ComputorEdge™ Online — 11/23/12

This issue: Business Tech Gift Ideas, Unusual Computer Gifts, and More!

Little known high tech stories. plus Digital Dave, quick computer crash protection, Wally Wang, and Charles Carr.

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DEPARTMENTS:

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

"Win 8 Upgrade," "Can You Still Buy a Windows 7 Computer?" "Making Another TAB Key—Why?" "Dealing with the Illogical"

Digital Dave

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

Compaq Presario CQ62 Laptop; Convert .DAT File; Re: Copied CD Music Files are Gone.

Dear Digital Dave,

My computer is too slow.

I updated my laptop from 2GB of memory to now 8GB. But my question is can I update the processor too, from AMD V140 2.30GHz to something faster? This computer is too slow no matter what I do.

Thanks for your help.

Jorge Alvarado
San Diego, Imperial Beach

Dear Jorge,

It is quite possible that you can upgrade your processor although it may not produce the results that you expect.

HP has a Web page specifically for "Upgrading or Replacing the Processor (*h10010.www1.hp.com/ewfrf/wc/document? cc=us&dlc=en&docname=bph07139&lc=en&product=4113091*)" in Compaq and HP computers. You didn't specify the exact model number, but you should be able to find the manual which lists possible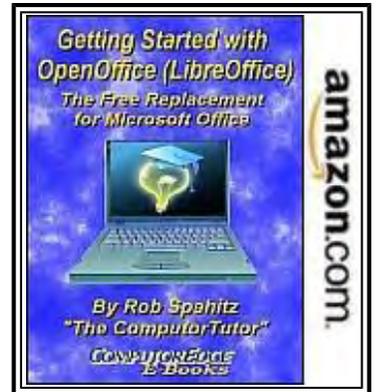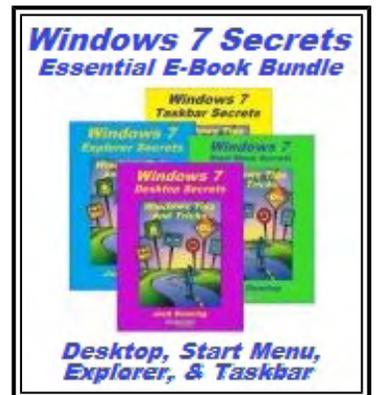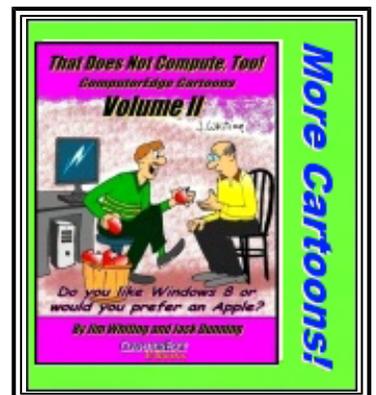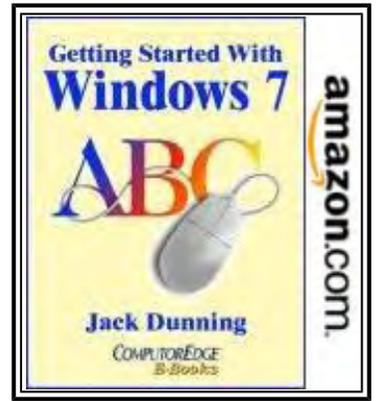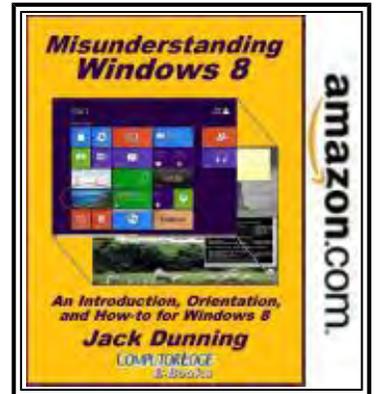 replacement CPUs at this HP Web page (*h10025.www1. hp.com/ewfrf/wc/pfinder?tmp_product=Compaq+Presario +CQ62&tmp_qt=manual&tmp_searchExperience=yes&lc=en&cc=us&dlc=en*) for the appropriate "Compaq Presario CQ62 Notebook PC Maintenance and Service Guide." Here is a sample manual (*h10032.www1.hp.com/ctg/Manual/c02641795.pdf*), although not necessarily your model. The possible processors are found on the first page.

Having said that, there may be other things slowing down your computer which are far more important than the processor. First, are you still using Windows Vista? You didn't say. Vista seems to have many more problems with speed than Windows XP, Windows 7, and Windows 8. Next, what programs are running in the background? Many of the antivirus programs will slow a machine to a crawl when scanning. If you have a lot of programs which load at startup, then that can cause major bottlenecks. Have you tired a utility such as CCleaner (*www.piriform.com/ccleaner*) to remove unneeded bits of software?

Are you sure that you don't have malware which is interfering with smooth operations? If you have any or all of these (and other) problems, then upgrading your processor may not buy you much performance. I don't know how much processors for your laptop cost, but new laptops can be had at very reasonable prices these days. It may be worth upgrading to a new one and it will definitely be much faster.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have an old .DAT data file (listing photo data: name, file number, date, etc) that was created by "Organize Your Collection" (OYC). OYC does not open with Windows. The file is readable in HTML format, but many pages (too many to print, as some pages have only one listing). how can I convert it to an Excel file? It looks like the data may be separated by a delimiter, but not consistently one type.

Bill Newbery

San Diego, CA

Dear Bill,

Since the .DAT file is readable as an HTML page, it is probably a plain text file of data. I would try to open it with Notepad or another text editor to get a look at the raw data and format.

The most universal format for transferring data is Comma Separated Values (CSV) files. It is a plain text file (no special characters), with each record on a single line (row) and each value in the record separated by a comma. Text is generally within quotes (although not always) and numbers have no quotes around them. The line is ended with a carriage return/line feed combination (which will not be visible in Notepad).

If the data appears to be in this format, then you may be able to open it in Excel by merely changing the extension to .CSV. Excel will place each data item in a separate cell (as separated by the commas) and add a new row for each line of data.

If you see the data separated by a character other than a comma, use Notepad or another text editor to search for and replace that character with a comma. (Be careful when finding and replacing characters so you don't remove the ones you want to keep. Sometimes you have to get creative.) Be sure that each line ends with a hard return. Delete any extraneous characters. If some text contains commas as part of the data, then it is important to enclose that text with quotes (if not already enclosed). Otherwise, Excel will jump to a new cell when it sees the comma. Save the file with the .CSV extension rather than .DAT. Open with Excel.

If it's a large file, this may take a little time, but it is the most reliable way to save the data and use it in a variety of programs. Tip: If you're moving data between incompatible programs, save the data as a CSV file in one program, then open it as a CSV file in the other. You will lose special formatting, but that probably wouldn't have worked anyway.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

This is a reply to your answer about my CD music files that disappeared from the folders where I originally copied them. I did as you suggested and found that they were all moved to an iTunes folder; all of the original folder names and music files. It's just my wife and I here and neither one of us moved them. What else could cause this?

David
San Diego

Dear David,

The best that I can do is make a semi-educated guess. At some point the music must have been added to iTunes—if not by you or your wife, then someone else. While iTunes does not delete the original files, if the added music file is not already in M4A (mpeg-4 audio) format used by iTunes, it does make new copies in the M4A format to place in the iTunes folders. If the music is already in the M4A format iTunes merely catalogues the path to the original music file with a link. Since many of the original files might have been in MP3 format, iTunes has created duplicate files in the iTunes folder—usually in the Windows Music folder and included in Windows 7 and Windows 8 Libraries.

The problem arises when you view Music in a system such as Windows Libraries (or even Windows Media Player which will play both types of files). In certain views, all of the files in the Library (both the MP3 in the original folders and M4A files the iTunes folders will appear). If the View mode does not include extensions, then it's easy to assume that you have unneeded duplicate files. Some people will decide to delete the duplicates, not realizing that they are in a different location. If all the MP3 files are deleted, only the iTunes files would remain leaving the other folders empty. The M4A files in the iTunes folders will continue to play in Windows Media Player.

I can't say that this is what happened to you, but many people get annoyed when they see what they think are duplicates in their system and just start deleting. In some cases, these files could even be located on another computer on the network. The owner of that computer could get upset if someone starts deleting his or her music.

Digital Dave
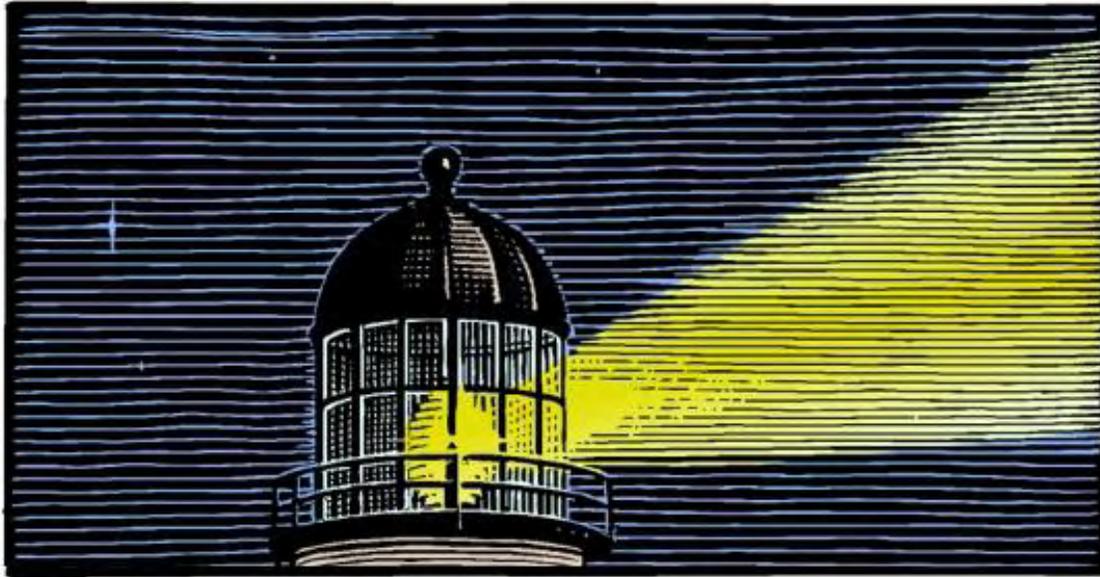
More Little Known High Tech Stories
"Steampunk Keyboards, Saving New York's Artwork, and Stealth DNA Tests" by Marilyn K. Martin

Business Tech Gift Ideas; Unusual Computer Gifts; New York's Artwork; Unusual Hardware; Stealth DNA Testing; Digital Issues for Small Businesses; Seniors and High Tech; Old, New and Unusual Vehicles; The U.S. Supreme Court and Digital Issues; Med Tech; The Disabled and High Tech Issues.

Business Tech Holiday Gift Ideas

"It's my favorite shade of lipstick, plus it has a built-in USB Flash Drive."

With the Holidays fast approaching by the time you read this, here is another round-up of gift ideas for the business people on your list. USB drives that double as something else are hot this year. DudeIWantThat lists a laser-engraved business card (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/ gear/office/usb-metal-business-cards.asp*) with a USB drive, as well as a retro-looking flash drive (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/ gear/computers/steampunk-usb-flash-drive.asp*) to appeal to someone's inner Steampunker. But if you are buying in bulk, E-Corporate Gifts (*www.e-corporategifts.com/techies.html*) list everything from a USB Hub and Card Reader to a Robot USB Drive.

(Note: Steampunk (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steampunk*) is a sub-genre of Science Fiction that features steam-powered machinery inspired by the 19th century's Industrial Revolution and the sub-culture or alternate history themes that it inspires.)

More gift ideas are stylish or unique book-ends for home or office, which are always popular. Trend Hunter (*www.trendhunter.com/ trends/knife-and-fork-bookends*) lists their collection, with book-ends for everyone from the Romantic to Cooks to Gamers to UFO buffs. And Unusual Desk Accessories are always fun, with *The Huffington Post* listing their favorites in an August 2012 gallery (*www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/29/desk-accessories-etsy-pic_n_1840247.html#slide=1448079*), from Neon Chemistry Coasters to desk calendars and vintage paperweights. For the more Boardroom types on your list you might try leather-bound Zagat travel guides (*solutions.zagat.com/products/guides-and-gifts*), personalized gifts (*www.corporategiftscompany.com*) in polished metal, or specialized gift baskets (*www.gifttree.com/v3/Corporate-Gifts-1.html*).

Unusual Computer Gifts—Finger Mouse to Steampunk Keyboard

For those friends and relatives who love unusual high tech, computer mouses are always popular. You might consider a wireless 3D finger mouse called a NEO Mouse (*gadgetspy.co.uk/neo-reflection-introduces-worlds-first-finger-mouse/*). Or how about wireless mouses (*www.buycheapr.com/us/result.jsp?ga=us25&q=unique+mouse+computer*) shaped like velvet hearts, a poker-ace or race cars?

And when it comes to truly unique keyboards, DudeIWantThat has quite a selection. For your Eco or Go-Green friends, how about a solid wood, but still fully functional keyboard (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/gear/computers/solid-wood-keyboards.asp*)? For students or others struggling to master Photoshop here are some keyboard shortcut skins (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/gear/computers/keyboard-shortcut-skins.asp*) for color-coded software help that might help upgrade their projects. For those who long for the clickety-clack days of typewriters, how about a combo vintage typewriter (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/gear/computers/usb-typewriter-computer-keyboard.asp*) and USB-compatible keyboard? And, for the Steampunk-lovers on your list, you can't miss with this beautiful retro-keyboard (*www.dudeiwantthat.com/gear/computers/steampunk-keyboard.asp*).

For those hard-to-find or no-longer-made computer items you might check out a surplus site called Weird Stuff (*www.weirdstuff.com/*) that advertises it "recycles and remarkets high technology." Hard drives to CPUs to Servers to motherboards, Weird Stuff has both a store in Sunnyvale, California, and a Web site that boasts over 20 years in business. Similar sites are TXcess Surplus (*www.txcesssurplus.com/*) and Computer Surplus (*compusurplus.com/wordpress/*).

New York's Artwork—Pre and Post Hurricane

According to *The New York Times* in early October 2012, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has started MetPublications (*www.metmuseum.org/metpublications/*) to let users search through (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/arts/design/the-mets-exhibition-catalogs-are-revived-for-a-digital-life.html?ref=technology*) more than 600 catalogs, journals and museum bulletins online. Users can search by title, keyword, publication type, theme or collection, and then order on-demand print copies—even for 140 out-of-print museum publications. They are printed with digital color reproductions through the Yale University Press. Available material currently only goes back to the 1960s, but the hope is to eventually offer museum publications back to its founding in 1870.

As Hurricane Sandy bore down, New York's art world was busy with protecting their (*www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/shortcuts/2012/oct/31/new-york-art-damage-hurricane-sandy*) priceless artwork. Initial attention was to remove outdoor statues, or wrap and secure them. Art Galleries in Chelsea were hit particularly hard, with 5 feet of water indoors that destroyed almost everything left hanging on the walls.

But the City's Collections Emergency Response Team (*www.popularmechanics.com/science/environment/natural-disasters/the-hero-response-teams-of-superstorm-sandy-14305969*), with their 24-hour hotline, were considered one of the Hero Response Teams before and after the hurricane. Popular Mechanics said that 107 of their "rapid (cultural) responder" volunteers went into action to assess damage and initiate salvage of NYC artwork, from studios to museums.

Unusual Hardware—PC Tower to Energy Management

According to *The Seattle Times*' Brier Dudley in October 2012, a company called Verdiem (*www.verdiem.com*) has released a $5,000 V-Box (*seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019504944_first_there_was_xbox_now_there.html*) billed as "the first IT energy management appliance." The V-Box runs Verdiem's Surveyor software—already being used by 700 institutions—and is designed to give facility managers more visibility and control over energy management.

According to Gadgetspy, one of the best PC towers to come on the scene this year is getting rave reviews (*gadgetspy.co.uk/cooler-master-cosmos-ultra-ii-tower-case-gets-rave-reviews/*). Cooler Master's Cosmos Ultra II Tower (*www.coolermaster.com/product.php?product_id=6792*) has a race-car inspired design that won a 2012 RedDot Design Award. Inside, it has enough spacious room in its cooling chamber for 3 overhead fans and a built-in fan controller.

With fatigued drivers causing more than 100,000 crashes a year in the U.S. (and about 1,550 deaths), both automakers and electronics companies are looking for solutions. In 2011, *The New York Times* reviewed an Anti-Sleep Pilot (*www.antisleeppilot.com/*) that is designed to alert a nodding-off driver (*www.nytimes.com/2011/05/22/automobiles/22DROWSY.html?_r=3&scp=1&sq=anti+sleep+pilot&st=cse*) faster than other, more inexpensive devices. It sits on a vehicle's dash, and requires regular

input from drivers to ensure that they are alert, using built-in motion detectors, flashing lights and an alarm. It costs about $180, although iPhone users can buy a $20 app from iTunes with most of the features of the stand-alone device.

Stealth DNA Testing—Misuse of Personal Data?

Called discreet DNA samples (*www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/11/us-usa-geneticprivacy-idUSBRE89A06H20121011?feedType=RSS&feedName=scienceNews&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter&dlvrit=309301*), some genetic-testing companies can get DNA from unsuspecting donors with anything from used toothpicks to cigarette butts. But according to Reuters in October 2012, the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues released a report recommending tighter regulations on non-consensual DNA testing, citing misuse of the results that could be very detrimental to unsuspecting individuals.

Examples of possible misuse were cited, from employers raising insurance rates if a person has a genetic-marker for cancer or Alzheimer's, to a contentious-spouse in a pending divorce who wants proof the custodial parent is unfit for child rearing. Federal law already bans using someone's genetic information to discriminate in employment or health insurance. But 25 states currently allow surreptitious DNA testing. A bill introduced in California would ban surreptitious DNA testing, requiring written authorization from the donor.

Digital Issues for Small Businesses

The New York Times has a "Small Business" guide in their Business Day section, with stories aimed specifically at helping small businesses succeed. A July 2012 story profiled a restaurant and specialty food store in California, Big Bottom Market (*www.bigbottommarket.com/*). It is a seasonal business looking to succeed in the off-season (*www.nytimes.com/2012/07/12/business/smallbusiness/a-seasonal-business-aims-to-survive-the-off-season.html?ref=smallbusiness*) (October through April), when there aren't many out-of-town visitors. They started by closing the market on Mondays and Tuesdays, revamped their wine inventory with lower priced wines, and created a menu that would appeal more to the year-around locals. They also opened for dinner, added catering and even a mobile food truck, and created a side business around their signature biscuits. Their new Web site also boasts cooking classes, wine tasting, and a menu including "Daily" and Beverages.

An article in September 2012 offered advice on how a small business can better convert Web site visitors (*www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/business/smallbusiness/three-keys-to-converting-web-visitors-into-buyers.html?ref=smallbusiness*) into customers. Verve Medical Cosmetics (*www.vervelaser.com/*) needed a Web site that would make them stand-out from their competitors also offering non-surgical cosmetic procedures. Their new Web site offered before/after photos, emphasized the physician's qualifications and years of experience, added the clinic's physical address, and made their "free consultations" offer and phone number more visible. Their Web redesign resulted in a 20% increase of qualified phone leads from the site, and an 18% decline in visitor "bounce rates."

In October 2012, there was an article that discussed how small businesses can use mobile apps (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/11/business/smallbusiness/small-companies-seek-to-push-sales-and-marketing-with-own-apps.html?ref=smallbusiness*) to push their businesses. Profiled is Magic Beans (*mbeans.com/*) a toy and baby gear store which got a free mobile app by agreeing to market-test it for its creator. The AisleBuyer (*www.aislebuyer.com/*) app allowed in-store customers to bypass the cash registers and check out purchases themselves. The app also offered shoppers recommendations, discounts and coupons, and helped the niche store generate 8% more sales.

Seniors Finally Embrace High Tech

When the Digital Age first hit seniors were the last to embrace computers and the Internet, with the counter-intuitive logic and multiple steps required. But now the technology has both matured and simplified, and tablets are the new favorite gadget (*www.denverpost.com/business/ci_21285497/high-tech-grandparents-seniors-embrace-gadgets*) for the senior set. One deaf 93-year-old loves her new iPad, using Google Earth to view the Connecticut home she lived in for 50 years, as well as search for recipes and knitting patterns. She also enjoys sending e-mails and photos to her three generations of family members. According to a recent Pew Study, half of Americans age 65 and older are now online for the first time, and seven in ten seniors own a cell phone.

Grandparents are also embracing digital technology to connect (*www.boston.com/news/local/2012/10/25/look-who-skyping-grandparents-and-grandkids/jEP1bonPAj15e9ifdio1mL/story.html*) with their far away grandkids. For 18-month-old Lily Cummings in San Francisco, weekly visits with her grandparents over Skype lets her show off her baby dolls and stuffed animals, and

grandpa even leans in to pretend tickle her belly. When her mother asked her where her grandparents lived, Lily knew in an instant: in the computer. Since 40% of grandparents have a grandchild who lives more than 500 miles away, more are turning to video-chats through Skype and FactTime, to watch their grandkids in real-time as they learn to walk or get their first haircut.

A *New York Times* blog in October 2012 discussed how getting more seniors connected to the Internet could also benefit their health (*well.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/08/e-health-opportunities-for-seniors/*). Taking advantage of e-health offerings online could both improve seniors' health and help them stay in their own home longer. Ideas range from staying digitally connected with relatives and doctors, to ordering groceries and prescriptions online. Hunting for recipes and menus suited for their tastes and health concerns is a fun activity, and researching their medical problems could lead to cutting edge research to e-mail to their physicians or caregivers. Links are offered to organizations that offer larger fonts and simpler Web sites specifically for seniors.

Old, New and Unusual Vehicles—Upgrades, Apps and a New Engine

An article in *The New York Times* in October 2012 stated that more drivers are avoiding costly ($800-$1000) in-dash navigation options, by opting for $50 mobile apps (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/automobiles/ford-and-chevy-introduce-smartphone-gps-connections.html?ref=technology*) and free maps on their smartphones. But driving with tiny-screen smartphone navigation can be awkward and dangerous. So now Ford and Chevrolet are offering ways for drivers to feed their phone's maps and instructions through their car's larger, built-in display and sound system.

The New York Times also reported in October 2012, that even older cars can be upgraded (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/12/automobiles/retooling-an-old-car-for-smartphone-apps.html?ref=technology*) to the Digital Age. A stereo system upgrade to something like Pioneer's AppRadio2 (*www.pioneerelectronics.com/PUSA/Car/AppRadio/AppRadio+2+(SPH-DA100)*) can not only add built-in navigation, but also support smartphone apps, as discussed above. AppRadio2 has a seven-inch touchscreen, an AM/FM radio, Bluetooth, and music and driver-centric apps through the user's smartphone for about $500.

Also in October 2012 *The New York Times* profiled a new hybrid (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/11/technology/start-ups/for-some-drivers-electric-motorcycle-could-be-the-best-of-both-worlds.html?ref=technology*) that is part electric motorcycle and part enclosed car. Still in prototype stage, the C-1 (*motoczysz.com/motorcycles/c1_prototype*) has two big gyroscopes under the floor to keep it from tipping over, can reach up to 120 mph, and can travel 200 miles on a full charge.

Also in October 2012 *Gizmag* introduced a new 40-bhp rotary engine (*www.gizmag.com/liquidpistol-rotary/24623/*) that burns a variety of fuels and requires no valves, cooling systems, radiators or mufflers. Called the LiquidPistonX2 (*www.liquidpiston.com/*), it holds promise for 75% thermodynamic efficiency. Co-founder Dr. Shkolnik believes the Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) can't be tweaked anymore and that going back to the basics of thermodynamics will lead to better and more efficient engines. Constant volume combustion and over-expansion make the X2 engine quieter, cooler and only one-tenth the size of a comparable diesel engine.

The U.S. Supreme Court and Digital Issues

With the laws in this country trailing the explosion of digital technology and how it is being used, some key cases are ending up at the U.S. Supreme Court. In October 2012, Wired reported that the SCOTUS declined to review a lower court decision dismissing the Electronic Frontier Foundation's suit to hold telecoms liable for allegedly providing the National Security Agency (*www.nsa.gov/*) with backdoors to eavesdrop (*www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/10/scotus-electronic-spying-case/*) on American citizens without warrants. The Obama Administration argued that the issue involved state secrets which could undermine national security, and such allegations are usually enough for judges to routinely dismiss the cases.

Also in October 2012, *The Washington Times* reported that the Supreme Court was set to decide on a monumental copyright law (*www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/oct/26/supreme-court-determine-legality-reselling-iphones/*) involving the re-sale of iPhones and other foreign-made gadgets. At issue is the first-sale doctrine, which allows the owner of any product to resell it, since the manufacturer only controls the original sale. But the Supreme Court will consider an exception for products made overseas. Whether the real issue is not letting cheaper foreign products undercut more expensive American products, or to promote "planned obsolescence" so people have to buy products more often, the decision could be devastating. It could affect everything from garage sales to retailers who buy overstock, with higher prices for everything due to non-competition.

Med Tech—Diagnostic Apps to Electronic Medical Records

In early October 2012 *The New York Times* had an article on how the field of medicine is being transformed (*www.nytimes.com/2012/10/09/science/redefining-medicine-with-apps-and-ipads-the-digital-doctor.html*) by iPads and apps. For puzzling cases, physicians can now consult diagnostic apps like MedCalc (*itunes.apple.com/us/app/medcalc-medical-calculator/id299470331?mt=8*), and have answers for treatment in under a minute. While younger physicians have embraced this new technological approach to medicine, older doctors wonder if the human-connection is at risk of being lost.

A site called iMedicalApps (*www.imedicalapps.com/*) offers medical-app reviews, and recommended apps sorted by device and/or medical specialty. They even offer lists, like Top 10 Free iPad Medical Apps (*www.imedicalapps.com/2012/06/top-free-ipad-medical-apps/*). This list contains everything from diagnostic apps, to the new influx of apps aimed at improving the physician-patient relationship. One of these is Cancer.net (*www.cancer.net/multimedia/mobile-applications*), which enables cancer patients to meticulously track their disease and therapy, providing an abundance of information for cancer physicians.

The New York Times (via RocketNews) in October 2012 discussed the ups and downs of electronic medical records (*www.rocketnews.com/2012/10/the-ups-and-downs-of-electronic-medical-records/*). While the idea is appealing, some physicians complain that the electronic systems are clunky and time-consuming, with too much potential for mix-ups and confusion that could ultimately be dangerous. A steep learning curve for healthcare professionals, as they sort through one screen after another, cut the number of patients seen in one clinic by half. Critics also say that electronic records make fraudulent billing too easy, and are too vulnerable to crashes. While the ultimate benefits may be huge, with patients soon able to view their medical records through an iPhone app, the current state of electronic medical records needs a lot more work.

The Disabled and High Tech Issues

According to an article in *The Boston Globe* in October 2012, Netflix has reached an agreement with the National Association of the Deaf to ensure that all movies and TV shows it streams will be close-captioned (*boston.com/businessupdates/2012/10/10/netflix-reaches-deal-end-lawsuit-over-closed-captioning-streamed-movies-shows/JkVQPbvy8uuL79zFVeFRNK/story.html*) within two years. In June, a federal judge ruled that online providers that serve the public are subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was the first time that Internet-businesses were recognized as being covered by the Act.

In August 2012, *Global Accessibility News* reprinted a San Antonio, Texas article discussing the digital challenges facing college students with disabilities (*globalaccessibilitynews.com/2012/08/13/access-to-high-tech-a-challenge-for-students-with-disabilities/*). With most college professors now supplementing in-class material with online content, disabled students may need assistive technologies, from screen readers to textbook scanners. It is also highly recommended that software designers "build for accessibility" from the very beginning, rather than attempt to repair their product after its release.

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

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

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

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

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

* *My Computer, My Nemesis: Bravely into the Smiley-Face Virtual Void!*, in both EPUB format (*www. computoredgebooks.com/My-Computer-My-Nemesis-humor-EPUB-iPad-NOOK-COMPHUMOR0004-1.htm? sourceCode=writer*) for iPad, NOOK, etc., and MOBI format (*www.computoredgebooks.com/My-Computer-My-Nemesis-humor-MOBI-for-Kindle-COMPHUMOR0004-2.htm?sourceCode=writer*) for Amazon Kindle.

* All four e-books can be found at our E-Book Store (*www.computoredgebooks.com/Humor-Computer-and-Internet-Anecdotes-and-Jokes_c16.htm?sourceCode=writer*).
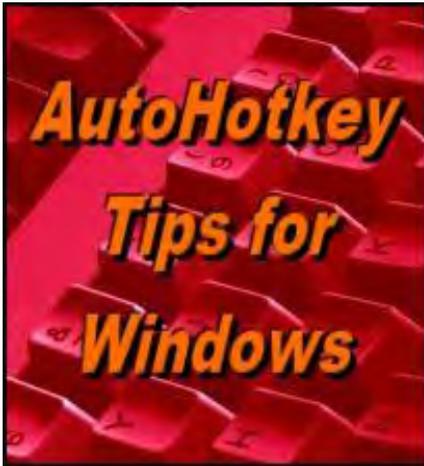
Protect Against the Pain of Losing Your Computer Work

"A simple AutoHotkey script for temporary backup of new text whether on the Web or working locally." by Jack Dunning

"Suddenly your computer locks up or the power goes out for a split second. Your heart sinks as you realize that you've lost everything you were working on."

I know that for some people the idea of writing short scripts of code (programming) is intimidating. However, if you can write an e-mail or short memo in Notepad, then you can easily make AutoHotkey work for you. It is that simple. This week we look at a solution for the computer crash or power outage problem when writing in computer programs or editing text in Web pages which have no built-in backup.

Losing a Half Hour of Work

Let's take a look at the following scenario: You're working with one of your regularly visited Web sites. It could be your bank, a Blogging site, your Web e-mail, or even Facebook. You're writing an extra long text message explaining the details of a problem (or your life). The Web site has no built-in Save button allowing you to store your work as you go along. Even if there is a Save button, it resubmits the entire page forcing you to relocate your place in your message. Maybe you're sending an e-mail to an institution, adding a comment to a forum thread, or posting your thoughts on Facebook. You've put a good deal of work into your screen and keep editing it to make sure that it's right.

Suddenly your computer locks up or the power goes out for a split second. Your heart sinks as you realize that you've lost everything you were working on. If you had first written the text in a word processor or Notepad, then you might have a backup—if you hit CTRL+S. But you didn't. It never occurred to you that the computer would crash, the Web site could temporarily become inaccessible, or the power might blip. It doesn't happen very often.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could save a copy of your in-progress text to a file without resubmitting that Web page or posting it to the world unedited—no matter which Web site you're visiting or what Windows program you're using? This can be accomplished with a short AutoHotkey script which turns the hotkey combination of CTRL+ALT+B into a backup feature writing all of your current text to a text file (*SaveEdit.txt*) saved in your Windows Documents folder. It works for Web editing windows (such as the one I'm currently using to write this column), in Notepad, WordPad, virtually any word processor, e-mail programs, or almost any other Windows program (see Figure 1). (The script will even save a list of files contained in an active Windows Explorer folder.)
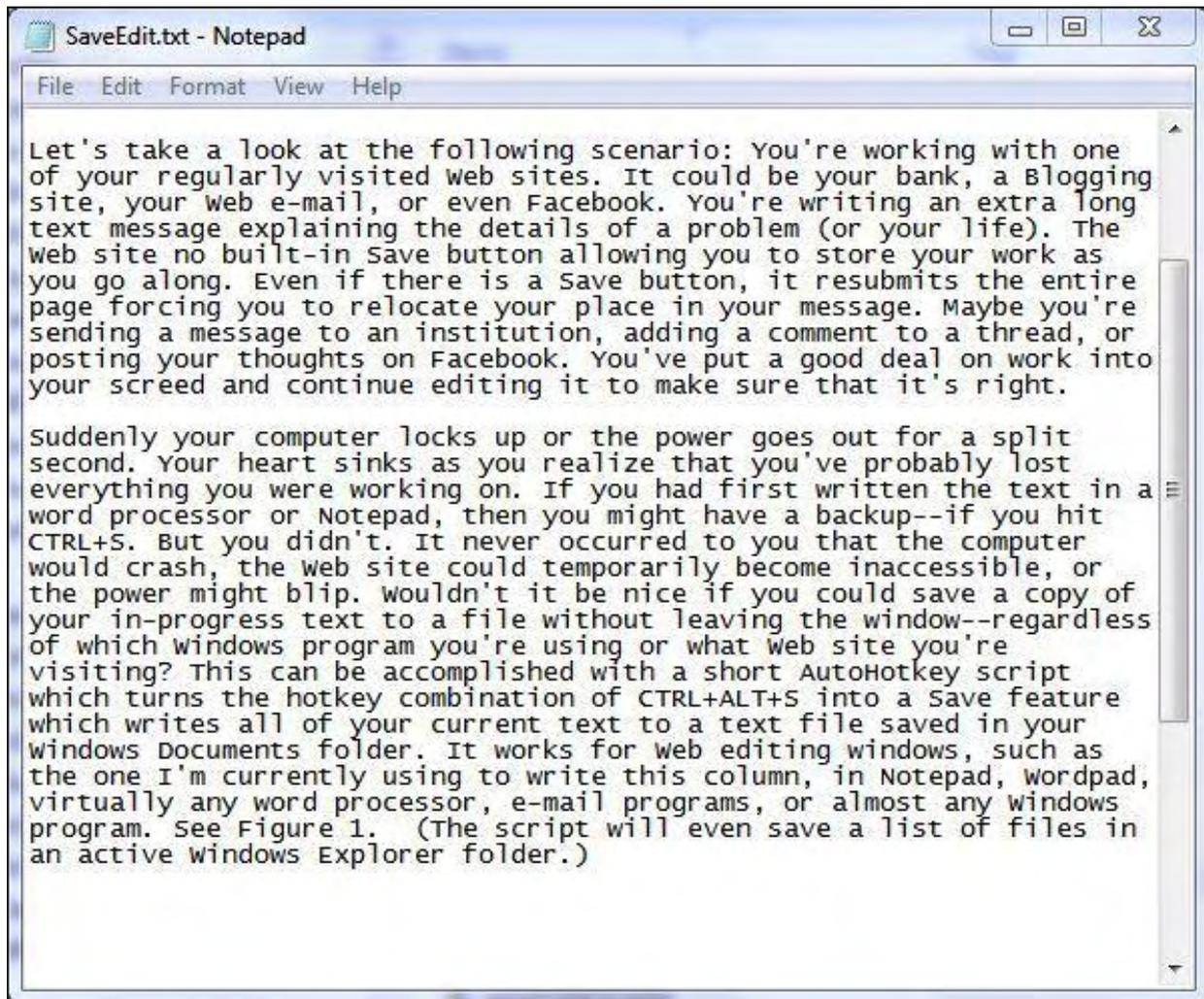
Figure 1. In-progress text is saved to a file called "SaveEdit.txt" (shown here when opened with Notepad) in the Windows Documents directory with the hotkey CTRL+ALT+B set up with an AutoHotkey script.

*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*)" for how to get started.*

Writing Your AutoHotkey BackupText Script

If you already have AutoHotkey (*www.autohotkey.com/*) installed and running, then implementing *BackupText.ahk* is easy. First, you right-click on the Desktop or in your AutoHotkey folder and select New => AutoHotkey Script from the menu. A new window will open with your default text editor displaying the standard boiler plate shown in Figure 2. Next you copy and paste the code shown below Figure 2 into the new .AHK file and save it with the name *BackupText.ahk*. Finally, right-click on the new file name and select Run Script. Now the hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+B will copy any text you are currently working on and save it in the file *SaveEdit.txt* located in your Windows Documents folder.

Figure 2. The AutoHotkey BackupText.ahk script contains boilerplate added when the script was created and the code to instantly backup your current work.

The BackupText Script AutoHotkey Code

To implement the new backup hotkeys, copy and paste the following code into an AutoHotkey file:

```
^!B::
Send, ^a
Sleep 100
Send, ^c
Sleep 100
IfExist, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Documents\SaveEdit.txt
   {
      FileDelete, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Documents\SaveEdit.txt
   }
FileAppend , %clipboard%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Documents\SaveEdit.txt
Click
return
```

How the BackupText Script Works

While this AutoHotkey routine may look complicated to some people, when taken one line at a time it is actually quite simple.

The first line (^!B::) establishes the hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+B. The caret mark (^) represents CTRL. The exclamation point is the ALT key. Of course, B is the letter B on the keyboard. The double colon (::) marks the end of the hotkey combination and the beginning of the AutoHotkey code.

The second line of code (Send, ^a) uses the AutoHotkey command Send (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm*) to execute the standard Windows key combination CTRL+A to select all of the text in the current editing field or window. The text and background changes color to show that it is selected (see Figure 3).
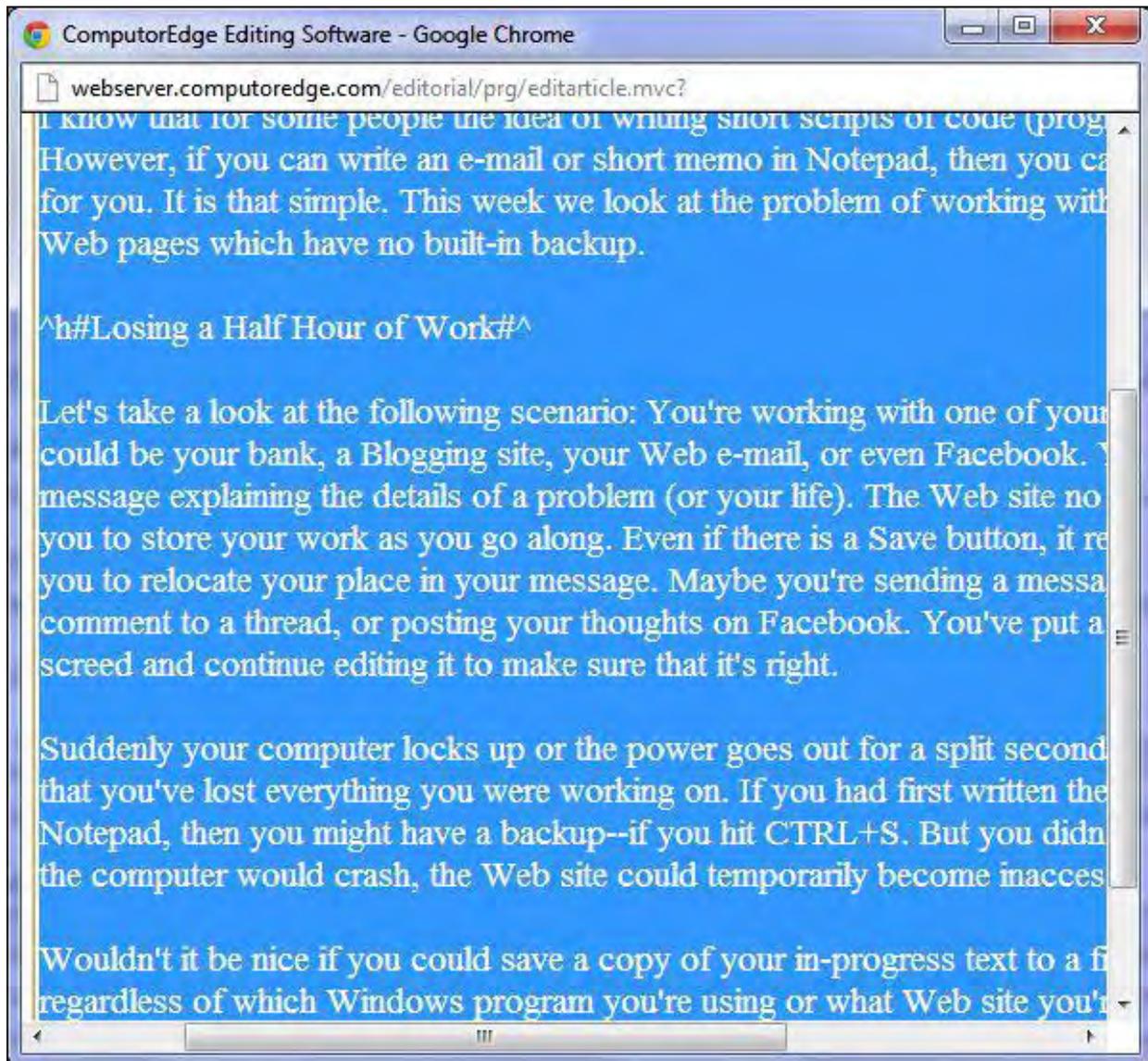
Figure 3. When CTRL+A is sent by the AutoHotkey script the text and background changes color to show that the text is selected.

When the script is executed the change in color caused by the ^A will appear as a flash.

The third and fifth lines (Sleep 100) merely cause a pause in the script (one tenth of a second) to allow the completion of the previous line before moving on. Otherwise, the script may be completed with old values.

The fourth line of code (Send, ^c) uses the Send command to copy (CTRL+C) the selected text into the Windows Clipboard.

The sixth line of code uses the IfExist conditional to check for the file *SaveEdit.txt* in the Documents directory. If the file does exist, it will be deleted with the FileDelete command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/FileDelete.htm*) (FileDelete, C:\ Users\%A_UserName%\Documents\SaveEdit.txt). Otherwise the FileAppend command (*www.*

autohotkey.com/docs/commands/FileAppend.htm) used below would continue to add text to the same file rather than replacing the old text with the new text. If the file does not exist, the FileAppend command will automatically create it—which it does in every case since the old file (if found) is always deleted.

Note that the logged on user variable *A_UserName* is used in the path. This makes the routine universal by substituting the current user's name—regardless of the user .

In the FileAppend line:

```
FileAppend , %clipboard%, C:]Users\%A_UserName%\Documents\SaveEdit.txt
```

The contents of the clipboard are saved to the file *SaveEdit.txt* which is created on the spot in the Documents folder of the logged on user *A_UserName*.

The last command issued before the end of the routine is the mouse command Click (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Click. htm*). This is included to deselect the currently selected text. Otherwise hitting any key could cause all of the text to disappear. (If you inadvertently delete selected text, you can usually get it back by either selecting Undo from the Edit menu—if there is an Edit menu—or right-click and select Undo from the menu.)

The Return command marks the end of the routine.

Problems with Backup

For many people this backup routine will be sufficient for those times when temporary backup is needed. Yet, there are a couple of issues with using this example. The first is that it is not automatic. You're required to hit the hotkeys to make it work. If you don't use it, you'll have no more protection than usual.

You could consider putting code in a timer which would automatically create a new backup at regular intervals, but in its current form you might accidentally delete all your text if it activated while you're typing. (Using the Critical command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Critical.htm*) in the first line after the double colon should prevent this problem since it would buffer keystrokes until the execution of the AutoHotkey routine is complete. We have yet to explore putting routines on a timer.) Another problem with a timer routine is that it will backup whatever window you happen to be on when it is executed, regardless of the type of window. This could cause the text you want to save to be overwritten, thus losing your backup.

An additional issue with this routine is that there is only one backup file. (That's why I call it temporary backup.) Anytime you use it, it wipes out the last backup. To resolve this problem the routine can be changed to use the window title in the file name (easier to recognize) and a unique identifier to allow incremental backup. This would ensure that nothing is lost since a new, unique, easy to identify file name would be created every time the routine is executed. The downside is that many more files will be saved taking up more storage space.

Next time, using the windows names and unique identifiers in backup file names will be explored.

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

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

Our second compilation of stupid *ComputorEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputorEdge 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*)*

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*).*

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

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

Wally Wang's Apple Farm
"The Influence of Windows 8" by Wally Wang

The Influence of Windows 8; Why You Want Microsoft Hardware; An Innovative iPad Word Processor; Relaxing with an iPhone or iPad; The Forgotten Browser; The Strange Ways of Hewlett-Packard; Foreign Language Characters.

Many people say that they wouldn't switch from a Windows PC to a Macintosh because they didn't want to learn a new user interface. Now that Windows 8 has arrived and forced Windows users to learn a drastically new user interface, a survey by the antivirus company Avast indicates that 70 percent (*www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2012/11/14/poll-shows-us-consumers-hesitant-windows-8/1700585/*) of current Windows PC users will just stick to what they have (Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7). Out of the 16 percent who plan to buy a new computer, 68 percent said they would buy a Windows 8 PC, but 30 percent planned to buy an iPad and 12 percent were going to buy a Macintosh. (Since 68 + 30 + 12 = 110, something is probably wrong with these percentages.)

No matter how you look at it, Windows 8 will cause some people to opt for an iPad or Macintosh, creating a steady exodus of Windows PC users to the iPad and Macintosh. A more interesting survey might be to ask how many Macintosh and iPad users would consider switching to a Windows 8 PC or a Windows RT/8 tablet like the Microsoft Surface (*click.linksynergy.com/link?id=15PJQz44Qcc&offerid=166833.2145&type=2&murl=http%3A%2F%2Flink.mercent.com%2Fredirect.ashx%3Fmr%3AmerchantID%3DMSFT%26mr%3AtrackingCode%3D92B9F37D-9C1F-E211-96D6-BC305BEDEAD8%26mr%3AtargetUrl%3Dhttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.microsoftstore.com%2Fstore%2Fmsstore%2Fen_US%2Fpd%2FproductID.258995000%253fWT.mc_id%253dmercent*)?

Nobody can use the excuse that the Macintosh user interface is too difficult to learn when the Macintosh is more similar to the pull-down menu structure of Windows XP than Windows 8. Another excuse that Windows users can never use again is that Apple charges too much for their products when iHS iSuppli has discovered that the profit margin (*www.isuppli.com/teardowns/news/pages/microsoft-surface-rt-more-profitable-than-ipad-teardown-analysis-reveals.aspx*) on Microsoft's Surface tablet is higher than Apple's profit margin of the iPad. So if you refuse to buy any Apple product because of their higher profit margins, you can start refusing to buy any Microsoft products because of their higher profit margins on their Surface tablets.

Obviously such excuses that the Macintosh user interface is too difficult to learn for Windows users and that Apple charges too much for their products makes no sense in the wake of the completely new user interface of Windows 8 and Microsoft's profit margin on their Surface tablets. The real question is which products will meet your needs regardless of which company makes them.

One curious fact is that large market share doesn't always translate into greater usage. Android smartphones (*finance.yahoo.com/news/strategy-analytics-android-captures-record-220500174.html*) have captured well over 80 percent of the overall smartphone market and now appears to have captured up to 41 percent of the tablet market. Yet iPhone and iPad users tend to buy more apps and spend more time on the Internet. The iPad alone accounts for almost 98 percent of all Web traffic (*marketingland.com/study-ipad-controls-98-percent-of-tablet-web-traffic-26272*). If so many Android tablets are being sold, how come Android tablet users don't browse the Internet as often?
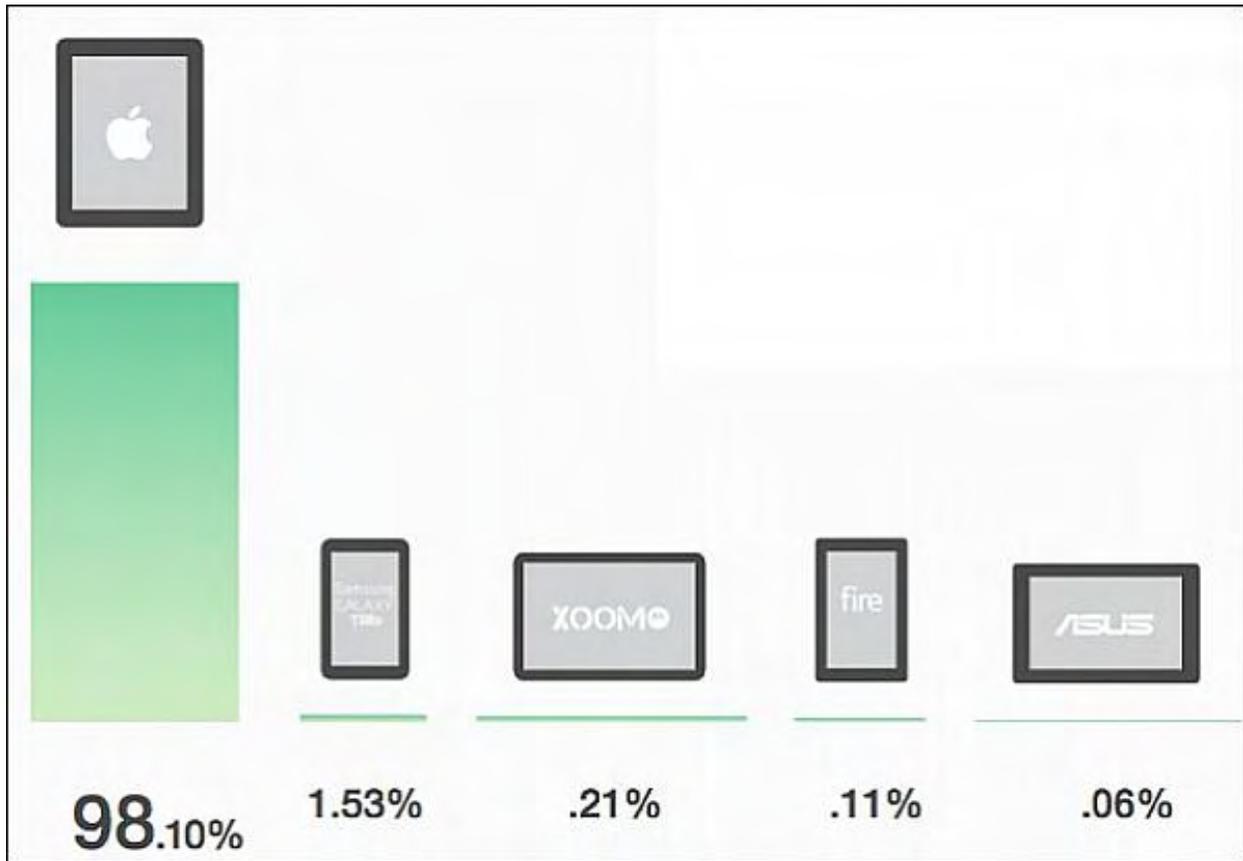
Figure 1. The iPad generates almost 98 percent of Web traffic while other tablets combined make up less than 2 percent.

Forrester Research (*techcrunch.com/2012/09/26/forrester-iphone-app-users-young-and-wealthy-android-app-users-skew-older/*) reports that iOS (iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch) users tend to be younger and more affluent. On the other hand, Windows users tend to be older and less affluent, which might explain the bitterness and anger so many Windows users exhibit towards anyone who uses Apple products.

Figure 1 Mobile App Users Are An Attractive Audience, But Vary By Device And Operating System (Cont.)

1-2 Different operating systems reach different users

Generation	iOS	RIM*	Android†	Windows‡
Gen Z (ages18 to 22)	16%	5%	14%	13%
Gen Y (ages 23 to 31)	34%	27%	30%	26%
Gen X (ages 32 to 45)	32%	43%	33%	36%
Younger Boomers (ages 46 to 55)	10%	16%	14%	13%
Older Boomers (ages 56 to 66)	6%	8%	8%	10%
Golden Generation (age 67+)	3%	1%	1%	2%
Gender				
Male	57%	51%	57%	54%
Female	43%	49%	43%	46%
Income				
Average household income	$105,200	$95,400	$89,300	$81,100

Base: 466 US online adults who own an Apple iPhone and use mobile phone applications
*Base: 234 US online adults who own a BlackBerry and use mobile phone applications
†Base: 665 US online adults who own a Google Android and use mobile phone applications
‡Base:143 US online adults who own a Microsoft Windows phone and use mobile phone applications

Source: North American Technographics® Telecom And Devices Online Recontact Survey, Q3 2011 (US)

76241 Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Figure 2. iOS users tend to be younger and more affluent while Windows users tend to be older and less affluent.

Rather than get mad at Apple and anyone who uses an Apple product, perhaps more Windows users should simply increase their own options in life so they can choose what they want out of desire rather than out of financial restrictions.

One of the best books to learn about making money is *The Richest Man in Babylon (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1466369728/ ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1466369728&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*)* by George S. Clason. Originally written as a series of pamphlets that banks and insurance companies gave to their customers, these parables about financial wisdom were later published as a book in 1926.

Some of the cures the book offers for dealing with a lean financial situation include Control thy expenditures, Make thy gold multiply, Guard thy treasures from loss, Insure a future income, and Increase thy ability to earn. By following the advice from *The Richest Man in Babylon*, anyone can improve their financial situation. Then you'll truly have a choice to buy whatever technology can work best for you.

Why You Want Microsoft Hardware

Microsoft's CEO, Steve Ballmer, recently hinted that Microsoft will make more hardware possibly including their own Windows Phone 8 phone (*www.mobileburn.com/20885/news/microsoft-ceo-steve-ballmer-sees-value-in-making-more-hardware— could-a-microsoft-phone-be-next*). The main reason Microsoft needs to make their own hardware is because they can't rely on the

mediocre products of their so-called partners anymore.

To run Windows 8, I recently bought a $319 Lenovo laptop. While Windows 8 runs acceptably on a non-touchscreen device, the real problem is the Lenovo laptop's trackpad. The far left side of the trackpad is completely unreliable. Sometimes it moves the mouse pointer and sometimes it doesn't. The rest of the trackpad works consistently and reliably except for this left side.

Even worse is that the entire trackpad seems to have a mind of its own. While scrolling across menus, sometimes the trackpad suddenly decides to click on an item and sometimes it translates the finger movement across the trackpad as a right-click gesture instead. The trackpad is virtually unusable to the point where it's easier just to lug around a separate mouse instead of wasting time with this horrible trackpad.

Compare the Lenovo trackpad to the trackpad in a MacBook Pro or MacBook Air and the difference is like comparing an Etch-A-Sketch to an iPad. Apple's trackpads feel solid and reliable. Lenovo's trackpad feels cheap and ultimately frustrating.

Once again, Microsoft's hardware partners tarnish Microsoft's reputation by cutting corners and giving users a subpar experience using Windows 8. Even though Windows 8 is nothing to get excited about even on a Surface tablet, the Surface tablet hardware makes using Windows 8 far easier than using Lenovo's clumsy trackpad.

If you really want to get a decent Windows 8 computer, get the Microsoft Surface Pro tablet. You may need to pay more, but you can finally understand why paying more for higher quality is something Apple users have known for years. If you can afford to wait, hold off until after Christmas.

Microsoft will be releasing the Surface Pro that can run Windows 8 early next year, which means you'll at least get decent hardware if you insist on wrestling with the tile interface of Windows 8 that usability expert, Jakob Nielsen, says (*venturebeat.com/2012/11/19/usability-expert-windows-8/*) "terrorizes poor office workers and strangles their productivity." By next year, expect some people to return their Surface tablets running Windows RT so Microsoft should eventually have a plentiful supply of refurbished Surface tablets you can pick up inexpensively if you're willing to be patient.

An Innovative iPad Word Processor

The larger iPad actually makes a great portable word processor as long as you can get past the obsolete mindset that tablets are only meant for consuming content instead of creating it. While there are plenty of word processors for the iPad, they all share the same problem editing text.

With Pages, you have to tap the screen to move the cursor around, which can be clumsy. With other word processor apps, they modify the virtual keyboard to provide familiar up/down and left/right cursor keys. However, a unique iPad word processor called Textilus (*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%252Ftextilus-word-processor%252Fid537818639% 253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%2526partnerId%253D30*) offers another option called the Magic Cursor.

How does Magic Cursor work?

The magic cursor button is located in the middle of the extra keyboard row, between the Tab and Font keys. It recognizes the following gestures:

- Tap the left or right arrows in the corners or swipe left, right, down or up on the Magic Cursor surface to move the cursor.

- Double tap to highlight automatically the word under the cursor. You can swipe to modify the selection. Double tap again to unselect.
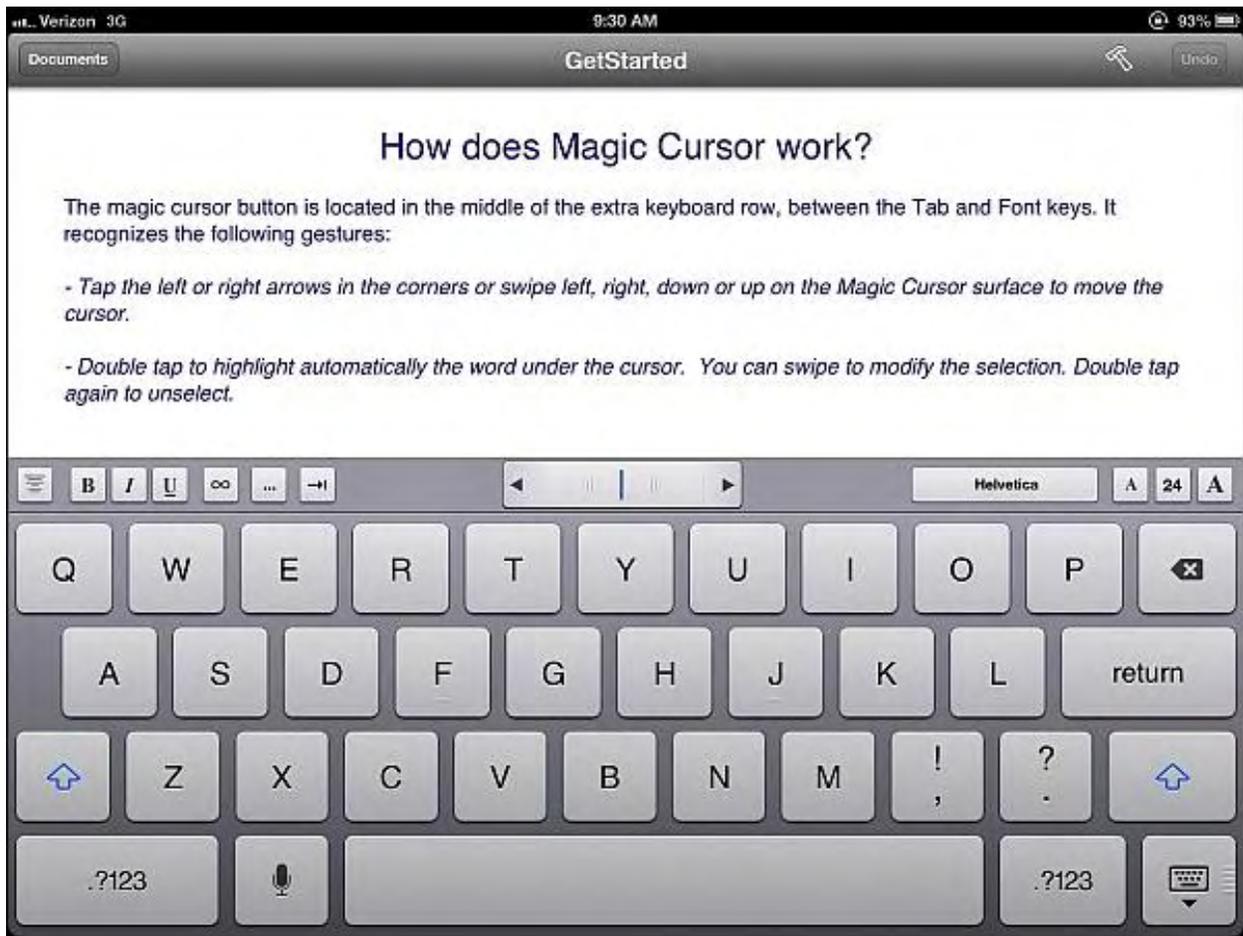
Figure 3. The Magic Cursor feature in Textilus makes it easier to edit text on the iPad.

The Magic Cursor appears at the top of the virtual keyboard and acts like a trackpad. Just slide your finger up/down or left/right on the Magic Cursor and you can quickly move the cursor anywhere in your text. This makes it far easier to edit text without sticking your finger in front of the screen all the time.

Another handy feature of Textilus is that it lets you open Google or Wikipedia directly from the Textilus app. After you get done browsing information in Google or Wikipedia, tap a Done button and it throws you right back into Textilus again. Now you can write and do research in Textilus without the hassle of exiting out of your word processor, opening Safari, then exiting out of Safari to load Textilus up again.
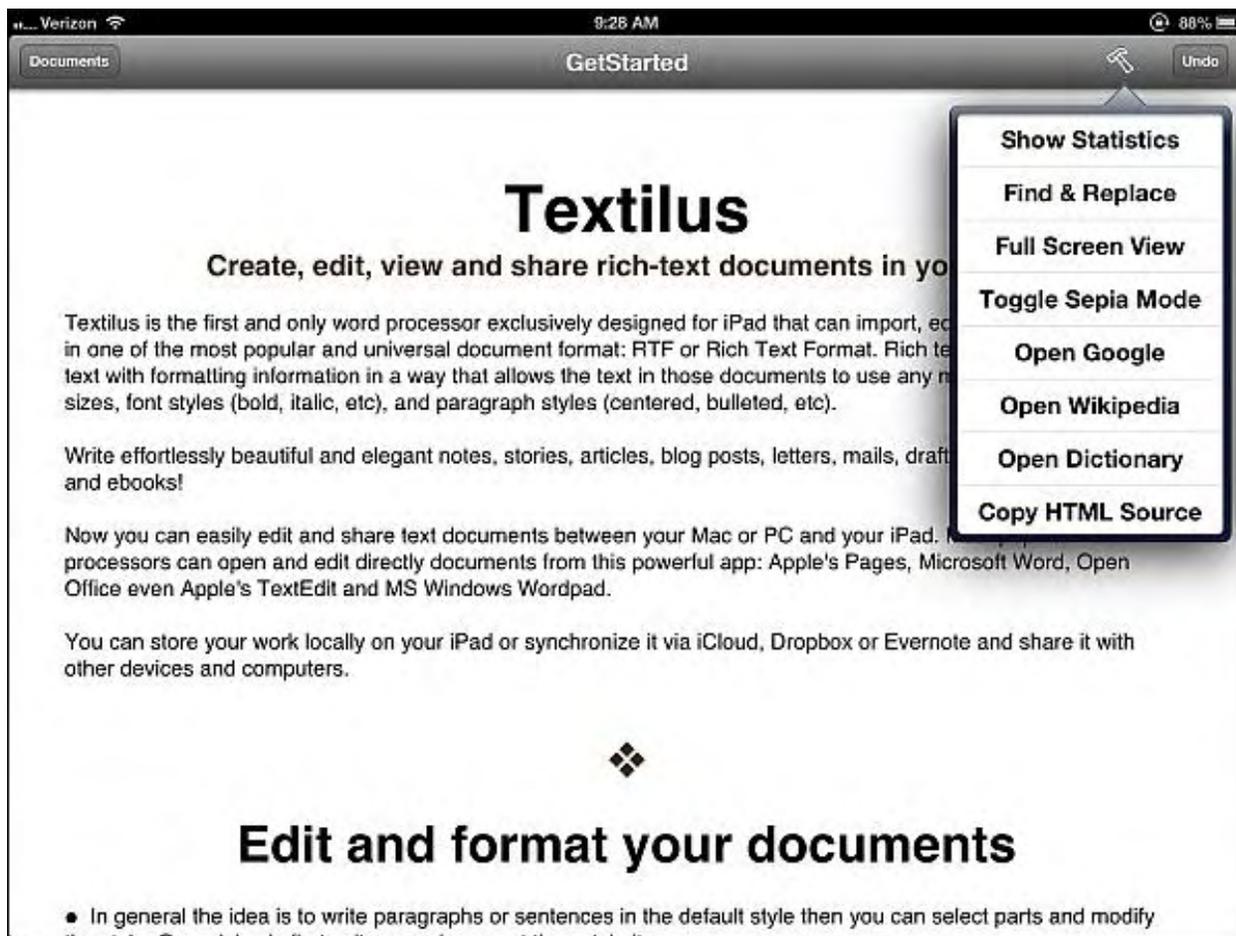
Figure 4. Textilus makes it easy to research on Google or Wikipedia while writing.

To maximize compatibility with other word processors, Textilus saves files in rich text format, which is a standard word processor format that retains formatting. All the popular word processors like Word and Pages can open and read rich text format files so you can easily transfer your documents out of Textilus and on to your main computer for further editing or printing. To make sharing files even easier, Textilus can link with Dropbox or iCloud.

The Magic Cursor feature makes Textilus the best word processor to create and edit text on an iPad. If you want to forget about carrying a laptop to do word processing and just rely on your iPad and its virtual keyboard instead, Textilus should be your first choice.

Relaxing with an iPhone or iPad

Many people have fountains at home so they can relax by listening to the soothing sound of running water (although the sound of a toilet running rarely brings an equal amount of relaxation). If you don't have a fountain, then you can try the next best thing and turn your iPhone or iPad into a fountain through the Desk Fountain 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%252Fdesk-fountain%252Fid513173994%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4% 2526partnerId%253D30*).
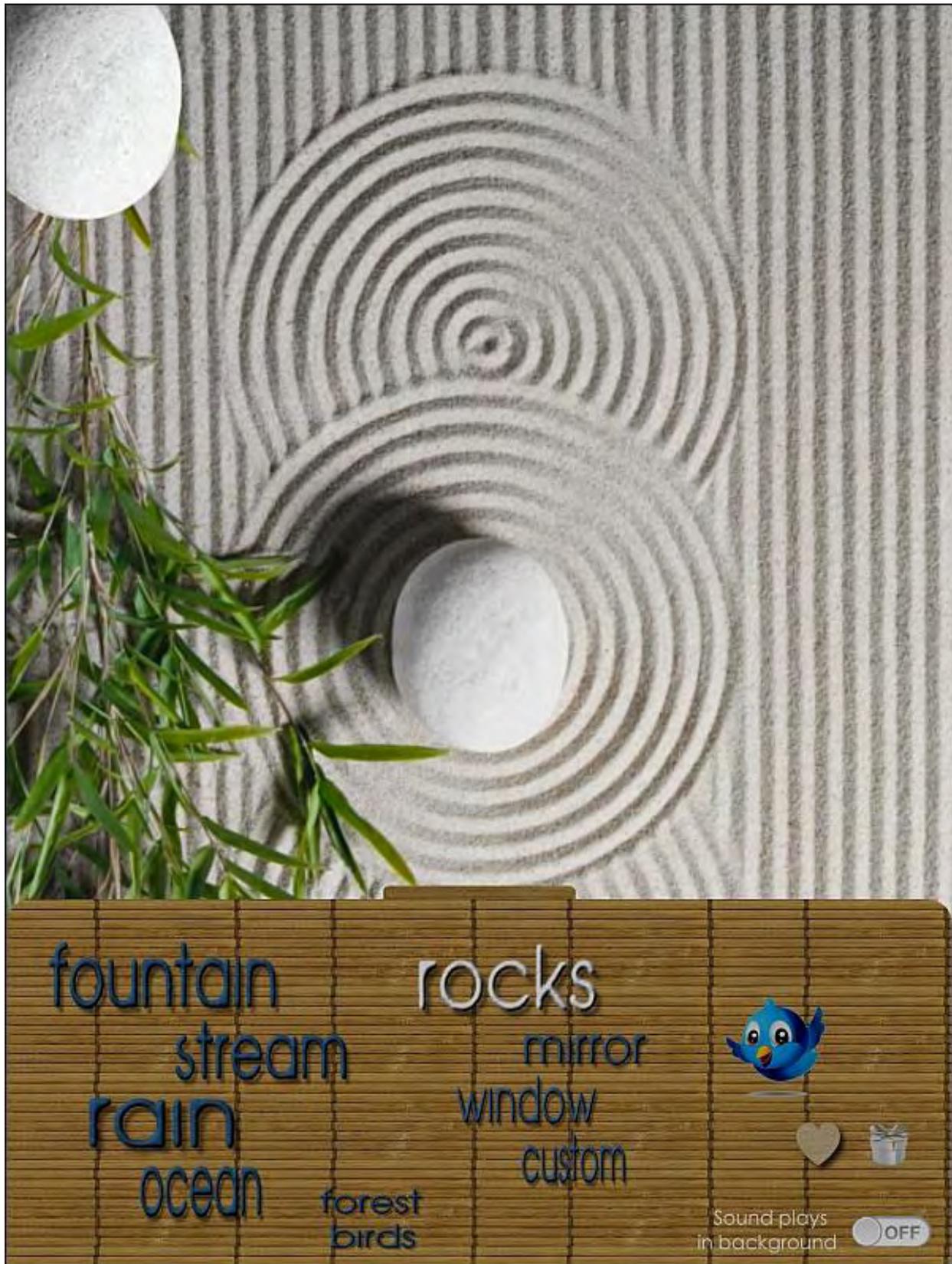
Figure 5. Desk Fountain turns your iPad into a fountain complete with sound effects and visuals.

This app lets you play different sounds such as rain falling, an ocean crashing along a beach, or a fountain bubbling water. You can choose from a variety of images or even turn on the iPhone or iPad camera so you can see yourself or another image.

With Desk Fountain, you'll always have your own soothing fountain to listen to wherever you happen to be whether traveling on an airplane, sitting at your desk, or riding in a taxi cab. If you find yourself getting stressed out during the day, let the Desk Fountain app calm your frayed nerves down.

For another calming app, load Koi Pond (*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%252Fkoi-pond-hd%252Fid371854509%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D4%
2526partnerId%253D30*) on your iPhone or iPad. This app turns your screen into a koi pond where goldfish lazily swim around. Shake your iPhone/iPad and you sprinkle food on the surface, attracting the fish to rise up and eat it. Tap the screen and your fingertip causes ripples, scaring away the fish.

By watching virtual goldfish swimming around your iPhone/iPad, you can relax while not getting anything done. Anytime you need to take a break, stare at the Koi Pond app on your iPhone/iPad and forget about your worries until your boss comes around and asks whether you'd like to take your koi pond and stare at it in the unemployment office.

Figure 6. Koi Pond lets you turn your iPhone/iPad into a goldfish pond.

The Forgotten Browser

When most people think of alternative browsers to Safari, they may think of Firefox or Chrome and maybe Opera. Since many malicious hackers take advantage of flaws found in the most popular programs people use, one simple way to increase the security of your computer is to stop using common programs and switch to something else.

For the Macintosh the most common browser is Safari, so malicious hackers will likely target flaws in Safari. Switch to Firefox, Chrome, or Opera, and any malware attacks directed at Safari will fail when confronted by Firefox, Chrome, or Opera.

If you want further protection, go with an even more obscure browser called Camino (*caminobrowser.org*). Built exclusively for Mac OS X, Camino can focus on creating a Macintosh user interface without worrying about cross-platform issues like Firefox, Chrome, and Opera. Even better, Camino is open source so it's absolutely free to try so you can see if it works better (or worse) than your current browser.

The odds that malicious hackers will target Camino is much less than if you used Safari. For added protection, Camino also includes

malware detection to block known threats anyway.

Figure 7. Camino includes common browser features including malware blocking.

Even if you're happy using Safari or any other browser, consider using Camino when you want to explore the Internet away from well-known sites like CNN, *USA Today*, or *The New York Times*. By using Camino, you put another layer of protection between the Internet and your Macintosh.

The Strange Ways of Hewlett-Packard

At one time, Hewlett-Packard stood for innovation. Nowadays, it just stands for incompetence. Back at the Consumer Electronics Show (*www.engadget.com/gallery/hp-slate-on-stage-at-ces-2010/*) in 2010, Hewlett-Packard embarrassed themselves by promoting the Slate PC, running Windows 7, ahead of the iPad. When the iPad took off, Hewlett-Packard quietly pretended that the Slate PC never really existed. At one time, Hewlett-Packard had plenty of videos on YouTube claiming they spent years designing the Slate PC. Now all of those videos are gone.

Then Hewlett-Packard spent $1.2 billion dollars to acquire Palm Computing for their webOS mobile operating system. After trying to compete against the iPad with their TouchPad, Hewlett-Packard turned webOS into an open source project that hardly anyone seems to care about any more, basically tossing $1.2 billion dollars down the drain.

Most recently, Hewlett-Packard acquired Autonomy for $10 billion dollars, then wrote down $8.8 billion as a loss due to Autonomy's questionable accounting practices (*www.forbes.com/sites/danielfisher/2012/11/20/with-autonomy-h-p-bought-an-old-fashioned-accounting-scandal/*). Former CEO, Leo Apotheker, approved this acquisition in addition to declaring that Hewlett-Packard was getting out of the PC business only for current CEO, Meg Whitman, to reverse course and announce that Hewlett-Packard was actually

staying in the PC business, but not before many corporations abandoned HP in favor of others such as Dell.

For his misguided "leadership," Leo Apotheker got rewarded with $13 million dollars while leading Hewlett-Packard to a loss of more than $30 billion in market capitalization during his 10-month tenure. With leaders like this, is it any wonder why corporations fail?

Apple tries to design the best and easiest to use products. Microsoft tries to get their software running everywhere. What's Hewlett-Packard trying to do besides make up for the incompetence of their top executives? When your company has no real vision, it's no surprise that it will run straight into a brick wall at high-speed and not know what hit them.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In case you need to type foreign language characters with accents, you can try these keystroke combinations:

Keystroke Combination   Character

Keystroke Combination	Character
OPTION + e	acute (á)
OPTION + `	grave (è)
OPTION + i	circumflex (ô)
OPTION + u	umlaut or dieresis (ï)
OPTION + n	tilde (ñ)
OPTION + q	oe ligature (œ)
OPTION + c	cedilla (ç)
OPTION + SHIFT + / (forward slash)	upside-down question mark (¿)
OPTION + 1 (the number 1)	upside-down exclamation point (¡)

These keyboard shortcuts take two steps. First, you must type the accent character you want, such as an acute or circumflex, by pressing the appropriate keystroke combination, such as OPTION + E. Second, you must type the letter that you want to appear with that particular accent mark.

So if you wanted to type the letter E with an acute accent mark over it, you would press OPTION + E and then type the letter E. (Note: The cedilla accent only appears underneath the C character so you can just press OPTION + C to type both the accent character and the letter c at the same time.)

These keystroke combinations work in most Macintosh programs so now you can write to your friends in Spanish, German, French, or any other language that uses these accent symbols.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

*My New Mac, Lion Edition (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908*)*
*My New iPad 2 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X*)*
*Steal This Computer Book (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050*)*
*Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987*)*
*Beginning Programming for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702*)*
*Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541*)*
*Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468*)*

*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*

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

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

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

*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*)*

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

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

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*)

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

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

Mobile Apps to Dictate Consumer Shopping during Black Friday/Cyber Weekend; New Web Site Browser Hopes to Revolutionize Discount Online Shopping; 10 Must-Have Mobile Apps for Holiday Shopping; Dishonored for PC; Samsung Galaxy S III.

Mobile Apps to Dictate Consumer Shopping during Black Friday/Cyber Weekend

Kenneth Wisnefski, online marketing expert and founder/CEO of WebiMax writes in this week:

In-store sales at major retailers this week will be significantly influenced by mobile applications on consumer's smartphones. The heavy usage of price-comparison, online reviews and near real-time pricing and inventory information will play a major role this Black Friday and throughout the holiday shopping season.

Today's consumer is constantly shopping for the best deal and lowest price while at the same time ensuring the product they are buying has positive reviews online. Some of the best mobile apps for this holiday shopping season include:

Amazon's Price Checker:

Amazon developed this app for both iOS and Android based devices. Consumers scan a product's barcode and instantly view alternate prices for that product from the Amazon store and other online retailers. Additionally, consumers can share the product on social media, thereby stimulating demand and engagement for it through their social network.

TGI Black Friday:

Consumers search thousands of deals across different states and categories. This information is updated in near real-time which helps consumers coordinate their actions to take advantage of the next major deal. With limited inventories on popular items, black Friday shopping is largely about having the right information at the right time.

Shopkick:

Consumers can unlock local deals and "kicks" by opening the app when in selected major retailers including Macy's, Best Buy, Target and more. These kicks include larger discounts, gift cards and other promotional incentives.

Advances in mobile technology and the incredible growth of demand is revolutionizing the way we shop these days and this technology will be at center-stage over the upcoming Black Friday and Cyber weekend.

New Web Site Browser Hopes to Revolutionize Discount Online Shopping

*Pete Codella, with Alexander's BeFrugal.com (*BeFrugal.com*), has what may be good news for readers who shop using coupons:*

*Budget conscious consumers clip physical coupons and search online for discount codes, a time-consuming process. The new, free Couponomatic browser add-on by BeFrugal.com (*BeFrugal.com*) automates discounts during the online shopping process, providing a drop-down of discount codes at checkout for 40,000+ online stores and restaurants, and earning shoppers an average of 7% cash back from 3,000+ online stores.*

What's more, discounts are crowdsourced, so if a shopper successfully uses a previously unknown code, it's added to the Web-based app and automatically appears for all future shoppers. Never before has the consumer been empowered to save money in such an integrated, simple way.

The Couponomatic add-on is a simple-to-install, small toolbar button in Chrome and a new toolbar in Internet Explorer and Firefox.

10 Must-Have Mobile Apps for Holiday Shopping

*Andrea Woroch (*www.andreaworoch.com*), a nationally recognized consumer and money-saving expert, notes that "a recent Pricegrabber survey reports 82 percent of online shoppers will use shopping apps to save on holiday gifts this year. With so many apps to choose from, it's difficult to distinguish which ones will save you money or just take up memory. As you start to plan your holiday shopping strategy, these mobile apps will make your life much easier and purchases much cheaper."*

*• Gift List App (*itunes.apple.com/us/app/gift-list-holiday-christmas/id342041825?mt=8*) (Apple)*

Start your holiday shopping on the right financial foot by downloading a holiday gift list app. The Gift List App ($1.99) for Apple devices enables you to organize gift ideas, store recipient information and track your budget. Android owners can use the Free Christmas List for similar capabilities.

*• Coupon Sherpa App (*www.couponsherpa.com/mobile-coupons/*) (Apple and Android)*

Coupon Sherpa was the first-ever mobile coupon app, and features hundreds of digital coupons for popular stores like Kohl's and Macy's. As a previous iTunes Staff Favorite and a regular on top-shopping-apps lists, Coupon Sherpa makes it easy to score in-store savings at retailers and restaurants, especially during the holiday season. Simply hand your phone to the cashier and they'll scan the coupon. No clipping required.

*• Decide App (*www.decide.com/mobile*) (Apple—iPhone and iPad)*

We've all been there: You carefully plan your purchase to procure the best deal, and a few months later you find your coveted item for much less than you paid. Luckily, Decide.com created an app for iPhones and iPads to help you determine the best time to buy everything from cameras to table saws.

*• RedLaser App (*redlaser.com/*) (Apple and Android)*

As retailers amp up their price-matching programs this holiday season, the RedLaser barcode scanning app will be especially handy. Target and Best Buy, for example, will price-match online retailers including Amazon, making it easier than ever to score the price you want while completing your in-store purchase.

*• Lookout Mobile Security App (*play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.lookout&feature=search_result#?t=W251bGwsMSwxLDEsImNvbS5sb29rb3V0Il0*) (Android)*

Think about all the personal information your mobile device contains, not to mention the apps and Web sites you use every day. Couple that with the growing trend of mobile commerce, and your device is a hot commodity for hackers. PCMagazine*'s Editor's Choice for Android is the Lookout Mobile Security App. It's available for free, or for $2.99 per month for enhanced security.*

*• OneReceipt App (*www.onereceipt.com/*) (Apple)*

Like in-laws and baked confections, you'll likely find yourself overrun with receipts this holiday season. Stay organized using the OneReceipt app to digitally store your many proofs of purchase. You can organize e-receipts and online purchase confirmations, as well as snap photos of hard copy receipts to cut down on paper clutter.

*• Slice App (*www.slice.com/*) (Apple and Android)*

Similar to the OneReceipt app, this one is for the loyal online shopper. The Slice App organizes all of your e-commerce activity and helps you track online orders and expenditures. Available for free on both Apple and

Android devices, the app also alerts you about price reductions on desired products.

• *DealBoard App (*itunes.apple.com/us/app/dealboard/id487976140?mt=8*) (Apple)*

Are you struggling with daily deal fatigue? If so, look no further than the DealBoard app to reduce your inbox clutter. This handy app aggregates daily deal offers into a single e-mail based on your preferences, eliminating the need for individual subscriptions. Own an Android device? Try the similar Deal Drop app.

• *BuyOrNot App (*www.buyornotapp.com/*) (Apple)*

It's easy to evaluate your shopping options when you're surfing the Web, but user reviews and other product evaluations are harder to come by in-store. Enter the BuyOrNot App, a barcode-scanning app with access to a jaw-dropping 45 million product reviews.

• *Car Locator App (*play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edwardkim.android.carlocatorfull&hl=en*) (Android)*

With crowded malls come crazy parking lots and when you're in a hurry, it's easy to forget where you parked. If you've ever found yourself wandering endlessly in search of your vehicle, consider downloading the Car Locator app for Android or Honk for Apple. These apps not only lead you to your car, they also feature a special timer that alerts you when the parking meter is about to expire so you avoid tickets.

Dishonored for PC

Title: Dishonored
Developer: Arkane Studios
Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Web site: www.dishonored.com (www.dishonored.com)
Platform: PC (also on PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360)
Price: About $60
Rating: M (Mature)

If you liked the first person shooter (FPS) Half-Life 2, you're going to live Dishonored. That's right, I wrote "live" (although you'll love it too), because that's how deeply the game immerses you in its stunningly rich and detailed world. Visuals, sound, level design, writing and puzzles, atmosphere, combat, all unite seamlessly to create an unforgettable experience.

Playing as the bodyguard Corvo Attano, your task is to find out who framed you for the assassination of the empress you were charged to protect. In the process you must learn what certain powerful persons have done to bring the city of Dunwall—the capital of the imperial government and the game's primary setting—to its knees.

You can carry out each mission in a surprising number of ways: stealth, direct attack, technical gadgetry, even using supernatural powers. You can also make use of shadow and sound to track your prey, improvising in ways that few games even attempt to implement (The brand new title Hitman: Absolution is a notable exception. More later.)

Dishonored looks absolutely fantastic. One big reason is that the game's art director and visual designer is Viktor Antonov, the same person who worked on Valve's revolutionary Half-Life 2 and the Half-Life 2: Lost Coast— a short demo game that is so hauntingly beautiful that it should be classified as art first, game second.

Dishonored is not a 100+ hour game like, say, Skyrim. You can finish it in 10-15 hours. But that's OK with me. The level of polish is so stunning you won't mind sacrificing a bit of quantity to gain so much quality. And this is one game you'll actually want to replay. As you progress you'll find innumerable locations and plot points that you'll want to explore the next time around, making the game potentially much longer than might appear at first blush.

Dishonored is an unapologetically single-player experience. I read that the developers didn't even consider adding a multiplayer component. Frankly, I wish more first person games were created without the pressure of trying to be two very different things (single and multiplayer) and ending up not doing either particularly well. Perhaps it's time for both developers and players to admit that single and multiplayer are two very distinct genres and allow them more often to exist independently.

Bottom line: Dishonored is the best game I've played in a very, very long time. I can't wait for the three add-on packs scheduled to be released in coming weeks.

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Samsung Galaxy S III

Product: Galaxy S III
Manufacturer: Samsung
Carrier used for this review: Verizon Wireless
*Website: www.verizonwireless.com (*www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/store/controller?
item=phoneFirst&action=viewPhoneDetail&selectedPhoneId=5988*)*
Price: $199 with two-year activation, $599 unlocked

I don't have enough experience with Apple's popular smartphone to authoritatively toss around terms like "iPhone killer," but one thing is for certain: the Galaxy S III is a wondrous amalgam of silicon, metal, and plastic.

Right off the bat, you'll notice the S III's power. The phone feels like it could jump right out of your hand. Apps load and run smoothly with nary a hiccup or stutter. There are relatively new full-sized computers sitting on people's laps right now that would have a hard time keeping up with this phone. Sure, you may not need that kind of power to surf the Web or play the occasional solitaire but, remember, when you're thinking about signing a phone contract you're also thinking about what kind of apps you'll need to run two years from now. Besides, no matter how little you use a cell phone right now, it's likely just a matter of time until you start shooting HD video or watching Netflix movies.

Big and beautiful, the 4.8" 1280x720 HD Super AMOLED display is a joy to behold. Colors are rich. Contrast and saturation are excellent. That said, I'd like to have the control over brightness, contrast, and saturation that the Galaxy S II and the original Galaxy Tab tablet had. I don't know why great, useful features have to be sacrificed to meet someone else's "one size fits all" spec.

One of the S III's hottest features is something called S Beam, which allows you to share music, pics, videos, documents—you name it—between compatible devices by simply bumping them back-to-back. S Beam is made possible by combining the technologies of Wi-Fi (which you already know about) and something called Near-Field Communication (which you may not yet know about). NFC is also the technology which will allow almost all phones in the future to do things like complete retail transactions by simply holding the device near the checkout kiosk.

Sound is near-audiophile quality. I compared 320 Kbps Amazon music tracks with a friend's iPhone 5 (using the same headphones) and, if anything, the S III sounded a bit better, certainly not worse.

Battery life is surprisingly good for a device this powerful and with a screen this large. Under regular use (lots of screen-time Web surfing, shooting pics, and watching video), I was able to make it to the end of the day with more than half a charge remaining. Still, get in the habit of charging overnight. Another nice plus: the S III's battery is removable so you can pick up a spare $10-15 backup on eBay and keep it charged and in your pocket for that occasional extra-long day. Removable batteries need to become as common as the essentially ubiquitous USB charger/data jack on Android devices.

The camera is top-notch for a phone. The 8 MP sensor shoots clear, sharp pics and there are plenty of options to modify them without the need of third-party apps. Pictures shot even in low light look great. You're going to be

forgetting you own a dedicated digital camera with this phone.

The S III shoots silky-smooth 1080p video. There's a little bit of lag while the camera finds focus, but that's pretty much par for the course for most cell phone cameras.

I've got to say something about the look and feel of the S III. It feels more like something that was carved out of smooth than built by man. Sleek lines, graceful curves, sleek and svelte. I really like the touches of silver on the slender white case. For that reason, absolutely positively do not leave the store without a case of some sort. No modern cell phone screen can survive a hard fall without protection.

It's hard to quantify cellular service, per se, but the Verizon LTE network certainly worked as advertised. Very few, if any, dropped calls or downloads.

The Samsung Galaxy S III is an excellent choice not only for right now but because so many of the features other phones have not yet even implemented are already built-in. That gives you a big edge a year from now when you've still got 12 months left on that cell phone contract.

Specs for our review unit (from Verizon):

Camera:
• Camera: 8.0MP rear facing camera with zero shutter lag and LED Flash, 1.9 MP front facing camera
• Camcorder: 1080p HD video capture (rear camera), 720p HD Video Capture (front facing camera)

Operating System:
• Android 4.0, Ice Cream Sandwich Platform

Memory / Processor"
• Dual core 1.5GHz processor & 2GB of RAM
• 16GB internal memory (actual formatted capacity is less)
• Supports up to 64GB microSD card (sold separately)

Display:
• 4.8" 1280x720 16M HD Super AMOLED display

Video:
• HD video, 720p HD on-device viewing
• DivX, H.263, H.264, MPEG4, VP8
• Video Player

Music:
• Audio Formats Supported: AAC, AAC+, eAAC+, MIDI, MP3, WMA, WAV
• Music Player
• Headset: 3.5mm audio jack

Bluetooth:
• Bluetooth Profiles Supported: Headset, Handsfree, Serial Port, Stereo, Phonebook Access, Object Push (vCard & vCalendar only), Human Interface Device, and MAP Profiles

Web:
• Mobile Hotspot Capable
• Video Chat/Conference Capable
• Backup Assistant Capable
• Wi–Fi Capable (802.11 a/b/g/n)
• Wi–Fi Direct
• DNLA Capable
• Gmail; Google Talk; YouTube, Google Calendar, Google Search, Google Maps, Play Music, Play Books, Play Movies, Latitude, Google +, Places, Play Store
• Over 400,000 apps & widgets available on Play Store

• *Device Software Update – upgrade firmware over the air*

Communication:
• *Text, Picture & Video Messaging with threaded messaging feature*
• *Speech to Text Feature*
• *Integrated Google Mobile Services , Microsoft Outlook Exchange contacts & calendar*
• *S–Beam*
• *Allshare Play*
• *Shareshot*
• *Face Unlock*
• *Media Hub*
• *S–Suggest (app recommendation engine)*
• *Tools: Calculator, Alarm Clock, World Clock, Stop Watch, Timer, Calendar, Memo & Voice Commands*
• *Accelerometer*
• *Gyroscope*
• *Barometer*
• *Compass*
• *Proximity sensor*
• *Phonebook capacity dependant upon available memory*
• *A–GPS/E911*
• *TTY Compatible*
• *Hearing Aid Compatibility = M4*

Network:
• *LTE, CDMA/PCS/1xEVDO Rev. A (800/1900 MHz)*

Dimensions:
• *Dimensions: 5.4" x 2.8" x .3"*
• *Weight: 4.7 oz.*

Keyboard:
• *Virtual QWERTY Keyboard*

Battery:
• *Standard Battery - 2100 mAh*
• *Usage time - up to 15 hours OR; Standby time - up to 200 hrs*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com*.*

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Win 8 Upgrade," "Can You Still Buy a Windows 7 Computer?" "Making Another TAB Key—Why?" "Dealing with the Illogical"

Win 8 Upgrade

[Regarding Jack Dunning's November 2 article, "Stop! Before You Download Windows 8 Upgrade for that Old PC!":]

Fantastic article, well because, that's exactly what I'm thinking of doing. And can't figure out what I'll need on my Vista machine. I have a ASUS motherboard with a Dual Core Pentium E5300 2.6GHz and 4GB memory. I can't find the NX switch in the AMI BIOS, so I'm stuck. I put the machine together in May of '09. I'll keep looking, and please keep writing on this subject. Thanks for the help.

-Jim Marshall, Oceanside, CA

This article will be helpful to anyone in a similar situation. But I have a couple of things to add from my experience with installing Win 8 on an older HP Tablet.

This is a 1270P Business laptop running Vista business 64 with a fresh install. It was "factory fresh" meaning it had all the factory hardware installed with no upgrades other than two extra gigs of RAM. Also the BIOS had never been updated. There were six newer versions available from the HP Web site.

Anyway to make a long and painful process shorter, after four weeks of downloading new drivers and BIOS updates I had a machine as close to a new HP Slate top as possible. I installed Windows 8 Preview on a 25 gig partition of the 100 gig HDD and it worked great. After the install it booted by default into the newest OS which was fine until I started the install of Win 8 pro as an upgrade to Vista.

I decided to delete the old Windows 8 partition. Unfortunately I didn't know how to use Vista's disk manager to remove the partition and reattach it to the main C: drive. So, I figured I would just wait until I got Windows 8 installed and use the disk manager in the new OS (it was easy and almost automatic).

The problem came not from the old Windows 8 install, but from the dual boot menu. Since I tried to install from a boot-able thumb drive created when I purchased 8 Pro and the install program said I couldn't do that, I had to shut down and reboot with Vista and install Win 8 from the setup.exe file on the thumb drive. I restarted only to face a screen that said "Attempting to repair Win 8."

After almost 20 minutes I decided that something must be wrong so I did a cold boot and waited another 15 minutes with the same screen. Anyway about three hours later I discovered that the Windows 8 Pro install program was trying to fix Windows 8 on the partition I had tried to delete. After I found the hidden dual boot menu in "System" in Vista's control panel and deleted (Windows 8 1), the new upgrade went fine with only the usual problems.

-Buck-o, El Cajon, CA

Jim, I'm guessing that you should be OK. I have a Windows machine with an AMI BIOS. Rather than called NX, Execute Bit Support is called XD and found under Advanced BIOS Features => CPU Feature. It should be enabled. I have installed Windows 8 Release Preview in VirtualBox on that computer although I'm not planning to upgrade it to the final release.

If you run the Windows 8 Upgrade Assistant and don't see the possible NX problem then you are probably OK. Yours is a much newer machine than the Pentium 4 that gave me the problem.

Hope this helps,

-Jack Dunning , *ComputorEdge*

Jack, thanks, I see it now. And it was enabled. I'll try that upgrade assistant.

Thanks for your help,

-Jim

Can You Still Buy a Windows 7 Computer?

[Regarding the November 9 Digital Dave column:]

The answer is yes, check Dell, or Frys, or Costco.com (not Costco stores as they don't have them any more), they still sell some Windows 7 machines, but don't dally, or it's likely they'll be gone.

Unless you need *a notebook computer because you have to use it other than one place regularly, I'd recommend getting a simple desktop as they're less likely to fail, are easier and cheaper to repair if they do, and can be upgraded more easily as time goes on, and you can easily use a much larger screen (for older eyes like mine).*

I'll second Dave's suggestion just to use the Windows 7 Easy Transfer, but it will not transfer your programs, even from Windows 7 to Windows 7, so you'll need your original CDs for applications like Office/Word, etc.

Lastly, while I'm not a fan of Windows 8, I've been playing with it since the Consumer Preview was released and it's not all that much different to use than 7, once you know how to get to the Desktop again. So don't be fearful of it, and, if you do get a Windows 7 machine, do *take advantage of the $14.99 upgrade option available (do sooner than later as it expires), so you have the option to upgrade if ever needed/wanted.*

Good luck!

-Rich Ernst, San Diego

Spoke to a Best Buy sales rep on the phone the other day. He said if the laptop comes with Windows 8, that's what you get. Can't downgrade a new computer. But*, there may be some "open box" items (read "returned") that have Windows 7. Call your local store before going in. My Oceanside store guy said they have a few.*

Regarding transferring old files and programs, Laplink has an excellent program called PC Mover that will *transfer most programs along with your other files. It comes with a transfer cable designed for just that task. Mine had a USB cable, but newer ones may have an Ethernet cable. Beware, it's only good for one transfer. You can buy another "transfer" online, though.*

-G R Bell, Oceanside, CA

Making Another TAB Key—Why?

[Regarding the November 9 Digital Dave column:]

David Levine asked about having another TAB key, but my first question would be why? You only use your right hand on the numeric keypad, is there some reason you can't use your left hand on the tab key?

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Dealing with the Illogical

[Regarding the November 9 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column:]

Wally, Science is one of man's descriptions of the universe that the Flying Spaghetti Monster created.

-Dennis, San Diego, CA

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