ComputorEdge™ Online — 03/01/13

This issue:
More Little Known High Tech Stories

More little known high tech stories, plus Digital Dave and an iPad tip, Jack gives another Windows tip, Wally and Apples, and World News and Product Reviews!

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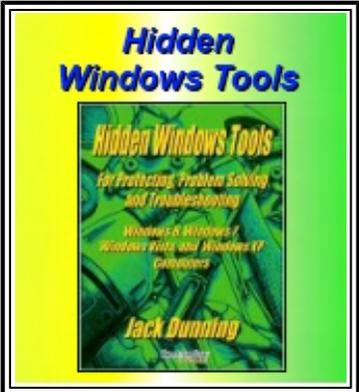
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Digital Dave

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

DOCX Attachments; Multiple Chrome.exe's Running; An iPad Tip for Typing E-mail Addresses.

Dear Digital Dave,

Every now and again I receive a message with a "docx" document attached. I was able to open one a long time ago, but I have forgotten which program I used. What program delivers a document in the "docx" format and how do I open it? Your assistance is invaluable, always.

CAS
El Cajon, CA

Dear CAS,

A file with the DOCX file extension is a Word Microsoft Office Open XML Format Document file. It is in common use now, so you can expect to receive them on occasion. It is more recent than the common DOC format so if you have an older version of Word, you may not be able to open the file. If this is the case, you should get the Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack (*www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=3*) for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint File Formats.

There are a number of other programs which read the DOCX format. A couple of the best are the free LibreOffice (*www.libreoffice.org*) and OpenOffice (*www.openoffice.org/*) productivity suite packages. (In you would like more information on what's included in either suite, see Rob Spahitz's e-book, *Getting Started with OpenOffice (LibreOffice): The Free Replacement for Microsoft Office (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008KMAN16/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B008KMAN16&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*).*)

You will find that many productivity type programs now support DOCX.

A word of caution: I'm assuming that you know the people who sent you these files. A good way to find out what to do with an attachment is to ask the person who sent it to you. If you don't know what it is and don't know who sent it to you, don't open it. Many types of attachments can be virus vectors.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have noticed lately that my computer is running slow, as if another program is running behind or with the program I am using (usually e-mail). I quickly boot Task Manager and see nothing but my Chrome Internet browser running. However, when I check Processes, I see four Chrome.exe's and they are all showing minor, but active interaction with the CPU. Is this normal? Why would there be multiple executable files going at the same time for the same program?

Thanks much for you help over the years. You are the Obi-wan.

Joe Piluso
San Diego, CA

Dear Joe,

Yes, the multiple processes are normal with the Google Chrome Web browser. Every time you open a new tab, Chrome starts a new, separate process which actually runs independently of the other open tabs. This is done for exactly that independence.

With other browsers, when one tab window crashes, often they all crash because they are running under the same process. This is not the case with Chrome. One tab window can freeze without affecting all the others. Close that tab and you can continue on with the other tabs. Overall this makes Chrome a more robust Web browser.

This is not to say that there's no downside. Since Chrome starts a new process for each tab, it uses more memory as you add more tabs. Plus, each new tab opening will take a little longer than adding a new tab in most other browsers. If you have too many tabs open in Chrome it can certainly affect system performance.

I like Google Chrome (my default browser), but it helps to know how it's different from other browsers. I'm certainly guilty of leaving too many tab windows open.

Digital Dave

Digital Dave's Tip

I discovered that this week Jack is doing a beginner's AutoHotkey tip for inputting long e-mail addresses in Windows. That's all well and good if you happen to be using a Windows computer. But what if you're one of the millions of people who now own an iPad or iPad Mini? As it turns out, iOS has a similar capability built into it.

The problem with many e-mail addresses is that they are often long and tedious to type. It is even worse on a tablet computer since using the virtual keyboard is a little more awkward. It's much easier to type a couple of characters and have the address pop up. To set up a hotkey for an e-mail address (or anything else) on an iPad enter Settings and select General => Keyboard (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The hotkey feature is located in Settings under General => Keyboard.

On the iPad, hotkeys are called Shortcuts. This is where all the current hotkeys are found (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The iPad maintains a list of all your hotkeys in the Shortcuts section of Keyboard settings.

Tap "Add New Shortcut..." to add a new hotkey. I use the @ sign as the last character (same as Jack does in his examples) because it is common to all e-mail addresses and is easy to remember (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Enter the phase and shortcut into the fields and tap Save.

Once the hotkey is saved as a Shortcut, whenever you enter the shortcut characters into a text editing field, the full address will appear as shown in Figure 4. Hit the Enter key or tap the field and the address will appear in the field. It may seem a little counter intuitive, but if you tap the phrase window itself, it closes without effect, as suggested by little red "x" in the corner. At first, I thought it was like a selection list, so I kept dismissing it with a tap when I wanted to use it.
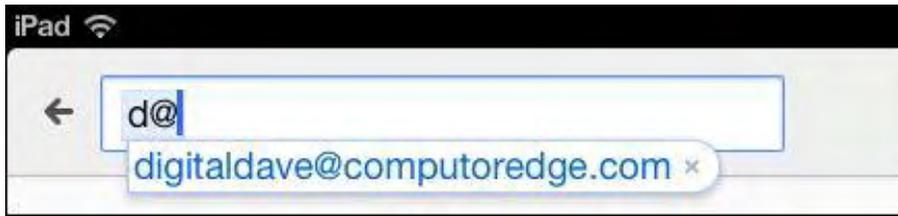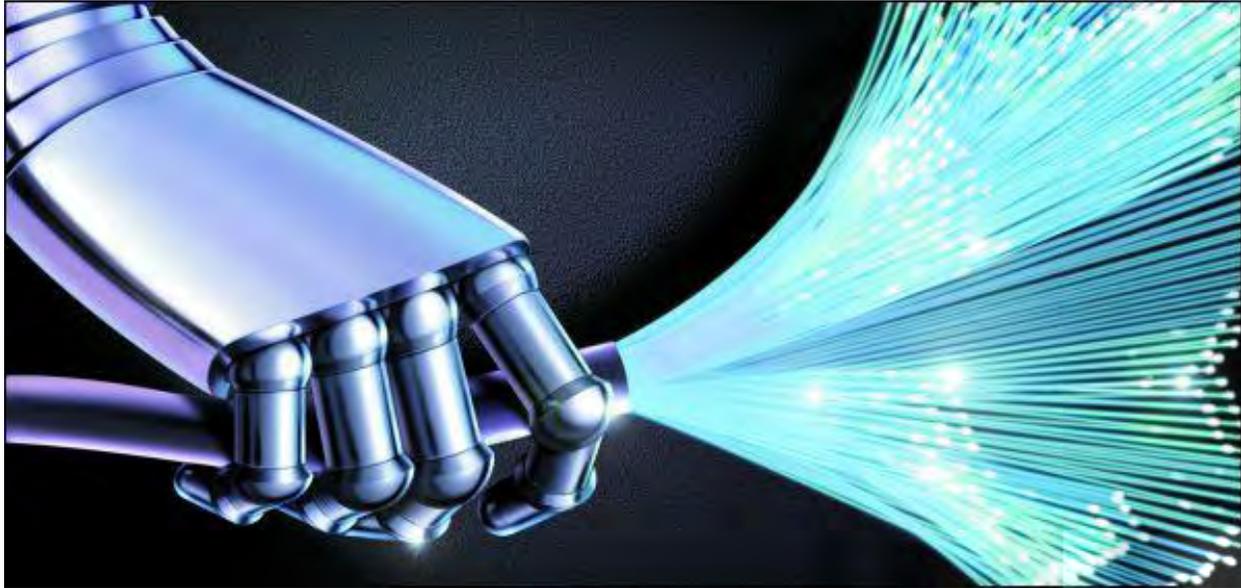
Figure 4. Tap the entry field (not the suggestion box) to enter the e-mail address.

I certainly wouldn't overdo it by adding too many hotkeys for e-mail addresses. Save this technique for those addresses which are the longest and you use the most. That way they will be easier to remember.

Little Known High Tech Stories

"iPhone Surges, Cloud for Office and Xbox, Student Entrepreneurs and Houses with No Utility Bills" by Marilyn K. Martin

> What to Look Forward to in 2013; Apple's iPad and iPhone; Blackberry in Trouble?; Microsoft's New Office 365 and Cloud Subscriptions; Gaming Console Updates—Forbidding Used Games to Redbox Instant; Helping Students Scrub Their Online Profiles; Is App Usage Cooling?; Teaching Students about High Tech Entrepreneurship; Dell Going Private; Music Technology; Radio and Music Video Tech; New Ideas for Municipal Waste; Aero-drama: Boeing's Dreamliner and Lithium-ion Batteries.

What to Look Forward to in 2013

We finally have a respite from political campaigning and the Olympics this year. High tech firms are already announcing new products (probably previewed at the Consumer Electronics Show last month), and are paying close attention to that bellwether of "consumer-driven demand." This already seems to be less about the newest high tech gadgetry, and more about the desire for streamlined products with fewer remotes and better resolution, as well as more choices of color and shape (like bendable).

Per a January 1, 2013 article (*www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-new-year-tech-20121231,0,3839092. story*) from the *Los Angeles Times*, users are looking forward to multi-colored iPhones, skinnier iPads, and the iPad mini with high-resolution retina displays. The writers are also looking forward to anti-texting apps/devices so people won't crash their cars while texting, and even a Bluetooth smartwatch. Waterproofed gadgets (as demonstrated at the 2012 CES), and a simplified TV and remote that even house guests can work, are also highly anticipated 2013 tech advances.

Also in January 2013, a *Seattle Times* tech reviewer reported that the iPhone can now be loaded with so many iOS apps that many home entertainment remotes could soon be retired (*www.seattletimes.com/html/ businesstechnology/2020148809_ptechpracticalmacxml.html*). This reviewer is now upgrading some of his entertainment hardware, and products with included remote apps are the ones he intends to buy. He's also upgrading his home-alarm system to broadband, to use an app to monitor it and turn it Off/On from anywhere. He is also hopeful Bluetooth 4.0 will soon be built into future electronic device upgrades.

But while our Digital Age may be getting information to us faster and through ever expanding formats and hardware, a January 2013 article in the *New York Times* charges that "errors are mounting (*www.nytimes. com/2013/01/11/business/in-new-year-errors-mount-at-high-speed-exchanges.html*) at high-speed stock exchanges." The article says that stock exchange operators are making nerve-rattling programming errors, like nearly a half-million trades executed at the wrong price over the last four years by BATS Global Markets (*batsglobalmarkets.com/*). Trading software has been glitchy with multiple (temporary) breakdowns since

Christmas 2012, which experts blame on the "technological arms race" with 13 upstart public stock exchanges fiercely challenging the incumbent systems, like the New York Stock Exchange.

Apple's iPad and iPhone

At the end of January 2013, Apple announced its fourth-generation iPad (*news.cnet.com/8301-13579_3-57566376-37/apple-ipad-jumps-to-128gb-starting-at-$799/*) with 128GB and a starting price of $799. A "cellular-enabled" iPad will cost $929. Available since early February, critics are already complaining that the new iPad is just a minor upgrade, on top of a slight-overhaul to the device late in 2012. But with Apple now pushing to get more iPads into businesses, Apple hopes the double storage capacity of this latest iPad will appeal mostly to the corporate world.

And as announced in February 2013, Apple did land a $159 Million contract (*news.cnet.com/8301-13579_3-57569529-37/apple-lands-$159m-government-contract-for-iphone-ipad/*) with the government of New Zealand for iPhones and iPads. While everyone from Home Depot to the US Department of Defense has dropped their BlackBerry contracts for Apple's iPhone.

Blackberry in Trouble?

"I don't know why everyone is saying that Apples are killing Blackberries. I love blackberries as much as ever!"

As more businesses and government agencies switch to Apple iPhones, per above, sales predictions for BlackBerry are dire. As reported by *Yahoo News* in February 2013, BlackBerry's new Z10 smartphones have already been released in the UK and Canada with a limited initial supply, and softer than expected demand (*news.yahoo.com/blackberry-z10-sales-estimate-slashed-83-due-slow-153040065.html*). So Wall Street analysts have slashed their sales estimates by 83% for the new BB10, which will launch in the US in March 2013.

High Tech Wizardry Transforming Cities and Neighborhoods

At the end of December 2012 the *Seattle Times* reported on plans to introduce new technology (*seattletimes.com/html/opinion/2019956825_peircecolumnsmartscreensxml.html*) to make urban spaces safer and more user-friendly in 2013. Touchscreen info kiosks—offering weather reports, event news, maps and public transportation arrival times—have already been installed in New York's Union Square. They'll soon spread to London, Los Angeles, Boston and other cities, installed by City24/7 (*www.smartcity24x7.com/NYC.html*) which has partnered with Cisco (*www.cisco.com/*). The kiosks also provide two-way communications with city emergency services, and broadcast a Wi-Fi signal for nearby smartphones and mobile computers.

In January 2013, the *Miami Herald* reported that Coral Gables has installed new mobile phone parking meters (*www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/28/3204913/gables-embraces-coinless-parking.html*). PayByPhone (*www.paybyphone.com/mobile-apps/*) is a downloadable app for smartphones, instead of rummaging for coins. Motorists like the ease of this no-cash payment method for parking, as well being able to extend their meter time via call, text or web. And for people who don't want to download the app, they can scan the Quick Response code posted on the meters, to launch the Web site from their smartphones. The city has already noticed that these new parking meters have been collecting over double what they had collected before PayByPhone.

In February 2013, the *Chicago Tribune* reported on how house building has entered a new era, recognizing how consumers uniformly and seriously want to get away from utility bills (*www.chicagotribune.com/classified/realestate/sc-cons-0214-umberger-energy-20130215,0,333328.column*). Houze Advanced Building Science (*thezeroenergyhome.com/*) will soon start construction on homes in Houston, Texas, and will guarantee buyers that their new homes will have no electric or gas bills for the first decade.

The new houses will be so efficient that they will have energy to spare. The new building strategy will encompass

both tight walls and ceilings, and its proprietary technology for a Power Cell (the size of an air-conditioning unit) that will produce on-site electricity and thermal heat from natural gas. The homeowner can store the extra energy in backup batteries or feed it back to the community.

Microsoft's New Office 365 and Cloud Subscriptions

In February 2013, the *Seattle Times*' Brier Dudley reported that Microsoft's near-essential home business software, Office 365, is rolling out a new subscription model (*seattletimes.com/html/ technologybrierdudleysblog/2020285859_microsofts_new_office_plan_buy.html*). Home users can now rent the software for $100 per year, instead of buying a new version on disc every few years. Early reviewers love the new Office 365, which combines Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and a desktop-publishing program, among others, and can be installed on up to five home PCs. But some reviewers noted that the price might be too steep if you don't use all or most of the various programs.

Gaming Console Updates—Forbidding Used Games to Redbox Instant

The Seattle Times' Brier Dudley also reported in February 2013 that Microsoft's new "digital distribution" subscription model for Office 365 may soon be coming to its game console Xbox as well (*seattletimes.com/html/ businesstechnology/2020326083_briercolumn11xml.html*). Early reports say that both Microsoft (Xbox) and Sony (PlayStation) will offer yearly licensing for video games when they release their next-gen consoles later this year.

The most controversial aspect is that both new consoles may block used games. Game publishers have been agitating against all the used games available for years now, feeling that they dilute their sales of new games. But many avid gamers are up in arms at the news, since selling/recycling older games has been protected under the first-sale doctrine of US copyright laws. But changes have been coming since a 2010 case which blocked the resale of software that is licensed to users.

Brier Dudley (*Seattle Times*) announced in February 2013 that Microsoft has scored a coup for its Xbox 360 video lineup by announcing a partnership (*seattletimes.com/html/ technologybrierdudleysblog/2020291878_xbox_gets_redbox_instant_exclu.html*) with video-rental Redbox (*www. redbox.com/*). Redbox is a subsidiary of Coinstar, whose CEO (Scott Di Valerio) is a former Microsoft vice president. Redbox Instant (*www.redbox.com/instant*), from Redbox and Verizon, is currently in beta testing, and will eventually provide streaming video and rental discs for Xbox for an $8-$9 monthly charge.

Helping Students Scrub Their Online Profiles

The Boston Globe reported in January 2013, that colleges are now helping students (*www.boston.com/news/ education/2013/01/03/colleges-help-students-scrub-online-footprints/fqDrO0xdNjo05p5E1LwucJ/story.html*) "scrub their online footprints." For students with common names, googling their name can turn up raucous party scenes or other embarrassing mistaken-identity photos. Or their own juvenile prank videos or sextexting imagery, which could doom a college graduate who needs a more professional image online. Although online-image-repair services have been around for awhile, most are expensive. BrandYourself (*brandyourself.com/*) was started by three Syracuse University alumni, and is now offered to Syracuse students for free. The general public only has to pay $10 a month for an account.

Also in January 2013, the *Los Angeles Times* revealed that a trio of Kent State University undergrads have put together a Facewash app (*www.latimes.com/business/technology/la-fi-tn-facebook-facewash-20130123,0,6926222.story*) for Facebook. The app will "search a user's facebook activity and content for items the user may want to hide or delete." The app, created in a couple days at a hackathon at the University of Pennsylvania, is available but still in beta, so expect some minor glitches.

Is App Usage Cooling?

In early February 2013, Apple CEO Tim Cook declared at a Convention that "the app economy" is going to "only two or three players," presumably Apple and Google, and that there aren't a lot of people writing PC apps (*www. businessinsider.com/tim-cook-pc-apps-2013-2*). Cook also announced that Apple has paid out (*finance.yahoo.com/ news/apple-paid-1-billion-developers-133044232.html*) a total of $8 Billion to App Store Developers in 2013 so far. This is possibly a reflection of the users who received iPhones or iPads during the holidays, and are filling up their

devices with apps.

Despite the eagerly embraced apps that can act as remotes for everything from security systems to TVs noted earlier, Yahoo Finance reported in February 2013 that most users have begun to overdose (*finance.yahoo.com/ news/app-usage-stalled-smartphone-users-145741268.html*) on downloading apps to their smartphones. A *New York Times* tech reporter has 259 apps installed on her iPhone, and only regularly uses 16 of them. A recent study by Nuance found that people download a lot of apps, but that they abandon 95% of them. And Neilsen reported last May 2012 that people most regularly use the same top five apps: Facebook, YouTube, Google Play, Google Search and Gmail.

Teaching Students about High Tech Entrepreneurship

A Denver, Colorado, mommy-blogger in February 2013 noted that young kids are natural salesmen (*www. milehighmamas.com/2013/02/09/denvers-dont-miss-programs-for-budding-entrepreneurs/?source=rsshomeblog*), and their abilities to influence and persuade can be very valuable skills later in life. The "Guest Blogger" then goes on to list Colorado programs for young budding entrepreneurs, from Young Entrepreneurs Marketplace (to sell their handmade products) to a one-week crash course in Business hosted by Junior Achievement.

In January 2013, the *Miami Herald* reported on the high school seniors who had won the Business Plan Challenge (*www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/27/3203877/business-plan-challenges-teen.html*) last year. Cole Press and Louis Segall took first-place with their TeamBeam sports app, born out of their own frustration for a sports app that curated news on just the teams and players they were most interested in. Cole and Louis are now college freshmen, although their TeamBeam app has yet to make a public appearance.

Xconomy ran a January 2013 article on the Technology Club (*www.xconomy.com/boston/2013/01/28/ten-companies-in-three-days*) at MIT's Sloan School of Management. Once a year they organize a 3-day trip to Silicon Valley (California) for students to tour top technology companies. One student who participated was invited to blog about his experience, which had solidified his desire to pursue a career in high technology.

Dell Going Private

The *Denver Post* reported in February 2013 that struggling PC maker Dell was taking the company private in a $24.4 Billion deal (*www.denverpost.com/technology/ci_22521834/dell-said-be-near-buyout-deal-worth-up*) led by its founder, Michael Dell. The idea is to try and turn around the troubled computer maker, away from "the glare and financial pressures of Wall Street." Michael Dell is throwing in his 14% stake and a portion of his $16 Billion fortune to help finance the sale to a group led by the technology investment firm Silver Lake (*www.silverlake.com/*). Microsoft is lending $2 Billion to the buyers, and the remaining money will be borrowed from several banks. This will saddle Dell with about $15 Billion in debt, which may run off risk-averse corporate customers worried about Dell's financial stability.

When a major shareholder complained that the buyout was a bad deal that undervalued the company, Dell went on the offensive to reassure shareholders that the private buyout was the best of several rescue-deals it had considered. As reported in the *Seattle Times* in February 2013, shareholders are unhappy that the proposed $24.4 Billion purchase price is 80% below (*seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2020333049_apusdellacquisition. html*) Dell's top market value of $150 Billion at its peak thirteen years ago.

Music Technology

In mid-December 2012, an AP story through the *Denver Post* reported on how Google now has a scan and match (*www.denverpost.com/technology/ci_22224419/google-launches-scan-and-match-music-service*) service for Google Music users, to store copies of their songs online for free. The service scans a user's computer and gives them access to the songs it finds, as long as they match the songs on its servers. Otherwise, it will upload the requested songs to a user's online locker. The service is similar to Apple's iTunes Match, and Amazon's Cloud Player, which both cost $25 apiece for a year, and allow online storage of 25,000 to 250,000 songs. Apple dominates this market with 64% of US music sales online.

Also in December 2012, the *Denver Post* ran another AP story about Astell & Kern (*www.astellnkern.com/*)'s new portable music player, the AK100. It offers astoundingly better quality (*www.denverpost.com/technology/*

ci_22223351/review-high-res-music-player-ups-audio-ante) for mobile music, which usually loses audio resolution after being compressed into the small digital files of most other mobile music players. About the size of a pack of cigarettes, their music player has a Wolfsen 24-bit DAC (digital-to-analog converter), and costs about $700. One reviewer said the AK100 was truly impressive, especially if listened to through high-quality headphones in the $100-$400 range.

In January 2013, Bloomberg through the *Seattle Times* announced Amazon's new AutoRip service (*www.amazon. com/b?ie=UTF8&node=5946775011*), which adds MP3 files (*seattletimes.com/html/ businesstechnology/2020216388_amazonautoripxml.html*) free with every CD purchase. Forget about waiting for the CD in the mail, Amazon provides the digital tracks as soon as you hit the Purchase button. You even have the choice of either streaming a track from the cloud, or downloading it to save a local copy. A growing list of singers and bands are now including this digital access, as well as the movie cast recording of *Les Miserables*.

Radio and Music Video Tech

In mid-January 2013, the *Tampa Bay Times* (through the *Seattle Times*) announced that Cox Radio had just made radio history (*/seattletimes.com/html/entertainment/2020172836_radioappxml.html*). The Florida alternative-rock station was only the second in the nation in which every song played was chosen by listening fans through a free smartphone app, from a list of 1,800 songs covering 30 years. Fans can also use the app to add a personal message to the song they pick, and receive a text message to alert them when the song and message are about to play. The radio station considers it a cost-saving measure, and will reassign its DJs to other jobs.

According to an article in *USA Today* in January 2013, a new free app for the iPhone and iPad lets users sort of create their own (*www.usatoday.com/story/tech/columnist/saltzman/2013/01/29/app-insider-video-star-music-videos/1874481/*) music video. VideoStar (*videostarapp.com/*) records you lip-syncing to your favorite song, then adds special effects before uploading "your" music video to YouTube and the world. The app is even optimized for iPad's larger, high-definition screen, and you can purchase more effects for $.99 to $1.99 apiece.

New Ideas for Municipal Waste

The Christian Science Monitor ran a January 2013 story on how cities are trying green strategies to deal with polluted runoff (*www.csmonitor.com/World/Making-a-difference/Change-Agent/2013/0129/To-tackle-polluted-runoff-cities-turn-to-green-strategies?nav=87-frontpage-entryBloglist*). Urban storm water runoff can overload sewage treatment plants and pollute waterways. Now some cities are creating rain gardens and roadside plantings to mimic the way Nature collects and cleanses water.

NextBigFuture reported in February 2013 how Jeff Surma through SolveforX (*www.solveforx.com/*) has designed breakthrough technology to convert municipal waste (*nextbigfuture.com/2013/02/converting-municipal-waste-to-energy.html*) to energy on both industrial and personal scales. The system would use plasma gas to super-heat waste, turning organic materials into synthetic gas which can be harvested and used as fuel. While inorganic materials can be turned into construction products.

Aero-drama: Boeing's Dreamliner and Lithium-ion Batteries

In mid-January 2013, Japan's two biggest airlines ordered all their Boeing 787 Dreamliners grounded (*www. foxnews.com/world/2013/01/16/japan-787-makes-emergency-landing-due-to-battery-in-latest-trouble-for/*) due to yet more problems with lithium-ion batteries. This comes after a three year delay by Boeing to launch the Dreamliner, due to a series of problems with battery fires and fuel leaks. A day after the Japanese grounding was announced, Reuters reported that Boeing's Dreamliners were being grounded all around the world, as regulators investigated the planes' battery problems (*www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/17/us-boeing-dreamliner-idUSBRE90F1N820130117*).

Anger was immediately directed at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which critics felt should have been the domestic oversight agency (*seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2020170118_apusboeingfaa.html*) to have caught the problem and grounded the Dreamliner—not the Japanese airlines. Some aviation experts wondered if the FAA is now too cozy with aircraft manufacturers or if the FAA is just not keeping up with new aviation technology involving multiple suppliers from around the world. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood stood by his endorsement of the Dreamliner's safety, but has since resigned, effective when a replacement is

found.

According to a *New York Times* article at the end of January 2013, the FAA had approved the use (*www.nytimes. com/2013/01/24/business/global/boeing-787-battery-was-not-overcharged-japanese-investigators-say.html*) of lithium-ion batteries in 2007 for Boeing's 787, after brushing off concerns by the Air Line Pilots Association that a fire in flight from the batteries would be difficult to extinguish, and that flight crews needed training for that type of emergency. Also at the end of January 2013, battery-maker GS Yuasa (*www.gs-yuasa.com/us/*) was temporarily cleared (*seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2020230485_apasjapanboeing787.html*) in the Dreamliner overheating and fire incidents. The joint Japanese/American investigation had shifted to the monitoring system made by Kanto.

But by early February 2013, the *New York Times* reported that the National Transportation Safety Board was blaming the FAA for accepting battery test results from Boeing in 2007 that had not properly assessed the risks of smoke or fire (*www.nytimes.com/2013/02/08/business/us-officials-fault-faa-for-missing-787-battery-risk.html*) from the Dreamliners' batteries. The data at this point indicated that the problem had originated in the lithium-ion batteries, when one of the eight cells had a short circuit and the fire then spread to the rest of the cells.

Meanwhile in Europe, *Newser* reported in mid-February 2013 that Airbus had abandoned its plans (*www.newser. com/story/162876/airbus-nixes-lithium-ion-batteries-for-latest-plane.html*) to use lithium-ion batteries in its new A350 airplanes. Airbus announced that they would revert to conventional nickel-cadmium batteries for its A350. Also in mid-February 2013, the Polish airline company LOT announced that it is keeping its Boeing 787 Dreamliners grounded through October 2013 (*seattletimes.com/html/ businesstechnology/2020353578_apeupolanddreamliner.html*), while Boeing tries to solve the safety problem with overheating batteries.

By the end of February 2013 Boeing was anxiously seeking quick FAA approval for a "permanent" 787 battery fix (*seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2020398769_boeingboxesxml.html*). A small team of top Boeing machinists are building high-strength containment boxes for the lithium-ion batteries in the 787 Dreamliner as part of a redesign to get the Dreamliners flying again, hopefully by April. (With deep cuts to defense, aerospace companies like Boeing are shifting priorities—and banking their futures—on their civilian airliners.) It is unknown at this point if the FAA will agree to the quick-fix to get Boeing's 787s back in the air. Stay tuned...

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/*) 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*),* and contributes weekly articles or humor columns to *ComputorEdge*.ComputorEdge 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*).* 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!
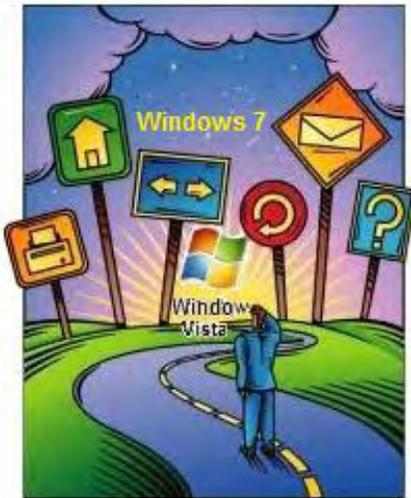
Windows Tips and Tricks: A New Look at the "Send To" Feature

"Available in All Versions of Windows, "Send To" Can Save Time and Effort" by Jack Dunning

If you often move files or folders to another location on your Windows computer, it may just be easier to add the task to your Windows "Send To" menu.

Although it's been a part of Windows ever since I can remember (and continues in Windows 8), the Send To menu option is one of the least remembered features of the right-click menu. (The right-click menu appears when the right mouse button is clicked while hovering over a folder or file icon in Windows Explorer.) I use right-click regularly for compressing files into ZIP folders, but I forget how convenient it can be for sending e-mails and printing documents. When properly configured, it's also one of the best ways to copy files to another folder without the hassle of opening two Explorer windows and dragging the file from one window to another. (I often neglect to hold down shift key and end up moving rather than copying the file.) I've written about Send To in the past and included it in the e-book *Windows 7 Explorer Secrets (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0075QLDI0/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0075QLDI0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)* (also a part of the *Windows 7 Secrets Four-book Bundle (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00801M5GS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)* at Amazon), but it deserves renewed attention, if only for those of us who have new reasons to take a closer look.

In my situation, I am now moving AutoHotkey scripts and apps into a public Dropbox for people who want to download them. I do this enough that it is worthwhile to modify the Send To menu to include a direct link to that Dropbox folder. This saves opening multiple Explorer windows, but also saves me from writing an AutoHotkey script to do it.

It's not practical to add every folder to your Send To right-click menu option, but if you have a folder that receives many new folders and files (such as subfolders in My Photos), then adding it to the list can be worth the time.

The Windows Right-click Menu Send To Option

There are a couple of quirks in the Windows right-click menu that are worth knowing. First, it does not display all the same items in all versions of Windows. While many of the options are common (Cut, Copy), there are differences depending on which Windows version you're using and the type of file. Certain items will appear on the list (Edit, Print, Rotate Clockwise, Rotate Counterclockwise for image files) depending on the type of file. Some programs add items to the right-click menu as shown in Figure 1 for AutoHotkey.
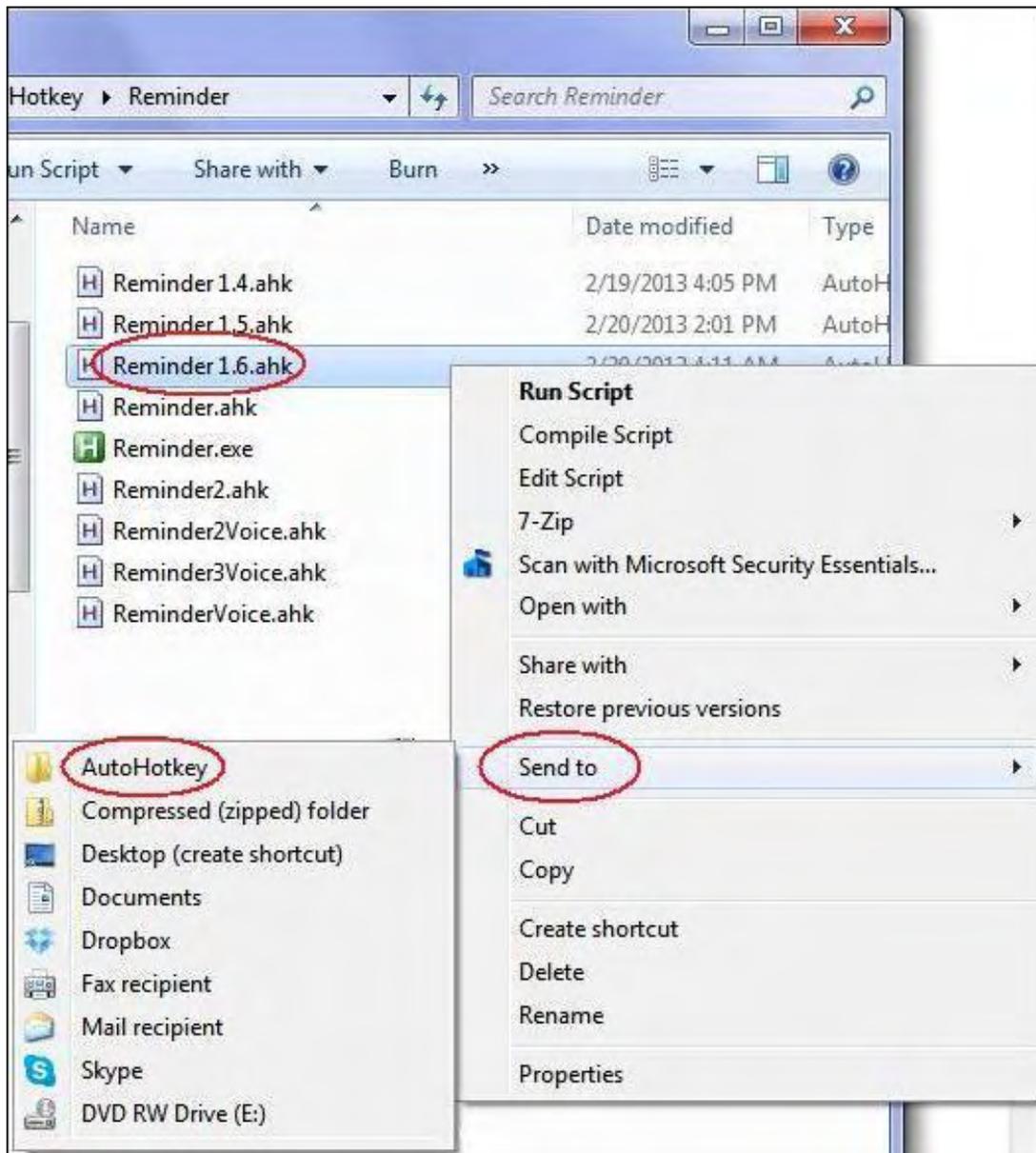
Figure 1. The Windows right-click menu displaying the Send To option in Windows 7. RunScript, Compile Script, and Edit Script were added to the right-click menu by the main AutoHotkey installation.

If you hold down the SHIFT key when you right-click a folder or file, the menu will change a little in most versions of Windows and a lot in Windows 7 and Windows 8—especially when looking at the Send To menu (see Figure 2). Many common folders are added to the SHIFT right-click menu in Windows 7 and 8 which don't appear in earlier versions. These folder items are drawn from the current user folder. Adding folders to your user folder will make them appear in the SHIFT right-click Send To menu.
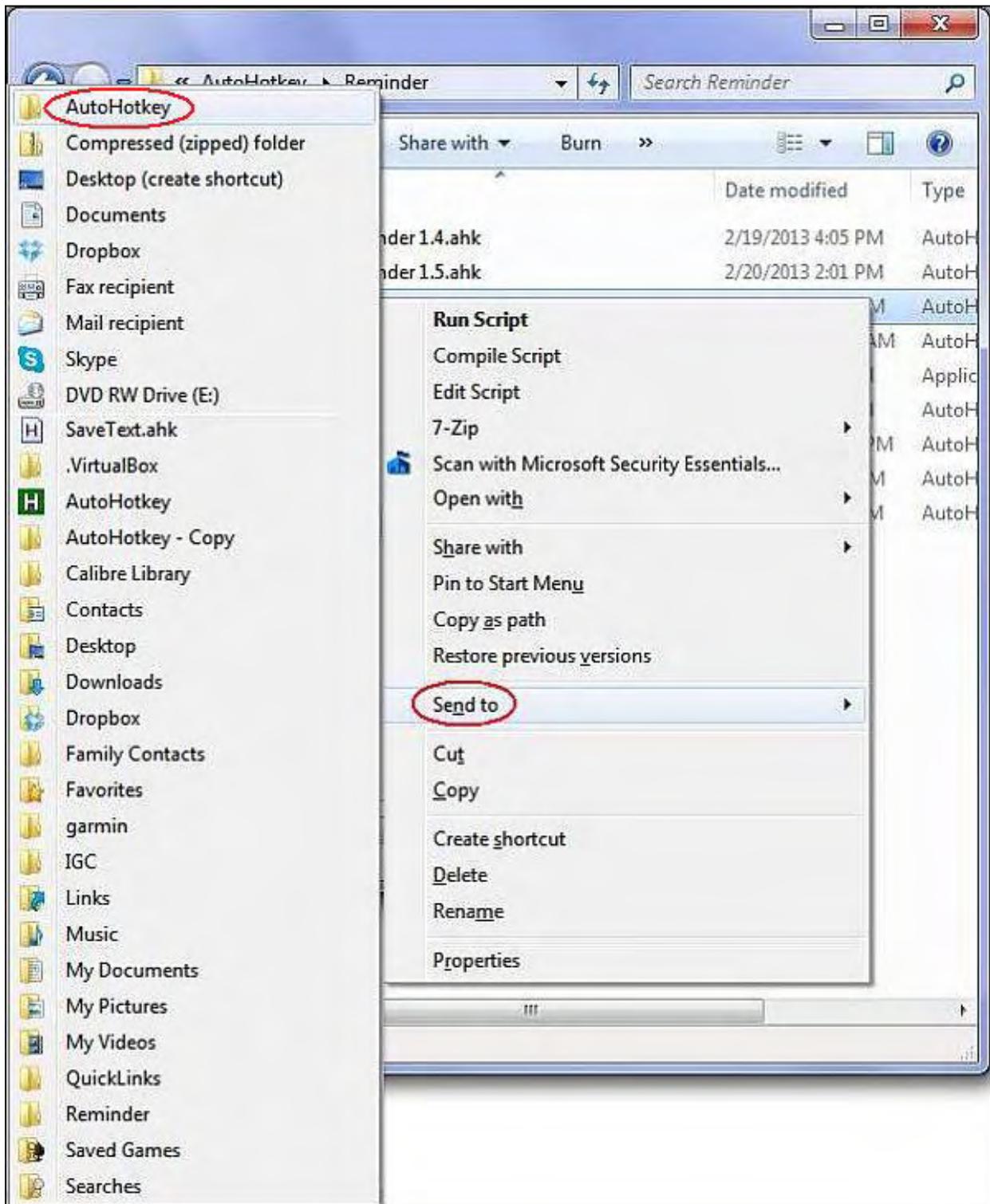
Figure 2. In Windows 7 and 8, the folders found in the current user folder appear in the Send To menu.

Note the AutoHotkey item at the top of the menu in Figure 1 and Figure 2 (circled in red). This folder is not a standard part of either right-click menu (with or without the SHIFT key). I added that link so I could send (copy) AutoHotkey files and apps directly to that Dropbox folder without copy-and-paste or dragging between windows, thus sharing the file with all other connected computers—and the rest of the world (since there is a public link directly to that Dropbox folder (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*)). This Send To option appears regardless of whether or not the SHIFT key is used with the right-click. If you need to move files regularly to a specific folder, you can see the value of this type of custom shortcut on the Send To right-click menu.

Adding a Special Folder to the Send To Menu

It's relatively simple to add an option to the right-click Send To menu. The first step is to open the SendTo folder by starting the Run dialog (⊞+R, select" Run…" from the Start Menu, or search for "run" in the Start menu or screen) and entering *shell:sendto* into the "Open:" field and clicking OK (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Use the Windows Run dialog to open the SentTo folder.

Any shortcuts you add to the SendTo folder will appear on the Send To menu (see Figure 4). It is important that you add shortcuts to the SendTo folder and *not* the folders. A shortcut will route a file (or folder) to the new location, but a folder in the SendTo folder will merely accept the items into itself within the SendTo folder. You don't want to start accumulating files in various folders within the SendTo folder since they may be difficult to locate later.
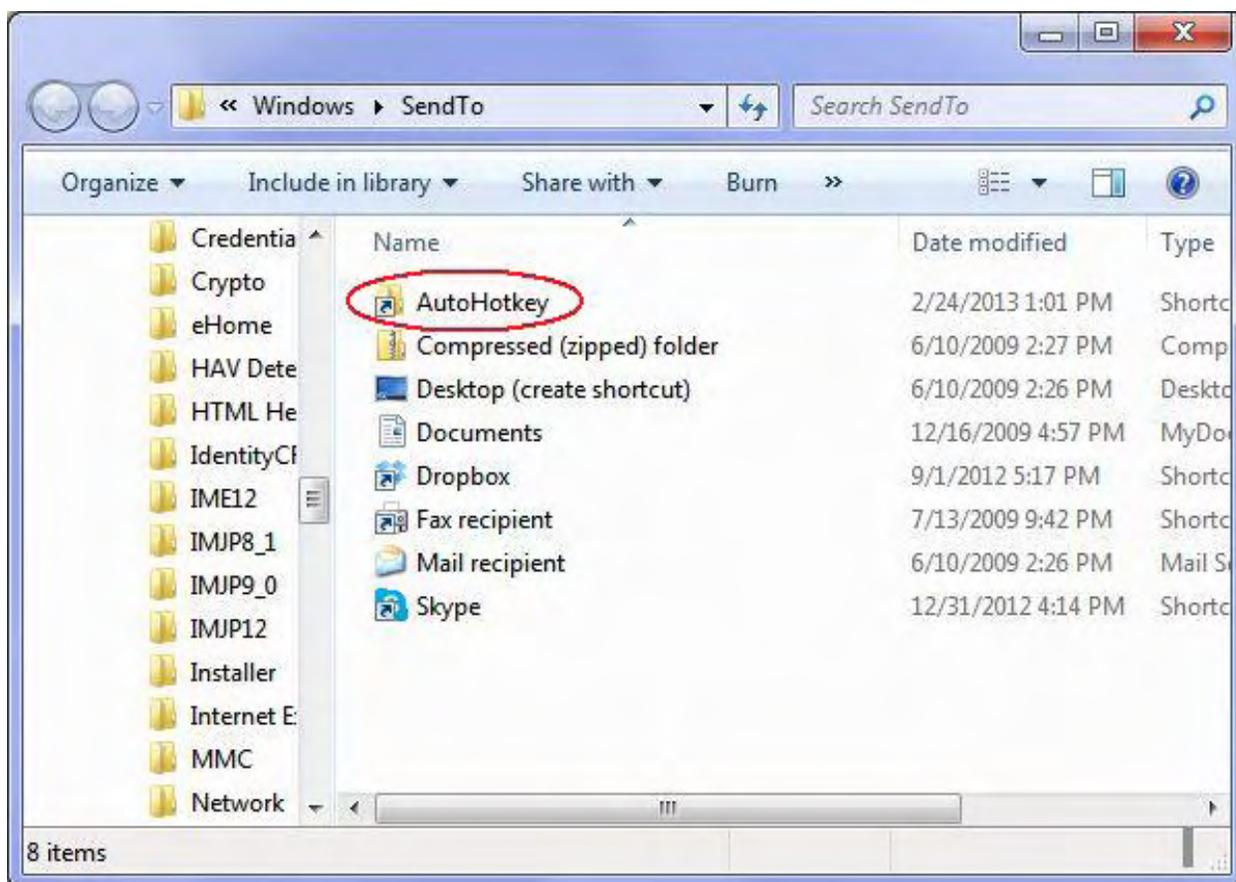
Figure 4. The Windows SendTo folder holds shortcuts that appear on the Send To right-click menu.

A shortcut may either be copied into the SendTo folder or newly created by right-clicking within the SendTo folder

and selecting New => Shortcut. If you later decide that you need to edit the shortcut, you can do so by right-clicking on the shortcut icon and selecting Properties. You can then change the path to another folder, pick a new icon (as discussed last week), or change the name in the General tab (see Figure 5). I changed the name to AutoHotkey Dropbox and added the AutoHotkey logo directly from the EXE file.
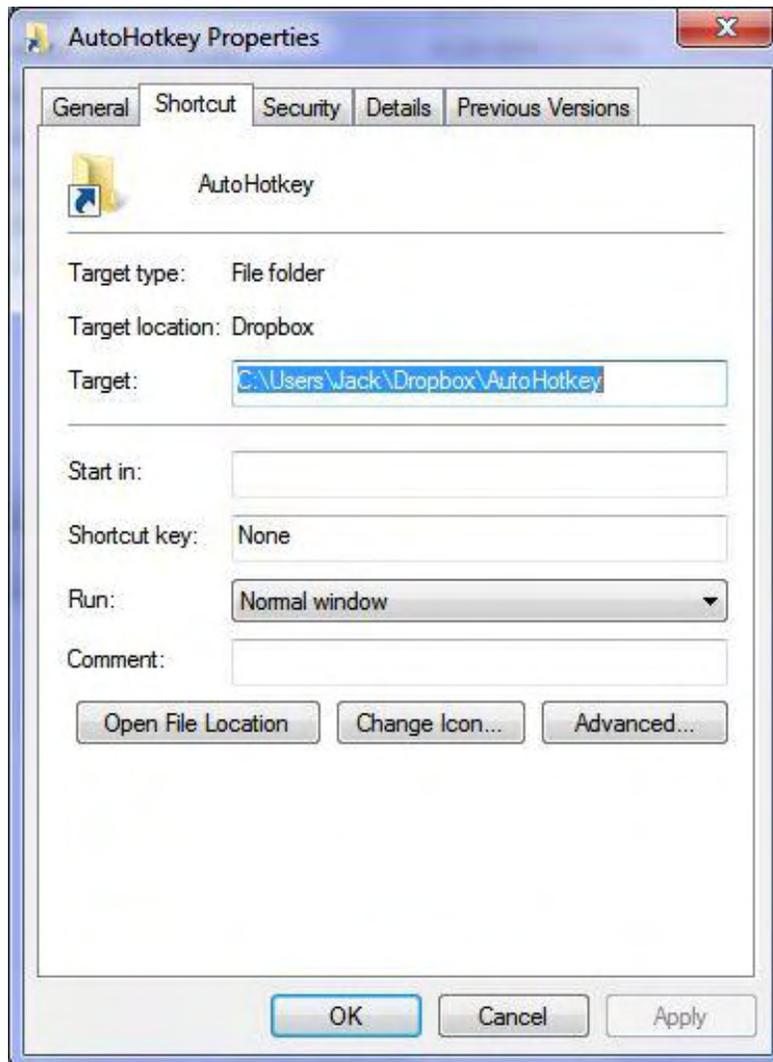
Figure 5. A shortcut can be modified through the Properties window.

The changes within the shortcut are immediately reflected in the Send To menu (see Figure 6).
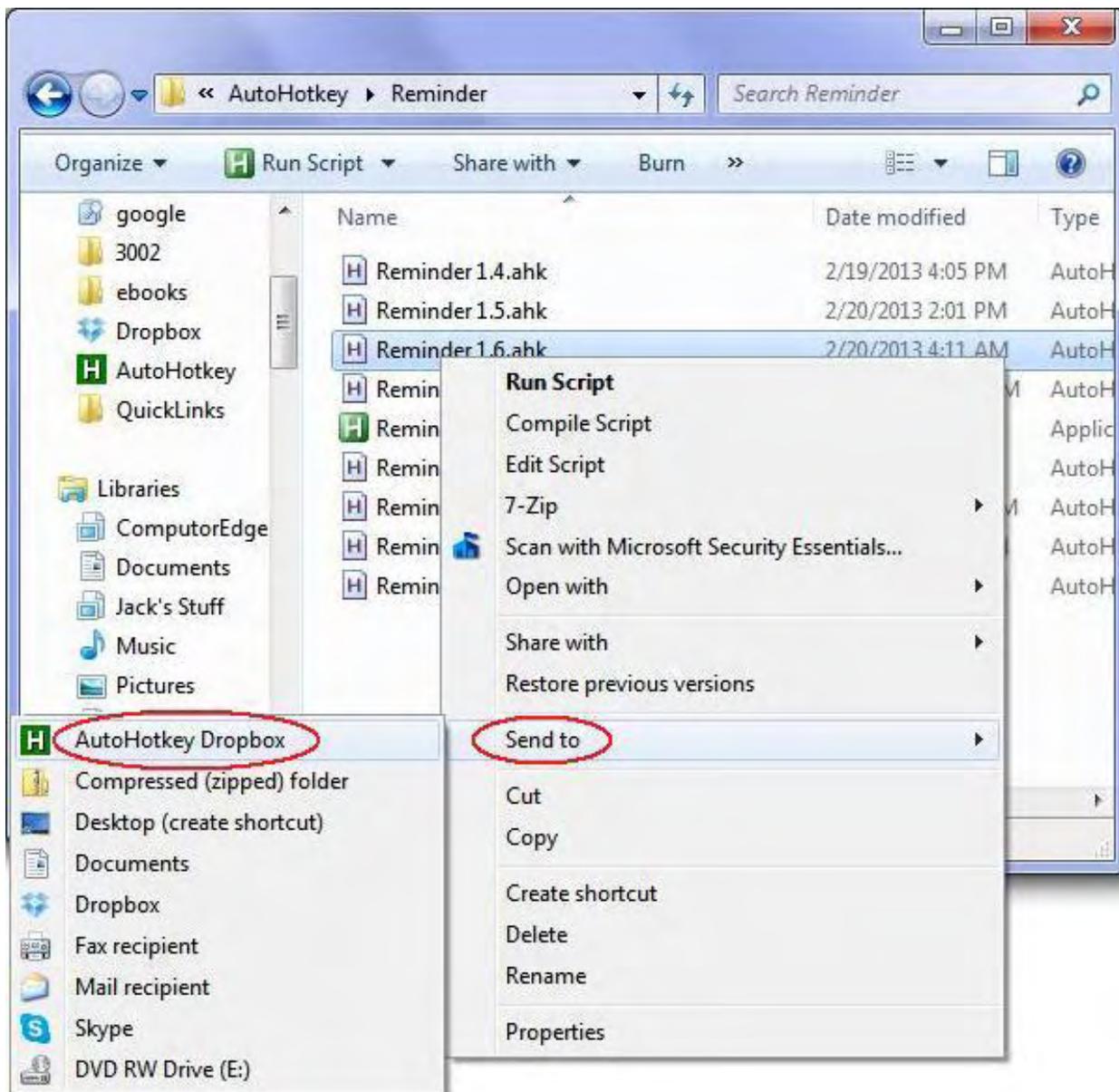
Figure 6. Changes made in the SendTo folder are reflected in the right-click menu.

Now whenever I need to update an AutoHotkey script or app that I have available for general download on Dropbox (usually due to a bonehead error), all I need to do is right-click on the file and select Send To => AutoHotkey Dropbox. It's done!

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

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*).*

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

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

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

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

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

Beginner's AutoHotkey Tip for Long E-Mail Addresses and More Reminder App

"There Is No Need to Constantly Type Those Long E-Mail Addresses, Plus a Reminder Toggle" by Jack Dunning

If you have long e-mail addresses then this beginner's AutoHotkey tip will make your life easier. Plus, the continuing saga of the Reminder app with a toggle for the speaking feature.

A Beginner's Tip for Super Quick E-mail Address Input

One of the main reasons for using AutoHotkey is hot string macro substitution as found in the AutoCorrection app which can be used in any Windows app or Web editing window. Misspell a word and see instant correction or type a couple of characters and an entire word or phrase appears. This is incredibly simple to implement with AutoHotkey and makes writing and editing on your Windows computer much easier.

However, one problem with the Internet is some e-mail addresses are incredibly long. Considering the number of times it's necessary to use your e-mail address in Web forms and as user names, it would be nice to have it appear with a couple of keystrokes. AutoHotkey replacement has been covered previously in other articles, but the hotkeys are activated by the following hotkeys which is a space, period, comma, or some other type of punctuation. In forms and user names we don't want to add a space or punctuation. AutoHotkey has a solution.

A normal macro substitution code line may look like the following:

```
::j@::jdunning@computoredge.com
```

This line of code placed in a text file and activated will display the enter e-mail address whenever "j@" is typed followed by a space or most punctuation. A backspace is required in many user name fields to remove the extra space or character. However, if an asterisk (*) is placed between the first two colons like so:

```
:*:j@::jdunning@computoredge.com
```

the e-mail is instantly substituted when the @ character is hit—not requiring nor adding any extra space or punctuation. Be sure to pick hotkey combinations that are not likely to occur in the normal course of your work so you won't be surprised by random e-mail addresses popping up.

There are other special characters which can be added between the first two colons. They can be reviewed in the Hotstrings section (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/Hotstrings.htm*) of the AutoHotkey site. You can also use the letter O to drop the activating space or character, but you would still be required to type it. This would be used if you wanted to add an ending without needing to backspace. For example:

```
:O:ct:constitut
```

would add "constitut" without a space leaving you to add "ion", "ing", "es", "ional" or another ending without backspacing.

For more options check out the Hotstrings section linked above.

*New to AutoHotkey? Check out "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (*www.computoredge.com/misc/
Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*)."*

More Improvements to the Reminder App

I'm getting closer completing the Reminder app—that's if an app can ever be truly finished. There are a few more
features to add, each of which has some interesting learning points. Since, if the free Windows utility *nircmd.exe* is
installed, the app is capable of reading the reminder out loud, the user should be told whether the voice is
available. Plus, if speaking is available, there should be a way to toggle it on and off. (You may not want your
computer nagging you.) Lastly, some code is added to the Reminder app to change the regular cursor into a push
button finger when it hovers over the voice toggle.

*If your interested in the columns on the writing of the Reminder AutoHotkey app, starting with the first column and
continuing through the AutoHotkey columns which discuss Reminder, click the link "View Columns Last Six
Months (*webserver.computoredge.com/forums/columnlist.mvc?article=AHK*)" at the top or bottom of each column
for a list of AutoHotkey columns in reverse chronological order. Not all of the columns are about Reminder, but
those that are will say so in the summary.*

Checking for the Nircmd.exe Speaking Program

Since the Reminder app does have the capability to use the Nircmd (*www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html*) speaking
feature, it seems reasonable to add a message about its availability on the Windows computer. Looking at the
reminder setup GUI window, there's space in the lower right-hand corner for informational text (see Figure 1).
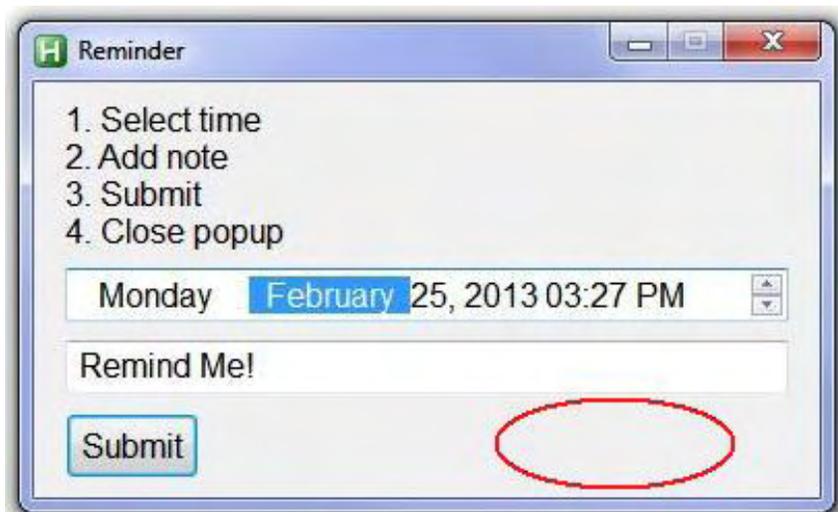
Figure 1. There's space in the lower right-hand corner of the reminder GUI for information about the speaking feature.

If the speech capability is available, the file *nircmd.exe* will be located in the Windows folder. The following
conditional is needed to first check for the existence of the *nircmd.exe* file, then add the text to the GUI:

```
IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe
  {
   Gui, Font, s10
   If(SetSpeak = 1)
     Gui, Add, Text, cGreen X+150 yp+10 vSpeak gSpeakToggle, Speaking On
   Else
     Gui, Add, Text, cRed X+150 yp+10 vSpeak gSpeakToggle, Speaking Off
  }
Else
  {
```

```
  Gui, Font, underline s10
  Gui, Add, Text, cRed x+150 yp+10 gNircmd, Speaking Not Available
 }
```

Of interest at this point is the ELSE portion of the conditional (*nircmc.exe* does *not* exist). The first line of code (IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe) looks for the file *nircmc.exe* in the Windows folder. If it's found, then the speaking capability is available. If not, the script jumps to the ELSE subroutine. The first line of the ELSE subroutine (Gui, Font, underline s10) set the font size to 10 points and underline (to indicate that it's also a link). See Figure 2.

Figure 2. When the Nircmd capability is not found, "Speaking Not Available" is displayed.

The second line of code in the ELSE section adds the text to the window with the GUI, ADD, TEXT command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm*). In this line the color option is set to red (cRed) and the text is positioned within the GUI with (x+150 yp+10). These options are explained in the "Positioning and Sizing of Controls (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm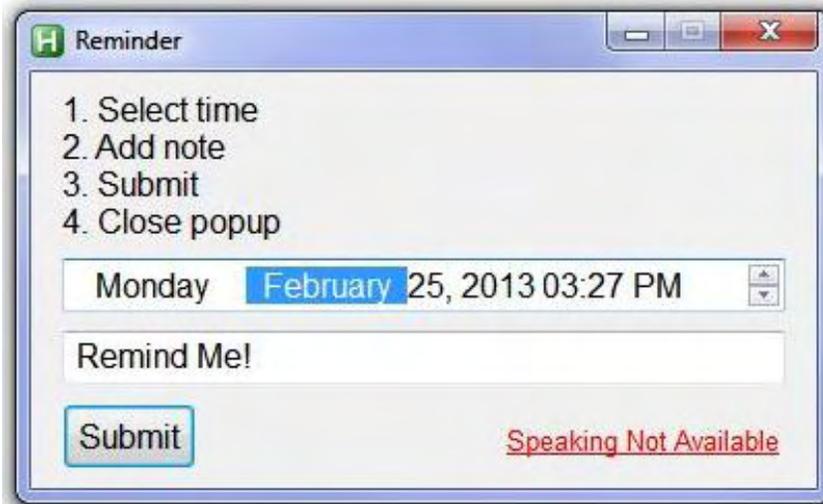#Position*)" section of the online AutoHotkey GUI help page. I had to play around with the numbers to get it where I wanted it. I've found that figuring out how to align text and buttons in AutoHotkey controls is not always easy and, at times, I've had to employ some formatting tricks.

The label *(Nircmd:)* is created with the gNircmd option. The label (subroutine) is as follows:

```
Nircmd:
  MsgBox, 4,Download Nircmd.exe?,You don't have Nircmd.
exe utility`nfor activating speech installed
                                                    .
`nWould you like to go to the Web site?
  IfMsgBox Yes
       Run http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html
Return
```

The label Nircmd pops up a message window asking if you would like to download Nircmd. If not, the window will close. If you click the "Yes" button (IfMsgBox Yes), your default browser will open and navigate to the proper site (Run http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html). It is then the user's option to download and install the utility which merely puts the executable *nircmd.exe* in the Windows folder.

Note that the second line of the MsgBox starts with the period (.) from the first line. This is merely a convenience for writing and viewing the code. When the next line is preceded by a punctuation mark, it is considered part of the prior line. This is common usage in AutoHotkey.

Turning Speaking On and Off

If the file *nircmd.exe* is found, then options have been added to toggle the feature on and off. You may not always want an audible alert. If the "IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe" statement evaluates as true, then the first part of the conditional is executed.

Last week, the Reminder.ini file was added to the script to save the latest reminder. Since the INI file already exists, it's simple enough to add the line:

```
IniRead, SetSpeak, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, SetSpeak
```

to the *ReadIni:* label from last week. This makes it possible to save and recall the last setting. The variable used to save the setting for speaking is *SetSpeak*.

The first time through, IniRead will not find the variable *SetSpeak* since it has not yet been written to the INI file. Therefore when the second conditional (If(SetSpeak = 1)) is encountered *SetSpeak* will *not* equal 1 and the ELSE condition will be executed. The text color is set to red (cRed) and the text is set to "Speaking Off." This will remain the case until the first time the text is clicked and the label *ToggleSpeak* (added with the *gSpeakToggle* option) is executed. The variable vSpeak has been added as an option merely to make changing the text with the GUICONTROL command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControl.htm*) easier.

To turn on the speaking capability, click the text "Speaking Off" to launch the label *SpeakToggle*.

The speak toggle (*SpeakToggle:*) is implemented with the following code:

```
SpeakToggle:
 If(SetSpeak = 1)
 {
  SetSpeak := 0
  Gui,Font,Cred
  GuiControl,Font,Speak
  GuiControl,,Speak, Speaking Off
 }
 Else
 {
  SetSpeak := 1
  Gui,Font,Cgreen
  GuiControl,Font,Speak
  GuiControl,,Speak, Speaking On  ;Alt 0160 hard space before On
 }
  IniWrite, %SetSpeak%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.
ini, Settings, SetSpeak
Return
```

The first time this conditional is encountered the variable *SetSpeak* does not exist and can't equal 1. Therefore the script jumps to the ELSE portion of the conditional. *SetSpeak* is set to 1 (SetSpeak := 1). The font color is changed to green (Gui,Font,Cgreen), then the GUICONTROL command is used to set that font color to the control *Speak*. The same control is then set to the new text "Speaking On."

For some reason, the word "On" would not display when executing this portion of the conditional, but placing a hard space (hold down the ALT key while entering 0160 with the number keypad to enter a hard space before On) before the word "On" in the code seemed to fix it. (Bug? I didn't have the problem on the "Off" side of the conditional.) If you copy-and-paste this code rather than downloading it from the Dropbox page (*www.dropbox.com/ sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) (*Reminder 1.6.ahk*), you may need to to add the hard space yourself.

The Reminder setup windows will now show the "Speaking On" link. See Figure 3.
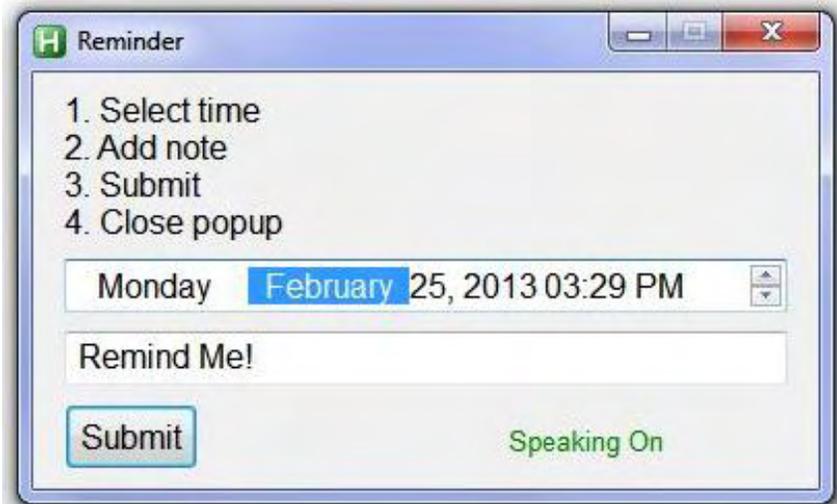
Figure 3. The Reminder setup window shown with the speaking feature on.

The last line of code uses the IniWrite command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm*) to save the new *SetSpeak* value to the INI file.

If you click the now green text, it will enter the first part of the conditional and execute the opposite of what appears above and disabling the speaking feature.

To put the selected setting into effect when a reminder is displayed, another conditional needs to be added to the *ShowReminder* label in the original script:

```
IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe
  {
    If SetSpeak = 1       ;new line
     SetTimer, TalkToMe, 15000
  }
```

This double conditional will only set the speaking timer if SetSpeak is set to 1.

Changing the Cursor to a Pointing Finger

One of the more powerful features of AutoHotkey is its ability to access built-in Windows features. In this case, I wanted to change the cursor to a pointing finger whenever it hovered over the new text speaking toggle link. This would make the text link even more obvious as a place to click. See Figure 4.
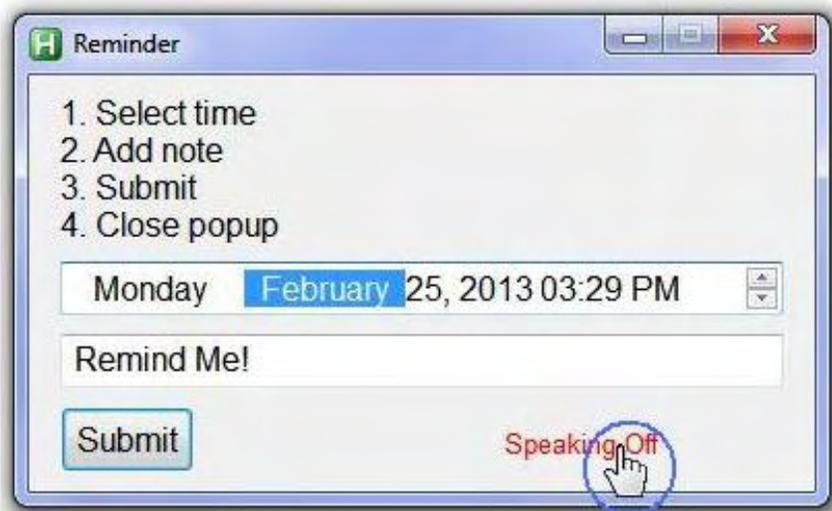
Figure 4. The cursor in the Reminder setup window changes to a pointing finger when hovering over the speaking toggle.

This is one of the more advanced features of AutoHotkey which I found while digging around examples. I'm sure that there is much more than merely changing cursors which can be accomplished with these techniques, but I haven't had time to look into the possibilities. Until I start exploring more advanced AutoHotkey features in this column (there is plenty of intermediate level work to do), I will only offer an overview of the following code and attest to the fact that it works:

```
IDC_HAND := 32649
hCursor := DllCall("LoadCursor", "UInt", NULL,"Int", IDC_HAND, "UInt")
OnMessage(0x200,"WM_MOUSEMOVE")
WM_MOUSEMOVE(wParam, lParam) {
  global hCursor
  MouseGetPos,,,, ctrl
 if (ctrl == "Static2")
  DllCall("SetCursor","UInt",hCursor) ; To set the cursor
}
```

The first three lines of code I copied unaltered from an example. The AutoHotkey OnMessage command (*www. autohotkey.com/docs/commands/OnMessage.htm*) is used to call the standard Windows message WM_MOUSEMOVE found in the List of Windows Messages (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/misc/SendMessageList. htm*). The WM_MOUSEMOVE function uses the data setup *hCursor* and *IDC_HAND* to make a DllCall—which is a little cryptic. The only value that I added was the "Static2" (if (ctrl == "Static2")) which designates the Speak control on the GUI window. (I found that value with the Window Spy utility by hovering over the speaking text link in the GUI window.)

It works, but I'll have to save deeper investigation for more advanced level scripting columns—when I get that far along myself.

The last piece of the puzzle is adding a line to the GuiClose label to "Destroy" the cursor (another DllCall):

```
GuiClose:
  Gui, Destroy
  HotKey, ^#R, ON
  Menu, Tray, Enable, Set Reminder
  DllCall("DestroyCursor","Uint", hCursor) ;line added to remove hand cursor
Return
```

Whew!

The Final Reminder App Script

I'm not sure that scripts are ever completed. I plan to eventually make this Reminder script capable of setting multiple simultaneous reminders, but for now I'll be moving on creating a simple database and calculating ages. Next week, I discuss a GrandKid app which maintains a simple database of grandchildren and calculates all of their ages from years down to the months and days. The techniques are useful in many different apps, although creating the function to calculate their ages was not as easy as it might seem.

It's also time for me to put together an intermediate level AutoHotkey e-book which will include the last few months of columns and articles, plus next week's simple database app with age calculation. If you've kept up with this column then you already know most of what what will be in the book, although I expect that I will do some clarifying and correcting during the edit.

Here is Reminder 1.6.ahk which can also be found on the Web for download (*www.dropbox.com/ sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*):

```
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
IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe
  {
    Gui, Font, s10
    If(SetSpeak = 1)
      Gui, Add, Text, cGreen X+150 yp+10 vSpeak gSpeakToggle, Speaking On
    Else
      Gui, Add, Text, cRed X+150 yp+10 vSpeak gSpeakToggle, Speaking Off
  }
Else
```

```
    {
     Gui, Font, underline s10
     Gui, Add, Text, cRed x+150 yp+10 gNircmd, Speaking Not Available
    }
IDC_HAND := 32649
hCursor:=DllCall("LoadCursor", "UInt", NULL,"Int", IDC_HAND, "UInt")
OnMessage(0x200,"WM_MOUSEMOVE")
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
  DllCall("DestroyCursor","Uint", hCursor)
Return
WM_MOUSEMOVE(wParam, lParam) {
global hCursor
MouseGetPos,,,, ctrl
if (ctrl == "Static2")
  DllCall("SetCursor","UInt",hCursor) ; To set the cursor
}
ShowReminder:
FormatTime, RightNow
#persistent
IfExist, %A_WinDir%\nircmd.exe
   {
     If SetSpeak = 1      ;new line
       SetTimer, TalkToMe, 15000
   }
Hotkey, IfWinActive, Your Reminder!
Hotkey, Esc, StopEscape
SetTimer, ChangeButtonNames, 50
MsgBox,20800,Your Reminder!, %MyNote% %RemMessage%`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
         IniWrite, %SetSpeak%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.
ini, Settings, SetSpeak
Return
ReadIni:
         IniRead, RemTime, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Time
         IniRead, RemMemo, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini, Settings, Memo
         IniRead, SetSpeak, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.
ini, Settings, SetSpeak
Return
Nircmd:
   MsgBox, 4,Download Nircmd.exe?,You don't have Nircmd.exe utility
         ,`nfor activating speech, installed
         .`nWould you like to download it?
   IfMsgBox Yes
         Run http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/nircmd.html
Return
SpeakToggle:
 If(SetSpeak = 1)
 {
  SetSpeak := 0
  Gui,Font,Cred
  GuiControl,Font,Speak
  GuiControl,,Speak, Speaking Off
  IniWrite, %SetSpeak%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.
ini, Settings, SetSpeak
 }
 Else
 {
  SetSpeak := 1
  Gui,Font,Cgreen
  GuiControl,Font,Speak
  GuiControl,,Speak, Speaking On   ;Alt 0160 hard space before On
  IniWrite, %SetSpeak%, C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.
ini, Settings, SetSpeak
 }
Return
```

Please let me know it you find any errors.

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

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*).*

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

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

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

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

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

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"Leap or Get Left Behind" by Wally Wang

Leap or Get Left Behind; Microsoft Office Warnings; Chasing Their Tail; Buying Apple Products at a Discount; Creating an Interactive Novel with LiveCode; The Most Popular Linux Distributions; Capture a Screenshot.

Barnes & Noble used to be one of the largest retail book sellers in the country. They still are, now that Borders Bookstores has gone bankrupt and disappeared. The problem is that Barnes & Noble is trying to straddle the divide between retail selling of printed books and electronic distribution of e-books through their Nook tablet. The problem is that both their retail and Nook business is sinking (*www.zdnet.com/barnes-and-nobles-flawed-approach-to-the-nook-7000011791/*).

The main problem is that few companies have managed the transition between the old way of doing business to the new way by trying to do both at the same time. Usually, companies opt for the old way of doing business, which guarantees they'll eventually get wiped out in the future.

When digital photography became popular, Kodak decided they were making more money on the film business so they didn't need to worry about digital photography. Eventually digital photography caught up and wiped out their film business. How Kodak failed to see that coming is as puzzling as seeing a speeding truck coming down the highway and refusing to step out of the road. Yet Kodak's executives got paid lavishly to ignore the obvious.

Borders Bookstore is another example of blind allegiance to the past. When the Internet first became popular, Borders felt that online book selling would be just a niche, so they wanted to focus on their retail business. When people wanted to buy books online, Borders actually directed people to their competitor, Amazon. By ignoring the future and clinging to the past, Borders guaranteed their own demise.

Barnes & Noble isn't making that same mistake, but they're not embracing the future completely either. Part of the company is still clinging to the retail book selling business, which has nowhere to go but down. The other part of the company is trying to offer e-books through the Nook, but they're getting stomped by Amazon and to a much lesser extent, Apple's iPad and their iBookstore. If a company tries to bridge two different business models at once, chances are good they won't be able to embrace either one very well, and wind up failing at both of them.

Apple has spent much less time on their iPod and Macintosh product line and put most of their emphasis on the iPhone and iPad, which represent the future. Microsoft is trying to bridge the gap between PCs and mobile computing with their hybrid Windows 8/RT operating systems, which don't satisfy either market very well. Given a choice between clinging to the past (Kodak and Borders) or leaping to the future (Apple and Google), Microsoft is trying to reach both markets like Barnes & Noble, and will likely struggle in both markets as a result.

Watch the struggles of retailer Best Buy, which is trying to sell products online just like Amazon, but maintain their expensive retail presence at the same time. Those retail costs will sink whatever profits Best Buy can create online, while Amazon simply rakes in the online profits with no retail expenses at all. Guess who's going to win in the long run, Best Buy or Amazon?

When the future arrives, it's best to jump on board with both feet and minimize the past. PC people did this at one time when the world switched from CP/M-80 to MS-DOS (instead of CP/M-86 that could run CP/M-80 software),

and then from MS-DOS to Windows (instead of MS-DOS running multitasking software like DesqView that could mimic Windows while still running MS-DOS programs).

Just as MS-DOS could never have nurtured desktop publishing or photo editing like graphical user interfaces (Windows and Mac OS X) could do, so can mobile computing (iOS and Android) offer advantages that PCs can never offer. Rather than drag the past into the future with a hybrid operating system like Windows 8, it's simpler to just jump into mobile computing without the burden of the past dragging you down. That means focusing on devices designed for mobile computing and not on devices that try to do everything but fail at doing anything well.

The future is not the PC running Windows or Mac OS X. If you're still clinging to the past, you can look at the fate of Kodak and Blockbuster Video to see what your future will look like sooner than you think. Don't waste time trying to cling to the old and embrace the new. Just embrace the new and move on from there.

Microsoft Office Warnings

Besides raising the price of individual copies of Microsoft Office in an attempt to drive people to the subscription-based Microsoft Office 365 edition instead, Microsoft has also removed a crucial business tool from Excel called PowerPivot (*www.infoworld.com/t/office-software/more-office-2013-bait-and-switch-revelations-213158?page=0,0*). This add-on is still available if you purchase the Microsoft Office Pro Plus volume license, which is something businesses can do but not individuals.

If you have a previous version of Microsoft Office, you may have installed the program on multiple computers. If you want to upgrade to Office 2013, you can only upgrade one computer. That means you'll now have to pay for additional upgrades, which is Microsoft's way of forcing people to opt for their Microsoft Office 365 subscription-based program instead.

Microsoft clearly wants everyone to use the subscription-based Microsoft Office 365, but rather than provide incentives to do so, they're punishing current Microsoft Office users in the process. When your new product line exists solely to benefit your company while inconveniencing your customers, that's a sure sign of problems.

Some companies will either pay more for Microsoft Office 2013 or switch to the subscription-based Microsoft Office 365, but what all companies should do is evaluate if they even need to upgrade or use Microsoft Office any more. For many companies, the features in current or older versions of Microsoft Office will work just fine, and the updated features in Office 2013 may not be necessary at all.

If you enjoy spending money needlessly, Microsoft will be happy to keep taking it while locking you into Microsoft products. Once you're locked into Microsoft products, you can criticize Apple and laugh at all the people who get locked into the perceived "walled garden" approach of Apple products. Of course, you would never be so foolish to allow a single company to lock you into their products because you're smart enough to put your trust into Microsoft instead.

Chasing Their Tail

Before Apple introduced the iPad, Hewlett-Packard tried to steal the spotlight by announcing the Slate PC at the Consumer Electronics Show. The company released a series of video interviews with their research engineers, claiming they had spent years developing the Slate PC, when it was really just a PC with Windows 7 running on it, but without a keyboard or a mouse. Not surprisingly, if that was Hewlett-Packard's idea of research and development, their Slate PC died a quick death when the iPad finally appeared.

Then Hewlett-Packard spent $1.2 billion buying Palm Computing for their webOS operating system to power Hewlett-Packard's TouchPad tablet. After launching the Touchpad at the same price as the iPad, Hewlett-Packard saw almost no sales, so they killed the project, flushed $1.2 billion down the drain, and liquidated their TouchPad inventory at $99 each. At that price, the TouchPad finally sold.

Now Hewlett-Packard is trying to break into the tablet market for a third time by using the Android operating system on their new Slate 7 tablet (*www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/24/us-hewlettpackard-tablet-idUSBRE91N0GF20130224*). This time their main advantage is the low $169 price tag and the large app library of Android.

Maybe this time Hewlett-Packard will succeed selling a tablet, but at that low price, they likely won't make much of a profit from it. While Amazon sells the Kindle Fire at a slight loss to drive people into buying music, video, and e-books from Amazon, Hewlett-Packard has no such way to make money from their Slate 7 tablet.

As nice as the Slate 7's price may be, don't expect Hewlett-Packard to carve much money out of the tablet market. If history is any indication, Hewlett-Packard will change their minds in a few months and flush more money down the drain as they continue banging their heads against the wall, trying to come up with a tablet that can compete against the iPad.

In the meantime, Hewlett-Packard sold their webOS (*news.cnet.com/8301-1035_3-57570990-94/webos-lives-lg-to-resurrect-it-for-smart-tvs/*) operating system to LG Electronics so LG Electronics can use it in their television sets. LG Electronics is at least thinking of the future while Hewlett-Packard keeps chasing the past.

The webOS operating system was considered by many to be technically equal, if not superior, to iOS and Android. For Hewlett-Packard to give up on webOS so soon seems as short-sighted as when Hewlett-Packard turned down (*appleinsider.com/articles/10/12/06/apple_co_founder_offered_first_computer_design_to_hp_5_times*) Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak because they didn't think the Apple personal computer would ever sell. Having missed the PC revolution, the smartphone revolution, and the tablet revolution, Hewlett-Packard is getting dangerously close to missing their own future for good.

Buying Apple Products at a Discount

Visit Apple's site and you can find refurbished products at a discount. Refurbished products don't give you much choice as to the size of the hard disk or the amount of RAM installed, neither will you always find the model you may want. However, if you find the particular product you want, you can save 10-20 percent off the retail price.

For another way to get refurbished Apple products (*stores.ebay.com/Refurbished-Outlet*), visit Apple's unofficial store on eBay. Like Apple's own refurbished store, all products come with full warranties but you'll have to hunt through the meager selection until you find the exact product you want.
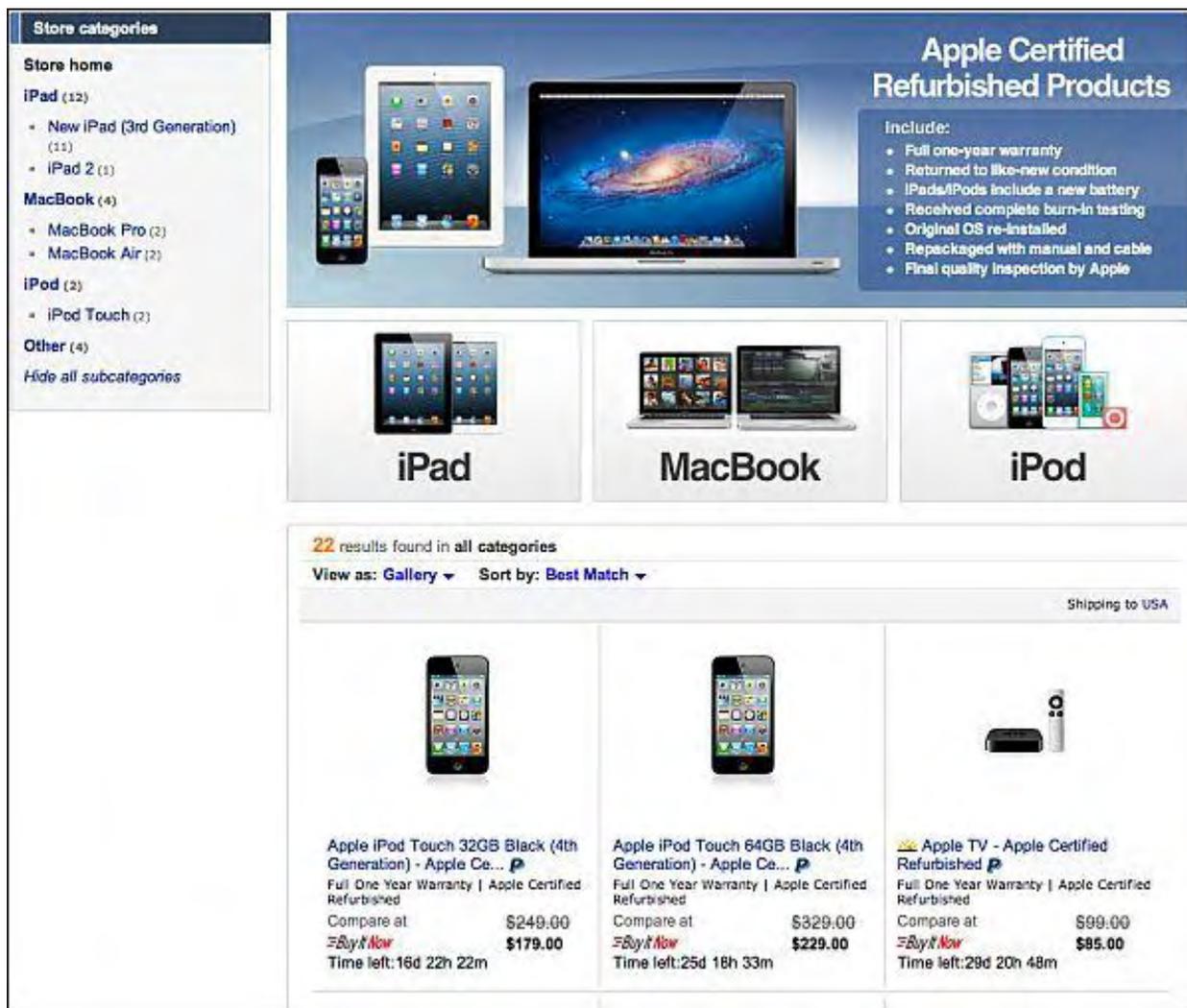
Figure 1. Apple sells refurbished products on eBay.

The next time you want to buy an Apple product, visit Apple's own refurbished store or their unofficial refurbished store on eBay. With the money you save, you can buy yourself additional accessories to go along with your refurbished Macintosh or iPad.

Creating an Interactive Novel with LiveCode

The world of static text and pictures, found on ordinary printed books, is coming to an end but stores like Barnes & Noble and even Amazon are still oblivious to this coming threat to their business. While you can create interactive e-books using Apple's free iBooks Author program, you can also create interactive e-books as an app using your favorite programming language such as Objective-C.

The co-creator of the popular Halo video game series has even created an interactive e-book as an app, called Morning Star Alpha (*www.polygon.com/2013/2/19/4001344/ex-bungie-heads-mobile-shooter-will-have-an-evolving-interactive*). Designed as an interactive comic book, this app will let readers explore the fictional environment that will be introduced later as a video game.

Figure 2. Morning Star Alpha will be an interactive comic book written in LiveCode.

Creating an interactive comic book might seem like a tough task, so that's why the creators are using LiveCode (*www.runrev.com*), which will soon be turned into a free, open source project. LiveCode, based on Apple's old HyperCard, makes programming fun and easy by using an English-like syntax. Now that LiveCode will be made open source, everyone can program and focus more on getting their project done and less on learning the technicalities of an editor/compiler like Xcode.

When Morning Star Alpha becomes available, you can see how much more engaging interactive books will be compared to static printed books. When your kids find old books in your garage or attic in the future, they'll laugh at the dusty pictures on pages that can't move. Seeing printed books in the future will be like today's book lovers staring at the clumsiness of scrolls and clay tablets.

The book industry actually has a bright future. It just has nothing to do with the printed page any more.

The Most Popular Linux Distributions

At one time, Ubuntu Linux was the most popular Linux distribution. Then Ubuntu created their Unity interface designed to turn Linux into an operating system that could work on PCs, smartphones, and tablets. Many people hated the change and immediately switched to rival Linux distributions such as Linux Mint and Mageia (*www. mageia.org/en/*). If you've seen Windows 8, you'll understand this revolt from Ubuntu Linux user interface.

One odd feature of Mageia is that it's an open source version of Mandriva Linux, which itself was based on Red Hat Linux. Unlike Ubuntu Linux, Mageia doesn't try to force you to learn a new user interface. Instead, Mageia closely resembles Windows 7, so if you prefer a more straightforward user interface, try the free and open source Mageia on your PC and avoid the painful experience of upgrading to Windows 8.
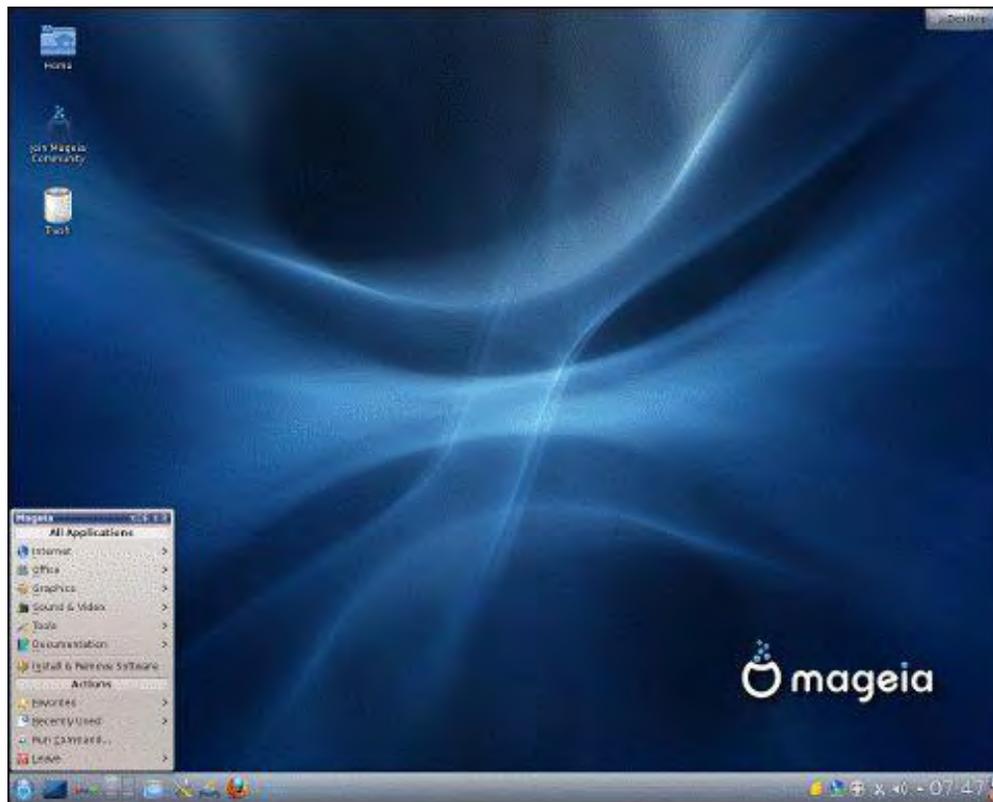
Figure 3. Mageia tries to mimic the familiar interface of Windows.

For years, Windows users have boasted that Windows PCs are cheaper than Macintosh computers, so if they're really interested in saving money, they should avoid Windows 8 altogether and just switch to Mageia or Linux Mint. At least they'll find that Mageia and Linux Mint offer a more familiar user interface than Windows 8.

*   *   *

If you need to capture a screenshot, you can buy a separate screen capturing program. However, OS X lets you press Command+Control+Shift+3 to capture your entire screen on to the clipboard. Now you can paste that image into a graphics program or word processor window.

If you press Command+Shift+4, your mouse pointer will turn into a cross-hair icon so you can capture a selected area. If you only want to capture the selected window, press Command+Shift+4+space.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

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

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541)
*Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468*)*
*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*
*How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/
ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70*)*
*The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M*)*
*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362*)*
*Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/
B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-
20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A*)*
*The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI*)*
*The 15-Minute Movie Method (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?
ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8*)*
*Erotophobia (A novel) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?
ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*)*

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

Worldwide News & Product Reviews
"The latest in tech news and hot product reviews." by Charles Carr

The Kindness of Game Developers; Ultrabooks to Make Up Half of All Notebook Sales by 2016; Sixty-five Free Smarter Buying Guides; This Satellite is Out of This World; Vpulse In-ear Canalphones—"Bring the Bass?"

The Kindness of Game Developers

There's a great item over at Kotaku.com (*Kotaku.com*) that recounts what happened when a young man turned to video gaming while he sorted out his feelings over his sister's death.

"Video games can be wonderful when you need someplace to decompress, when you need to tune the world out," the Kotaku article notes. "That's exactly what Reddit user lb-Cyber needed during a tough spot in his life."

"On February 21st, 2012, my sister passed away after a nine-year battle with cancer," lb-Cyber wrote in a Reddit thread. Dealing with the loss wasn't easy, as you might imagine. He wrote of being isolated and alone following her death.

"So he used the outlets he could find, including Skyrim," the article continues, "It helped."

Bethesda reached out. On the anniversary of the sibling's death, lb-Cyber received the [Skyrim] art book of you see above. It was signed by all the members of the Bethesda team."

"I wrote a silly post a month ago about how Skyrim helped me through a tough time. I didn't expect to receive such a touching response from Bethesda. I absolutely was floored and a day I thought would be absolutely agonizing ended with an incredibly heart-warming and unexpected moment of absolute kindness," lb-Cyber wrote on the Reddit thread.

Check out the entire post at m.kotaku.com (*m.kotaku.com/5986364/he-took-refuge-in-skyrim-after-his-sisters-death-bethesda-reached-out-and-sent-him-this*))

Ultrabooks to Make Up Half of All Notebook Sales by 2016

Although currently viewed as prohibitively expensive, Ultrabook sales will explode in the next five years, making up 47% of annual notebook sales by just 2016, says business intelligence provider GBI Research (*www.gbiresearch. com*).

According to the firm, 1.3 million Ultrabooks were sold last year, but thanks to technological advances and a drop in component prices, this number is predicted to reach a massive 148.7 million by 2016, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 109%. GBI writes:

Ultrabooks (defined by thinner, lighter bodies and with a shorter boot-up time than typical notebooks) are expected to explode in popularity in the near future as cloud-based systems, such as Apple's iCloud and Google's Cloud Storage, become more prevalent and defy the need for a traditional hard drive.

The price reduction of microprocessors and flash memory, combined with an increase in production capacity for screens and casings, will also see a sizeable drop in the average selling price of ultrabooks, from $1050 last year to $510 by the end of 2016.

The Americas are currently the biggest consumer of Ultrabooks and are expected to purchase 1.55 million units this year alone, accounting for 42% of 2012's global market.

However, this will change over the next five years as the Asia-Pacific region is expected to become the biggest buyer of Ultrabooks in 2016, with an estimated 55 million units. The Americas are predicted to come second with 54 million unit sales, while Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) will come third with combined sales of around 40 million.

Sixty-five Free Smarter Buying Guides

With more choices than ever among digital camera gear, camcorders, flat screen TVs, and other consumer electronics gear, consumers can easily be overwhelmed. Adorama (*www.adorama.com*) comes to the rescue with 65 free buying guides to provide customers with helpful information that will let them choose the best products for their needs and budget.

"Our buying guides are an integral part of the Adorama Learning Center's mission to provide Adorama customers with unbiased information that will help them purchase products that they will be satisfied with," notes Adorama Learning Center editor Mason Resnick. "The variety of guides ranges from simple gear for snapshooters to accessory gear guides aimed at professional photographers, as well as a wide-ranging mix of video, home theater, computer, and printer guides."

Camera buying guides include top Compact Digital Cameras, Mirrorless Interchangeable-Lens Compacts, ideal cameras for low-light photography, and DSLRs. Other photography guides include suggested sports and macro photography kits, all-in-one lenses for DSLRs, and accessory guides for items costing $100 or less, or $100-250. There are also recommendations for top camera bags, eBay photography, still-life tents, tripods for travelers, and accessories every wedding photographer should bring along.

For videographers, there are guides to the best DSLRs for video, must-have video accessories, guides to pocket-sized high-definition camcorders designed to capture point-of-view action, and a guide to microphones for video.

"Consumer electronics guides include home theater systems, affordable digital projectors, and 3D flat screen TVs," says Resnick. "There are guides to help consumers choose accessories for their smart phones, tablets, netbooks, and laptop computers, as well as guides to optics and telescopes. Want to do bird photography in your backyard? Interested in exploring the cosmos with a telescope? It's all in there."

This Satellite is Out of This World

Title: Seagate Satellite Mobile Wireless Storage Device
Manufacturer: Seagate
Model: STBF500101 (500GB)
Web site: www.seagate.com (*www.seagate.com/external-hard-drives/portable-hard-drives/wireless/seagate-satellite/*)
Price: $189.99 list ($169.99 on Amazon (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004Z0S7K6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B004Z0S7K6&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*))

The Seagate Satellite, part of the Seagate GoFlex Storage System, is a wireless storage solution that allows you to stream all sorts of content to almost any Wi-Fi enabled device either by using a Web browser or a free app optimized for most tablets and smartphones.

Setup is a breeze. Just charge up the Satellite; plug it into your laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone via USB; and transfer your media. Enjoy up to 7 hours of continuous streaming per charge—the perfect solution for devices that don't have all that much storage space to begin with.

And it's not just for photos, music, and documents. Got a gang at home? The Satellite also makes it easy to stream up to three different HD movies to three different Wi-Fi enabled devices at the same time. You can get hundreds of (compressed) movies onto the thing. To test it out, I set it up at home and was able to play one movie in my son's room, another in my daughter's, all while my wife and I watched a third down in the living room. No transfer hiccups at all.
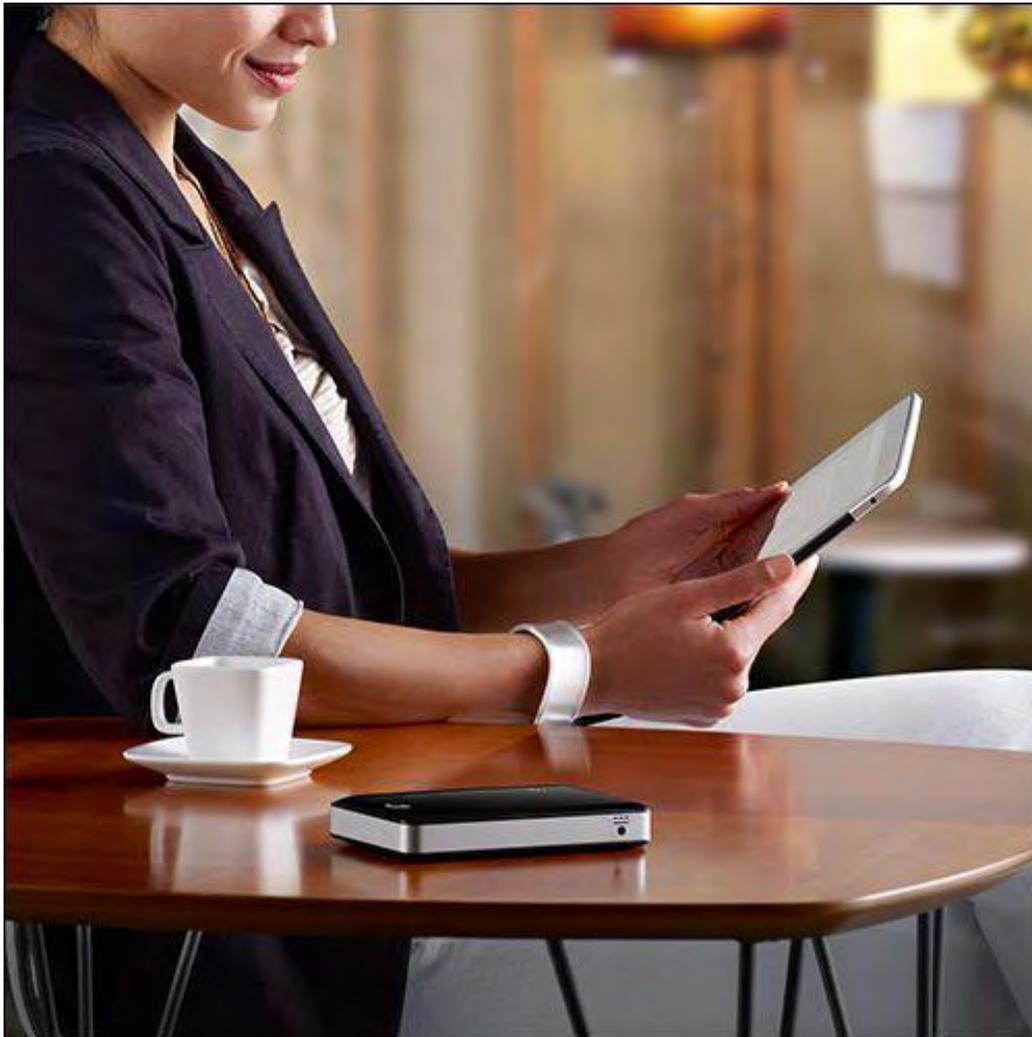
I've read forum posts by a few other users who told me they had some problems with initial setup and navigating the file system, two of whom were Mac users, but I didn't have any problems whatsoever.

There are lots of ways to content around wirelessly, but the Seagate Satellite Mobile Wireless Storage Device is one of the simplest, most dependable ways I've yet seen.

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System Requirements (from Seagate):

• iPad, smartphone, tablet or computer with a Web browser and Wi-Fi connectivity (802.11 b/g/n)

• PC or Mac computer running Windows 7, Windows Vista, Windows XP, or Mac OS 10.5.8 or later operating system for loading media onto Seagate Satellite mobile wireless storage device via USB

• SuperSpeed USB 3.0 port (required for USB 3.0 transfer speeds) or USB 2.0 port

• 500GB of storage capacity

• Up to 7 hours battery life, 25 hours standby time

• Wi-Fi range up to 150 feet

Other available interfaces include FireWire 800 and powered eSATA using compatible cables (sold separately).

In the box: Satellite mobile wireless storage device, USB 3.0 USM adapter with detachable USB 3.0 cable, compact wall adapter with retractable pins, compact car charger, USB to DC cable, quick start guide, warranty.

vPulse In-ear Canalphones —"Bring the Bass?"

Product name: vPulse
Manufacturer: Velodyne Acoustics, Inc.
Web site: velodyne.com (*velodyne.com/vpulse-earphones.html*)
Price: $99 at Amazon (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006CVF1P0/ref=as_li_ss_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B006CVF1P0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)

The standard earbuds included with Apple's music playing iDevices meet a lot of users' needs and auditory sensibilities, as evidenced by their ubiquity in the real world. Although replacing these earbuds involves an additional cost, music lovers might want an upgrade that would enhance their listening experience. One alternative with potential appeal to a wider audience than just serious audiophiles and/or one-percenters is Velodyne Acoutics' vPulse in-ear canalphones (*www.techhive.com/article/2000079/infographic-the-different-types-of-headphones-illustrated.html*).

The vPulse in-ear canalphones (IECs) come in a user-friendly package that thankfully doesn't require surgical instruments and/or superhuman powers to break open. It consists of a white glossy cardboard box within a cardboard sleeve that is easy to open (unlike the sealed plastic bubbles that some competitors prefer). After removing the package's outer sleeve (which has a picture of vPulse on the front side and useful information on the flip side that includes specs, a list of compatible iDevices, package contents, features, and more), you open the interior cardboard box by tugging on a looped black fabric strip. The box, in turn, houses a plastic mold which holds its contents securely in place (Figure 1).

Figure 1. vPulse in-ear-canalphones (IECs) come in an eye-catching cardboard box (above left) with a sleeve (above right) showing one of this product's IECs below the marketing line "bring the bass."

vPulse IECs' standard accessories include an English-only user guide booklet (containing registration information, list of package contents, specifications, warnings, safety and care instructions, usage instructions, warranty information, service and support information, and how to recycle), a handy zippered pouch, a plastic alligator clip, and two packages of silicone sleeves. One package of sleeves contains five black pairs (small, two pairs of medium, large, and extra large), the other contains four grey pairs (only one pair of medium). Although this generous variety of sleeve size and color combinations should maximize the likelihood of finding a good and/or comfortable fit, this reviewer's experience was the opposite (details in a moment).

In addition to the above accessories, the box also contains the vPulse IECs in one of three color options—Classic Black, Velodyne Electric Blue, or Hot Pink. The unit for this review is Classic Black, and interestingly it physically differs from the unit on the package's sleeve and the user guide's cover page in two aspects (cf., Figure 2, A and B). One difference is that the review unit's casing has a raised metallic letter V on the side opposite the driver while the pictured unit has a black letter V on a raised hexagonal shape. The other difference is that the review unit's remote control has up and down arrows while the pictured unit has plus and minus signs for changing the volume level. Are these differences evidence of mere cosmetic changes, or do they accompany an underlying hardware upgrade? Stay tuned for a potential answer to this question below.
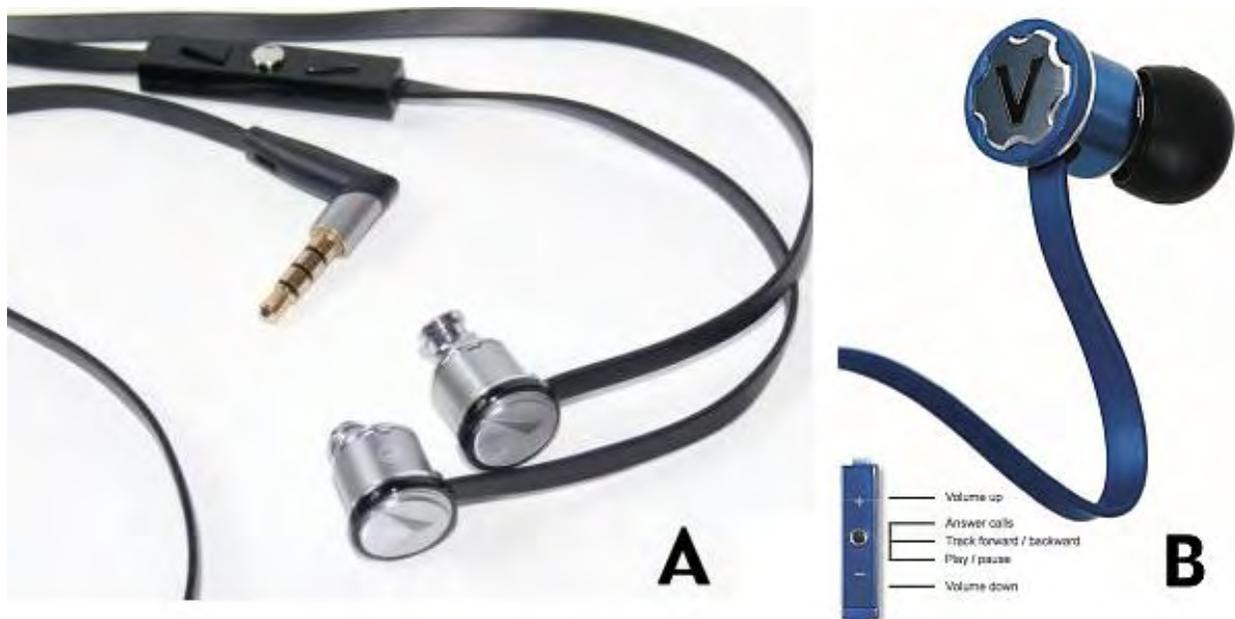

Figure 2. The Classic Black review unit (A) has a raised metallic letter V on its casing and up and down arrows on its remote; the Electric Blue unit (B) shown in the user guide and on the package's sleeve has a black letter V on a raised hexagonal shape and plus and minus signs on its remote. Cosmetic, or evidence that the review unit is a new version vPulse?.

What I like most about vPulse IECs is their design. The aforementioned casing is made of aluminum, has clearly legible letters L (Figure 2A) and R indicating their respective stereo channels, and it contains 10 mm drivers with 20 Hz-20 kHz frequency response, 92 dB/1 mW sensitivity, 16 dB at 1 kHz noise reduction, and 16 ohm impedance according to the product's specs. At the ear end of these casings is a driver post oriented at an angle (Figure 2A; my guess is its ~30º) rather than extended straight out from the casing. This design facilitates insertion of the silicone sleeve into the user's ear canal; it also deters looping the cables above and over the user's ear lobe. Perhaps most importantly though, the vPulse IECs' 43.5" cables are flat rather than the usual cylindrical shape. These cables, during testing, absolutely refused to get tangled up like spaghetti; instead, they went into use essentially immediately, thereby maximizing the time available for actually listening to music rather than spending time untangling. Woo hoo!

Additional design elements worth noting and appreciating—the integrated remote is located about five inches below the left casing (which puts it near the user's neck or shoulder), and its three buttons (the aforementioned arrow-shaped volume controls plus a circular multifunction control for play-pause, fast forward, rewind, phone calls, and more) are sufficiently separated and raised that they are easy to operate without mistakenly pushing one

when intending to push another; the 3.5 mm plug is gold-plated, angled at 90º, and the housing in which the cable enters the plug should be durable (no troubles during testing).

Although the above design features make the vPulse IECs a compelling choice from a usability perspective, their equally compelling weakness is how they sound. During testing, regardless of which of the nine included pairs of silicone sleeves were installed (with some accompanying discomfort or pain), the audio was terrific…except for the bass. Vocals, lead and rhythm electric or acoustic guitars, keyboards, percussion instruments, brass, and strings all were detailed, rich, and crystal clear…except for bass guitars, drums, and strings. My impression of all bass instruments was that they sounded only OK, as if they were mumbling rather than clearly enunciating their notes. A good example supporting this impression is John McVie's brief bass guitar solo in "The Chain" on Fleetwood Mac's recorded concert "The Dance." All other instruments in that song—Lindsay Buckingham's lead guitar, Christine McVie's keyboards, and Mick Fleetwood's diverse percussion set—sound rich while the bass McVie brought sounds just ordinary. A lack of bass typically can be attributed to an inadequate fit and/or seal created by the silicone sleeves. However, during testing for this review, the seal was sufficient to mitigate ambient noises in various environments (bus; trolley; living room; etc.).

What makes this impression particularly puzzling is that Velodyne Acoustics, a company renowned for their subwoofers, advertises the vPulse IECs (*velodyne.com/vpulse-earphones.html*) with the tag line "bring the bass." Adding to this puzzle, other reviews raved about the vPulse IECs' bass; Macworld's description (*www.macworld. com/article/1168496/velodyne_vpulse_headphones_offer_big_bass_without_offending.html#lsrc.rss_main*) was "big bass," PC Magazine's was (*/www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2407817,00.asp*) "rich bass," and CNET's was (*reviews.cnet.com/headphones/velodyne-vpulse-black/4505-7877_7-35370111.html*) "impressive bass response." Were those reviews' units the same as this review's?

That question leads us back to the earlier one—are the differences between casings and remote in the review unit and those shown in the user guide and packaging evidence of mere cosmetic changes, or do they accompany an underlying hardware upgrade? Perhaps the review unit is a different version with different bass properties than the previous version. We can only speculate...

In conclusion, vPulse IECs are an excellent third-party replacement for the standard ear buds included with Apple's iDevices. They come with an unusually generous diversity of accessories, their design is compellingly user friendly, and they do sound terrific other than their bass. If vPulse IECs' bass during this review had lived up to the company's tag line "bring the bass," they would bring my highest rating; instead, they get penalized half a globe.

Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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

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

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

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

Carr has judged many writing competitions including San Diego Press Club and Time-Warner Communications

contests and was sole judge for the national NAPPA Tech Toys awards for five years (which his kids really appreciated). He was recently a judge for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition.

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

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

Learn more at *www.charlescarr.com*.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Copy-and-Paste AutoHotkey script," "Gesture Control," "Dual Monitors Swapped after Sleep," "Vista Slow to Boot," "Start Menu Simulation"

Copy-and-Paste AutoHotkey script

[Regarding the February 15 A Beginners Tip, Plus Solving More AutoHotkey Script Issues column:]

I discovered that when I copy-and-paste your Reminder script from IE10 to Notepad, it all runs together in two lines. It won't work until numerous "Enter" keys are added in exactly the right places. Is there a way to copy-and-paste the script as shown in the Web page? If not, perhaps you could include a downloadable text file.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

[That's odd. I tested it myself with IE10 and Notepad without any problem. Perhaps a different browser or text editor would do the job.

*In any case, I've added it to our published Dropbox AutoHotkey folder (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/ QdMY1dNuy7*). It's called* Reminder 1.4.ahk*. There will be other versions in the future which I will also add to this folder.*

-Jack

Gesture Control

[Regarding Marilyn K. Martin's February 15 article, "More Little Known High Tech Stories":]

Marilyn K. Martin,

I do not work for Leap Motion.

A soon to be released product which you failed to mention is the Leap Motion Controller (*www.leapmotion.com/*). Per the company Web site: "The Leap Motion controller senses your individual hand and finger movements so you can interact directly with your computer. Just connect our device and instantly get 8 cubic feet of...3D interaction space."

A while back, I read this article (*www.engadget.com/2012/05/21/leap-motion-3d-motion-and-gesture-control/*): "Leap Motion has created a new device, called the Leap, it claims is 200 times more accurate than existing technology...it creates a eight-cubic-foot virtual workspace. Within that area, it tracks all ten of your fingers simultaneously to within 1/100 of a millimeter..."
And after reading the Engadget story, I have pre-ordered their product. I hope mine arrives soon.

-Chuck, Broomfield, CO

Dual Monitors Swapped after Sleep

[Regarding the February 15 Digital Dave column:]

Another thought for the user with the Windows 7 machine that swaps the monitors after sleep.

Try swapping the monitor connections on the video card. Perhaps one or the other is sensed first. He'll have to redo his monitor 1 and 2 setup/default, but it might cure the problem of coming up after sleep.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Regarding Marc's dual monitor problem, I don't have the exact setup, so I can't reproduce the problem, but if running something after waking up from suspend/hibernation cures the problem, perhaps he can try this AutoHotkey script.

```
#Persistent
OnMessage(0x218, "WM_POWERBROADCAST")
WM_POWERBROADCAST(wParam, lParam)
{
    ; 6 :PBT_APMRESUMECRITICAL
    ; 7 :PBT_APMRESUMESUSPEND
    If (wParam = 6 or wParam = 7) {
        Sleep 1000
        Run "thing_that_fixes_dual_monitor_problem"
    }
    Return True
}
```

-Sol, San Diego, CA

Vista Slow to Boot

[Regarding the January 25 Digital Dave column:]

A 30 second boot is ridiculously long for a computer using WIN 8 plus of all things an SSD. I get less than 30 sec boot on *all* my machines (notebooks and desktops) with just XP using HDDs. On the Anandtech forums it is reported that with WIN 8 and an SSD the boot is literally seconds (no splash screen) to a useable desk top.

Seems to me that the user has a configuration issue which needs investigation.

-Chris Romel, San Diego, CA

Start Menu Simulation

[Regarding the February 15 Windows Tips and Tricks: Adding Custom Toolbars to the Taskbar column:]

The Windows 7 Start Menu combines the list of programs from two different Start Menus, *appdata* and *programdata*, and also contains many other useful locations. I wonder if you can recommend a true start menu replacement. (I know that several can be downloaded.) I'm sure you agree the Windows 8 Start Screen is a poor substitute. The "All Apps" menu is more complete than the Start Screen but doesn't allow any customization and there is no way to boot to it directly.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

ComputorEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at ComputorEdge.com (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook*). Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section.If you want to submit a short "ComputorQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at *ceeditor@computoredge.com*. If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit ComputorEdge E-Books (*www.computoredgebooks.com/*).