \$7.99 Scripts Pro ([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%252Fscripts-pro%252Fid348543183%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fscripts-pro%252Fid348543183%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)) app, which works on the iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch. In comparison, Final Draft Writer only works on the iPad.

Then there's the free Scriptly ([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%252Fscriptly%252Fid499392844%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30](http://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%252Fscriptly%252Fid499392844%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30)) app that only works on the iPad. Scriptly can also open Final Draft files too so you can view and edit them on your iPad.

If you're just starting out writing screenplays, you can't go wrong with Scriptly since it's free. If you need to edit screenplays on an iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch, then your only option is Scripts Pro. If you're already making a six-figure income selling screenplays, then you can probably afford the more expensive Final Draft Writer that only works on the iPad.

With the iPad eliminating the need to print bulky screenplays, apps like Final Draft Reader/Writer, Scripts Pro, and Scriptly can turn your iPad into a screenplay editor and reader. Now you just have to write a screenplay worth reading. That's the easy part. The hard part is getting a studio to even look at your screenplay in the first place.

To learn the basics of story structure, look at a book called *Story Engineering* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1582979987/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1582979987&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1582979987/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1582979987&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20)) by Larry Brooks. The book focuses mostly on screenplays and novels, but you can apply the same principles to creating short stories and stage plays too. Then use your knowledge of story structure to write the screenplay of your dreams using Final Draft Writer, Scripts Pro, or Scriptly.

## Dealing with the Illogical

One of the strangest examples of human nature occurs when you challenge someone's beliefs. Just present unpleasant facts that people don't want to acknowledge and they'll let loose a barrage of insults and confused arguments in an attempt to discredit anything they don't want to believe in. What's even stranger is that the more evidence you provide against their beliefs, the more passionately they argue for those very beliefs that don't make any sense.

To learn more about irrational thinking and how the Internet provides a new way to make money, you might be interested in reading *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0812976568/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0812976568&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0812976568/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0812976568&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20)) by Bobby Henderson.

Back in 2005, Bobby Henderson, a 24-year old graduate of Oregon State University, read about the Kansas State Board of Education's attempt to force public schools to teach creationism as an alternative to evolution. The Kansas State Board of Education claimed that evolution was only a theory, so intelligent design should also be taught as a theory.

Of course when most people want to promote intelligent design, they usually mean promoting their own religious beliefs about the creation of the world, so Bobby Henderson decided to write a parody of intelligent design that he posted on his own Web site ([www.venganza.org](http://www.venganza.org)). Reasoning that intelligent design was also an unproven theory just like evolution, Bobby Henderson decided that it made just as much sense to claim a religious deity created the world as to claim that a flying spaghetti monster created the world. In addition, he reasoned it would be impossible to disprove that the flying spaghetti monster also created a heaven filled with a stripper factory and a volcano that spews out an endless supply of beer.



Figure 3. A Flying Spaghetti Monster might have created the world.

His satirical response to the Kansas State Board of Education soon caught the attention of others, and a publisher bought the rights to his parody to publish as a book. Just by posting something on the Internet, Bobby Henderson managed to make money on a book that went on to sell 100,000 copies.

Believing in a flying spaghetti monster makes as much sense as believing in anything else, yet some people still fail to catch the humor and truthfulness of this argument. For another perspective on how people will believe anything they want to believe in, look up "John Frum" and "cargo cult" on the Internet.

The people on the island of Tanna have a curious belief about a man named John Frum. Apparently during World War Two, American soldiers landed on the island and astounded the natives with their metal airplanes and ships, rifles, tanks, Coco-Cola, and chocolate bars that the natives had never seen before. Reasoning that they could never have made any of those items that they saw the American soldiers using, the natives decided that they could only have been manufactured by the gods.

When the war ended and the American soldiers went away, the natives reasoned that the way to attract and bring back these manufactured goods was to mimic the behavior of the American soldiers. So the natives built fake landing strips in hopes that airplanes will soon land and bring more cargo to their island. They also worship John Frum as a messiah-like figure who promised he would return one day and reveal the secrets of where the cargo came from.

As part of their religious rituals, the natives wear fake military uniforms, march around with wooden sticks resembling rifles, and build military-style barracks as their holy buildings in the belief that this will attract ships and airplanes full of cargo once more.

When you read about island natives marching around in fake military uniforms in hopes of attracting airplanes full of chocolate bars and metal shovels from the gods, you can't help but marvel at the delusions the human mind can fabricate for itself. When

you look around and see that such delusional thinking isn't limited to primitive people but to seemingly intelligent and rational human beings in modern society, then you have to wonder if there's any hope for the human race at all. Probably the only people not concerned about this lack of thinking are the irrational people who have already deluded themselves about a fantasy of their own making, which might involve a stripper factory in heaven and a volcano that spews out an endless supply of beer.

\* \* \*

If one program has multiple windows open, you can quickly see all of them by right-clicking on the program's icon on the Dock to open a pop-up menu. Choose Show All Windows.



Figure 4. The Show All Windows option appears in the pop-up window.

Now your Macintosh will display all open windows as thumbnail images on the screen so you can see what's currently open. Click in the file you want to view and that window expands to fill the screen so you can edit it.

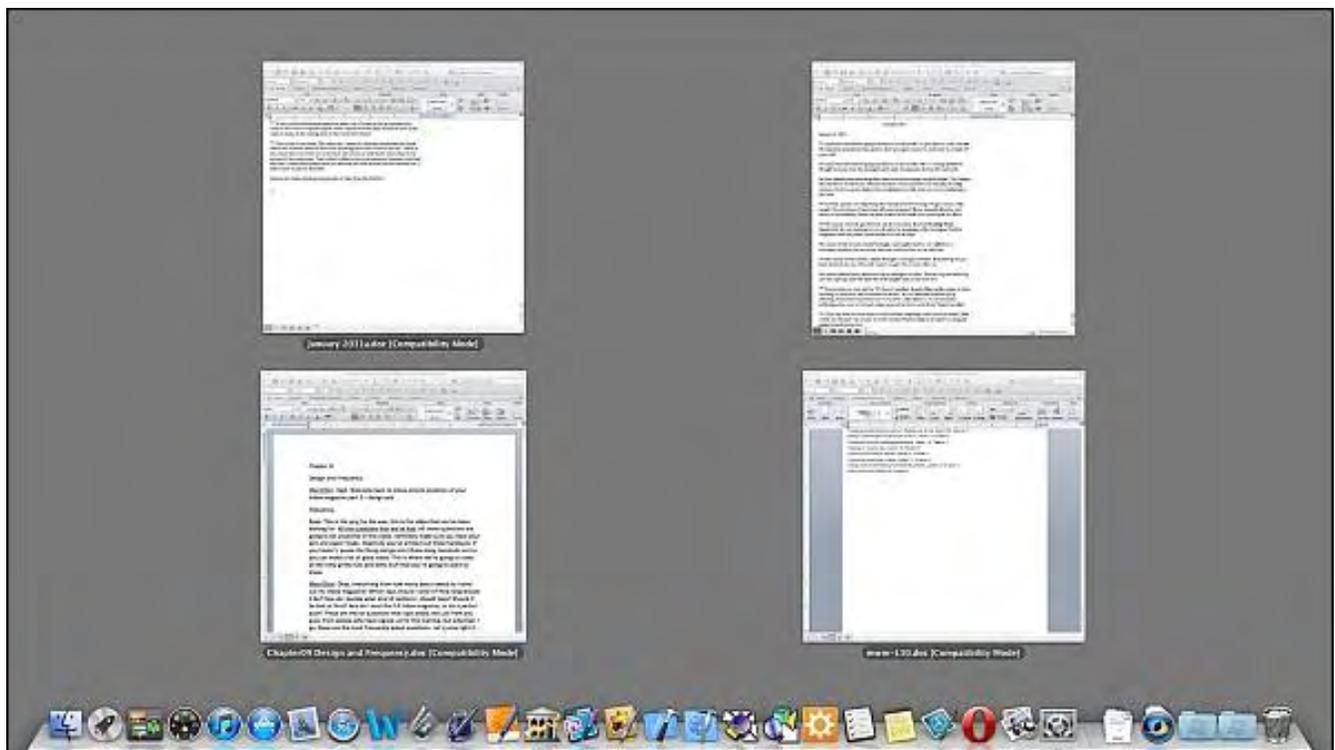


Figure 5. Viewing multiple windows of a program as thumbnail images.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*The 15-Minute Movie Method* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8))

*Erotophobia (A novel)* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20))

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

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# Worldwide & Product news reviews

## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

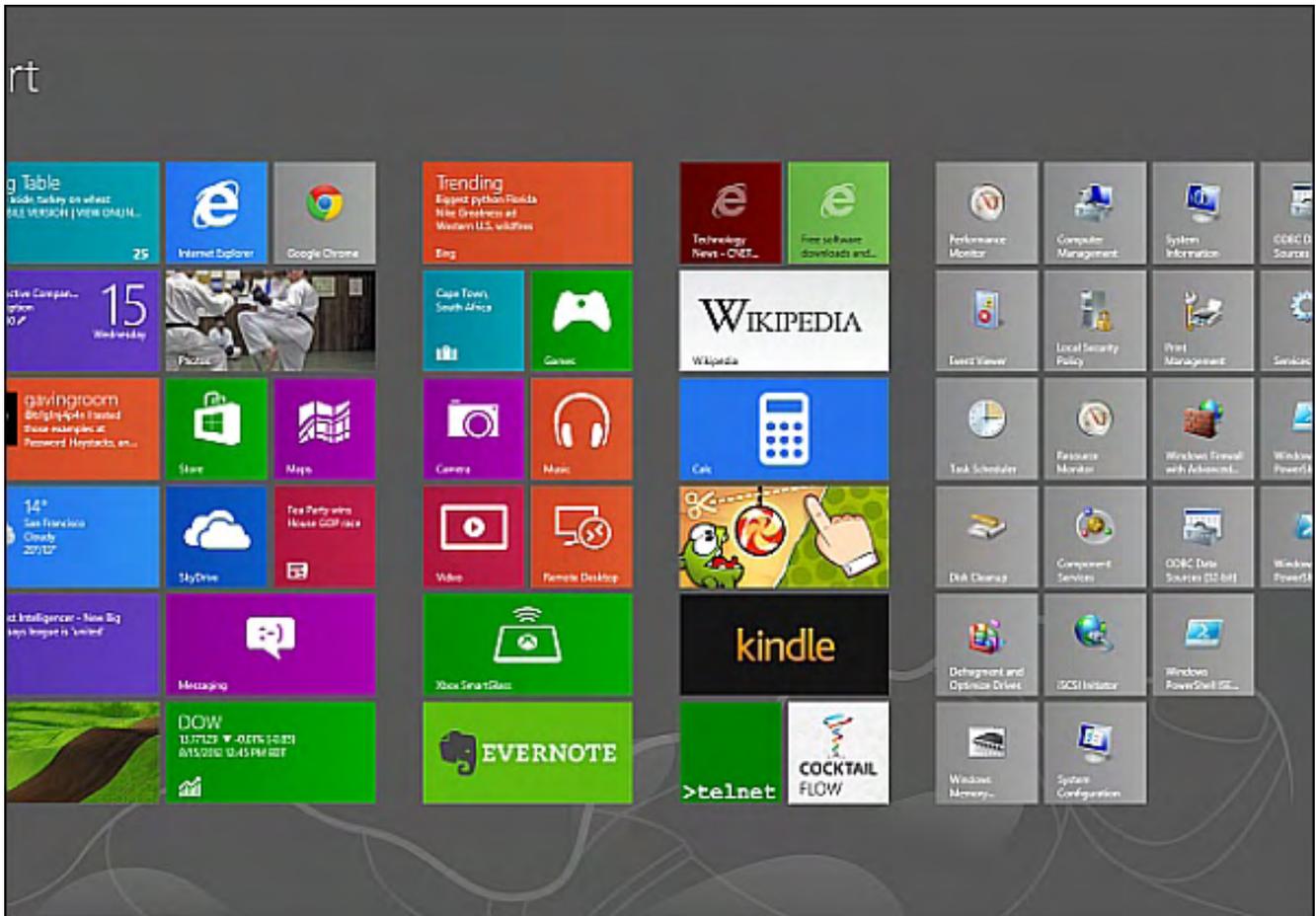
- 🌐 Don't say we didn't warn you.
- 🌐🌐 What is that store's return policy?
- 🌐🌐🌐 We've seen better; we've seen worse.
- 🌐🌐🌐🌐 You'll probably be happy you did.
- 🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 What are you waiting for?

Survey: Win 8 Considered Safer but Few Desire to Buy a New Win 8 PC; Comparing Surface, iPad Mini, and iPad 4th Gen Browser Performance; Android Rising; Lucius for PC; GO with Wireless Earphones.

### Survey: Win 8 Considered Safer but Few Desire to Buy a New Win 8 PC

The folks at the antivirus company Avast.com write in this week with the results of an October 23-24 survey of more than 350,000 of its users across seven languages:

Computer users surveyed by AVAST Software indicate that they expect the new Microsoft Windows 8 operating system to be safer, but only 8% of respondents said they will buy a new computer any sooner because of it.



Two thirds of survey respondents were running Windows 7, yet despite highly publicized security vulnerabilities in older operating systems (OS) such as XP and Vista, a full 30% of respondents are still taking chances with the two latter operating systems.

*Microsoft has done a very good job in publicizing the new Windows 8 OS, as the majority respondents were aware of its pending arrival.*

*Nearly two out of three Windows users believe that Microsoft has gotten better at improving the security of its OS offerings over the years.*

*While almost half believe that the new Windows 8 would be even more secure, 14% were skeptical.*

*Despite such high belief in its higher security value over Windows 7 and older OS, at least 78% answered that they do not intend to purchase a new computer sooner just to have Windows 8.*

*More than a quarter of respondents in fact do not plan to buy a Windows-based PC at all, instead intending to go with an iPad or Mac.*

*Of course, as Ed Bott wrote over at ZDNet ("[Windows 8 is the new XP](http://www.zdnet.com/windows-8-is-the-new-xp-7000006095) ([www.zdnet.com/windows-8-is-the-new-xp-7000006095](http://www.zdnet.com/windows-8-is-the-new-xp-7000006095)")), people tend to initially resist each new Windows OS, but come around eventually if they continue to hear good things about it:*

*"This new version of Windows is going to be a disaster, pundits say. It will be completely rejected by businesses, who will stick with old versions even after Microsoft drops support for them. And its new interface is so hideous and unusable that customers who are forced to use it will trip over themselves finding ways to restore the old Start menu. I am, of course, talking about Windows XP, which was released 11 years ago this week. It lived down to all those insults and dire predictions for years before it finally and implausibly became a success."*

*For more information on Windows 8 see Jack Dunning's e-book, [Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20) ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)).*

### **Comparing Surface, iPad Mini, and iPad 4th Gen Browser Performance**

*The folks over at Futuremark tell us they got their hands on some new toys recently and thought we might be interested in the benchmark scores coming out of their test lab.*



- *Microsoft Surface—Peacekeeper score 348*

*Tested with Peacekeeper, our universal browser benchmark, the Microsoft Surface is slower than the iPad 2 and the Galaxy Tab 10.1. Now, it's one thing to be slower than other tablets, but the Surface is also slower than the latest phones. For instance, the browser performance of the Galaxy S III is nearly twice that of the Surface, and the iPhone 5 is more than two and a half times faster.*

*Incidentally, the scores from the Surface are in line with other Tegra 3 devices when running the internal beta build of our next 3DMark, which makes the browser performance all the more disappointing. Internet Explorer 10 is still far behind the competition when it comes to speed.*

- *iPad Mini—Peacekeeper score 515*

*The iPad Mini has the same dual-core A5 found in the iPad 2, a chip with near identical CPU performance to the A5X found in the iPad 3rd gen. Indeed, Peacekeeper scores from the iPad 2, iPad 3rd gen and iPad Mini are all at the same level provided they are running iOS 6. Against the competition, the iPad Mini outperforms the Nexus 7 but is slower than the Galaxy S III.*

- iPad (4th gen)—Peacekeeper score 951

Apple says the A6X processor in the 4th gen iPad doubles the CPU and graphics power of the A5X in the third-generation device. Peacekeeper has the 3rd gen iPad with iOS 6 scoring 522 while the 4th gen device scores 951 earning it a place at the top of our leaderboard for mobile devices.

You can see a chart of these scores ([peacekeeper.futuremark.com/results?key=stats](http://peacekeeper.futuremark.com/results?key=stats)) for yourself.

## Android Rising



According to PR maven Andy Marken over at Marken Communications ([www.marken.com](http://www.marken.com)) the Android OS has surged to 75% of all smartphones sold in Q3 2012:

Google's Android mobile operating system powered three out of every four smartphones shipped worldwide during the third quarter of 2012, according to new data from market intelligence firm IDC.

Android device shipments reached a record-high 136 million units during the third quarter, representing 75 percent of all 181.1 million smartphones shipped during the period. IDC notes that Android's 91.5 percent year-over-year growth nearly doubled

overall market increases of 46.4 percent.

"Android has been one of the primary growth engines of the smartphone market since it was launched in 2008," said Ramon Llamas, IDC research manager, mobile phones. "In every year since then, Android has effectively outpaced the market and taken market share from the competition. In addition, the combination of smartphone vendors, mobile operators and end-users who have embraced Android has driven shipment volumes higher. Even today, more vendors are introducing their first Android-powered smartphones to market."

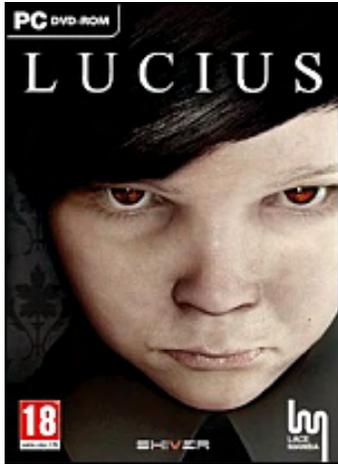
Apple's iOS trails far behind Android with third-quarter shipments of 26.9 million, a year-over-year jump of 57.3 percent. IDC notes iOS was the only other mobile operating system to amass double-digit market share during the period at 14.9 percent. IDC credits the late-quarter launch of the iPhone 5 and lower prices on older iPhone models for iOS's gains, noting that without a splashy new software enhancement like Siri or FaceTime, the iPhone 5 relied on a larger touchscreen and LTE connectivity to fuel consumer interest.

Research In Motion's BlackBerry continues to fade into irrelevance, sliding to third-quarter market share of just 4.3 percent, down from 11.8 percent a year earlier. RIM shipped 7.7 million BlackBerry smartphones during the quarter, off from 11.8 million year-over-year.

Symbian—once the worldwide leader in smartphone sales—also suffered steep declines, with shipments dropping to 4.1 million from 18.1 million a year ago. Symbian's second quarter market share tumbled to 2.3 percent, compared to 14.6 percent a year ago.

Microsoft's Windows Phone trails behind both BlackBerry and Symbian with third-quarter shipments of just 3.6 million, corresponding to market share of 2 percent. That's still a 140 percent year-over-year increase from third-quarter 2011 shipment volumes of 1.5 million. Microsoft unveiled Windows Phone 8 earlier this week, trumpeting carrier commitments from the likes of Verizon Wireless, AT&T Mobility, and T-Mobile USA—an indication the operating system's fortune could turn during the lucrative holiday shopping season ahead.

## Lucius for PC



*Title: Lucius*

*Manufacturer: Lace Mamba Digital*

*Web sites: <http://www.lace-mamba.com>, <http://lucius.shivergames.com/>*

*Price: about \$20 download, \$40 boxed retail*

*As a fan of the Omen movies, wherein a perfectly lovely little boy surprises everyone by turning out to be the devil's spawn, I was looking forward to the guilty pleasure of playing the little scamp myself in the new first person adventure game, Lucius. Unfortunately, I had a devil of a time—and I don't mean devil in the "good" sense of the word.*

*The game takes place in the mansion where Lucius lives. As a sort of sixth birthday present the child gets the news that he is Devil Jr., Beelzebub II, Son of Satan (and to think I only got my son Legos for his sixth birthday!). Lucius is tasked with hastening the demise of everyone in the mansion by staging accidents without implicating himself in the process combining and using objects found lying around the house (padlock, toys, etc.). When you're successful, your satanic powers increase.*



*My first impression was that, while the game looked reasonably good by today's FPS graphical standards, moving Lucius himself felt clunky even on a maxed-out quad core machine. Not a good way to begin.*

*I also wish there'd been a greater sense of creativity—for want of a better word—in dispatching my prey. You soon get the feeling there's one and only one right way to accomplish tasks—the one the game's creators have in mind. In that way, Lucius reminded me of the old point-and-click 2D adventures like King's Quest, only in 3D.*

*Also, at least in the version I played, my relationship to the physical world seemed off. Play a game that really knows how to "get physical" like Dishonored, Arkham City, or Crysis 2 and you'll see what I mean. It*

*often felt like it was just too much trouble making things happen. Even worse, sometimes Lucius would get stuck in an area and I couldn't get him unjammed.*

*One thing I did like very much was the game's cut scenes. They did a good job of moving the story forward—until the end, which came more abruptly than I expected. Plan to have lots of unanswered questions as you watch the credits roll.*

*My biggest problem with the game: After about an hour, I had to force myself to play it to be able to write this review.*

*Now, that's a bad "Omen."*



### **GO with Wireless Earphones**

*Wireless connectivity is a feature supported by many of our 21st century gadgets including our computers, home entertainment systems, and mobile devices. One notable exception, however, is what we use for private listening to tunes on our cell phones or portable music players. We're mostly still using 20th century wired technology that delights us with remarkably high fidelity but burdens us with tangled cables susceptible to breaking. Some wireless (Bluetooth) products are available though, and one of them is Plantronics' BackBeat GO ([www.plantronics.com/us/product/backbeat-go](http://www.plantronics.com/us/product/backbeat-go)).*

*The BackBeat GO fits the definition of earbuds ([www.techhive.com/article/2000079/infographic-the-different-types-of-headphones-illustrated.html](http://www.techhive.com/article/2000079/infographic-the-different-types-of-headphones-illustrated.html)) rather than earphones; this product (like Apple's ubiquitous white wired one) sits loosely in your outer ears rather than inserting into your auditory canals. Earbuds typically deliver comfort at the expense of audio quality, and that's also true of BackBeat GO as explained in more detail momentarily.*

*Plantronics' packaging for the BackBeat GO consists of two parts—an upper oval-shaped plastic case that literally puts these earbuds on a pedestal, and a lower contoured two-piece styrofoam clamshell box held together by a piece of white (not very sticky) tape along the clamshell's short side (Figure 1). The plastic upper part is as strong and unlikely to be damaged as the styrofoam lower part is thin and easily damaged (as evidenced by the review unit's multiple tears).*



Figure 1. BackBeat GO comes in a two-part oval-shaped package. The upper part (left) is clear plastic containing a pedestal-like structure on which the BackBeat GO sits. The lower part (right) is a styrofoam clamshell box containing the product's accessories and multi-folded "Getting Started" document.

This package includes the following accessories: three pairs of rubbery black eartips (small, medium, and large), one pair of rubbery black in-ear stabilizers (more about them below), a mini-USB to brick battery charger (~2 x 0.75 x 0.75"; ~1.75 oz.), plus the product's paper documentation (two glossy accordion-style "Getting Started" documents—one in English, the other in Spanish; one plain paper notebook-style "For Your Safety" document—in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese; and a plain paper single-sheet "Limited Warranty"—in English on one side and Spanish on the other; Figure 1). The package does not include a carrying case, pouch, or any foam sleeves.

BackBeat GO (Figure 2) consists of two glossy black plastic cylindrical units (~1" long and 0.5" diameter) that house a rechargeable non-replaceable lithium ion battery (rated for 4.5 hours of talking or listening, 10 days of standby), 6 mm neodymium speakers, plus hardware for Bluetooth 2.1 (A2DP, HSP, HFP, and AVRCP support), digital signal processing, and full duplex noise canceling. These units are connected by a flat pliable black cable measuring a tad over 22" long. All together, the earbud units, cable, plus an installed pair of eartips and the stabilizers weigh in at merely 0.5 oz. Truly remarkable!



*Figure 2. BackBeat GO's glossy black cylindrical units contain a lithium ion battery, 6 mm neodymium speakers, plus hardware for Bluetooth 2.1, digital signal processing, and full duplex noise cancellation. These units are connected by a 22" flat cable with a remote-microphone unit below the right one.*

*Each earbud's stereo channel is indicated by an easy-to-overlook raised black letter just above where the cable emerges from the unit. However, the one labeled "R" has three features that more readily distinguish it from the "L" unit—1) a battery indicator LED (blue when the battery is charged, red when it is drained or recharging) located on one side of the unit; 2) a mini-USB port (located under a rubber flap on the back of the unit; Figure 3) for recharging the battery within 2.5 hours; and 3) a remote/microphone unit (Figure 3).*



Figure 3. BackBeat GO's right stereo channel earbud has a remote/microphone unit with volume control buttons (green arrows), multifunction button (blue arrow) that controls tunes and phone calls, and an on-off button (red arrow). This earbud also has a rubber flap that, when opened, reveals a micro-USB port (purple arrow) for the micro-USB-to-brick accessory that recharges the product's lithium ion battery. An in-ear stabilizer is indicated by the orange arrow.

The remote/microphone unit is located about 2.25" down the cable and has audio volume controls, an on-off switch, plus a multifunction button for controlling tunes (pause-play; rewind-fast forward) and calls (taking, ending, or rejecting a call; holding one call and answering a second one; switching between calls; redialing; etc.) (Figure 3). This unit is both a strength and a weakness, as explained in a moment.

After pressing and holding the remote's power button, BackBeat GO comes to life as indicated by an ascending four-note tone that plays through the earbuds (an additional single-note tone plays after the BackBeat GO has connected with a Bluetooth-active device). Press and hold the button again and BackBeat GO shuts down as indicated by a descending four-note tone that plays through the earbuds. While power is on, two new icons appear on your music player's screen—one (in the status bar) shows BackBeat GO's battery level, the other (in the track navigation controls bar) can be tapped to display a pop-up menu listing the audio outputs available to be chosen (Figure 4). When the battery indicator icon shows that the BackBeat GO's battery is almost drained, the earbuds produce an audible tone signaling

that about 15 minutes of music listening remain. This is highly preferable to hearing your music abruptly cut off without any warning.

BackBeat GO's wirelessness definitely is my favorite feature. Being able to fire up favorite tunes without losing time dealing with a tangled mess of cables is a huge plus (especially for time-challenged users who want to get up-and-running promptly). Additionally, being able to put an iDevice in one room and wander to other rooms (within Bluetooth's advertised 33' range; your experience could be different) unencumbered by cables is majorly cool and convenient.

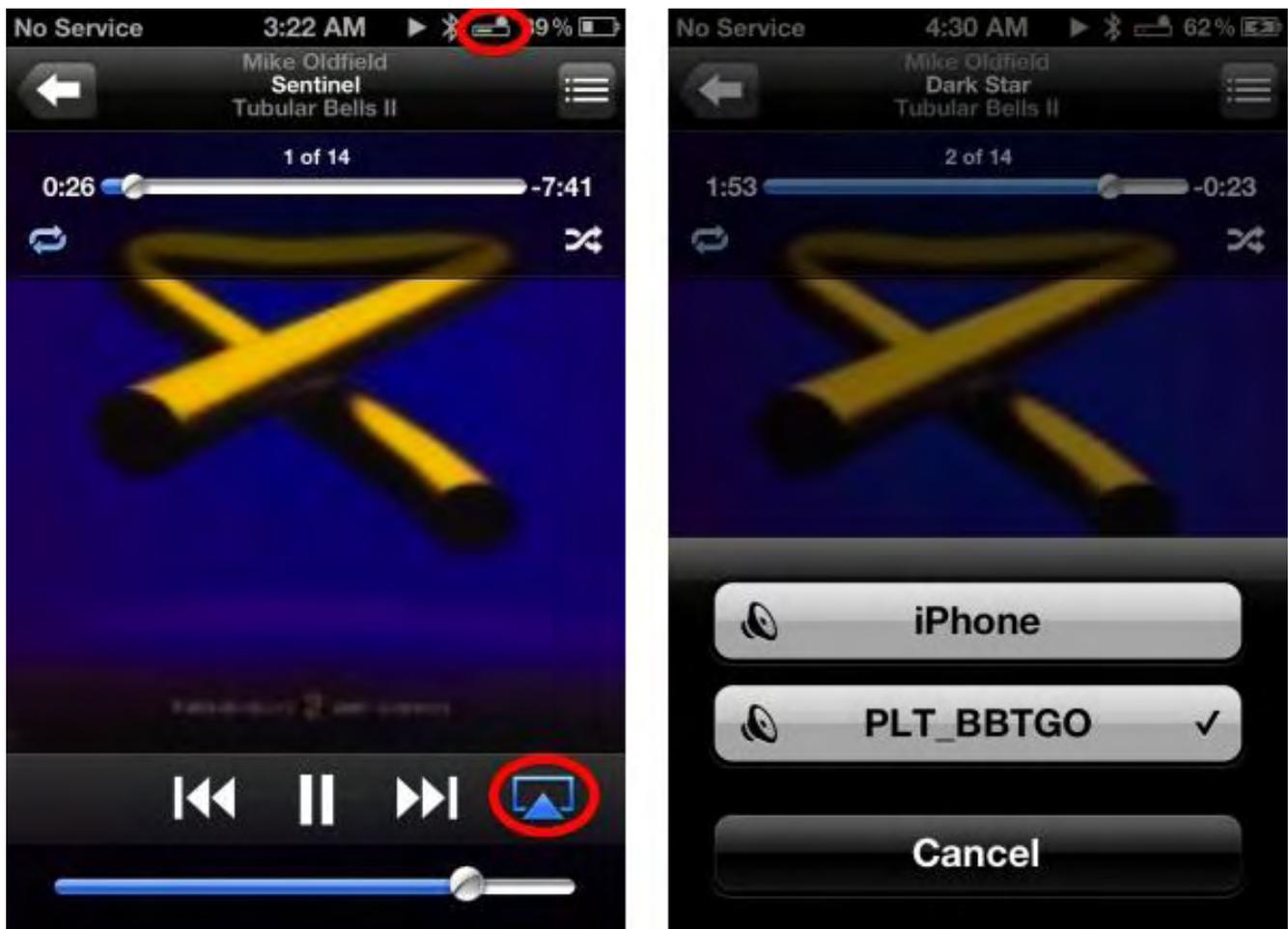


Figure 4. While using BackBeat GO, two new icons appear on an iDevice's screen—a battery indicator displays in the status bar and an output menu icon displays in the track navigation controls bar (red ovals; left). Tapping the output menu icon produces a pop-up menu that lists the available output options (right).

Speaking of the BackBeat GO's battery, it is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, Plantronics' engineers have done a highly commendable job of cramming a rechargeable battery into such a small and lightweight earbud. However, its rating of 4.5 hours before requiring a recharge (3.5 hours in my tests) seems disappointingly short—recharging was necessary at least once per day during testing. I look forward to longer lasting batteries or, better yet, the time when wireless earbuds can draw their electricity directly from a portable music player or cell phone to reduce the number of devices that need to be recharged.

The battery also has the following additional weaknesses. 1) Since it is not user replaceable (as mentioned earlier), the BackBeat GO must be disposed and replaced when the battery's lifespan has ended. 2) I could not find any information in the product documentation or the company's Web site about how many recharge cycles a user can expect before the battery's lifespan has ended. 3) The company evidently does not provide a take-back recycling program to ensure that BackBeat GO is recycled properly

and responsibly.

*BackBeat GO's remote unit also is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it conveniently facilitates control over tunes and calls without having to access your cell phone or music device directly. On the other hand, however, the remote's buttons easily could be more user friendly. Given the remote's proximity to the right earbud, the user has little choice but to work the buttons blindly by feel or else remove the right earbud from her/his ear in order to see the buttons. The on-off button would be more user friendly if it were a slider rather than pressable. The volume control buttons would be more user friendly if they were bigger circles rather than small "+" and "-" on the remote. And the multifunction button would be more user friendly if the volume control buttons were spaced farther away from it (for users with fat-finger syndrome). The unit's microphone was more user friendly than the remote's buttons; during testing, it provided very good (if not excellent) caller voice quality.*

*Audio quality is another strength and weakness. If your ear canals' size matches one of the three sizes of eartips included in the package, you're in for a treat. This product's audio quality is surprisingly crystal clear, rich, and well defined rather than muddy or vague...as long as the eartips fit with a proper seal. During testing, I began with the medium size eartips based upon experience with other products' sleeves. The medium tips resulted in what could most accurately be described as tinny sound. Replacing the medium tips with the large ones made an easily noticeable improvement. However, while using the large tips, I felt compelled to occasionally push the earbuds into my ears to relieve the impression that they might fall out. One more thing about audio quality...bass guitar fans need not apply. In my favorite tunes that feature bass guitar riffs, I can scarcely hear them with BackBeat GO's large or medium eartips. Turning on my iDevice's equalizer did not remedy this issue. Perhaps foam sleeves that provide a better seal would result in improved bass quality.*

*In conclusion, BackBeat GO represents a remarkable engineering accomplishment of incorporating a rechargeable battery, Bluetooth support, and audio enhancing hardware within a smaller and lighter form factor than competitors' older models. Although its wirelessness and reasonable price point (\$99.99 MSRP) make it a potential impulse purchase, the most important features' weaknesses (nonreplaceable battery; frequent recharging; remote's buttons size and position; missing bass) make BackBeat GO a less compelling purchase.*



*Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Learn more at [www.charlescarr.com](http://www.charlescarr.com).*

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# EDITOR'S LETTERS

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

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

"Programmable Tattoo," "7Zip and Win7," "Browning Today," "A Soundcloud Set to Accompany the Column," "Programs Not Running Correctly"

### **Programmable Tattoo...**

*[Regarding Marilyn K. Martin's October 26 article, "Holiday Gifts and More Little Known High Tech Stories":]*

*That was an April Fool's joke from two years ago!*

*-Matt, San Diego, CA*

*Dudes, this was an April Fools Day joke, not a real product. You can't believe everything you read on the Internet.*

*-George, Olivehurst, CA*

One October Fool! OOOPS! You were right, Matt and George, I fell for one of "Think Geeks" April's Fool Jokes. I guess I can take small comfort in the fact that I wasn't alone ([www.thinkgeek.com/stuff/looflrpa/](http://www.thinkgeek.com/stuff/looflrpa/)). Thanks again for the hoax-alert!

*-Marilyn, Texas*

### **7Zip and Win7**

*[Regarding the October 19 Digital Dave column:]*

*I have 7Zip installed on all of my machines and the Windows zip is still there. There is no standalone program, just the context menu. In Windows Explorer right-click on a file or folder and select Send to => Compressed (zipped) file.*

*-Marcus, Alabama*

### **Browning Today...**

*[Regarding the October 26 Digital Dave column:]*

*Dear Dave,*

*How do I get one of those mirrors?*

*Not quite as long a reader, but at least as old.*

*-Doug, San Diego, CA*

### **A Soundcloud Set to Accompany the Column**

*[Regarding the October 19 Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error column:]*

Hello. I appreciate you stopping by to read this column, but need to apologize for something. There were really no links—to some music, for instance—something that would have been helpful. So, in an attempt to correct this matter, I've created a Soundcloud set ([soundcloud.com/mr-trona/sets/without-digital-music-life-1](https://soundcloud.com/mr-trona/sets/without-digital-music-life-1)) featuring several of the artists mentioned in the piece.

Prost! 8^)

-Matthew W. Beale, Here

### **Programs Not Running Correctly**

*[Regarding the October 26 Windows Tips and Tricks: Solving Software Problems column:]*

*Great column as usual. Just one addition I'd like to make is that some Windows services can be turned off by installing third-party software that perform Windows core functions (usually better or faster than windows). These programs can turn off Windows services ie: indexing, defragging, network controllers and other basic services that are usually run in the background by the OS. If these services are turned off and the program that was used to replace them has been uninstalled incorrectly (deleted), then you may not be able to perform maintenance tasks on your hard drive or network infrastructure.*

*The fix is to open Administrative tools in Control Panel and double-click on component services, find the program or service that should do what you want done and see if you can turn it on or make it automatic. You usually need to reboot for it to take effect. If it still doesn't work you may need to do a RegEdit to find commands left over from the program that took over from windows on this service. Some uninstall programs (Advanced Uninstaller free) will search for incorrectly uninstalled programs and get rid of reg entries and left over files.*

-Buck-O, El Cajon, CA

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