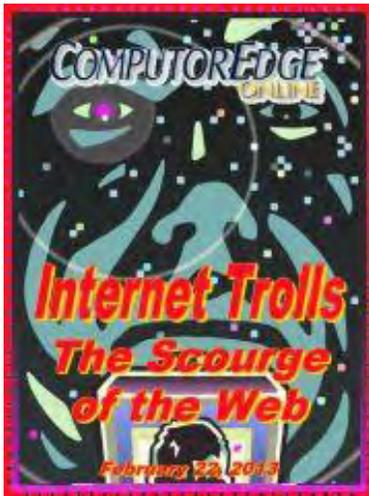


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 02/22/13



## This issue: Internet Trolls, the Scourge of the Web

The Internet is a place where anonymous people think they have a right to be nasty and cruel.

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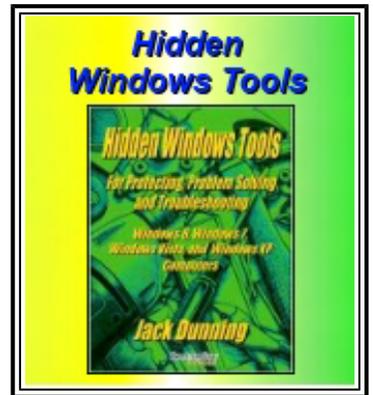
## DEPARTMENTS:

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

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns. "Surface RT without "Real" Windows," "Classical Music Collection," "Ernie's Start Page Woes," "How secure is the Cloud?"



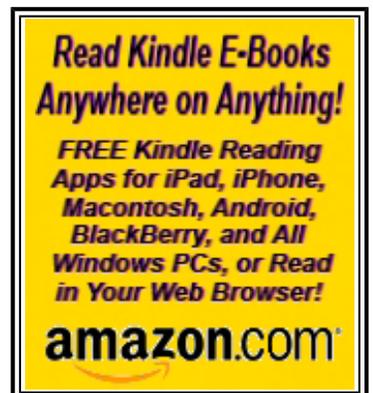
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## Digital Dave

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

Free RAM Disk Software; Google Chrome Problem; iPad "cleaning" and security?

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I'm considering using Softperfect's RAM Disk ([www.softperfect.com/products/ramdisk/](http://www.softperfect.com/products/ramdisk/)), but I'm not sure how to use it with SeaMonkey. What is your opinion on these software programs? I've found instructions on how to use it with IE, but not SeaMonkey. Can you enlighten me?*

*Thanks,*

*Brent Hunt  
Chula Vista, CA*

Dear Brent,

RAM disk software takes a portion of your system memory and turns it into a virtual disk drive. Since it is composed of the fastest memory in your system, it is many times faster than your hard drive. However, whether it will actually help you out depends upon a number of issues.

First, any memory that is assigned to a RAM disk is no longer available to your computer for normal operations. That means that you are actually reducing the memory in your computer. If you load a number of programs at the same time, the lack of memory could actually slow down the overall performance and cause more swap drive access on the hard drive.

Second, the programs already run in RAM memory, thus program speed will not be helped by a RAM disk. Where a RAM disk may help is in tasks which require a great deal of interaction with hard drive files. This could be true with database sorts of huge files, the editing of video where only small portions are in memory, or other applications which handle large volumes of data.

I personally don't think that a RAM disk is likely to help most Internet applications since the bottleneck is your Internet connection—which is way slower than anything else in your computer system. Even caching Web pages may be of little help since many of today's pages are dynamic and need reloading from the Web to be up-to-date.

I don't use any RAM disk because I don't have any applications that need more data handling speed. If I were compiling huge programs or doing other time-consuming hard disk intensive activities, I would consider it as an important alternative. I certainly wouldn't bother sacrificing system RAM for applications such as Internet Explorer and SeaMonkey, which are slowed down more by the Internet than even a slow hard drive.

The answer these days is a Solid State Drive ([www.amazon.com/s/?\\_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&hvadid=8038964717&index=electronics&keywords=solid%20state%20drive&linkCode=ur2&ref=pd\\_sl\\_8yn97hq6sk\\_e&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/s/?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&hvadid=8038964717&index=electronics&keywords=solid%20state%20drive&linkCode=ur2&ref=pd_sl_8yn97hq6sk_e&tag=comput0b9-20)) (SSD) which is a storage drive composed of non-volatile memory. You can get a small one and set it up as a cache or get a big one and not worry about it at all. (Before you buy an SSD make sure it's compatible with your computer. This is especially a problem with older laptops.)

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I just began using Chrome the past couple weeks. Using it for Cafe World on Facebook it loads quickly, however it*

*leaves a long blank area below the game screen and then keeps scrolling down by itself into this area. Any ideas on settings I can change to correct this?*

*Doug K  
El Cajon, CA*

Dear Doug,

You're assuming that the problem is with Google Chrome and not the application. I'm not familiar Cafe World, but I've seen my share of strange behavior on Facebook. I use Facebook off and on to see pictures of my family, but I still have trouble figuring it out.

The problem is that not all browsers work the same. Many Web apps have been optimized to work with Internet Explorer which has never correctly implemented the specification. Therefore, often when a page works in Internet Explorer, it may have problems in Google Chrome or Firefox. That's why I keep all three browsers on my computers. If one doesn't work, I try another.

It's unlikely that you will find a setting in Google Chrome that will resolve the problem. As for the scrolling problem, I've seen a faulty mouse cause unwanted scrolling—even without a hand on it.

Maybe another reader who uses Chrome and Cafe World on Facebook can give us some insight into this problem. Is the symptom universal or is it just happening on your computer?

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I just started using an iPad Mini and am enjoying it. The more I looked into its security and how to keep it clean, the more I'm concerned. There is not much info out there, compared to a PC. I have programs on my PC like SUPERAntiSpyware, AVG, Disk Cleanup and CCleaner that I use regularly, but where do I go for programs like these to keep my iPad running like new? (Not much found under Apps.)*

*Thanks for any info you can share. Much appreciated.*

*Jerry Hughes  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Jerry,

Although all computers to some extent are vulnerable, there are a number of reasons why there are not a ton of anti-malware apps for Apple iOS devices.

First, unless you "jailbreak" your iPad or iPhone, you can only install Apple approved apps. While this doesn't guarantee that all the apps are clean, it greatly increases the odds that your iPad will be protected. Having said that, if you open App Store on your iPad, you will find a number of free antivirus apps by searching on the term "anti-virus."

People "jailbreak" (a non-Apple approved work-around) their iOS devices so they can add non-Apple approved apps. By its very nature, this will increase the risk of getting infected by a malicious app. Ironically, one of the apps available for cleaning an iPad, iCleaner, can only be loaded onto a "jailbreak" device.

Second, iOS is a less messy operating system than Windows. It doesn't leave nearly so many temporary files and other litter strewn about. The largest source of lost space is apps that are no longer used and videos, photos, and music no longer needed. The best time to remove these apps and files is when you are synced to your computer and using iTunes. This will ensure that the changes are made everywhere within your Apple collective.

If you want more on cleaning up your iPad, I found a number of articles on the topic such as "Spring cleaning tips: Spruce up your iOS device ([http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310\\_39-57405784-285/spring-cleaning-tips-spruce-up-your-ios-device/](http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310_39-57405784-285/spring-cleaning-tips-spruce-up-your-ios-device/))." Most of the tips seem pretty reasonable, although resetting an iPad to new, out-of-the-box condition should be saved for when you're experiencing real problems.

Digital Dave

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## Beware of Internet Trolls!

“Internet Trolls Are Mean, Deceptive People” by Jack Dunning

With the anonymity of the Internet comes people hiding in the shadows who delight in causing others pain and aggravation. They're called Internet Trolls (or jerks). Who are they and what can you do about them?

The Internet is truly the Wild West. It's a place where people not only break the rules (if there are any), they feel it's their right to do so. Many people believe that they need to "tell the truth" no matter how it affects other people. It's their birthright. "I'm only being honest!" It's especially easy to be "honest" if no one knows who you are. This is one genesis of the Internet troll, people who delight in aggravating, demeaning and abusing others on the Internet.

### The Internet Troll

As defined by Wikipedia, the Internet troll ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll\\_\(Internet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll_(Internet))) is "someone who posts inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community, such as a forum, chat room, or blog, with the primary intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion." Trolls are not usually trying to steal your identity or lure you into a scam for financial gain. They are just plain rude people who use their online anonymity to say mean (often deceptive) things.



From "Why Do Internet Trolls Exist?" ([mashable.com/2013/02/10/internet-trolls/](http://mashable.com/2013/02/10/internet-trolls/)), "When people think they're anonymous, they do things they otherwise wouldn't. When conversations aren't happening in real time, some people feel like they can quickly dash off a negative comment and then immediately escape altogether. And when people get all wrapped up in their narcissism and rebelliousness, they might be more likely to pick on others they don't even know."

The problem is that the Internet has become the new playground for bullying and the troll is the perpetrator. Unlike brick and mortar schools where the bully can be recognized, the trolls carry out their plans in the cyber dark and behind masks of the Internet.

### Trolls as School Bullies

"Bullying is about children being horrible to children. It's not the phone doing it or the social media platform." says "Beat Cyber Bullies ... It'll Save Lives" ([www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/feeds/smartphone/scotland/4789210/Beat-cyber-bullies-itll-save-lives](http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/feeds/smartphone/scotland/4789210/Beat-cyber-bullies-itll-save-lives)).

htmlxzz2L06mOrfJ)." The Internet has become the new place that kids meet after school...except there is little or no adult supervision. Much of this would be overlooked if it weren't for the fact that children have committed suicide as a result of online abuse.

**TROLLS are the best!**

*that is not the truth*

**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS**  
of the average troll:

**DEINDIVIDUATION**  
when we reduce our sense of our own identity, we are less likely to stick to social norms.

**WANTNA KNOW HOW I GOT THESE SCARS?**  
#CUTFORBEIBER

**DISSOCIATIVE ANONYMITY**  
You don't know me!

**Simple Anonymity**

- Provides a sense of protection
- Allows the user to move about without any kind of indication of identity or even distinguishing characteristics other than potentially a username.
- Allows for misrepresentation of a person's true self
- However, even if one's identity is known and anonymity is removed from the equation...

**ASYNCHRONICITY** "See you later. LOL"

conversations do not happen in real time.

**NO EXCUSES!** (the driving troll)

The asynchronous nature of the Internet also allows a person to choose their words carefully.

**SOLIPSISTIC INTROJECTION** IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD

- Lacking any kind of visual face-to-face cues, the human mind will assign characteristics and traits to a "person" in interactions on the internet.
- Solipsistic Introjection can help individuals bond or identify with others in a given community.
- The mind will associate traits to a user according to our own desires, needs, and wishes - traits that the real person might not actually have.
- Allows fantasies to be played out in the mind (the stalker troll)

**Suicide Baiting**

In the 1990s a study by Leon Mann showed that when someone threatened to jump from a high building they were encouraged to do so by keyboarders.

**PEOPLE WERE MORE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE A POTENTIAL JUMPER, IF...**

- They were part of a large crowd.
- The jumper was above the 7th floor.
- It was dark outside.

**Social Psychologist**

Psychologically, we are "disintegrated" from the person we're talking to and less invested in our own identity in an e-mail.

As a result, we're more prone to aggressive behavior...

**#cut4bieber**

Brought to you by Troll Discretions is an example of this - the social experimenting troll.

**Even when comments were attached to people's names with their Facebook accounts, people still felt free enough to post mean comments.**

The best Hostesses of how many Facebook posts have been removed about Abbie Cadence, the five-year-old daughter of a real Housewives cast member.

**56 YEARS OLD Grandmother of 7**

**DISCRETION**

creation of a stalking troll.

What's needed is a little more parental supervision, but many parents have too much fear of violating their children's privacy when they should be more concerned about where their kids are going and what they're doing. The Internet is just as much a place to go as the local hangout. "Where the bullying is happening is new—but it is still bullying...Parents need to know how it all works, how to block someone and how to take a screen grab as evidence if their child is being bullied."

Plus, there can't be consequences for reporting bad behavior. "One thing that stops children from saying if something bad is happening online is fear that their computer or phone will be taken away."

Note: On the left is an infographic about Internet trolls—who they are and what to do about them—from Best Psychology Schools Online (www.bestpsychologyschoolsonline.com/internet-trolls/). Click the image to see the original at full size.

### Self-Inflicted Wounds

The fuel for Internet trolls usually comes from our own mouths (or keyboards). People spew out their thoughts and opinions on the Internet, via e-mail and text messages far too easily without first understanding the possible consequences. Once something is posted to the Web, it can be considered etched in stone. It only takes a second for someone (a former boyfriend or girl friend) to capture your most intimate thoughts and later post them on a "revenge" Web site (www.policymic.com/articles/23926/porn-site-allows-ex-lovers-to-get-their-revenge-online-how-they-re-getting-away-with-it)... after you've dumped him or her. The problem is that we make ourselves vulnerable by giving away too much information about ourselves.

Even on Facebook people often show no discretion in their comments, not realizing that those words may later come back to haunt them. Unlike face-to-face conversations with your closest friends, most Internet comments are in virtual print and may be scrutinized for years to come. It's not until you're up for that promotion 20 years from now that a political or religious comment you made as a teenager will come back to haunt you.

The worst time for posting a comment, writing an e-mail, or sending a text message is when you're emotional. "We advise young people never to type when they're angry and not to share a nasty comment written by someone else," says Beat Cyber Bullies. If you feel indignant or angry about something, put your thoughts into an open Notepad window. Then, let it sit for a day or two. Maybe you will edit it a couple of times, but before making it public ask yourself if you would want to print it on the front page of the *New York Times*...with your name attached? When you're on the Internet, you're in public, even if you think you're in a private room.

Exercise discretion. In the officer's wardroom on board a naval vessel, "traditionally considered taboo are three topics: politics, religion, and

sex." A person would do well to exercise the same restraint when interacting on the Web.

### How to Deal with Trolls

Most of the trolling on Facebook is unintentional. It comes in the form of an inappropriate remark or thoughtless reaction to a posting. This is because the users control their friends and relationships. The wise Facebook user only "friends" people they know. With the anonymity gone, the troll loses his or her so important shroud of secrecy. That's why, as bad as Facebook can get, it is not nearly as infected with bad behavior as Internet forums where people can remain anonymous. However, Facebook is subject to fake profiles created merely for the purpose of attacking other people. Remember, the primary goal of an Internet troll is to elicit an emotional reaction.

Ignore them and they'll go away. This is wise counsel, but not everybody has the training or strong self-concept that allows for this tactic.

Richard Schiffman in "Scientists Prove That Internet Trolls Are Wicked ([www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-schiffman/scientists-prove-that-int\\_b\\_2542663.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-schiffman/scientists-prove-that-int_b_2542663.html))" says "One rule of thumb is that trolls pretend to be sincerely interested in a topic at hand—that's how they rope you in—but their real motive is to push your neural buttons and elicit some sort of reaction. In other words, they want to make your brain every bit as angry and addled as their own. Science has got some advice on this: don't let them. Do not feed the trolls."

One tenet for dealing with Internet trolls is don't allow yourself to be emotionally hooked. Trolls use many different techniques to get a reaction. The most insidious malcontents won't just blurt out a nasty remark. No, they first pretend to be on your side, building up rapport. They may even seem to agree with you. Then when things are going well, they suddenly turn on you, or accuse you of not being sincere enough about your positions or thoughts. Remember, they are after a reaction and want to inflict emotional pain. By bringing others down they falsely feel they are bringing themselves up.

Some suggest that the solution is to out-troll the troll. As one commenter offered ([www.improbable.com/2011/page/103/](http://www.improbable.com/2011/page/103/)), "Whenever I have come across a troll who is obviously trying to get a rise out of someone, what I do is vehemently agree with said troll to the point where I eventually come round to the point of insulting the troll for not being as pro the subject as I am making myself out to be."

### "How to Psych Out Your Troll"

The major source for the infographic and many of the articles about trolling is Claire Hardaker ([uclan.academia.edu/ClaireHardaker](http://uclan.academia.edu/ClaireHardaker)), a University of Central Lancashire lecturer, who "in order to establish a rigorous study of trolls, studied nine years worth of unmoderated comments (including 172 million words) from a forum

**MISSING LINK**  
A feeling of escapism is produced

A way to throw off mundane concerns to address a specific need without having to worry about consequences.

"People may see cyberspace as a kind of game where the normal rules of everyday interaction don't apply to them."

Emily Black, a criminal lawyer studying identity theft in cyberspace

A famous 1960s-era study found that people were willing to administer an electric shock to a person they couldn't see, even if they knew it was causing them serious pain.

Lesser replications of Milgram's studies found that his conclusion was less likely to be true if people identified more strongly with the student receiving the shocks.

Stanley Milgram, Yale University psychologist

When humans are faced with guesswork and ambiguity, they often perceive it as threatening.

"I'm a boring nice person IRL!"  
Michael Butsch (aka Pissed in Pixels) of Reddit reply

**MINIMIZING AUTHORITY**  
You're Not So Great Yourself

Oppositional Defiance Disorder affects 16% of the general public in the UK.

20% of the general public in the UK.

archaeology children in the UK.

Lock of hierarchy causes changes in interactions with others.

If people can't see the user, others have no way to know if the user is an on-duty police officer, head of state, or some kind of "authority" person logging out in their den on their computer.

People can be motivated to speak their mind in place of an authority figure, but that form is removed online.

Must have the last word (the last person, kind of troll)

**NARCISSISM**  
I speak for you

People with extreme views who are extremely hard about their message to debate themselves, not thinking everybody agrees.

Study with Stanford University students showed that students who thought they spoke for the majority expressed their attitudes more readily.

Trolls not in this category: they care if they're majority opinion or not. (the self-righteous troll)

**LOST IN TRANSLATION**  
Miscommunication common

Text-based messages are inherently more ambiguous

One man's joke is another man's insult (one person's last clever troll)

**How to Psych Out Your Troll**

In order to establish a rigorous study of trolls, University of Central Lancashire lecturer Claire Hardaker studied **NINE YEARS** WORTH OF UNMODERATED COMMENTS (172 MILLION WORDS) from a forum about horses.

In summarizing the behavioral patterns Hardaker wrote: **TROLLING CAN**

**succeed** if users are deceived into believing the troll's pseudo-intention(s), and are provoked into responding sincerely.

**USERS CAN MOCK TROLL.** That is, they may undertake what appears to be trolling with the aim of enhancing or increasing effect, or group cohesion."

**be frustrated** if users correctly interpret an intent to troll, but are not provoked into responding.

**be thwarted** if users correctly interpret an intent to troll, but counter in such a way as to curtail or neutralise the success of the trolled.

**fall** if users correctly interpret an intent to troll, and are not provoked by the troll.

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about horses. In summarizing the behavioral patterns Hardaker wrote:

"Trolling can

• be frustrated if users correctly interpret an intent to troll, but are not provoked into responding

- be thwarted if users correctly interpret an intent to troll, but counter in such a way as to curtail or neutralize the success of the troller
- fail if users do not correctly interpret an intent to troll and are not provoked by the troller
- succeed if users are deceived into believing the troller's pseudo-intention(s), and are provoked into responding sincerely

"Finally, users can mock troll. That is, they may undertake what appears to be trolling with the aim of enhancing or increasing effect, or group cohesion."

Maybe it's all getting a little too complicated. It can all be summed up with:

1. Don't say or post anything on the Internet, in an e-mail, or in a Tweet, that you wouldn't say in front of or show your mother—unless, of course, your mother is a troll.
2. Ignore the jerks (trolls).

I wouldn't bother with trying to out-troll the trolls. They probably won't notice. As someone once said, "People who don't get it, don't know they don't get it!" Ironically, this was said by someone who didn't get it. It wasn't me. I know I don't get it.

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers* ([www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt\\_at\\_ep\\_dpt\\_9](http://www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_9)).

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

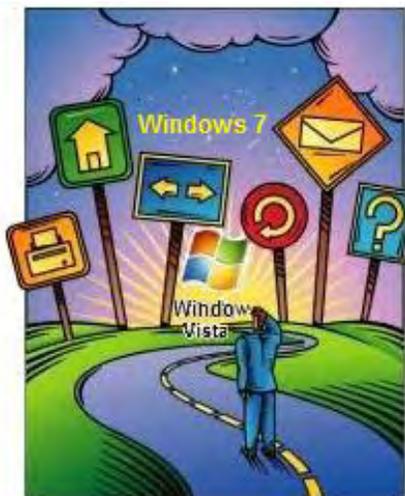
Our second compilation of stupid *ComputerEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput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

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

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

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

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# Windows Tips and Tricks

## Windows Tips and Tricks: Adding Icons to Distinguish Folders

“Add Logos and Images to Replace the Plain Vanilla Folder Icon” by Jack Dunning

Whether using the Windows Desktop, Windows Explorer, Taskbar menus, or even the Windows 8 Modern Start interface, custom icons can make it easier to find your favorite folders and shortcuts in all versions of Windows.

One feature of Windows is the capability to add graphic images as icons to folders and shortcuts. This makes it easier to distinguish the type and contents of a particular folder. If you're creating new folders they will display a plain vanilla file folder icon. It's relatively simple to tailor your folder icons for your needs. (The steps shown here were completed on Windows 8, but the techniques they are pretty much the same regardless of which version of Windows you're using.)

First a folder is selected for demonstration purposes. Shown is a folder which includes images of Lyla (see Figure 1).

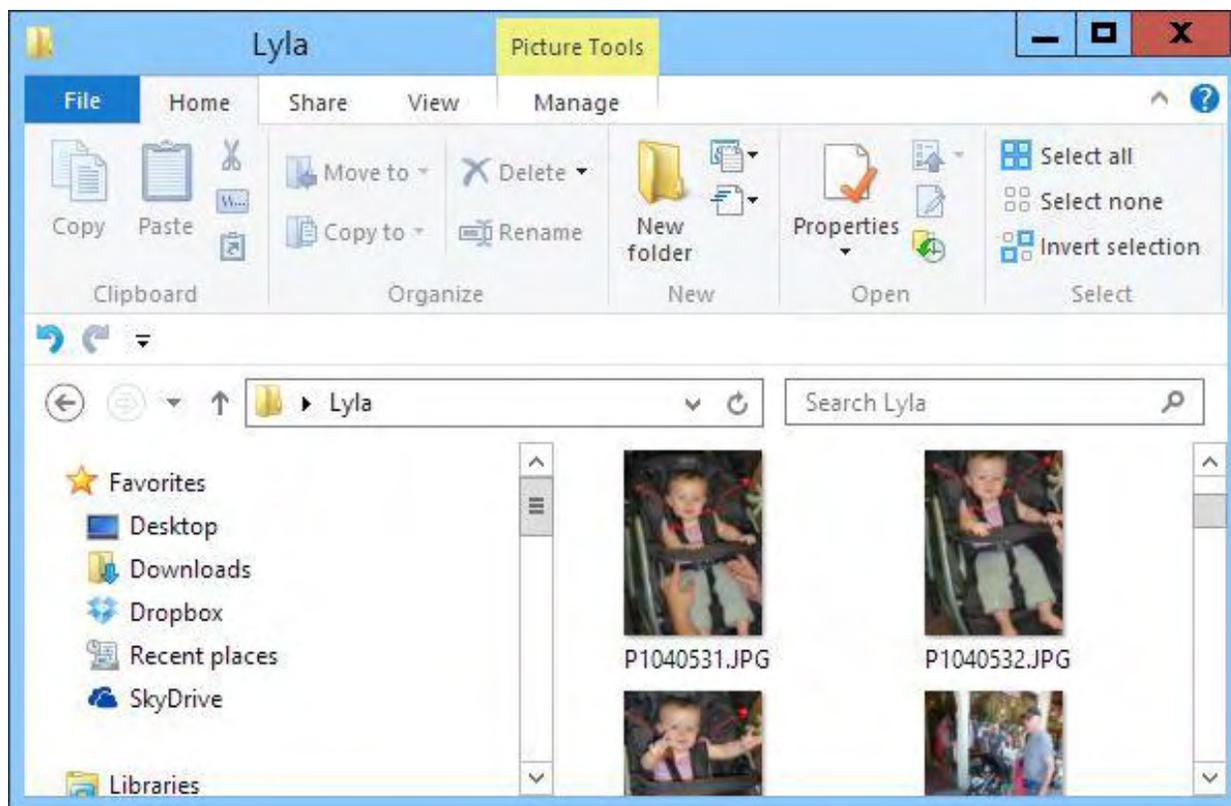


Figure 1. The Lyla folder is selected as a test folder.

A shortcut has been added to the QuickLinks folder in a new Photos folder. When the QuickLinks toolbar on the Windows 8 Taskbar (discussed last week the "Windows Tips and Tricks" column) is clicked, the new items show up as plain manila folders (see Figure 2). This is what occurs in most Windows locations, including the Desktop, Windows (File) Explorer, and the new Modern interface in Windows 8.



Figure 2. The Photo folder and Lyla shortcut have no distinguishing icon.

To liven up your folder with new icons and make it easier to differentiate them, you can create your own ICO files ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICO\\_\(file\\_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICO_(file_format))) (icon files). ICO files are images in a format designed for use as icons virtually everywhere including on the Web. They are often tiny images (16 x 16 or 32 x 32 pixels), but can be larger. Most applications will resize them as necessary.

All you need to create an ICO file is an image editor capable of saving in the ICO format. A capable free image viewer and editor which will save in the ICO format is IrfanView ([www.irfanview.com/](http://www.irfanview.com/)).

The first step is to open the image file you want to make into an icon. With IrfanView it's easy to select an area of the image (click and drag a square around the target portion of the image), crop it with "Crop selection" from the Edit menu, then reduce it to the desired size with "Resize/Resample..." in the Image menu (see Figure 3). The crop doesn't need to be exact but should approximate a square since most icons are optimized as squares.

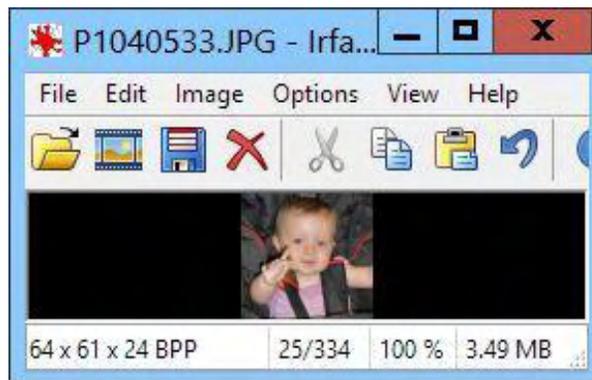


Figure 3. The image should be cropped to a square and resized as appropriate for its use.

The image size you select will depend on how you're using the icon. I picked 64 x 64 pixels knowing I was also using it for a Desktop icon. Keep "Preserve aspect ratio" checked so the image won't be distorted. The dimension may not be an exact square, but that won't matter as long as it's close.

Once the new ICO file is saved, navigate to the target folder location, right-click on the folder and select properties (see Figure 4). The Properties window will open. The same can be done for shortcuts.

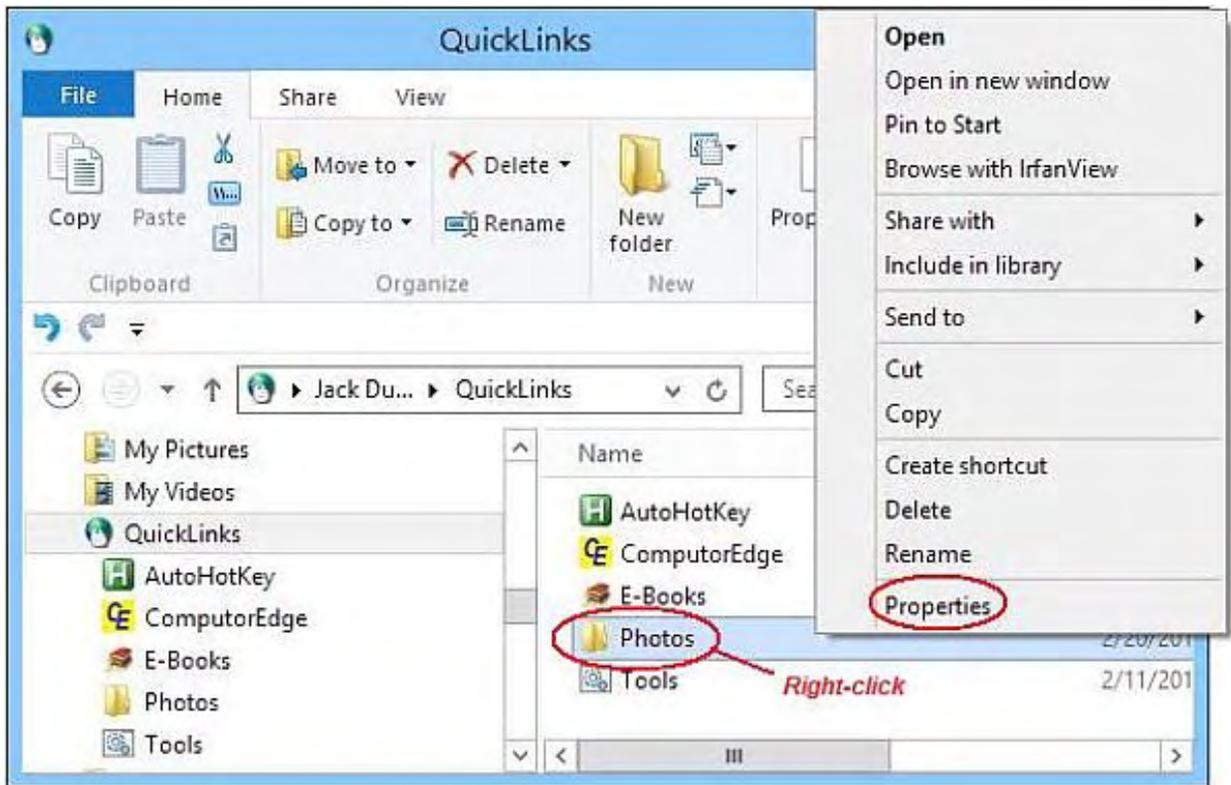
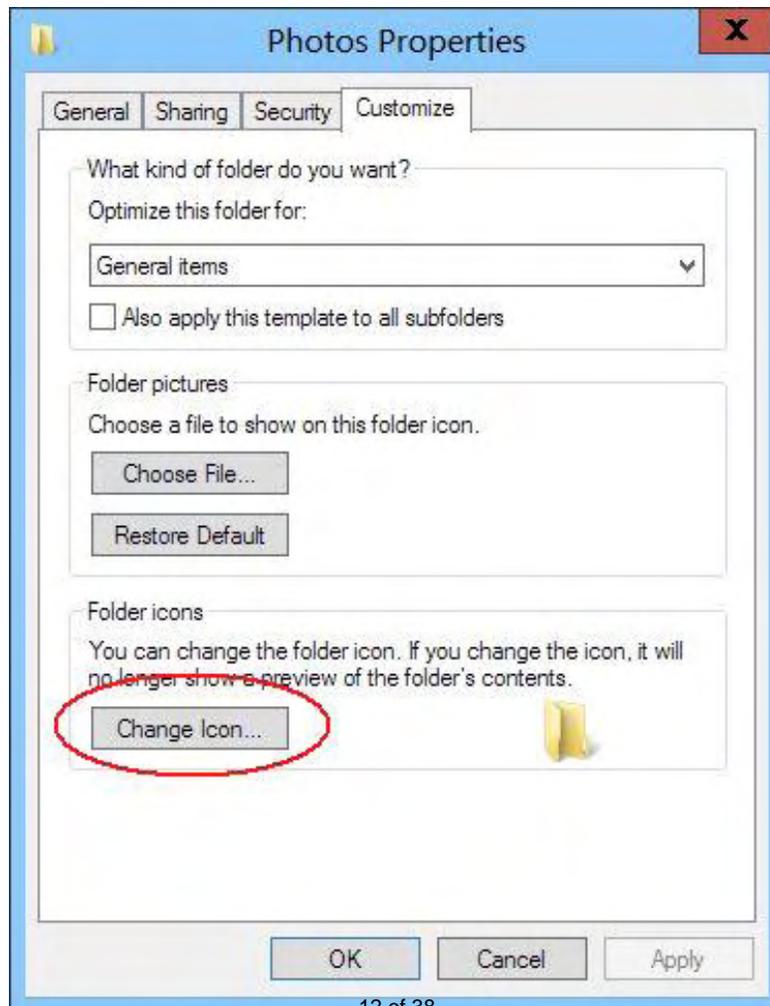


Figure 4. Right-click on the folder name and select Properties from the menu.

It may appear differently in other versions of Windows, but you're looking for a way to change or customize the icon. In this case, "Change Icon..." is found in the Customize tab (see Figure 5). For shortcuts the "Change Icon..." button is in the Shortcut tab in its Properties window.



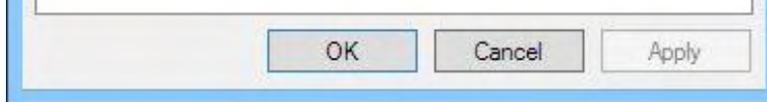


Figure 5. To change the icon for a folder or shortcut, click the Change Icon... button in the Properties window.

After clicking "Change Icon...", click the "Browse..." button and navigate to the location of the new ICO file. Select the appropriate image (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. The ICO files appear in the Change Icon window after navigating to the saved location.

After opening and applying the new image, the new icon will appear in representations of that folder or icon (see Figure 7 top). In Windows 8 the icon will also display on the Modern interface tile if "Pin to Start" is selected (see Figure 7 bottom).

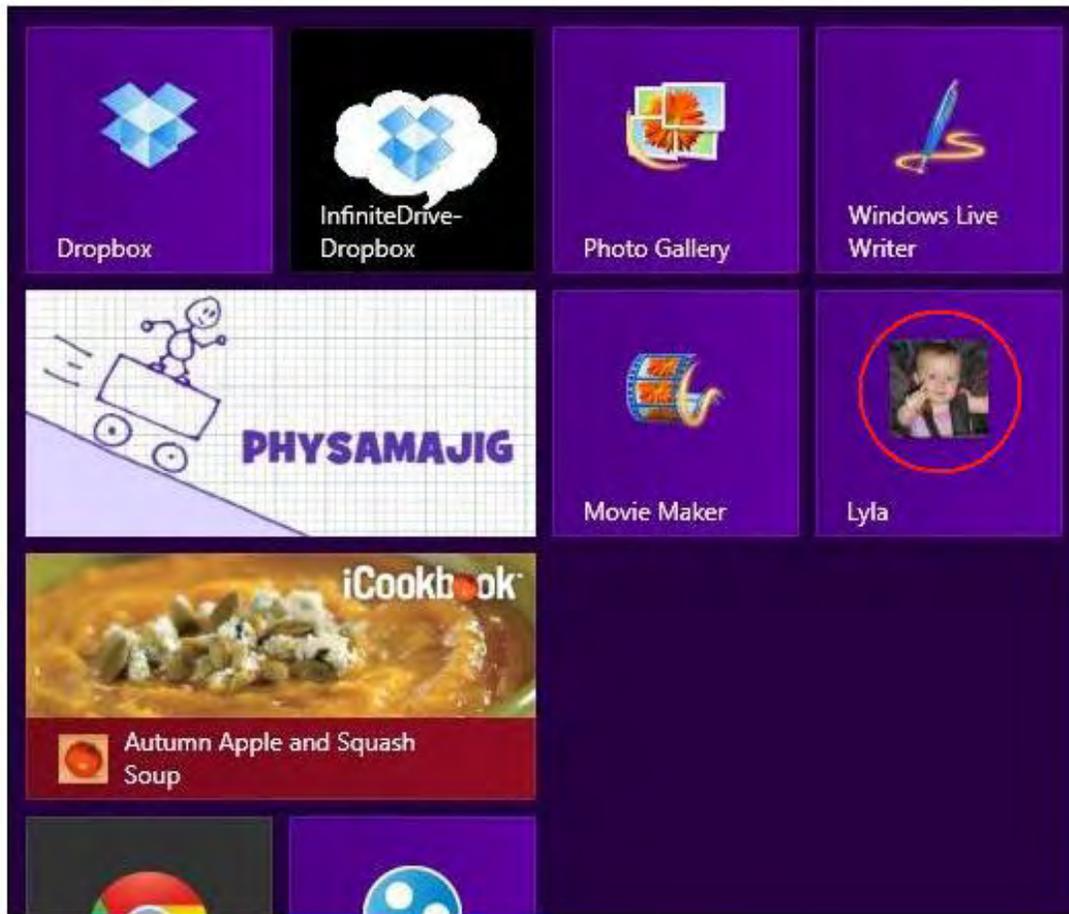


Figure 7. The new icon appears on the Desktop and in the QuickLinks toolbars (top) as well as on the Windows 8 Modern interface (bottom).

If we take the time to create ICO image files, we can add another way to make navigation easier—especially when looking at a long list of files.

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers* ([www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt\\_at\\_ep\\_dpt\\_9](http://www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_9)).

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/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/)

B009SI3F52/ref=as\_li\_ss\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20).

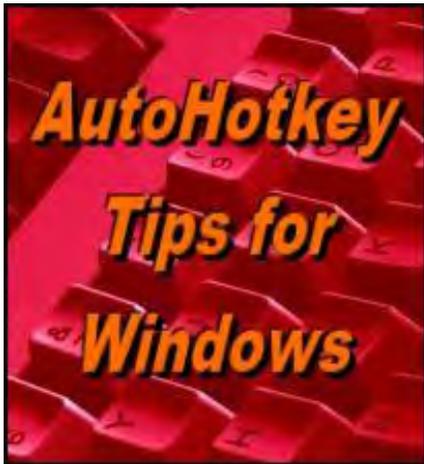
Our second compilation of stupid *ComputerEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput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

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

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

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

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**Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!**

## A Beginner's Tip for Mild Dyslexia, Plus More Reminder Enhancements

“A Beginner's Trick For Swapping Two Mistyped Letters, and How to Make the Reminder App Last for Days” by Jack Dunning

A quick app for swapping two letters could help those of us who make typos. Plus, corrections and enhancement for the Reminder app which teach more valuable AutoHotkey techniques, including saving your reminder to disk.

### Beginner's Tip

I'm a little dyslexic—as I believe many people are without realizing it. When I was in school, I could never copy by hand an entire page of a paper without making a mistake—usually reversing letters. I knew exactly what I wanted to write, but was constantly amazed (and frustrated) when I would reverse letters right before my eyes. I have the same problem when typing, but at least with computers it's fairly easy to make corrections. I use the AutoHotkey AutoCorrect app which catches many of my mistakes. However, there are still combinations that I need to correct.

This simple AutoHotkey script is a quick fix for those times when two letters are accidentally reversed. Once the script is activated merely highlight the reversed letters and use the ALT+R hotkey combination. For example, if you accidentally type "tset" highlight the "se" then hit ALT+R. The two letters are swapped and the corrected word "test" remains. This will work in any Windows program or Web editing field.

To implement this AutoHotkey feature, either create a new AutoHotkey file (.ahk) or add the following to another AutoHotkey file. (I added it to my AutoCorrect.akh file.):

```
!R::
SendInput, ^c
Sleep, 100
Clipboard := SubStr(Clipboard,2,1) . SubStr(Clipboard,1,1)
SendInput, ^v
Return
```

This routine may look a little involved to the beginner, but I assure you that it is quite simple. (For more information on first AutoHotkey scripts, see "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script ([www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing\\_AutoHotkey\\_and\\_writing\\_your\\_first\\_script.html](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html)).")

The first line of code (!R::) merely establishes the hotkey combination ALT+R. The exclamation point (!) represents the ALT key. The double colon (::) marks the end of the hotkey combination and the beginning of the routine. The routine includes all the lines up to the "Return" in the last line which marks the end of the routine.

The SendInput command ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm)) on the second and fifth lines is used to "send" a command to the computer. In this case, "^c" is CTRL+C, the standard Windows command for copying to the Windows Clipboard. The two characters previously highlighted are copied to the Clipboard.

The Sleep command (Sleep, 100) on the third line of code merely makes the routine pause for one-tenth of a second to ensure that the copy in the previous line is completed before moving on.

The work is done in the fourth line of code using the SubStr function ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/Functions.htm#BuiltIn](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/Functions.htm#BuiltIn)). The SubStr function is used to parse a text string—in this case, the contents of the Clipboard. The first SubStr function (SubStr(Clipboard,2,1)) grabs one character (represented by the number 1) starting with the second character (represented by the number 2). The second SubStr

function (SubStr(Clipboard,1,1)) grabs one character (represented by the number 1) starting with the first character (represented by the number 1).

By reversing the order of the two functions and adding them together with the concatenate operator ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/Variables.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/Variables.htm)) (the period "." between the two functions), the Clipboard is replaced with the reverse order of the two characters originally highlighted.

The last line of code before the "Return" uses the SendInput command to paste (^V represents CTRL+V) the reversed letters in the original locations of the text.

Whether it is easier to highlight the recalcitrant letters and hit ALT+R or merely type the letters in the correct order is questionable. However, this is a demonstration of a simple use of a built-in function.

### More Work on the Reminder App

Each week I'm adding a little more to the Reminder app. The original Reminder script was fairly short (although longer than it needed to be). It's now becoming fairly involved. This time more important functionality is added, plus more error correction.

Ron Cerrato found an error in the last script which prevented a second reminder from being set after the first was completed. It was caused by the code added to prevent the ESC key from exiting the reminder while leaving the audio on (discussed last week):

```
Hotkey, IfWinActive, Your Reminder!
Hotkey, Esc, StopEscape
```

It turns out that when *Hotkey, IfWinActive* is invoked anywhere in a script, it affects all Hotkey commands that may occur after that point. Therefore, the activating hotkey combination CTRL++R was only valid if the *Your Reminder!* is open—which it isn't.

The solution is to add one line (Hotkey, IfWinActive) to the *IfMsgBox, OK* subroutine:

```
IfMsgBox, OK
    SetTimer, TalkToMe, Off
    Hotkey, IfWinActive ;<= added new line to disable conditional
Return
```

When Hotkey, IfWinActive ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Hotkey.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Hotkey.htm)) is used without any parameters, the original is deactivated no longer affecting subsequent hotkey combinations.

### Adding Reminder Setup to the System Tray Icon

Ron also asked for activation be added to the System Tray right-click menu, as well as, the normal CTRL++R. (Ron doesn't have a  key on his keyboard.) It seemed like a good idea, so I looked into it.

Adding an item to the right-click menu is simple enough:

```
Menu, Tray, Add, Set Reminder, SetReminder
```

The item "Set Reminder" is added to the bottom of the right-click menu for the Reminder icon in the System Tray (see Figure 1). When selected the SetReminder label is run.

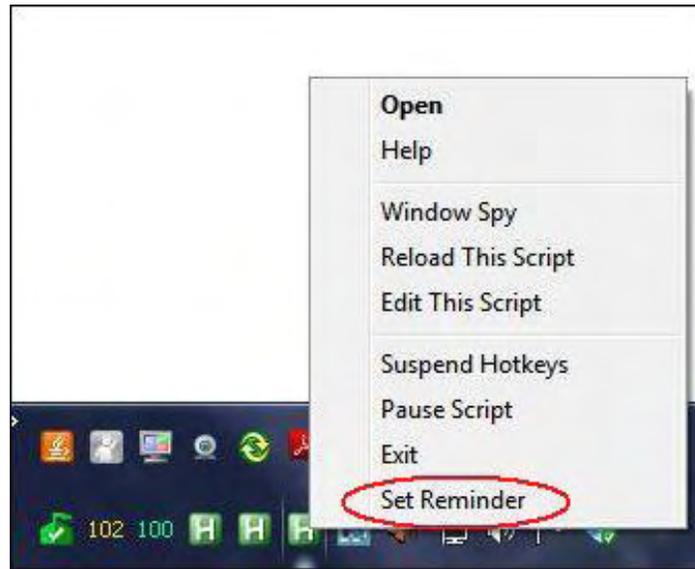


Figure 1. After adding the menu item Set Reminder to the System Tray, a right-click on the icon makes the setup item available.

The easiest way to implement this alternative was to turn the main routine into the label *SetReminder*. (I tried simulating the ^#R hotkey combination with the menu selection, but I couldn't seem to get that to work.) That means running the same label with both the hotkey combination and the menu selection. The hotkey was changed from:

```
^#R::
```

to:

```
Hotkey, ^#R, SetReminder, On
Return
SetReminder:
```

This new code creates the hotkey combination CTRL++R which executes the label *SetReminder*, the same label executed by the menu item. The Return is added to prevent the new label from executing immediately upon loading. The remainder of the routine is turned into a labeled routine by adding *SetReminder:* to the start of the main routine.

The only other code necessary is

```
Menu, Tray, Disable, Set Reminder
```

and

```
Menu, Tray, Enable, Set Reminder
```

added at the same locations where the hotkey combination ^#R is turned off and on again while the Reminder Gui is running like so:

```
HotKey, ^#R, Off
Menu, Tray, Disable, Set Reminder ;<= new code to disable menu item
```

and

```
GuiClose:
Gui, Destroy
HotKey, ^#R, On
Menu, Tray, Enable, Set Reminder ;<= new code to enable menu item
```

Return

Turning the main reminder setup routine into a label also increases the future flexibility of the Reminder app for future changes and options. It can be called from almost anywhere in the script.

### Defaulting to Reminder Set Time

Another issue is that after you set a reminder, the time shown when you launch the setup again defaults to the current time. It would be more convenient if it showed the time selected for the most recent reminder. This is a simple change since the set time is saved in the variable *MyTime*. Add the Choose option to the DateTime GUI:

```
Gui, Add, DateTime, vMyTime w350 1 Range%A_Now% Choose%MyTime%
,dddd,MMMMd, yyyy hh:mm tt
```

By adding the Choose option as shown, the DateTime GUI will default to whatever date/time follows the option (no space) in the standard date/time format (YYYYMMDDHHMMSS). Note that options in AutoHotkey commands are often a list with only a space (no commas) separating each option. The order of the options does not matter nor are they case sensitive. Any capital letters are for readability only.

### Adding Reminder Persistence Beyond Reboots and Shutdowns

The problem with the current form of the Reminder app is that it sits in memory without any backup. If you lose power, you lose your reminder. What's needed is a way to save the data to disk which will automatically reload when the Reminder app comes back to life. As mentioned in the column about ScratchPad, INI (initialization) files can be used to save data which will return the app to its last state. In this case, an INI file called *Reminder.ini* located in the Reminder folder is used to save key information. If the file folder does not exist (first time the app is run), it is created with the following code:

```
IfNotExist, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\
FileCreateDir, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder
```

It's not necessary to create the file since the first time the WriteIni command ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm)) is issued, the Reminder.ini file will be created. This occurs after a new reminder is submitted using the label (subroutine) *WriteIni*:

```
WriteIni:
    IniWrite, %MyTime%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Time
    IniWrite, %MyNote%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Memo
Return
```

Note that the label is saving the value of *MyTime* (the reminder time) and *MyNote* (the note entered into the reminder setup window) to the INI keys *Time* and *Memo* respectively under the Section labeled *Settings*. If you opened the Reminder.ini file in the Reminder folder with Notepad, you would see something similar to the following:

```
[Settings]
Time=20130219154703
Memo=Remind Me!
```

Every time those WriteIni commands are issued, the same settings will be updated. The writing needs to occur every time a new reminder is submitted which triggers the *ButtonSubmit* label. The following line is added to the appropriate condition of *ButtonSubmit* (when the set time is greater than the current time):

## GoSub, WriteIni

The GoSub command ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gosub.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gosub.htm)) merely calls the label *WriteIni* as a subroutine. The GoSub command is an easy way to run a label from anywhere in a script. This allows the label to be used multiple times without needing to repeat the code everywhere it's needed. After the label code is executed, the script return to the same location and continues—unless it encountered a command which caused an exit. (You can see the GoSub line in context in the complete script listing at the end of the column.)

Now that the basic data is saved to disk, it's a matter of retrieving it when the Reminder app is loaded with the IniRead command ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniRead.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniRead.htm)). This is done by adding the following *ReadIni* label to read the *Reminder.ini* file:

```
ReadIni:
    IniRead, RemTime, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Time
    IniRead, RemMemo, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Memo
Return
```

This is the reverse process of the IniWrite command saving the keys *Time* and *Memo* from the section *Settings* to the new variables *RemTime* and *RemMemo* respectively. To set up the saved reminder the following conditional are added at the beginning of the *Reminder.ahk* script:

```
IfExist, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini
{
    GoSub, ReadIni
    If (RemTime > A_Now)
    {
        MyTime := RemTime
        MyNote := RemMemo
        GoSub, ButtonSubmit
    }
Else
{
    MyTime := A_Now
    MyNote := "Remind Me!"
}
}
```

The IfExist command is used to check for the file. This is only needed for the first run of the script, but it doesn't hurt to have it in there for all runs—just in case the INI file has been deleted.

The first step is to read the file (GoSub, ReadIni). Then, if the reminder is for a time later than now, *MyTime* and *MyNote* are set to the saved values and the reminder is reset (GoSub, ButtonSubmit). If the reminder time has already lapsed, then *MyTime* and *MyNote* are set to defaults and the old values are ignored. You could make the lapsed reminder display (just in case you forgot it completely) by adding the appropriate GoSub to the second part of the condition. However it would then display every time you loaded the app, regardless of the last time you used it. (A solution to that problem would be to zero out your saved INI data when the *Your Reminder!* window displays, then not execute the reminder with blank data.)

This INI file can now be used in future versions of the Reminder app as more features are added.

## The Complete Reminder Script

The Reminder app script is now available in our AutoHotkey Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7)) as

**Reminder 5.1.ahk** and is listed here for copy-and-paste:

```

Menu, Tray, Add, Set Reminder, SetReminder
IfExist, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini
{
    GoSub, ReadIni
    If(RemTime > A_Now)
    {
        MyTime := RemTime
        MyNote := RemMemo
        GoSub, ButtonSubmit
    }
    Else
    {
        MyTime := A_Now
        MyNote := "Remind Me!"
    }
}
IfNotExist, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder
    FileCreateDir, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\
Hotkey, ^#R, SetReminder, On
Return
SetReminder:
HotKey, ^#R, Off
Menu, Tray, Disable, Set Reminder
Gui, Font, s12, Arial
Gui, Add, Text,, 1. Select time`n2. Add note`n3. Submit`n4. Close popup
Gui, Add, DateTime, vMyTime w350 1 Range%A_Now% Choose%MyTime%, dddd, MMMMd, yyyy hh:
mm tt
Gui, Add, Edit, vMyNote w350, %MyNote%
Gui, Add, Button, Default, Submit
Gui, Show, , Reminder
Return
ButtonSubmit:
Gui, Submit, NoHide
NewTime := MyTime
If (MyTime > A_Now)
{
    EnvSub, NewTime, A_Now, s
    FormatTime, Schedule, %MyTime%
    MsgBox, 4160, Your Reminder, "%MyNote%" is scheduled for`n%Schedule%
    #Persistent
    RemMessage := "Better get going!"
    GoSub, WriteIni
    SetTimer, ShowReminder, % NewTime*1000
}
Else
{
    MsgBox, The time must be later than right now!
    GuiControl, , MyTime, %A_Now%
}
Return
GuiClose:
Gui, Destroy
HotKey, ^#R, On
Menu, Tray, Enable, Set Reminder
    
```

```

Return
ShowReminder:
FormatTime, RightNow
#persistent
IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe
{
    SetTimer, TalkToMe, 15000
}
Hotkey, IfWinActive, Your Reminder!
Hotkey, Esc, StopEscape
SetTimer, ChangeButtonNames, 50
MsgBox,20800,Your Reminder!, %MyNote% `n%Rightnow%
MyNote := "New Reminder!"
SetTimer, ShowReminder, Off

IfMsgBox, OK
    SetTimer, TalkToMe, Off
    Hotkey, IfWinActive
return
ChangeButtonNames:
    IfWinNotExist, Your Reminder!
        Return ; Keep waiting.
    SetTimer, ChangeButtonNames, off
    WinActivate
    ControlSetText, Button2, Waiting,Your Reminder!
Return
TalkToMe:
run, nircmd.exe speak text "%MyNote%"
Return
StopEscape:
    Return
WriteIni:
    IniWrite, %MyTime%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Time
    IniWrite, %MyNote%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Memo
Return
ReadIni:
    IniRead, RemTime, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Time
    IniRead, RemMemo, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Memo
Return

```

Please let me know about any errors you find.

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers* ([www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt\\_at\\_ep\\_dpt\\_9](http://www.amazon.com/Windows-Protecting-Troubleshooting-Computers-ebook/dp/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpt_9)).

Now at Amazon! Jack's *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!*:

*Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)).

Our second compilation of stupid *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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20))

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

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

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

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Myth of Microsoft Office” by Wally Wang

The Myth of Microsoft Office; The Difference Extra Memory Makes; More Uses for the iPad; A Unified Operating System; Double-Clicking the Title Bar to Minimize a Window.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Many people make decisions based on emotions rather than logic, but then they rationalize their decisions using logic, even if they have to make up their own facts to do it. One of the more curious myths surrounding computers is that you have to use Microsoft Office to get any business work done. Such a myth revolves around two shaky foundations.

The first myth is that only Microsoft Office provides the features you need to get business work done. In some cases, Microsoft Office actually does provide features that you can't find in any other programs, but in most cases, that's not true at all. The free and open source LibreOffice ([www.libreoffice.org/#0](http://www.libreoffice.org/#0)) duplicates many features of Microsoft Office including PivotTables often used in Microsoft Excel.

Alternative programs sometimes offer features you can't find in Microsoft Office. For example, Apple's spreadsheet, Numbers, lets you create different size columns and rows on a page so you can customize the look of your spreadsheet. On the other hand, Excel forces you to work within a huge spreadsheet where changing the width of a column affects the entire worksheet.

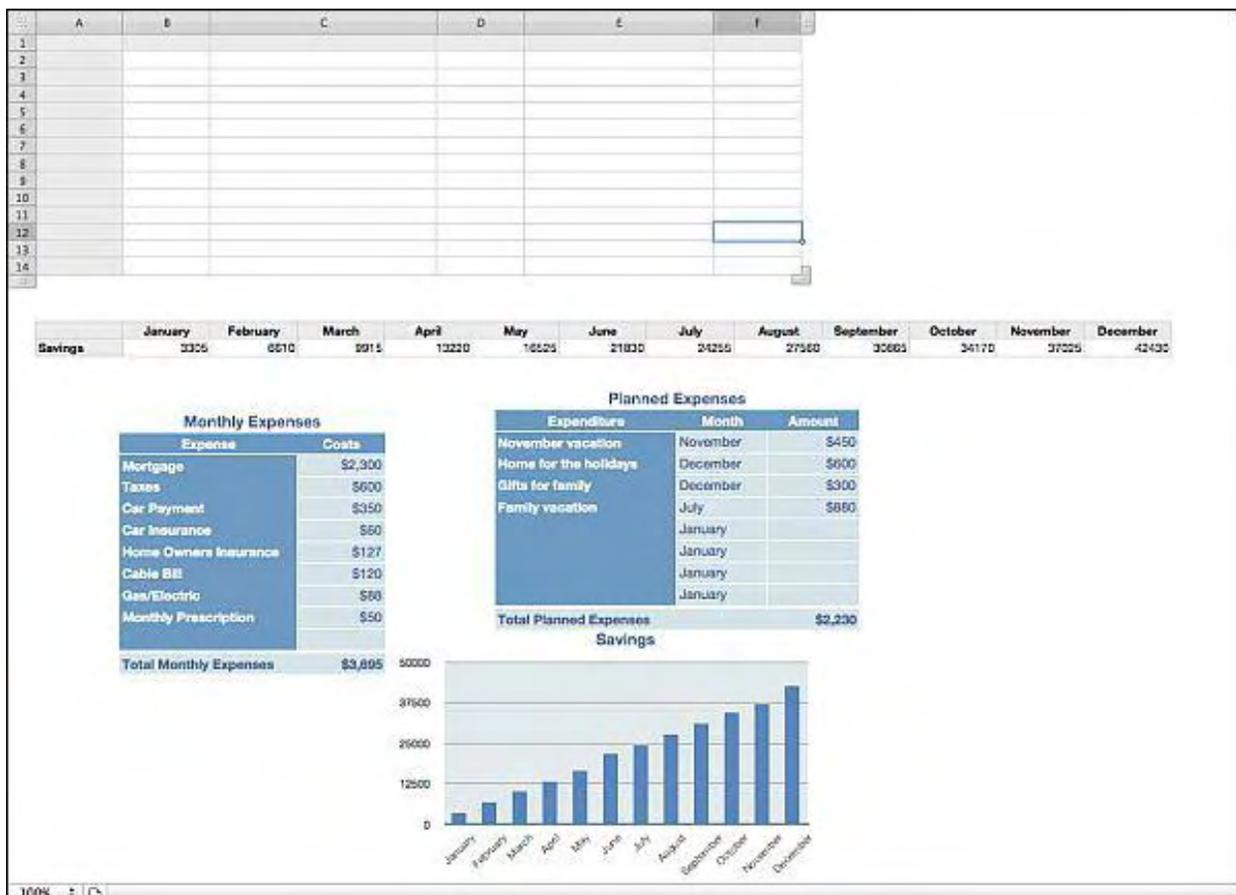


Figure 1. Numbers lets you create spreadsheets of different column widths and row sizes on a single page, which Excel cannot do.

Just as Microsoft Office offers some features you can't get in other programs, other programs offer some features that you can't get in Microsoft Office. Thus it's just as fair to say that sometimes you need Microsoft Office as it is to say that sometimes you need other programs because Microsoft Office won't let you do what you need.

The basis for claiming Microsoft Office is crucial for business work often boils down to being used to Microsoft Office and not wanting to learn anything new. Yet each new version of Microsoft Office requires you to learn something new anyway. Claiming that you don't want to learn a new program is far different than claiming Microsoft Office is the only tool that can get the job done. In most cases, other programs are just as capable as Microsoft Office, so you don't really need Microsoft Office.

The second shaky foundation that people use to cling to Microsoft Office is file compatibility. By sticking with Microsoft Office, people think they can avoid file compatibility problems. Yet every version of Microsoft Office suffers from file compatibility problems. Microsoft even includes a feature called the Compatibility Checker ([office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/compatibility-checker-HA010014109.aspx](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel-help/compatibility-checker-HA010014109.aspx)) to identify compatibility problems when sharing files with people using other versions of Microsoft Office. Unless you're sharing files with someone who uses the exact same version of Microsoft Office that you use, there will always be the possibility of file compatibility problems.

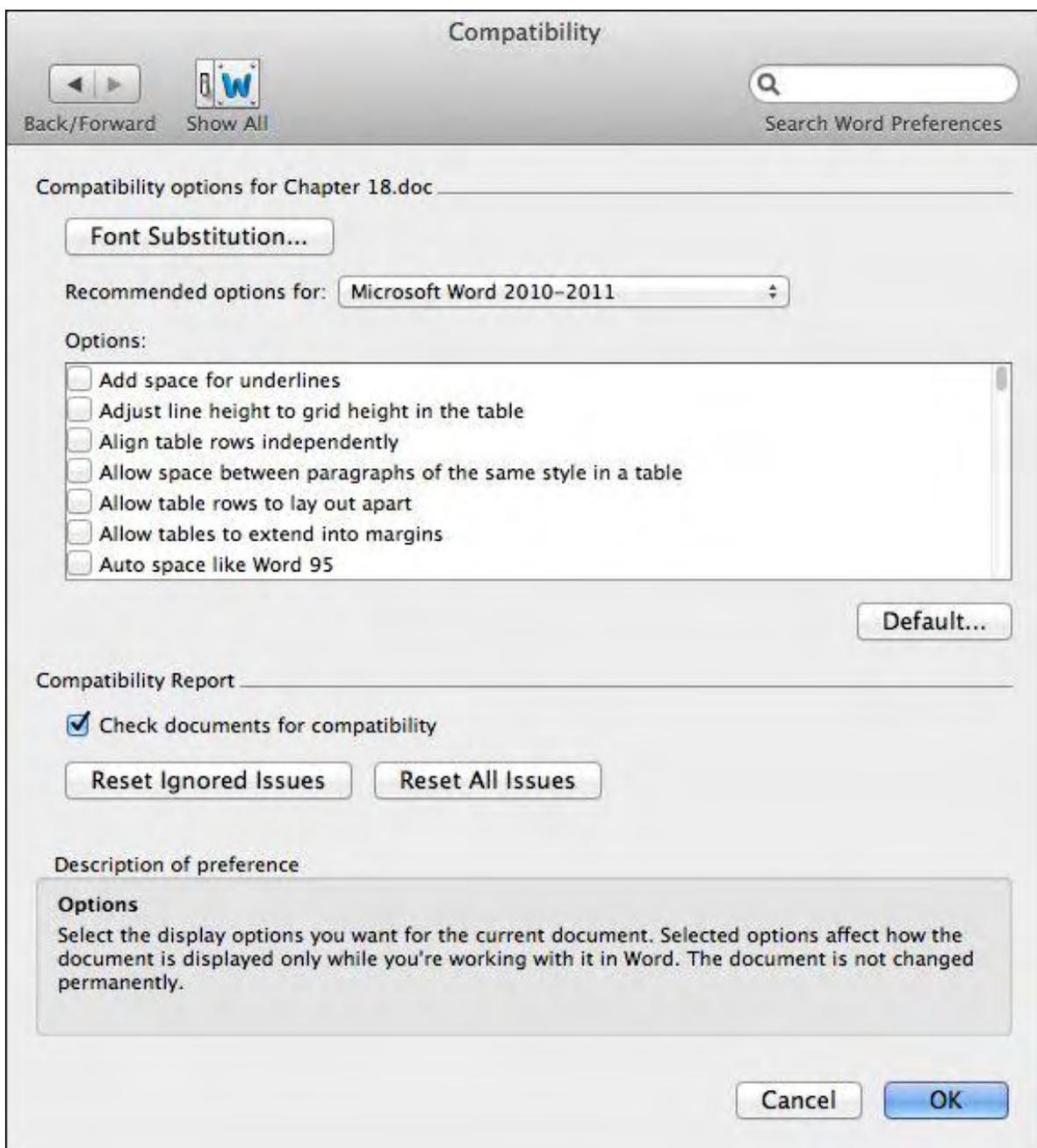


Figure 2. Microsoft Word for the Mac lets you check for compatibility problems when sharing documents with other versions of Word.

Since file compatibility will always be an issue when sharing files with different versions of Microsoft Office, you should really be looking at tools that help you get your work done and worry about file compatibility later. If you worry about file compatibility first, you'll risk using a tool that may not offer every feature you really need or using a tool that's harder to use than something else. What good is sharing perfectly compatible files if you can't do the work you need to do?

The most common argument against the iPad is that it doesn't have Microsoft Office. Yet Microsoft's Surface tablet with Windows RT comes with a free copy of Microsoft Office 2013, and that didn't boost sales of Windows RT devices. Even worse, a Windows RT device's biggest advantage is that it acts like an ordinary laptop running Microsoft Office without taking full advantage of the touchscreen features of the Surface tablet.

On the iPad, you can use Pages and manipulate items using the familiar and intuitive touchscreen interface. Then export your Pages documents as Word documents if you wish. You won't have all the features of Word in the iPad version of Pages, but how often will you actually need all those features of Word when writing on an iPad? In most cases, you'll need to write and edit text on the move, then you can worry about more complicated formatting later.

Pages and its iWork suite companions, Numbers and Keynote, can accomplish the majority of the work you might need to do in Microsoft Office. If you'd rather not export files in Word, Excel, or PowerPoint formats, you might be interested in a more compatible office suite for the iPad called Smart Office 2.

Smart Office 2 gives you a choice of which file format to use when creating a document, such as the older .doc of Word 2003 and earlier, or the more modern .docx format used in Word 2007 and up. Like Pages, Numbers, and Keynote on the iPad, Smart Office 2 offers a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation program. Instead of closely mimicking the user interface of Microsoft Office on a desktop computer, which the Surface tablets do, Smart Office 2 takes advantage of the touchscreen interface of the iPad just like iWork.

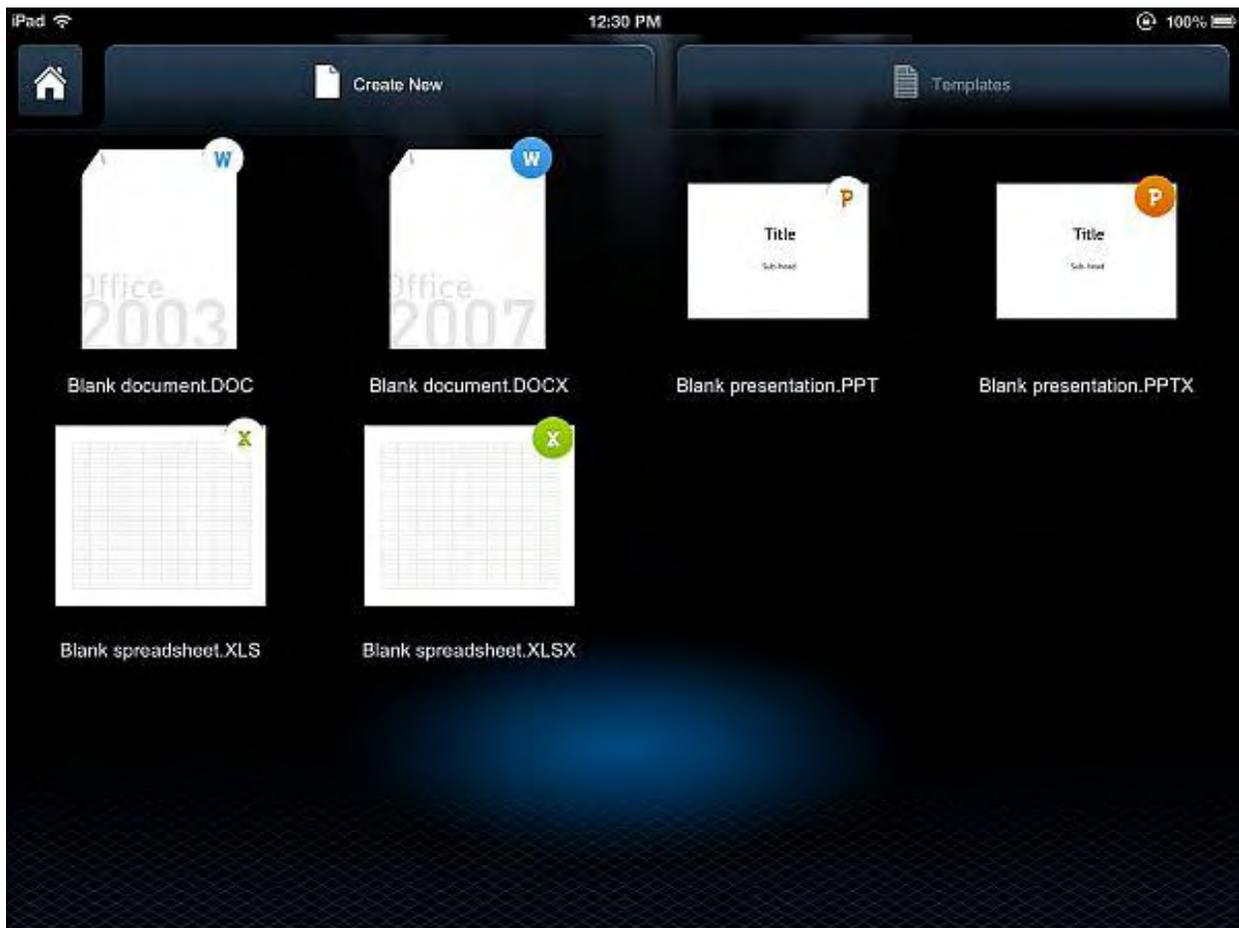


Figure 3. Smart Office 2 lets you choose a file format to use.

While Smart Office 2 won't offer every feature in Microsoft Office, it will give you the ability to create Office files and perform the bulk of your

work on an iPad. Given a choice between using Microsoft Office on a Surface tablet that gives you almost every feature possible, but without the convenient touchscreen interface, or using Smart Office 2 that gives you the most common features you'll need while letting you take full advantage of the touchscreen interface of the iPad, it's easy to see the advantages of the iPad and Smart Office 2.



Figure 4. Smart Office 2 includes templates to help you create files.

Smart Office 2 lets you do the bulk of your work on an iPad. Microsoft Office on a Surface tablet overwhelms you with features you probably won't use on the road that often. Then it forces you to use your Surface tablet on a flat surface like a laptop, which negates the advantage of using a tablet.

There's nothing sacred about the Microsoft Office user interface. Even Microsoft keeps changing the user interface with each version of Microsoft Office. The main reason people cling to the Microsoft Office user interface is because they don't want to learn something new, which is an entirely different argument than claiming that only Microsoft Office lets you do work for business.

Ultimately, the two biggest arguments for using Microsoft Office boil down to "I'm used to the way it works" and "I don't want to learn something new." While those two arguments are valid for not upgrading to a new version of Microsoft Office, they're not valid for claiming that only Microsoft Office can meet the needs of business users.

If you plan on relying on Microsoft Office, you now have to consider their subscription-based Microsoft Office 365. Microsoft has quietly raised the price of Microsoft Office 2011 for the Mac and restricted it to one computer. Previous versions of Microsoft Office 2011 for the Mac allowed you to install it on multiple Macintosh computers while paying a lower price. Paying a monthly fee to use Office 365 might seem like a bargain over the higher initial cost of buying Microsoft Office for your computer, but you'll pay more in the long run.

The thought of paying a monthly fee to use Microsoft Office 365 should help you decide if you really need Microsoft Office at all. There's nothing wrong with using Microsoft Office, but there's no reason to cling to it either at the expense of settling with hardware or software that doesn't make you more productive. The ultimate goal is to get work done easily and efficiently.

For some people, that means using Microsoft Office. For others, that means not using Microsoft Office. When people can drive a stake through this myth that only Microsoft Office can make you productive, we'll all be free to choose the right tool for the right job rather than force everyone to use one tool whether it helps them or not.

## The Difference Extra Memory Makes

If you find your computer tends to run slower than you'd like, try cleaning out the useless files that your operating system often creates and leaves scattered on your hard disk. To clean up your Macintosh, try the free Magican program ([www.magicansoft.com](http://www.magicansoft.com)).

However, sometimes just cleaning out your hard disk won't be enough. That's when you need to think about adding more memory. Most people won't be able to upgrade their memory because prying open a Macintosh requires special tools. So when you buy a Macintosh, get more memory installed than normal so you'll grow into the memory. Right now the bare minimum to run a modern Macintosh is 4GB of RAM, but you should get 8GB of RAM instead. The other alternative is to take your Macintosh into an authorized repair shop and have them add more memory when you find your Macintosh runs slowly the more programs you try to use at the same time.

Fortunately, a handful of older Macintosh models still allow you to open an access door and install memory chips. If you're one of the lucky few, you can save money by buying memory chips and plugging them into your Macintosh yourself. If your Macintosh doesn't allow easy access to the memory slots, or you don't feel confident upgrading the memory yourself, take it to an authorized repair shop.

Rather than buy a new computer, consider just boosting your old computer's memory. By buying third-party memory chips (which are cheaper than buying memory chips directly from Apple), you can save money. You may be surprised at how useful an older computer can suddenly become with a little more memory installed.

## More Uses for the iPad

When the iPad first appeared, vocal critics claimed that it was useless. Instead of seeing the possibilities that the iPad offered, critics focused on what the iPad couldn't do, which is like criticizing a car because it can't fit in your wallet or criticizing a book because it can't vacuum a carpet. By focusing on what something can't do, everything in the world is a complete failure and totally useless, especially all the critics who think this way.

While irrational critics fabricate logic that makes no sense whatsoever, the rest of us can see how other people are exercising their creativity by finding uses for the iPad that emphasizes what it can do, which is to make computing more mobile and more personal.

Next year, between 6,000 and 7,000 students in the Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 will get a fourth-generation iPad ([www.dailyherald.com/article/20130217/news/702179914/](http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20130217/news/702179914/)) to use. Officials say that the use of iPads by students "has resulted in better organization, instant feedback, savings in paper and class time and more engaged classrooms, according to teachers leading the program."

In the Fraser school district in Michigan, 5,000 students from kindergarten to high school will be using the iPad ([tabtimes.com/news/education/2013/02/18/deployment-5000-ipads-largest-ever-michigan](http://tabtimes.com/news/education/2013/02/18/deployment-5000-ipads-largest-ever-michigan)). "Teachers can now leverage technology at the point of instruction rather than only having access to computers during the assigned computer lab time," Dr. David Richards, Superintendent of Fraser Public Schools, said in a statement. "Our teachers can customize each child's educational plan to better meet the student's learning needs in each content area."

Besides educational uses, iPads can be used for real-world applications as well. After testing out a variety of devices, New Zealand police ([www.nbr.co.nz/article/vodafone-muscles-gen-police-business-159m-mobile-contract-win-ck-135786](http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/vodafone-muscles-gen-police-business-159m-mobile-contract-win-ck-135786)) concluded that "Based on frontline officer feedback from the trial (over 100 staff in four districts trialed smartphones, laptops and tablets over an 11-month period) the preferred devices are the iPhone as smartphone and iPad for the tablet. The approach used to develop the applications means Police can move to other devices with relative ease as technology changes."

After reporting an increase in revenue, LinkedIn's CEO, Jeff Weiner, decided to reward every LinkedIn employee with a free iPad mini ([techcrunch.com/2013/02/13/linkedin-ceo-jeff-weiner-pulls-an-oprah-gives-every-employee-an-ipad-mini/](http://techcrunch.com/2013/02/13/linkedin-ceo-jeff-weiner-pulls-an-oprah-gives-every-employee-an-ipad-mini/)). While there are plenty of other tablets Jeff could have given people such as an Android tabloid or even the Microsoft Surface tablet, he likely chose the iPad mini because it's a product that many people find desirable and useful.



Figure 5. LinkedIn's CEO, Jeff Weiner, stands next to boxes of iPad minis to give to LinkedIn's employees.

Hand an iPad to a child and watch their eyes light up. Hand that same child a Microsoft Surface tablet and watch for an entirely different reaction, especially if you show the child how to use Microsoft Office on the Surface tablet by switching out of the tile interface and going back to the familiar desktop interface. Children will obviously see the logic, usefulness, and excitement in that feature alone and start clamoring to get some serious work done using Microsoft Office on a Surface tablet.

From writing science reports and essays to creating charts and presentations, children instinctively know that only Microsoft Office can possibly meet their needs because everything else in the world is absolutely useless. Maybe those same children will start break dancing with the Surface tablet too, imitating the Microsoft Surface commercials ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=37F6lg1WLT4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37F6lg1WLT4)) they see on TV.

## A Unified Operating System

When Microsoft introduced Windows 8, they promised a no-compromise solution for people who want to use the same operating system on a smartphone, tablet, and computer. While Windows 8 struggles to gain acceptance, another operating system has tackled that same problem and might even prove more acceptable to the public.

Ubuntu Linux ([www.zdnet.com/canonical-reveals-ubuntu-tablet-plans-7000011508/](http://www.zdnet.com/canonical-reveals-ubuntu-tablet-plans-7000011508/)) was once the most popular Linux distribution until the company behind it, Canonical, changed the user interface and drove people towards alternatives like Linux Mint. However, Canonical is positioning Ubuntu Linux to run on smartphones, tablets, and computers, just like Windows 8. The big difference is

that Ubuntu Linux is open source and free, which can encourage more companies to support it on their various devices.

With Windows 8 and Ubuntu Linux working to be a unified operating system capable of running on all devices, the first question is which operating system will succeed first? The second, and more important question, is whether having one operating system run on multiple devices is even worth pursuing at all?

Suppose you create a Windows 8 or Ubuntu Linux program that runs on an ordinary PC. Technically, you might be capable of running that same program on a smartphone or tablet, but the screen size and user interface will be drastically different. Anyone really want to use Excel or PowerPoint on the smaller screen of a smartphone using the same Ribbon interface found in Microsoft Office running on a Windows 8 PC? How useful will an app, designed for smartphones and tablets, be running on a desktop PC?

Technically, it's possible to create a unified operating system that runs on multiple devices just as it's possible to create a universal engine that can power a tank, a golf cart, and an ocean liner. Microsoft and Canonical believe that one operating system can work in all devices. Other companies like Apple and Google are focusing on a separate operating system for smartphones and tablets, and a second operating system for PCs.

While the dream of getting one operating system to run everywhere sounds appealing, it also seems far more complicated. Microsoft Windows Mobile 6.5 once powered up to 20 percent of the smartphone market, but mimicked the user interface of Windows XP, even to the point of having a Start button in the lower left corner of the screen.

The Windows Mobile 6.5 user interface tried to bring the desktop interface to smartphones. Now Windows 8 is trying to bring the smartphone interface of Windows Phone 7 to the desktop. Both approaches seem misguided. Shouldn't the user interface be optimized for each device?

\* \* \*

The standard way to minimize a window is to click on the middle yellow button in the upper right corner of a window. This causes the window to swoosh and shrink to an icon next to the Trash icon on the Dock. However, you can also double-click on a window's title bar to minimize a window too.

To make sure this works on your Macintosh, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. When a System Preferences window appears, click the Dock icon and select the "Double-click a window's title bar to minimize" check box.

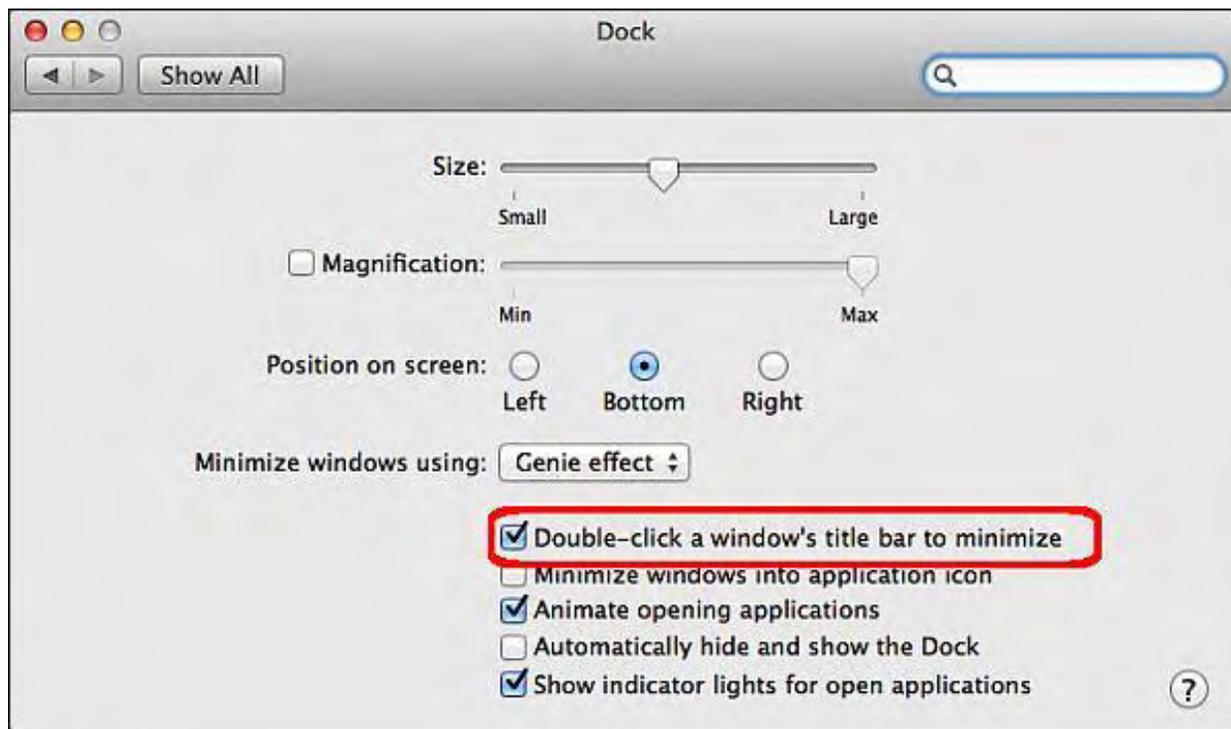


Figure 6. Turning on the option of double-clicking the title bar to minimize a window.

used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

***My New Mac, Lion Edition*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908))

***My New iPad 2*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X))

***Steal This Computer Book*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050))

***Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987))

***Beginning Programming for Dummies*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702))

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us)*** ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A))

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

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

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

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

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## Beyond Personal Computing

“The Sub-Culture of Steampunk” by Marilyn K. Martin

Gears and Goggles to the Rescue

According to Wikipedia and other sources, "Steampunk" is a sub-genre of historical science fiction that focuses on the steam-powered machinery of the 1800s' Industrial Revolution, especially in Victorian England and America's Old West. Just add a dash of cyberpunk, with its posturing air of rebellion and lots of quaint faux hand-guns (in holster or garter). It is retro-futurist fantasy, with copper-tubed exoskeletons, clock-parts, pith helmets, period corsets, and lots of brass gadgets with gauges and dials. Add plenty of ornate plastic weapons that look more like tools to lube your car—or shoot it into the Future. Leather, metal, glass and wood are favored, although plastics painted to look as such are quite acceptable.

Otherwise normal people everywhere have embraced these types of "anachronistic technologies" that pre-date electricity, or exist only in a parallel-universe ruled by Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, or individual combo-creativity. Steampunk aficionados come in all ages and nationalities, and they write books, design and wear costumes (young guys lean heavily toward a prosthetic metal-and-gear arm, for some reason), attend conventions and play games. They also love to converse in quaintly polite Victorian language on the, ahem, Aethernet.

### The Aethernet

No self-respecting Steampunk fan would be without access to the Aethernet, especially to visit photo-forum-announcement sites like The Steampunk Empire ([www.thesteampunkempire.com](http://www.thesteampunkempire.com)). They post photos, ask questions, tell polite period jokes or request help in design. They also sport avatar names like Sky Marshall, Sepiachord, Princess or Captain of the Lost World.

Photos of costumes and antique teapots are popular. And everyone speaks with a "most proper" British courtesy about everything from the Queen's Magistrates and brass airships, to having tea while listening to a Ragtime band on the gramophone. It's allowed to debate Einstein versus Tesla, but cast aspersions on Beatrix Potter or Sherlock Holmes at your own peril.

### Cosplay

The term is a contraction of costume play, or a type of performance-art where costumed folks come together to role-play in a specific subculture. What started out as random costumed attendees at science fiction conventions has now evolved into elaborate costumes as specific story characters and/or subcultures, like Steampunk. Cosplay is divided into Basic Cosplay, or portraying a costumed character to attend a convention. While Masquerade involves wearing an elaborately detailed costume while acting and speaking "in character."

For Steampunk Cosplay there are costume and accessory sites like the Steampunk Emporium ([www.steampunkemporium.com/steam.php](http://www.steampunkemporium.com/steam.php)) and Bib to Crib ([shop.bibtocrib.com/steampunk?ggkey=steampunk](http://shop.bibtocrib.com/steampunk?ggkey=steampunk)). They offer complete lines of Men's and Ladies' clothing and accessories ([www.steampunkemporium.com/steam.php?\\_\\_utma=1.177023408.1358363648.1358363648.1358363648.1&\\_\\_utmb=1.5.10.1358363648&\\_\\_utmc=1&\\_\\_utmz=1.1358363648.1.1.utmcsr=%28direct%29|utmccn=%28direct%29|utmcmd=%28none%29&\\_\\_utmv=-&\\_\\_utmk=70802704](http://www.steampunkemporium.com/steam.php?__utma=1.177023408.1358363648.1358363648.1358363648.1&__utmb=1.5.10.1358363648&__utmc=1&__utmz=1.1358363648.1.1.utmcsr=%28direct%29|utmccn=%28direct%29|utmcmd=%28none%29&__utmv=-&__utmk=70802704)), with product reviews and customer comments. While their Weapons section features imaginative faux-firearms ([www.steampunkemporium.com/store/steampunk\\_weapons.php?\\_\\_utma=1.177023408.1358363648.1358363648.1358363648.1&\\_\\_utmb=1.6.10.1358363648&\\_\\_utmc=1&\\_\\_utmz=1.1358363648.1.1.utmcsr=%28direct%29|utmccn=%28direct%29|utmcmd=%28none%29&\\_\\_utmv=-](http://www.steampunkemporium.com/store/steampunk_weapons.php?__utma=1.177023408.1358363648.1358363648.1358363648.1&__utmb=1.6.10.1358363648&__utmc=1&__utmz=1.1358363648.1.1.utmcsr=%28direct%29|utmccn=%28direct%29|utmcmd=%28none%29&__utmv=-)

&\_\_utmik=69407888) with names like The Consolidator, The C.O.D., and The Chambered Pocket Cannon. Prices range from \$30 to \$130.

## Most Proper Attempts at Humor

Q: How many craftsmen does it take to make a vaporizing derringer?

A: Two. One to make it, and the other to huff, "I dare say, Ole' Boy, I could have done that in half the time!"

Jack the Ripper and a prostitute were walking down a dark, dank and foggy alley in Whitechapel. The prostitute turned to Jack and said, "Blimey, this alley is a'fully scary." Jack sighed and replied, "Yes indeed. And I have to go back alone."

Q: Why did the Steampunker cross the Aether?

A: To get to the aether side.

One most proper Sunday in church, the parishioners lined the pews while awaiting the clergyman. Suddenly, a blast of fire and smoke shot up from the front, and the Devil himself stood glaring at the good folk. The ladies shrieked, the children screamed, and the horrified men ushered their loved ones out as quickly as possible. Only one elderly man remained calmly seated in a pew. The Devil snarled and strode toward him. "Do you know who I am?!" he thundered. "Yes, indeed," sighed the older man in his tweed suit and vest. "Then why don't you fear me, as the others do?" demanded the Devil. "Because," the old chap answered, "I'm married to your sister."

Q: How many Steampunkers does it take to screw in a light-bulb?

A: 33. 1 to discover electricity, 14 to invent the light-bulb, 6 to glue unnecessary clock parts to it, and 12 lawyers since Edison will try to take credit for it.

A seaship pirate and an airship pirate met in a bar, and were comparing the injuries associated with being a privateer. "What happened to your hand that you ended up with a hook?" asked the sea pirate. "A sky-battle swept me overboard, and one of the enemy's vaporizers sliced off me hand," answered the airship pirate. The sea pirate solemnly nodded then asked, "And how did you lose your eye?" The airship pirate sighed, "A seagull dropping fell into me eye." The sea pirate roared with disbelief. "You lost your eye to a seagull dropping?!?" The sky pirate twitched. "Well, it was me first day with me hook."

## Steampunk Events

It's truly amazing the wide variety of events for Steampunk enthusiasts. In May 2013, a strange place called Piscataway, New Jersey, will host a Steampunk World's Fair ([steampunkworldsfair.com](http://steampunkworldsfair.com)). It is advertised as "The World's Largest Steampunk Event" and "Amazingly Friendly and Welcoming To All."

The Victorian Steampunk Society in the UK, The Asylum, already has Most Splendid Steampunk Festivals ([steampunk.synthasite.com](http://steampunk.synthasite.com)) planned for March 2013 and September 2013.

October 2013 also features Steamcon V - Around the World ([www.steamcon.org/steamcon\\_v/index.php](http://www.steamcon.org/steamcon_v/index.php)) in Seattle, Washington. Pith helmets or other head coverings are recommended, due to inclement Pacific Northwest Spring weather, and hot air balloon or dirigible touchdowns might be allowed. If you are looking for something a little edgier, you can check out the Goblin Market ([theanachronismnyc.com](http://theanachronismnyc.com)) in October 2013, put on in New York City by The Anachronism. It's a musical event, with "Victorian Rapper SteampunkFunkBizarre as Master of Ceremonies." (Hey, this is NYC. You were expecting retro-normal?)

Smaller Steampunk events are also upcoming. From author signings to "maker faires," (Always wanted to learn how to make goggles?), they are all listed at Steampunk Events ([www.steampunk.com/events](http://www.steampunk.com/events)). There is even a North Carolina radio show called The Clockwork Cabaret ([www.myspace.com/theclockworkcabaret](http://www.myspace.com/theclockworkcabaret)), which allows devotees to "Download your encephalopodcasts here!"

## The Old West That Never Was

One popular American version of Victorian-era Steampunk is Old West Steampunk. This sub-genre was made famous by the *Wild, Wild West* TV show in the last century, and somewhat by the more recent movie *Cowboys & Aliens*. You can view some terrific Old West Steampunk costumes and accessories on Pinterest ([pinterest.com/steamcircus/western-style-steampunk](http://pinterest.com/steamcircus/western-style-steampunk)).

If you reckon you'd like to attend such an Old West Steampunk event, check out the Wild Wild West Steampunk Convention ([www.wildwildwestcon.com/d](http://www.wildwildwestcon.com/d)) in Old Tucson, Arizona, in March 2013. If you live near Cincinnati, Ohio, there are themed Old West Festivals on weekends from September 7 through October 6, 2013. And September 15-16, 2013 is their Western Steampunk ([oldwestfestival.com/](http://oldwestfestival.com/))

[index.php/themes](#)) weekend event. And if you live near Colville, Washington, you can join "Frontiers" LARP (live-action, role-playing) series of weekend-long events ([www.biomechine.net/frontiers/](http://www.biomechine.net/frontiers/)), held every couple months at a private campground with heated cabins.

## Steampunk Books and Products

Popular Steampunk fiction ([www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/steampunk](http://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/steampunk)) ranges from the *Leviathan* and *Parasol Protectorate* series, to *Boneshaker* and *Clockwork Angel*.

For Steampunk products as beautiful as they are retro-cool, check out Dude I Want That ([www.dudeiwanthat.com/search.asp](http://www.dudeiwanthat.com/search.asp)) and enter "Steampunk" in the Search window. Or check out Kinect ([www.kinectdesign.com/](http://www.kinectdesign.com/)) for gears-to-flowers t-shirts and jewelry.

For the do-it-yourself Steampunk aficionados, not much can top this computer retro-tower ([www.funny-games.biz/pictures/1333-interesting-pc-case.html](http://www.funny-games.biz/pictures/1333-interesting-pc-case.html)) that appears quite functional. Or, forget the tower and go for a steampunk pyramid ([www.funny-games.biz/pictures/177-computer-pyramid.html](http://www.funny-games.biz/pictures/177-computer-pyramid.html)), which I suppose functions as an oversize paperweight.

## Steampunk Artwork

This kind of artwork is, of necessity, intricate and riveting (yes, pun intended). Not many artists can pull it off with any sense of anachronistic believability. But an artist named Kevin Mowrer has done just that. His Steampunk Frahnknshtyne ([api.ning.com/files/JTFPu4gwoMaMMmX4dJUEC5CvMWIR4g6iBRDLJyG28Jgc7Mbap\\*GpOMYPb3K0xEj-oPWfvqBCKYjQ1FXLE2\\*JEObZOZiH9EPX/rsz\\_steampunk\\_skull\\_cover.jpg](http://api.ning.com/files/JTFPu4gwoMaMMmX4dJUEC5CvMWIR4g6iBRDLJyG28Jgc7Mbap*GpOMYPb3K0xEj-oPWfvqBCKYjQ1FXLE2*JEObZOZiH9EPX/rsz_steampunk_skull_cover.jpg)) is beautifully chilling, with its Steampunk skull and eye-pupil gears behind a monocle.

Mowrer's Steampunk renderings of the warrior helmets from *Star Wars* are as eerily intricate as his leather-and-goggles version of a Steampunk Darth Vader ([mowrerart.blogspot.com/](http://mowrerart.blogspot.com/)). And no self-respecting Steampunk Assassin would dare step Out-of-Time without a beautifully designed armament like this ([api.ning.com/files/wHBK9E86skK6R8buW3LU-ktUCg1QPsQhu1d\\*7n9vo3nK07cBtg9Uf3TV4wYsKzeTngyDn-B7tLVEccCH1qdZmR8by97lxqDQ/Screenshot20121105at7.34.21PM.png](http://api.ning.com/files/wHBK9E86skK6R8buW3LU-ktUCg1QPsQhu1d*7n9vo3nK07cBtg9Uf3TV4wYsKzeTngyDn-B7tLVEccCH1qdZmR8by97lxqDQ/Screenshot20121105at7.34.21PM.png)).

Bjorn Hurri is another accomplished Steampunk artist. Check out his intricate painting of a *Star Wars* Steampunk Stormtrooper toy ([api.ning.com/files/FZ-xP1EYfFa9GMe7U3rzS4eyiLcJrQXZCZY2QJq5IR-7uzMLfFuD1d634aVeTfHP-Vjw3DT9vpikTFyLLmc6li4nys288K0a/rsz\\_steampunk\\_star\\_wars\\_by\\_bjorn\\_hurri\\_05.jpg](http://api.ning.com/files/FZ-xP1EYfFa9GMe7U3rzS4eyiLcJrQXZCZY2QJq5IR-7uzMLfFuD1d634aVeTfHP-Vjw3DT9vpikTFyLLmc6li4nys288K0a/rsz_steampunk_star_wars_by_bjorn_hurri_05.jpg)).

Joy Reactor ([joyreactor.com/tag/steampunk](http://joyreactor.com/tag/steampunk)) features some more of Bjorn Hurri's innovative *Star Wars* Steampunk toy characters, as well as a mechanized lobster to a gear-laden—and armed—crab. Scroll down for beautiful Steampunk pens, a leather-clad Batman, Victorian-computer, and even a tiny gears-and-jewels fairy.

## Why is Steampunk So Popular?

As with people who like to dress up and stagger around as Vampires or Zombies, confused outside observers struggle to understand why these engrossing, alternative-cultures seem so entertaining. And the best explanations of Steampunk's appeal, not surprisingly, come from the articulate participants and admirers of Steampunk itself.

One Steampunk blogger, Austin Sirkin ([austinsirkin.tumblr.com/post/20317870381/what-is-steampunk-its-come-to-my-attention](http://austinsirkin.tumblr.com/post/20317870381/what-is-steampunk-its-come-to-my-attention)), says Steampunk seems loosely concerned with the "aesthetics and affectations of the past"—although it really isn't about the past at all. That we really have no concept what actual life in the Victorian Era or Old West was all about. So today's Steampunk is really a counter-culture based on the movies of the 50s and 60s (like the original *Time Machine*), that are just modern interpretations of Victorian science fiction and fantasy.

Mr. Sirkin thinks the appeal of Steampunk is because it resonates within our jaded souls, which are tired of the sleek and minimalist aesthetics of the modern age. That people really dislike today's "casual emptiness," and secretly crave more formal and interesting rules of social interaction. Trapped in such a rude and immodest world, Steampunk aficionados have created a counter-culture based on their secret love of the more ornate, exotic, romantic and interesting Victorian Era that-never-was.

An editor of the now-defunct *Weird Tales* ([weirdtales.net/wordpress/2008/09/17/five-thoughts-on-the-popularity-of-steampunk/](http://weirdtales.net/wordpress/2008/09/17/five-thoughts-on-the-popularity-of-steampunk/)), Stephen H. Segal, wrote in 2008 that Steampunk is really about letting both men and women be unabashedly romantic. With deep bows and formal curtsies, lace and leather, everyone can enjoy being flirty with politely stilted dialogue filled with double entendres. This makes for vastly

more interesting and appealing interactions between the sexes, than boring tech-talk or the minimalist dialogue around a hook-up.

He also thinks Steampunk is a rebellion against the sleek happy-tech of touchscreens and sterile display information. That people really crave a messier, more involving world with tactile-touchables like glass and brass, and personal communications dictated by formal politeness and ingrained respect. He also thinks Steampunk is more "acceptable" to parents than the morose and self-absorbed Goth or Emo sub-culture. And that Steampunk also offers a huge enough alternative-universe to allow people to be whoever their fantasies dictate—from a Steampunk superhero to an H.G. Wells mad scientist.

So Futurists and their technologies should never lose sight of our individualistic humanity, and manifest destiny to enjoy our somewhat untidy lives. And that everything goes better with corsets, gears, a touch of mystery and danger, and flirty double-entendres.

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Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. She has had short stories appear in the following 2011-2012 publications: *Deadman's Tome* ([www.demonictome.com/](http://www.demonictome.com/)) online magazine; *Strange Valentines* anthology; *Cosmic Crime* anthology; *PerihelionSF* online magazine; and *The Fifth Dimension* online magazine. She has also sold a short story to appear in the March 2013 anthology, *Universe Horribilis*. She is also writing a Young Adult SF series, *Chronicles of Mathias* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1598249002/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1598249002&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1598249002/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=1598249002&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)), and contributes weekly articles or humor columns to *ComputerEdge*. ComputerEdge E-Books has converted many of Marilyn's computer humor columns into four e-books. Now available in a four-book Kindle bundle from Amazon.com *The Best Computer and Internet Humor, Anecdotes, and Jokes Found on the Web* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)). Marilyn's collection of the funniest stories about our computing machines and how we use them at home, the office, and in cyber space. Save 25% off the individual book price!

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

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

"Surface RT without "Real" Windows," "Classical Music Collection," "Ernie's Start Page Woes," "How secure is the Cloud?"

### Surface RT without "Real" Windows

[Regarding Jack Dunning's February 8 article, "Is the Surface with Windows 8 Pro Tablet Right for You?":]

I agree with you on the draw backs to the Surface Pro and RT '(computers?)'. I think you hit the nail on the head when you said that you have been running Win 8 on your desktop computer for a long time now. I too have been running Win 8 on as many types of computers as I own, (desktop, laptop, touchscreen & pentop), since it first became available for download. I have not had much use for the "Modern" interface. While it can appear to be a new type of interface, it has 'surfaced' before and been rejected because anyone who uses a computer to make their living with will use all of the inputs available, keyboard, mouse, touch, pen and voice. And will reject any interface which is not useful.

I can't seem to find any use for a clock that tells time in many different time zones and the weather in Chicago and Detroit, etc. unless I'm going there on the next plane. I agree with you and Dave in that you do not need the MS Office Suite (bloat ware), but those who need to use it in the corporate milieu need more than a cute interface to be the office pro.

If I am going to use a computer to make my living I want its OS to be as diverse as possible so I can be as flexible as I need to be for the different problems you have to handle in the business world. I can install Win 8 on any type of computer that I need to perform the tasks of my job. So why should I buy a Surface Pro unless it will handle all of my business, personal and social needs?

PS: I downloaded a couple of copies of Win 8 Pro for \$40.00 each so that I have it available when the right PC becomes available in my price range, maybe an ultralight laptop with a docking station for my home/office use.

-Buck-o, El Cajon, CA

### Classical Music Collection

[Regarding the February 8 Digital Dave column:]

Dear Dave: Do I detect a little tongue in cheek here? I know you're not a **Mac** person. Would I be correct in guessing that you don't have any **Mac** tunes on your computer?

-Buck-o, El Cajon, CA

*I may not be what you call a Mac person, but I do own a Mac as well as an iPad. So I do use iTunes for a few reasons, although I don't regularly listen to music while I'm working.*

-*Digital Dave*

### Ernie's Start Page Woes

[Regarding the February 1 Digital Dave column:]

Hi Ernie and Digital Dave-

Try these start page sites. They are all customizable to suit your needs. Some offer better customization than others. They're all free, so no tears shed if they don't work for you.

Alltop ([alltop.com](http://alltop.com))

Protopage ([www.protopage.com/](http://www.protopage.com/))

All My Faves ([www.allmyfaves.com/](http://www.allmyfaves.com/))

igHome.com ([www.ighome.com/](http://www.ighome.com/))

Cheers,

-Andrew Kliss, San Marcos, CA.

I have used iGoogle. It allows you to select and add widgets that meet your needs to give you an easy "dashboard" as your homepage.

-David, Broomfield, CO

How secure is the Cloud?

[Regarding the February 1 Digital Dave column:]

Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) of 1986 ([epic.org/privacy/ecpa/](http://epic.org/privacy/ecpa/))

The adoption of Cloud computing offers many benefits (such as convenience and ease of access). E-mail, documents, pictures, personal calendars, and location data stored on a home computer are fully protected by the 4th Amendment's warrant requirement. These same data stored in the cloud are considered abandoned after 180 days, even if you accessed it just yesterday, and offered little or no protection under current law.

-Chuck, Broomfield, CO

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