ComputorEdge™ Online — 03/08/13
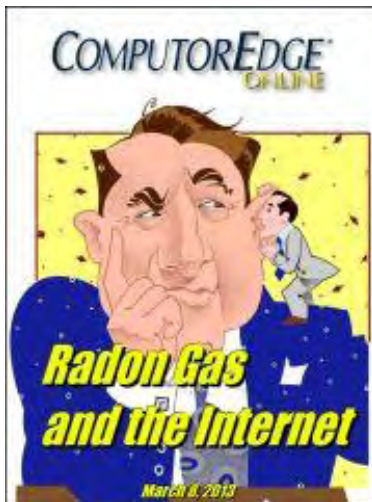
This issue:
Radon Gas and the Internet

Odorless, Colorless Radon Gas Is Scaring Us to Death

Table of Contents:

The Macintosh in the Enterprise; The iPad Drives a Car; The Most Difficult Devices to Repair and Modify; Learning Computer Programming; Arkansas State University to Require Students to Use iPads; Facebook Losing its Cool; The Disk Utility Program.

Beyond Personal Computing by Marilyn K. Martin

Managers: Love 'Em, Hate 'Em—Stuck With 'Em
Amusing anecdotes all about managers.

DEPARTMENTS:

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers by ComputorEdge Staff

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.
"Steampunk Not for Me," "Of Internet Troll," "Anti-adware, Virus Protection for iPad," "Loved Your Article on Doctors and Mobile Computing"
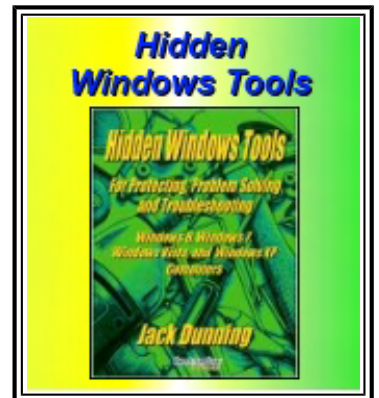
Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *cewebmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2013 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

ComputorEdge Magazine, P.O. Box 83086, San Diego, CA 92138. (858) 573-0315

Digital Dave

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

Adobe Reader Update Problem; Possible Article of Interest: SSD Reliability; Wi-Fi Connection Problem.

Dear Digital Dave,

Once again I turn to you, Dave, always so helpful! We all read about the importance of Reader updates, the latest flaw, etc. For quite some time, whenever I try to get the update from Adobe (and today from CNET), it downloads and then on install says the "installation failed." I believe I have tried it with both Firefox and Chrome, with or without Avast active, and it never works. The Program list shows that we have Reader X and we need XI. Any advice, please?!

Sandy
San Diego, CA

Dear Sandy,

It seems that every time I turn around my browser is telling me Adobe Reader needs to be updated—even if I've just updated it. It gets pretty annoying. It's seems your problem is worse.

Most likely you need to first uninstall Reader via Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP) found in the Control Panel before installing the new version. There are probably some issues with the last install. For more information, check out this Adobe help page (*helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/update-errors-acrobat-reader-windows.html*).

Apparently Adobe has a lot of problems with installations because there are a bunch of help pages. Many offer similar solutions, but if you continue having problems then it may be worthwhile to work through them all:

• Troubleshoot Reader Installations (*helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/troubleshoot-reader-installation-windows.html*)

• Error 1402 | Error 1406 | Acrobat, Reader (*helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/error-1402-error-1406-acrobat.html*)

• Error 1935 | Install | Acrobat, Reader | Windows (*helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/error-1935-install-acrobat-reader.html*)

Good luck,

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

*I thought you might find this article interesting, "How SSD (Solid State Drive) power faults scramble your data (*www.zdnet.com/how-ssd-power-faults-scramble-your-data-7000011979/*)."*

Chris Romel
San Diego, CA

Dear Chris,

It is definitely an interesting article, although not surprising. This information just emphasizes what has always been true—no technology is perfect. This is why I always push people to do automatic backup. It doesn't matter whether you use hard drive storage or solid state drives, there are always potential problems which can damage your data. I prefer to use multiple backup techniques for my most critical files. I backup to an external USB drive, plus sync files to another computer, then implement automatic backup of that backup machine to a second drive.

I noticed while perusing Jack Dunning's e-book *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00B8Z2ASG&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)* that he devotes no less than six chapters to the various ways to back up Windows computers. This is certainly worth taking seriously. They haven't yet invented error-proof or foolproof technology.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a new HP desktop computer with Windows 8 and a built-in b,g,n Wi-Fi connector. When I am connected to my home wireless system all works well, if I put the computer into sleep mode and use it again in a few hours all works well. If the computer is left in sleep mode for a couple of days, the Wi-Fi does not connect until it is manually disconnected and reconnected again. The indicator in the lower right hand corner of the screen shows that it is connected when actually it does not work until I proceed to disconnect/reconnect it. How can I fix it so that it remains connected?

Sam
San Diego, CA

Dear Sam,

My initial reaction is to say, "Don't let your computer go into Sleep mode." However, there may actually be a solution recognized in Windows 8—and possibly other versions.

Some of the early suggestions by people who've encounter the problem were to uninstall the network setups via the Device Manager and let Windows reinstall them after reboot. While this appeared to work, it seems that the more direct approach is to make sure that "Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power" is checked in the Power Management tab of the Properties window for the network device in Device Manager (see Figure 1). This is a little counter intuitive because it would seem that you would want to leave it on. However, this is not the case.
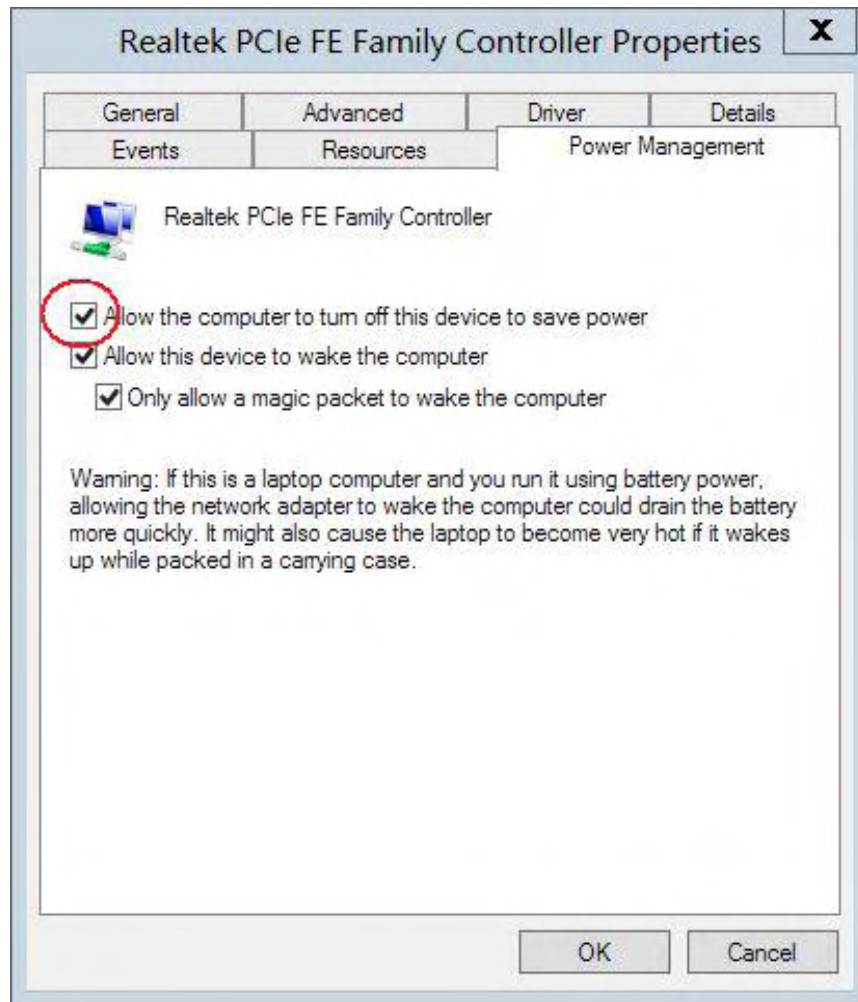
Figure 1. Make sure that "Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power" is checked in the Power Management tab of the Properties window.

It turns out that uninstalling and reinstalling the network device was resetting the Power Management option to checked as shown—the default.

To access the device Properties window in Windows 8, use the +X hotkey and select Device Manager. Navigate to "Network adapters" and select the appropriate card. Right-click and select Properties, or click the Action menu and select Properties, then click the Power Management tab.

If you would like more information, check out this Microsoft Answers page (*answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/ forum/windows_7-networking/wifi-very-slow-to-reconnect-if-at-all-after-sleep/0d925acd-e789-456c-a4eb- 444cd1876085*).

Digital Dave

Radon Gas and the Internet

"The Internet Says Radon Gas Is Killing You" by Jack Dunning

The problem with getting information from the Internet is that most Web pages are simply parroting each other.

Recently the local newspaper ran some articles about the dangers of radon gas in homes. Radon gas is colorless, odorless and radioactive. It is the byproduct of the breakdown of underground radioactive material which seeps up into homes that happen to sit over the deposits. The articles state that radon gas is a major contributing factor to lung cancer—especially for smokers. The inset map included with the newspaper article showed that the area where I live has a particularly high level of measured radon. Naturally this is concerning for me. I want to know when there is a colorless, odorless gas killing me.

My initial reaction was to get a test kit for the radon gas, but the local Home Depot was sold out—probably due to the run caused by the newspaper articles. So I got on the Internet and surfed to Amazon looking for radon gas test kits and/or detection devices. This caused me even greater confusion. The comments by buyers stated that the test kits (mailed in for analysis) were hit and miss, and the detection devices were over $100. I needed more information before I could decide which would work for me.

According to the printed newspaper articles, just because your neighbor's house has low radon levels, there is no reason to believe the concentrations in your house will be low. Apparently, it is random selection regardless of whether you live in either a high or low radon gas concentration area. It probably depends upon how much uranium is buried under your house. Since buildings tend to trap the radon gas, the only safe thing to do seems to be living and sleeping outside where the gas will float away.
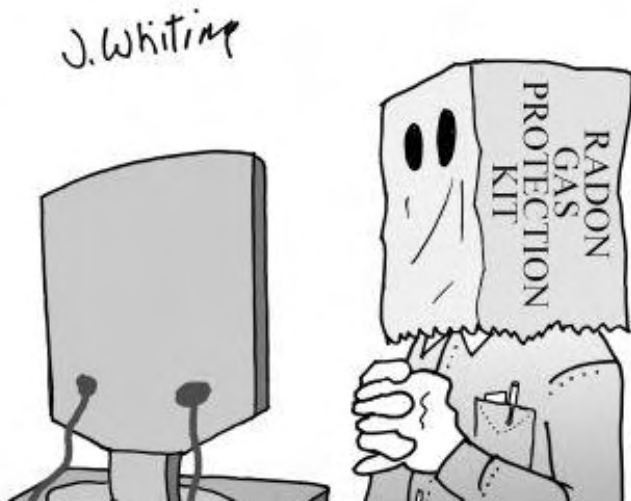
The danger from radon gas comes from the radioactive particles floating in the air—the most dangerous of which are the alpha particles—the nucleus of the Helium atom. If inhaled, these particles may contribute to lung cancer. Alpha particles can be stopped by a piece of paper, so I've considered wearing a paper bag over my head— which has other added benefits. (That's a joke! I shouldn't be joking.) The abatement of radon gas has become a big business.

The standard treatment for radon concentrations (other than sealing cracks in the basement) is sucking air out from under the house (or from the basement) with a pipe

Jack found his Radon Gas Protection
Kit on the Internet at Amazon.com.

and a fan. The cost is usually over $1000 for this setup. But, before springing for that kind of fix, I want to know that I have a problem. Again, I turned to my primary source of information—the Internet.

Radon Gas and the Internet

In my initial Web searches I mostly turned up companies that were either selling radon detection kits and/or services, or companies wanting to rid my house of the poisonous gas. (I even found a scary video (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S8vr27plZs*).) After searching on the key words "radon myths (*www.google.com/search?q=Radon%20Myths*)" I discovered a Web page oriented toward giving specific information about radon's sources, dangers, detection, and abatement. The page "Radon—A Brief Discussion (*www.forensic-applications.com/radon/radon.html*)" was written by Caoimhín P. Connell, Forensic Industrial Hygienist.

As I perused the article I noted how Connell seemed to approach the topic from an objective "this is what we know" and "this is what we don't know" basis. He didn't say that radon gas wasn't a problem, but he did point out why we really don't know if it's as bad as we've been told by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He discussed the studies used to make the "official" determinations and recommendations about the dangers of radon gas. Connell covered the different methods of testing for signs of radon and their reliability. Then he finally covered the various methods for radon gas abatement. After reading the article I came away thinking that I had a pretty good understanding of what is known about radon gas and its effect on humans—which isn't very much. OK, now let's see what everyone else has to say.

The Dominant Thought on Radon Gas

As I continued reading some of the other articles on the Web I started to see a common theme. Not only was I seeing the same thoughts, but they were using the exact same words:

"MYTH: Scientists are not sure that radon really is a problem.

"FACT: Although some scientists dispute the precise number of deaths due to radon, all the major health organizations (like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Lung Association and the American Medical Association) agree with estimates that radon causes thousands of preventable lung cancer deaths every year. This is especially true among smokers, since the risk to smokers is much greater than to non-smokers."

If it were not for the fact that Connell's Web page appeared at the top of the Google search list, all I would have seen were articles with those parroted words. I'm not saying that the words aren't true, I just wanted something more than a reiteration of one source. The writers had not bothered to do any research of their own. This is a major problem with the Internet. There are so many people who copy-and-paste when they write an article that the common theme drowns out all other information. The abundance of the single-mind (copied) opinion on a topic convinces people that it must be right. If something is said enough times, people become convinced that it's true. After all, *everyone* is saying it.

Connell cited 2010 as the year of the most recent studies he had reviewed for his article. I decided to e-mail him asking if there had been any more recent studies on the effects of radon gas. I told him that much of what I had found on the Internet was merely a regurgitation of text found on other Web sites. I was surprise at Connell's response, not just because he responded (many people don't bother), but by the length and nature of his remarks. He did offer an additional study (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Thompson%20Hormesis%202011.pdf*) which I've posted for anyone who cares to investigate further. (The best that I could determine was the study concluded that more study is needed—that is if more study is even possible.) The bulk of Connell's e-mail was devoted to the question(s) of "'Does the Internet impact thinking?' Or, is it valid to expand the question to an even larger issue? Could the bigger question be 'Has a flawed mind-set on how information is presented been magnified by the Internet?'"

I found Connell's e-mail intriguing, although certainly not without controversy. Rather than merely excerpting the e-

mail and giving my take on it, I've decided to publish it as a second article in this issue of *ComputorEdge*. You make your own decision. However, the topic does illuminate the problem with getting information from the Internet.

Connell uses the terms tautology (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tautology_(rhetoric)*) and tautologist throughout his e-mail. This is essentially a reference to people who copy the work of others when supposedly doing independent research, or, as I referenced in the Internet repetition of warnings about radon gas, merely cite what others are saying without any further investigation. The Internet is not the source of tautology, but it certain magnifies the repetition of beliefs and can drown out opposing data.

The Internet Magnifies and Overwhelms

Facts don't change. We just don't always know what the facts are. O.J. Simpson either killed Nicole or he didn't. The only one who knows for sure is O.J. himself (or the real killer(s), if he didn't do it). If he did do it in fact, then not guilty verdicts have absolutely no bearing on the fact that he did it. It is immutable. It makes no difference what I or anyone else thinks, the facts won't change. We just don't know what the fact is—O.J. does.

The same is true for scientific facts. The truth is not altered by our opinions. We may not know the truth, but our thinking doesn't alter it. Truth is not determined by voting. The argument that "most scientists agree" is specious. Science is not determined by popular belief. The fact that there may be more scientists on one side of a debate than another does not make the majority right (or wrong). It's completely irrelevant. It is just as possible for one million scientists to be wrong as it is for another to be right—especially in the age of the Internet.

The Internet amplifies popular thought. If something "sounds good" then it gets repeated again and again until it's all that can be heard. This trumpeting finally turns into reiterated pap which should be ignored as a series of obviously trite statements—but it isn't. Through the incessant repetition the view is taken as gospel. The Internet offers a forum of popular voting for an idea—which may or may not have some element of truth in it. Who knows? Few people do real research anymore. Repetition does not make truth.

We do know that dissenting points of view tend to be drowned out by the popular themes on the Web. When so many Web pages are espousing the same set of "facts" it is very difficult for disagreement to even appear on a Google search page. It is a testament to Connell's page on radon that it appears at the top of the "radon myths" search page. There is vast competition from the repeatedly copied Web pages.

If an opposing point of view does manage to breakthrough on the Internet, it is usually followed by series of attacks from adherents to the prevailing idea. These attacks are often in the form of the character assassination of the messenger.

The Scientific Truth Can Be Found with Verbal Attacks—Not!

I'm even more amazed when I read the comments attached to various Blogs and videos discussing radon dangers. "What moron thinks a home shouldn't be tested? lol." "You are an idiot. I am a Radon Mitigation Installer and depending on what state and area you live in, your Curie (Ci) levels can be very high. For an idiot like you, compare it to asbestos... is asbestos a real threat? That's what I thought..."

The use of attacks and inflammatory language to dismiss opposing views doesn't make an advocate right. The aggressive commenters seem to think that verbally beating other people into submission makes their point valid. If there's disagreement on a topic, some on the Internet feel righteously justified in calling people names. It's as if attacking people will scientifically prove their point. Scientific fact is not altered by invective. But no amount of argument or bullying will change the truth—whatever that is.

The Web Is Just the Web

I do a great deal of research on the Web. It's a fantastic tool. I've learned a few Google tricks to get past the chaff of Spam sites, scams, and the repetition of misinformation. However, as with any tool, it's not much help if you don't know how to use it. When the Internets failings are not understood, it can easily do damage by misleading and misinforming.

My mother died of lung cancer at age 60. She never smoked cigarettes, although as a Navy wife she had been

around a lot of smokers. She also loved to garden and used spray insecticides on her flowers. Could radon have been the source of her cancer? Possibly, but so could have a number of other causes. When my mother died of lung cancer we wondered how, as a non-smoker, she could have gotten it. But was it caused by radon gas? As far as I know there is no way to determine whether a particular case of lung cancer came from radon gas as opposed to some other cause. There are estimates of how many cases of lung cancer a year are caused by radon gas, but I wonder how they know this. Is there a test that shows radon was the culprit?

The problem is that we depend upon others to read and interpret the studies used to make "official governmental" determinations about health hazards. If the people in those positions don't do their job properly, then we are left to fend for ourselves. Unfortunately, the Internet does not help when cluttered with repetitious Web pages. On the other hand, without the Internet I would never have found Connell's page on radon gas. You should judge for yourself whether Connell takes a rational approach to the topic.

I don't claim to know the answers when it comes to the dangers of radon gas. I don't think anyone does. My concern is how positions are based upon suspect information, then amplified by the Internet—which also aids in squelching dissenting information. Because so many people are saying it, we take it as truth. If someone disagrees, they are accused of being a "radon gas denier" as if it's the same as being a "holocaust denier." Eventually, government regulations are put in place to force everyone to test and abate a problem we don't really understand. Soon the lawsuits will follow. We should be able to engage in reasoned debate, but it seems that too many people have a particular ax to grind.

Take your Internet with a grain of salt.

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.

Does Repetition on the Internet Make It True?

"An E-mail from Caoimhin P. Connell, Forensic Industrial Hygienist" by ComputorEdge Staff

> Caoimhin Connell has spent his life looking for the truth. The Internet seems to make it more difficult. Is he making progress or merely tilting at windmills? You decide.

Included is the response to the following e-mail from Jack Dunning:

I was looking into the effects of radon gas, when I came across your article which sounded well-reasoned and unbiased. I then noticed that almost all other information on the Web was a parrot of EPA talking points—word for word. I've since decided to write an article for my online magazine ComputorEdge *about how the Web impacts information, especially on controversial topics. Your article seems to be a prime example.*

My one question for you is whether there have been any more conclusive studies on radon since 2010. I found it difficult to locate anything since there is so much parroted chaff. If you have time, please let me know.

Good morning, Mr. Dunning,

Thank you for the e-mail. Yours is an interesting argument and so let's set aside the radon issue for a moment to see if there is a bigger picture and ask "Does the Internet impact thinking?" Or, is it valid to expand the question to an even larger issue? Could the bigger question be "Has a flawed mind-set on how information is presented been magnified by the Internet?"

Western Society has come to view scientific publications in peer reviewed journals as reliable science; and an accurate reflection of objective observable fact and even scientific consensus.

Historically, this view was justifiable and "scientific studies" were indeed reliable; because they were thought-based and objective. However, starting in the late Sixties, a troubling trend began to emerge; the occasional scientific paper was retracted, ostensibly due to an honest error. Then, more papers were being retracted due to duplicate publications and plagiarism. This type of questionable conduct gave way to methodical misconduct; and eventually outright scientific fraud. More and more, we have seen this very troubling trend continue, which has not undermined the traditional confidence attributed to scientific studies even though the information in those studies has become less reliable.

This trend has also produced a new type of scientific practitioner; the "Tautologist (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tautology_ (rhetoric)*)." Is scientific tautology a threat to thinking?

You are probably aware of the austere nature of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences is arguably one of those still-reliable sources of objective and sound science. Therefore, when a paper appeared in The Proceedings a couple of months ago (October 16, 2012 edition (Vol. 109, No. 42) titled "Misconduct Accounts for the Majority of Retracted Scientific Publications" (Fang FC, Steen RG, Casadevall A), it should have been particularly noteworthy. The authors revealed that the most common reason for retraction of 2,047 peer reviewed articles was fraud/suspected fraud, and that information becomes very important in the war against tautology, since those are the very papers that gain their credibility through repetitive citation, not content. That is, if one repeats a false statement enough, and is repeated by a growing number of tautologists, then the false information becomes accepted. Nothing new there—but has the Internet magnified the problem?

So, we need to ask ourselves, which came first; the Internet or the fraudulent trend in scientific papers?

In the late 1980s, I was an analytical chemist with a research institute that was asked by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to participate in a national proficiency "round robin" for analyzing elemental lead in whole blood using atomic absorption spectroscopy. A total of 84 labs from across the country agreed to participate. When the results were published, my laboratory was the only lab which was declared "non-proficient" since my results were outside of the relative Gaussian score (greater than two standard deviations) from all the other laboratories. My work was called into question by my laboratory director, who was concerned about the "error" I had obviously made, since my work was not in agreement with that of 83 other laboratories.

I won't go into all the details at this point, but eventually the issue was resolved—it was found that 83 laboratories across the country had all referenced (sole sourced) a flawed analytical method. Only one of the analysts (me), took the time to initially sit down, and ask the necessary analytical question, and develop a method for the analysis of lead in blood. At the end of the day, it was discovered that 83 laboratories all got the same (wrong) answer, because they all used the same (flawed) reference. One chemist, got the right answer, because only one chemist thought the question through. A real-life example of tautology in motion before the Internet. Of course, I too had done a state-of-the-art literature search and found a copy of the flawed method—however, I did something none of the other analysts did; I tested the validity of the method in my laboratory and found the method was flawed, so I rejected the method that was blindly accepted by my peers, and developed a different method.

A similar event reoccurred ten years later over the issue surrounding the imaginary "toxic black mold," Stachybotrys atra. Curiously, I was working for a different organization, but under the same laboratory director when an article appeared in the US CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) titled Acute Pulmonary Hemorrhage/Hemosiderosis Among Infants — Cleveland, January 1993–November 1994. (Dearborn DG, et al.. MMWR December 09, 1994 / 43(48);881-883). This article was the fraudulent and disastrous publication that launched the "toxic black mold" scare from which the American public has yet to fully recover.

At the time of the publication, virtually none of my colleagues actually read the MMWR article but rather, merely accepted the conclusions of the authors as found in the short abstract. Worst still, being tautologists, they began to reference the article over and over the abstract, then worse still, began to interpret what they presumed the article may have said and we began to see meta-abstracts of the findings. It became an elaborate, and well constructed, house of cards.

I, however, did the unthinkable in my profession—I actually read the paper and analyzed the findings. What I found was that the paper was fatally flawed; the conclusions were not supported by the data. At the time, the asbestos issue was dying down, and Industrial Hygienists were scrambling to keep their private practices afloat—and "toxic mold" was just the boat they had been hoping for. The scare was on, and there was cash to be made.

The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) had recently launched a new Internet phenomenon called a "chat-board." I went onto the chat-board, and discussed my findings, and the flawed nature of the MMWR paper. The issue became so violently contentious, the ACGIH shut down the chat-board; permanently.

While my learnèd colleagues had dollar signs in their eyes and began running around testing for "toxic mold" thus cashing in on the emerging issue, I stuck to the science, and once again became a pariah in my scientific community. Up to the point of very nearly being fired from my senior position because I would not swallow the story, my Boss (forgetting our past situation) sat me in his office and asked me "So you think you are right and the rest of the world is wrong, including the US Centers for Disease Control?" I asked my Boss if he had actually read the paper that was causing the stir, and even he admitted that he had not read the article. My Boss stated that the did not have to read the article since MMWR was sufficiently respectable to merely believe the abstract. The MMWR would not publish junk-science, therefore, I must be wrong.

Ultimately, of course, the US Centers for Disease Control announced the "errors" in the paper (including fabricated data—scientific fraud), retracted the "toxic mold" paper, and apologized for publishing junk-science. As finally admitted by the US CDC in March of 2000, the CDC concluded they had been mistaken in reporting that "toxic molds" in general and Stachybotrys in particular responsible for the earlier reported illnesses. Two international scientific communities had been convened to look at the original report, and in a March 2000 statement, the CDC stated:

Both groups of reviewers concluded that the available evidence does not substantiate the reported epidemiologic associations—between household water damage and AIPH or between household fungi and AIPH —or any inferences regarding causality. (US Centers for Disease MMWR Update: Pulmonary Hemorrhage /Hemosiderosis Among Infants — Cleveland, Ohio, 1993–1996, MMWR, Vol. 49, No. 9, March 10, 2000)

You can read the whole story at Forensic Applications' Web site (*www.forensic-applications.com/moulds/sok.html*).

But for almost seven years, the entire Industrial Hygiene community through the winds of Internet tautology,

fanned the flames of fraud and fear, and billions of dollars were unnecessarily spent on addressing an imaginary "toxic mold." To this day (and up to just last week), I continue to oppose and testify against my colleagues who still haven't read the original report, let alone the retraction, and who still reference the now discredited and withdrawn report.

At the heart of the failure of the appropriate scientific communities to be the gatekeeper of good science, was an abdication of sound analytical thinking, driven in part by the desire to make a lot of money as quickly as possible before the gravy train ran out—honesty and integrity be damned. (You should be aware that I was removed from a teaching position at a college for refusing to remove a 20 minute segment from my curriculum on "ethics." I was told by the college administration that: "Ethics has no place in today's curriculum.")

Scientific fraud, magnified by the Scientific Tautologist is continuing to this very day. Consider the very recent scientific fraud perpetuated through the National Jewish Hospital paper authored by Dr. John Martyny. Released in September of last year, the paper made an instant splash across the globe, and within a day, my office was receiving communications from as far away as England regarding the paper. Law enforcement communities across the globe have latched on to the paper, and through reliance on a false argument of "authority" they are perpetuating the fabrication through tautology in the Internet (although they have never read the paper, and generally lack the technical ability to understand the issues at hand). If you are interested you may see more in "Mould Hazards in Marijuana Growing Operations (*forensic-applications.com/moulds/marijuanamould.html*)."

I serve on a Federally funded Health and Medical advisory board, and we are currently tackling the problem of this case of scientific fraud since it was funded by US Federal Taxpayer's monies.

In your e-mail, you ask the question: "My one question for you is whether there have been any more conclusive studies on radon since 2010." But in fact, should the better question be "Have there been *any* legitimate scientific studies as of today, February 25, 2013, that have ever shown that residential radon poses a health risk?" Remember, buried deep in the EPA risk estimates, the EPA acknowledges that they don't have any such studies, and indeed —all the pertinent studies they do have indicate that as concentrations of residential radon goes up, lung cancer rates go down. Nowhere does the EPA state they have any data that demonstrates the risk that underpins their policy statement—and an entire house of cards, now being cited by other agencies, and other governments has been built upon a risk model that has been resoundingly rejected by legitimate (honest) scientists who have knowledge of such issues.

Look at similar nonsense from just this year on the Internet:

From EmaxHealth, "Lead Poisoning May Be A Criminal Element (*www.emaxhealth.com/1275/lead-poisoning-may-be-criminal-element*)."

Where on earth did they come up with such nonsense? Follow the tautology, and see if you can find the parallel in the radon issue:

1) How lead exposure relates to temporal changes in IQ, violent crime, and unwed pregnancy. Nevin R. Environmental Research 2000 May; 83(1): 1-22

2) Mr. Nevin then rewrites the same paper (why was it republished?) Understanding international crime trends: the legacy of preschool lead exposure. Nevin R Environmental Research 2007 Jul; 104(3): 315-36

3) It gets repeated: The social costs of childhood lead exposure in the post-lead regulation era. Muennig P. Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine 2009 Sep; 163(9): 844-49

4) And repeated: Lead poisoning: the epidemic hitting the US juvenile justice system. Miller S. International Journal of Liability and Scientific Enquiry 2013; 5:213-20

5) Then meta-analyzed by Ms. Deborah Mitchell on February 13, 2013 (at 6:54am) for eMaxHealth Internet magazine who falsely "references" the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and within a couple of days it was appearing on my professional radar by my colleagues who used it mostly as a good laugh.

Let's look at the birth of a myth. It usually starts with the false assumption that correlation equals causation. I am

always amazed at how easy it is to fool the masses with junk science when the authors know the intended audience doesn't know what the words mean. Here, the referenced Nevin study linking tetraethyl lead and crime is "junk science" since the referenced "study" is so full of epidemiological pitfalls as to make a statistician groan with pain. But it contains juicy "gossip" in the form of a five second talking point that helps to increase the probability of being repeated.

Let's look at what the Nevin study says:

"This study shows a very strong association between preschool blood lead and subsequent crime rate trends over several decades in the USA, Britain, Canada, France, Australia, Finland, Italy, West Germany, and New Zealand. The relationship is characterized by best-fit lags (highest R2 and t-value for blood lead) consistent with neurobehavioral damage in the first year of life and the peak age of offending for index crime, burglary, and violent crime."

Wow! That sounds very scientific. Then, if that weren't enough, the author added some very scientific looking graphs (which obviously prove just how scientific it really must be).

Here, the entire argument centers on the word "association" which is a valid epidemiological term (and one we often see in the radon issue). The author knows that virtually none of the readers of his abstract will know what the word "association" actually means.

The author knows that virtually all the readers will think that the word "association" means "cause" (as in "cause and effect"). In fact, nothing is further from the truth. "Association" is the stuff used to lead people along a path who otherwise don't understand the realities of statistics.

An "association" is the weakest of all epidemiological evidence. An "association" is needed before one can move on to "correlation" (which is needed to eventually move on to causation). "Correlation" speaks to the strength of the association. But even "correlation" by itself is extremely weak even with good association.

In my early toxicology classes, I used to demonstrate that pickles were the number one factor associated with death in the US. And everything I stated in the lecture was objectively correct. In the end, the student learned that although 100% of all deaths in the US have been "associated" with pickles, pickles didn't actually "cause" a significant number of deaths in the US.

But here, the author uses REALLY "scientific" stuff like saying "The relationship is characterized by best-fit lags (highest R2 and t-value for blood lead)…" WOW, sounds scientific … but what does it mean?

Let's look at another "scientific" article and see how the pathway leads from eating chocolate to being a serial killer and how scientific correlation gets abused. In a another recent scientific "study" scientists demonstrated that eating chocolate makes you a serial killer.

It starts with an article by Franz Messerli that was published in the New England Journal of Medicine (Chocolate Consumption, Cognitive Function, and Nobel Laureates, Messerli FH N Engl J Med; 367:1562-1564October 18, 2012 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMon1211064). He correlated data from several countries on Nobel laureates per-capita with the annual per-capita chocolate consumption. Which got picked up by an Internet blog by James Winters and Seán Roberts, "Chocolate Consumption, Traffic Accidents and Serial Killers." They reproduced Messerli's findings but also showed that chocolate consumption per-capita is significantly correlated with the (log-transformed) number of serial and rampage killers per-capita (r = 0.52, p=0.02).

In the chocolate = Nobel Prize Laureate article, the article says:

"There was a significant linear correlation (r=0.791, P<0.0001) between chocolate consumption and the number of Nobel laureates."

Wow! Now if *that* doesn't prove that chocolate causes Nobel laureates, then what would, and therefore, it that is true, then the chocolate = serial killer is supported, right? After all, 1) there must be association before correlation, 2) there must be correlation before causation, 3) r=0.791, P=<0.0001 is not only real fancy mathematics (absolutely necessary to really bamboozle the gullible), but actually is a reasonably good correlation.

Armed with this, it is easy it is to sell the popular (but very wrong) myth: association = correlation = causation. We see it constantly in popular media, (such as the guns cause crime nonsense and the radon causes cancer nonsense); we see it in political discussions—and it is generally assumed to be true; regardless of how wrong the assumption actually is.

Let's look at some other excellent associations and correlations: Last year I gave a series of lectures in toxicology and epidemiological in Huntingdon, England. Here are a couple of slides (*forensic-applications.com/misc/slides2. pdf*) from my toxicology lecture.

You'll see that with the same scientific studies and math used to demonstrate that "…a very strong association between preschool blood lead and subsequent crime rate trends over several decades …" I similarly proved that storks cause babies (R2=0.95) and sunspots cause Canadian lynx (or was it the other way around?) Notice in my examples, that the graphs are every bit as convincing as those used by Mr. Nevins in his "study."

Also notice the R2=0.85 on Slide 20 and how the correlation statistic is exactly the same, but the graphs demonstrate that the actual correlation in each case is vastly different.

Notice in the "sunspots cause Canadian lynx" there is both positive correlation and negative correlation (*Wow!*… that must *really* be scientific!!)

So, when you see words like "association" "linked" "correlated" etc, in scientific language, pause for a moment and ask yourself why the author didn't use the word "cause."

How does this play out in the radon and Internet issue? Here is a fun dialogue from the Internet (*forensic-applications.com/radon/radon_dialogue_EPA.pdf*) between me and the EPA that explains the issue.

What we see is the Internet is merely the vehicle that places fraud and sloppy thinking on the fast-rack. The root of the problem lies with the lack of proper training in our colleges and universities and an abdication of classical analytical thinking skills. To return to the radon issue, this abdication in skills results in non-sense papers such as one of the papers (*forensic-applications.com/radon/reviews.html*) I reviewed.

So, Mr. Dunning, that is the long answer. Here is the short answer: "Yes." I have attached a more recent paper to this e-mail for your enjoyment.

Before you choose to take on the radon issue, I recommend you read Cervantes' *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, and consider if you have what it takes to tilt with windmills!

Cheers, and good health to you!!

Cheers!
Caoimhín P. Connell
Forensic Industrial Hygienist
www.forensic-applications.com

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/*).

Windows Tips and Tricks: Windows 7 and 8 Calculator

"The New Windows Calculator Is No Longer Plain Vanilla" by Jack Dunning

If you haven't looked at the Windows Calculator app since Windows Vista, it may be time to glance at it in Windows 7 or 8.

In Windows XP and Windows Vista the included math calculator is adequately capable, if a little plain. It only has two modes: standard and scientific. It's good for basic calculation, but doesn't go much beyond that. All that changed in Windows 7 and continues in Windows 8.

The Windows Calculator utility is often overlooked. It wasn't until recently that I took another look at the capabilities of the Windows 7 and Windows 8 calculator (same in both versions). I was been working on an AutoHotkey function that calculates people's ages (not an easy problem) when I discovered that the current Windows calculator has a feature which does exactly that—calculates the years, months, weeks and days between two dates. While this age calculation capability doesn't do what my GrandKids AutoHotkey app does (discussed this week in the AutoHotkey column), it's great for quick one-time checks—plus there are a number of other features worth a closer look.

In addition to the standard and scientific settings, the Win 7 and 8 calculator includes a programmer's and statistics mode (see Figure 1). These are great if you're either the type of programmer that tweaks bits or a statistician. However, of more interest to me are the extra modes: unit conversion, date calculation, and various worksheets.
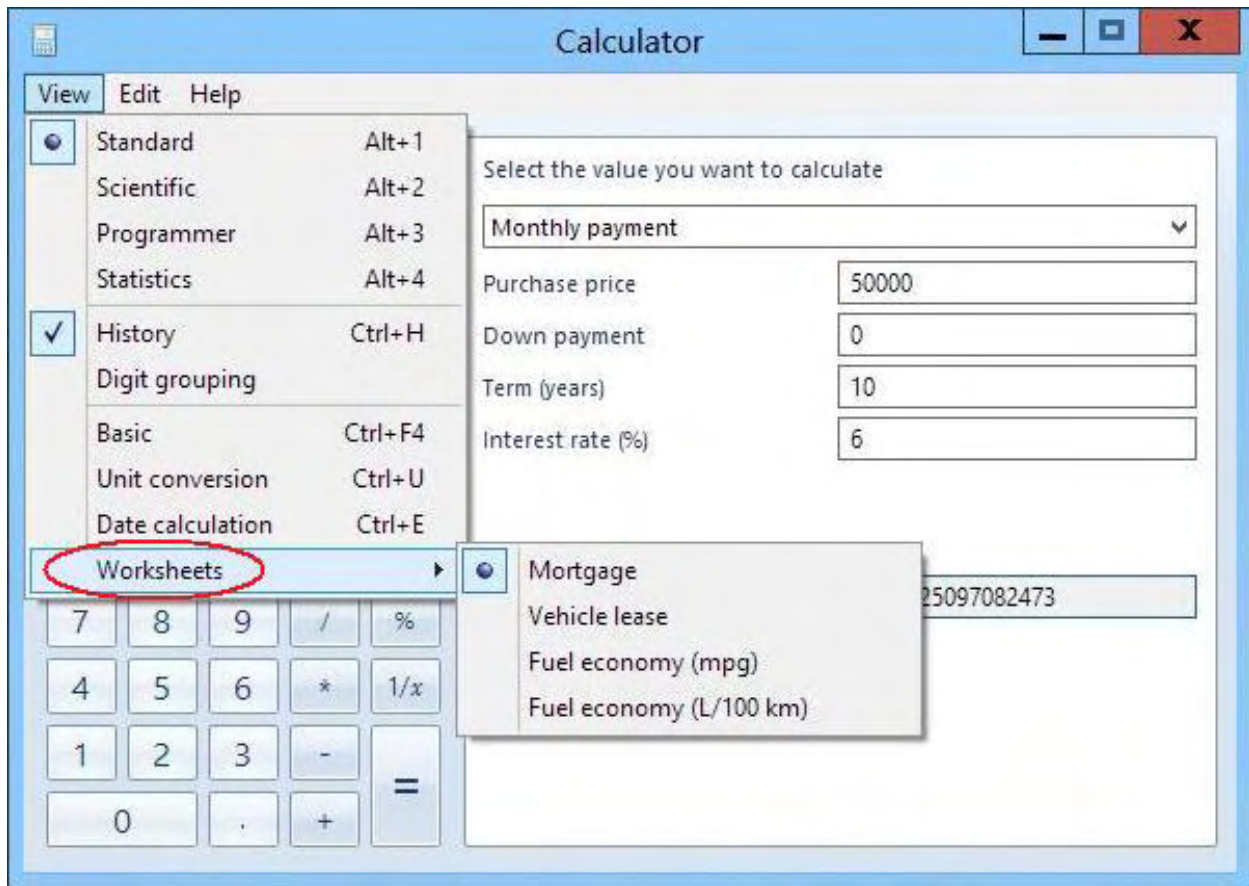
Figure 1. The Windows 7 and 8 calculator has special modes that pop out to the right when selected: unit conversion, date calculation, and four worksheets (mortgage, vehicle lease, fuel economy in mpg or L/100 km).

The unit conversion capability is extensive including conversion from imperial pints to US pints (important for people frequenting British or Irish pubs) and foot-pounds to joules. It's obvious that this feature is aimed more at the scientist and engineer rather than the budding cook. While both angstrom and pascal were included, there was no way to convert cups to tablespoons. I could have used this for some of my physics classes (if I had ever done my homework).

The date calculation is useful if you need to find the difference between two dates (see Figure 2). It also has a mode where you can add or subtract a specific number of years, months, and/or days to or from any date. I have a new respect for this capability since it took me a while to wrap my mind around the date calculation problem for my GrandKids AutoHotkey app.
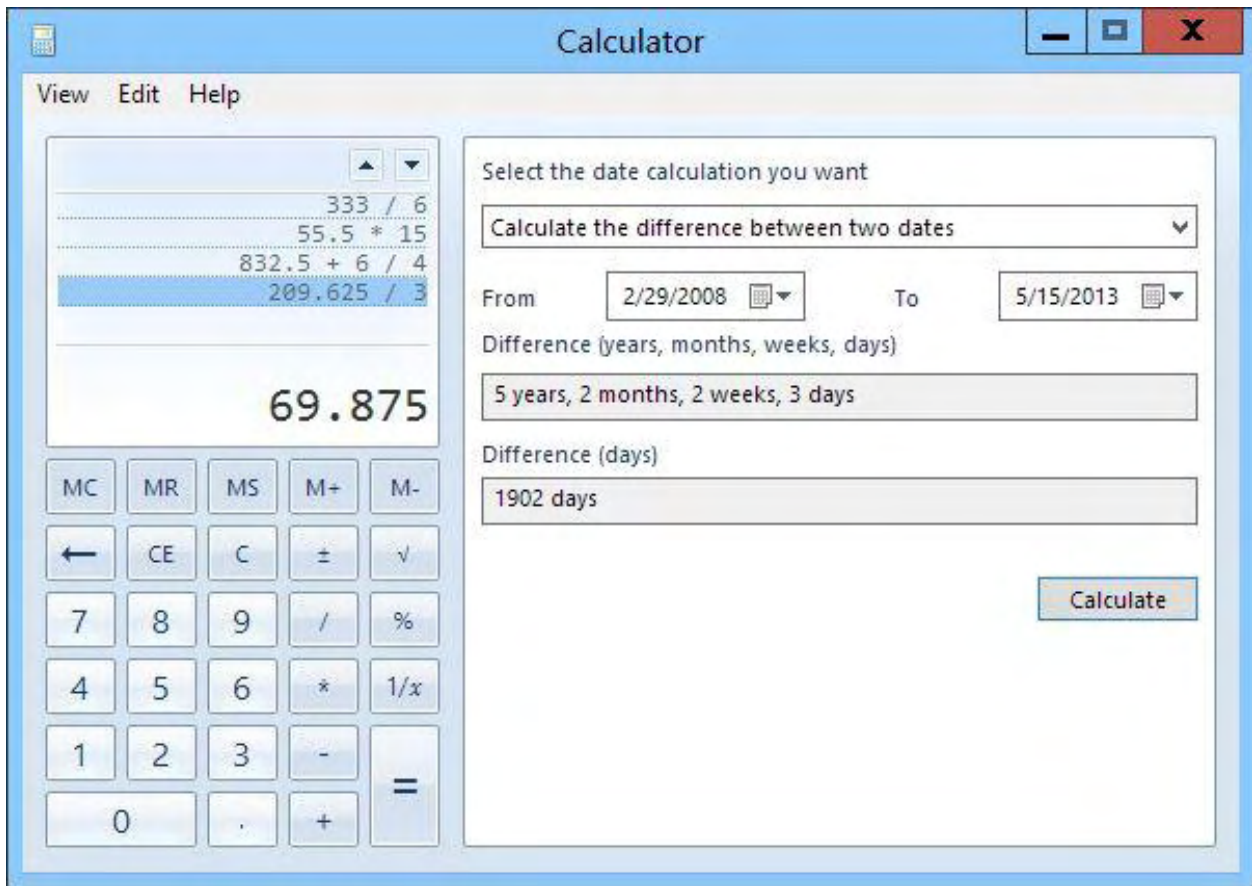
Figure 2. In Windows 7 and 8 the calculator offers date calculation, plus a history mode that allows you to see and select previous calculations.

The History mode is especially useful to people who need to reuse previous calculations. When selected, the results window expands upward revealing the prior calculations. Anytime a particular value is needed, a click of the mouse is all that's required to pop the result into the main window. This replaces the awkwardness of using the standard memory features (MC, MR, M+, and M-) to save needed results.

However, if you're fond of the standard memory buttons, this Windows calculator has added an MS button (Memory Save) for replacing values in memory. Rather than needing to clear the memory first (MC), the result immediately takes the place of the old saved value.

Why Not Always-on-Top?

The only feature missing is an option to make the calculator always-on-top. If I'm using the calculator while doing my taxes or running another program which requires a little number crunching, then I like the calculator to sit on top without disappearing whenever I add input to the other window. For me, this has always been an obviously omission by Microsoft in both the calculator and Sticky Notes app. (Sticky Note reminders should always sit on top of everything else. Otherwise, you'll need a reminder to look at your reminders.)

Fortunately, I have a quick and easy solution. A simple one-line AutoHotkey script (this week's beginner's tip) toggles any active window to always-on-top with the CTRL+ +F8 hotkey combination. All you need to do is put the single line in a text file and run it with the free AutoHotkey program or compile it and add it to any Windows computer without needing the AutoHotkey program installed. I use it all the time.

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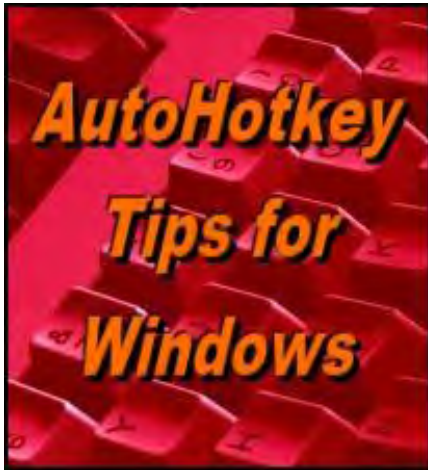
Our second compilation of stupid *ComputorEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputorEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?" (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*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

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.

Always-on-top for Beginners and a GrandKids App

"A Beginner's Tip for Always-on-top and Remembering Your Grandchildren's Ages" by Jack Dunning

The one-line AutoHotkey always-on-top script is a must-have for Windows Calculator and Sticky Notes, plus write a GrandKids app with a simple AutoHotkey database to remember how old your grand kids are.

This week in the "Windows Tips and Tricks" column I discussed the Windows calculator found in Windows 7 and Windows 8. My complaint about the app is that there is no option to make the calculator window (or Sticky Notes app windows) always-on-top. This week's beginner's AutoHotkey tip is a one-line app which toggles any active window always-on-top on and off again.

Once the AutoHotkey always-on-top app is running, the first time you hit the hotkey combination CTRL+🪟+F8 the active window is set to always-on-top. Do it again and the mode is disabled. (If you prefer to just get this capability without messing with AutoHotkey, then I compiled this one line app into an EXE file which you can download from the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) (*Always_on_Top. exe*) and run with a double-click—AutoHotkey is not needed. Then CTRL+🪟+F8 will work on any active window.)

The line of code to include in an AHK file is as follows:

```
^#F8::WinSet, AlwaysOnTop, toggle, A
```

^#F8 sets up the combination CTRL+🪟+FUNCTION KEY 8 as a hotkey. Whenever that hotkey combination is used the WinSet command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/WinSet.htm*) is executed using the AlwaysOnTop attribute and Toggle value. The A indicates to use the active (selected) window.

This is about as simple as AutoHotkey gets. If you are new to AutoHotkey check out "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*)."

A Simple AutoHotkey Database

Some of the most powerful software applications use databases to store information. When data is saved to a more permanent form on a hard drive or other persistent storage, it is often in the form of a database. What distinguishes a database from other saved files (txt, doc, jpg, etc.) is the use of records of consistent data types with common fields making it easier to search, sort, and report on those fields. The address book in your e-mail program is an example of a database.

Databases are not needed for the most of the AutoHotkey apps we've discussed so far. AutoHotkey has a powerful set of commands which adds tools to your Windows computer without resorting to saved data. Most of the apps offered so far in this column are not dependent upon data stored on the computer. One exception would be the latest version of the Reminder app which saves the current reminder to disk, although in its present form it is a database of only one record. In order to expand the Reminder app to handle multiple reminders, the app would need a true database with multiple records.

If you want to add more power to your AutoHotkey apps, you can add simple databases. There are many times when a small database will solve a problem. (If you're working on really big problems, then AutoHotkey may not be the program for you. Sometimes it's better to investigate real database systems (Microsoft Access, SQL, etc.)

which have the tools for structuring files and handling the sorting and reporting built-in, rather than trying to make a utility scripting language into a database manager. It can be done, but you will need to build most of the tools yourself.)

Using INI Files for Simple Databases in AutoHotkey

While there are always multiple ways to solve problems in any programming language, I look for the simplest way first. In the case of AutoHotkey, one of the easiest ways to set up a database is with an INI file. The reason for this is AutoHotkey already has commands for reading from (IniRead (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniRead. htm*)) and writing to (IniWrite (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm*)) INI files. It assumes a basic, flexible structure which makes it ideal for simple applications. If I were looking at more complicated apps with larger databases, I may prefer using Comma Separated Values (CSV) files, then parsing the records of data for access. AutoHotkey does have commands which make it easier to work with CSV files, but the scripting would be more complicated. For now, if an INI file will do the job, I'm going to use it. (See this previous AutoHotkey column for more details on using INI files to save data.)

The GrandKids AutoHotkey App

In my example, I set up a database of grandchildren which includes their names and birthdays. When you have a number of grandchildren it can be difficult to remember how old each one is. In my GrandKids app, a database of grandchildren is read from an INI file with the current age of each being calculated on the fly, then displayed in an AutoHotkey window (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The GrandKids.ini file is read, ages calculated, then displayed.

As it turned out the simplest part of the GrandKids app was setting up and reading the database. The formatting of the GUI window and writing the age calculation function was much more problematic.

Setting Up the GrandKids.ini File

In the Reminder app the script automatically setup the INI file used to save the current reminder settings. Since the *GrandKids.ahk* script doesn't do it, you'll need to create the GrandKids.ini file yourself or you can copy my sample INI file, *GrandKids.ini*:

```
[Settings]
Number=6
[Grand1]
First=Liam
Second=Patrick
Last=Smith
Birthday=20080229
[Grand2]
First=Seamus
Second=Alan
Last=Smith
```

```
Birthday=20081103
[Grand3]
First=Freyja
Second=Lynn
Last=Smith
Birthday=20091007
[Grand4]
First=Eveline
Second=Elizabeth
Last=Smith
Birthday=20111231
[Grand5]
First=Lyla
Second=Emilia
Last=Jones
Birthday=20120214
[Grand6]
First=Baby
Second=Girl
Last=Smith
Birthday=20130228
```

Copy-and-paste the above lines into a text editor (Notepad, etc.) and save it to a file named *GrandKids.ini* in a new GrandKids folder created in your My Documents folder. Since the data will rarely, if ever, change, it is easier to directly edit the INI file than it would be to add editing and writing features to the app. (We'll save editing and writing the INI for a future version of the app.) It's important to create the INI file in the proper location before running the script since it will not display any information without this data file in place.

There are two parts to an INI file. The first is the section which may equate to an individual record (although it may not). A section is designated by the square brackets ([]) which surround the section name. In the above data file the sections are [Settings], [Grand1], [Grand2], [Grand3], [Grand4], [Grand5], and [Grand6], respectively. When the IniRead and IniWrite commands are used, the section name tells AutoHotkey where to look in the INI file for the specific data.

Listed under each section are the keys which store the data. These equate to the fields in a database, although they can be anything. While the keys for each section starting with "Grand" are the same (First, Second, Last, and Birthday) it is quite possible to include varying keys—as long as the script knows how to find the data. The first section ([Setting]) is there to tell AutoHotkey how many records (the key *Number*) are in the database. This is important for the app to have a way to know how many records exist, since it will only look for that number of grandchildren. Be sure to adjust your INI file key *Number* for the number of records you included.

The format of each key is "Key=Value" where "Key" is the key name and "Value" is the value of the data. For example, in the section *Grand1*, *First* (first name) has a value of "Liam", *Second* (middle name) has a value of "Patrick", *Last* (last name) has a value of "Smith", and *Birthday* has a value of "20080229" in the standard year, month, day format. All of this data must be entered by hand since the since the script does not currently have the IniWrite capability. Frankly, for this app it's easier to edit the INI file than it would be to add the editing features in AutoHotkey.

Once the GrandKids.ini file is setup, the app is ready to run.

Reading the GrandKids.ini Data File

The AutoHotkey code for reading the *GrandKids.ini* file is relatively short and simple:

```
IniRead, Howmany, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Settings, Number
```

```
Loop, %Howmany%
  {
    IniRead, First, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, First
    IniRead, Second, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Second
    IniRead, Last, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Last
    IniRead, Birthday, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Birthday
    HowOld(Birthday,A_Now)
    FormatTime, Birthday , %Birthday%, dddd, MMMM d, yyyy
    RowSpace := First . " " . Second . " " . Last . "                       "
    RowSpace := SubStr(RowSpace,1,35)
    BDSpace  := Birthday . "                       "
    BDSpace := SubStr(BDSpace,1,40)
    Gui, Add, Text, , %RowSpace%`t%BDSpace%`t%Years% Years, %Months% Months, %Days
% Days
  }
FormatTime, Now_Time, A_Now , Longdate
Gui, Show, w575 ,Grand Kids — %Now_Time%
```

In the first line of code the IniRead command is used to retrieve the number of records in the INI file *GrandKids.ini*. The *Number* key value (6) under the *Settings* section is stored to the variable *HowMany*.

The second line of code starts a normal loop (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Loop.htm*) (Loop, %Howmany%) to read the individual records. It is set to repeat *HowMany* times.

As the script loops through the INI file the IniRead command is used retrieve the data for each record by using the loop variable *A_Index* (the number of the loop iteration) to create the appropriate section name (*Grand%A_Index%*) for each data record. For example, on the second pass through the loop *A_Index* would hold the value of 2. *Grand%A_Index%* then becomes "Grand2", the name of the second "Grand" section, thereby retrieving the second set of data.

Once the data is retrieved for the current record, the birthday is sent to the *HowOld()* function to calculate the current age, the data is formatted and added to the GUI with the Gui, Add, Text command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm*). I won't go into detail about the age calculation function, *HowOld()*, or the GUI formatting at this time. Both have enough complications to be the subject of another AutoHotkey column.

Once the loop is completed, the last line uses the Gui, Show command to display the accumulated and calculated information shown in Figure 1. The entire code for the GrandKids app is as follows:

```
#SingleInstance Force
IniRead, Howmany, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Settings, Number
Loop, %Howmany%
  {
    IniRead, First, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, First
    IniRead, Second, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Second
    IniRead, Last, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Last
    IniRead, Birthday, C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName%
*bckslsh*Documents*bckslsh*GrandKids*bckslsh*GrandKids.ini, Grand%A_Index%, Birthday
```

```
      HowOld(Birthday,A_now)
      FormatTime, Birthday , %Birthday%, dddd, MMMM d, yyyy
      RowSpace := First . " " . Second . " " . Last . "                       "
      RowSpace := SubStr(RowSpace,1,35)
      BDSpace  := Birthday . "                              "
      BDSpace  := SubStr(BDSpace,1,40)
      Gui, Add, Text, , %RowSpace%`t%BDSpace%`t%Years% Years, %Months% Months, %Days
% Days
    }
FormatTime, Now_Time, , Longdate
Gui, show, w575 ,Grand Kids — %Now_Time%
HowOld(FromDay,ToDay)
    {
      Global Years,Months,Days
; If born on February 29
      If SubStr(FromDay,5,4) = 0229 and Mod(SubStr(ToDay,1,4), 4) <> 0 and SubStr
(ToDay,7,2) = 28
          PlusOne = 1
; Calculate this month's length
      ThisMonth := Substr(ToDay,1,4) . SubStr(ToDay,5,2)
; Set ThisMonthLength equal to next month
      ThisMonthLength := % SubStr(ToDay,5,2) = "12" ? SubStr(ToDay-1,1,4)-1 . "01"
             : SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . Substr(100+SubStr(ToDay,5,2)+1,2,2)
; Days in this month saved in ThisMonthLength
      EnvSub, ThisMonthLength, %ThisMonth%, d
; Set ThisMonthday to FromDay or  (if FromDay higher) last day of this month
      If SubStr(FromDay,7,2) > ThisMonthLength
          ThisMonthDay :=  SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . SubStr(ToDay,5,2) . ThisMonthLength
      Else
          ThisMonthDay :=  SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . SubStr(ToDay,5,2) . SubStr(FromDay,7,2)
; Calculate last month's length
      LastMonth := % SubStr(ToDay,5,2) = "01" ? SubStr(ToDay-1,1,4)-1 . "12"
             : SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . Substr(100+SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-1,2,2)
; Set LastMonthLength equal to this month
      LastMonthLength := SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . SubStr(ToDay,5,2)
; Days in last month saved in LastMonthLength
      EnvSub, LastMonthLength, %LastMonth% ,d
; Set LastMonthday to FromDay or (if FromDay higher) last day of last month
      If SubStr(FromDay,7,2) > LastMonthLength
          LastMonthDay :=  SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . Substr(100+SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-
1,2,2) . MonthLength
      Else
          LastMonthDay :=  % SubStr(ToDay,5,2) = "01" ? SubStr(ToDay-1,1,4)-
1 . "12" . SubStr(FromDay,7,2)
             : SubStr(ToDay,1,4) . Substr(100+SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-1,2,2) . SubStr
(FromDay,7,2)
; Calculate years
      Years  := % SubStr(ToDay,5,4) - SubStr(FromDay,5,4) < 0 ? SubStr(ToDay,1,4)-
SubStr(FromDay,1,4)-1
             : SubStr(ToDay,1,4)-SubStr(FromDay,1,4)

; Calculate months
      Months := % SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-SubStr(FromDay,5,2) < 0 ? SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-SubStr
(FromDay,5,2)+12
             : SubStr(ToDay,5,2)-SubStr(FromDay,5,2)
      Months := % SubStr(ToDay,7,2) - SubStr(ThisMonthDay,7,2) < 0 ? Months -1 : Months
```

```
    Months := % Months = -1 ? 11 : Months
; Calculate days
    EnvSub, ThisMonthDay,ToDay , d
    EnvSub, LastMonthDay,ToDay , d
    Days  := % ThisMonthDay <= 0 ? -1*ThisMonthDay : -1*LastMonthDay
; If February 28
    Years := % plusone = 1 ? Years +1 : Years
    If (SubStr(ToDay,1,8) <= FromDay)
        Years := 0, Months := 0,Days := 0
  }
```

If you edit the GrandKids.ini file to suit your needs then you will have a reminder list of the ages (or years married) of your grandkids, kids, friends, or anyone else you have in mind.

GrandKids App Notes

The GrandKids app does not use a hotkey combination. It immediately displays the window when it is run. If you want to display it again, you need to either right-click on the System Tray icon (green box with H inside) and select Reload This Script or reload load the program itself. Adding the line #SingleInstance Force to the script prevents the error if the script is already loaded and reload.

If you want to add a hotkey combination to launch the app or turn it into a label to run in another app, the Return command should be added just before the HowOld() function.

It took me a little while to come up with the HowOld() function for calculating age. I had a number of false starts. I couldn't find a good AutoHotkey age calculation function on the Web, but I think this one does the job. If you find any errors, please let me know. I want to get it right. I will make this function a topic for a future column.

Formatting the GUIs is not always easy. I went through some gymnastics on this one. There may be easier ways to do it, but this seems to work and will be worth reviewing in a future column.

I've added both the GrandKids5.ahk file and the GrandKids.ini sample file to the AutoHotkey Dropbox (*www. dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) for downloading.

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

"The Macintosh in the Enterprise" by Wally Wang

The Macintosh in the Enterprise; The iPad Drives a Car; The Most Difficult Devices to Repair and Modify; Learning Computer Programming; Arkansas State University to Require Students to Use iPads; Facebook Losing its Cool; The Disk Utility Program.

To absolutely nobody's surprise except for people who refuse to see the obvious, Gartner reports that Macintosh computers will soon be accepted as common (*www.infoworld.com/d/microsoft-windows/gartner-apples-macs-will-be-accepted-windows-pcs-2015-212361*) by IT professionals. Part of the reason is that more workers are using iPhones and iPads at work, which makes it easier for corporations to accept Macintosh computers as well.

Gartner's report says, "One byproduct of this injection of multiple operating systems into the corporate environment is a predicted shift toward hybrid mobile applications that support more than just one platform." Instead of developing applications that only run on Windows, or even worse, only within the ancient and incompatible Internet Explorer 6 browser, companies will now have to get their custom applications to run on mobile devices as well as Windows, the Macintosh, and possibly even Linux too.

Most likely, the laziest IT departments will scream and complain that they actually have to work to keep the other parts of the company happy using the devices that make them more productive. IT professionals often cite standardization as the key to efficiency, completely ignoring the fact that handing the wrong equipment to other workers in the company severely limits their productivity and efficiency.

If IT departments think standardization on one platform makes their life easier, it makes just as much sense to switch to Linux or the Macintosh as it does to stick with Windows. The bottom line is that most IT departments use excuses to justify their own illogical decisions to do as little as possible while hampering the productivity of the rest of the company.

Tomorrow's corporate world will no longer be stuck on one type of computer running the exact same version of the operating system and other programs. Instead, corporations will be running a variety of computing devices that need to share data seamlessly. In the past, that meant forcing everyone to use Microsoft Office, but with no version of Microsoft Office for mobile devices, it makes more sense to simply eliminate Microsoft Office altogether and search for more compatible alternatives that can share data across multiple platforms and programs.

If neither Windows nor Microsoft Office will be crucial for tomorrow's office workers, that means people can focus more on getting work done using the optimum tools rather than wasting time learning Microsoft Office and Windows if neither software helps them work better. With fewer people needing or using Windows and Microsoft Office, the profits of Microsoft can't help but decrease.

The less money Microsoft makes, the less money they'll have available to fund money sinks like the Xbox and the Bing search engine. With less funding available, these other Microsoft ventures will either have to shut down, be sold off, or actually make money for a change without relying on the endless stream of cash that props them up from sales of Windows and Microsoft Office.

Microsoft will likely still be around in the future unless they completely screw up (a large possibility considering the ineptitude of corporate executives in general). In the meantime, watch Microsoft deal with the changes in the new

corporate computing environment where Windows and Microsoft Office no longer dominate the market like the 1990s and their dominant position in computing drops a little bit further every year.

To see the effect of change faster, watch IT professionals, wedded to Microsoft products, deal with this seismic shift of the computing landscape. The smart IT professionals will simply adapt and learn something new. The stubborn IT professionals will resist change and drive themselves out of a job. After decades of thinking backwards, the corporate world is finally accepting the idea that workers need to be productive first without forcing everyone to use the same tools whether they work for them or not.

The iPad Drives a Car

While Google and other companies keep experimenting with self-driving cars, Oxford University has created a self-driving car using an iPad (*arstechnica.com/apple/2013/03/video-ipad-is-the-brain-for-self-driving-car/*) to control and drive a vehicle. Instead of completely controlling a car, Oxford's iPad car works when drivers come upon a familiar route. That's when the iPad asks the driver whether they want to switch to the robotic system. Just tap the screen and the iPad takes over. At any time, another tap on the brake pedal returns control back to the human driver.

Self-driving cars are the future, which can make taxi cab rides less intimidating while also giving children and the elderly, who may not be able to drive themselves, the freedom to ride anywhere they wish. Instead of investing in a taxi cab and hiring someone to drive it, tomorrow's investors will be able to buy computer-controlled taxis and let them run loose in a city, picking up passengers and collecting fares like a vending machine on wheels.

If an iPad can control a car, that alone tells you that the processing power of an iPad should be enough to handle the average person's workload involving word processing, presentation software, and maybe creating and editing a spreadsheet or two. Anyone who still thinks the iPad is nothing but a toy needs to ride in a car controlled by an iPad to see if a toy could duplicate that task as well.

While some people will undoubtedly need more powerful and specialized computers, most people don't. An iPad able to control a car proves that the iPad's processing power is more than sufficient for many tasks that Apple probably never dreamed about when they first introduced the world to the iPad.

The Most Difficult Devices to Repair and Modify

At one time, critics complained that Apple products were useless because you couldn't open them up and swap in a new hard drive or add more memory yourself. Now iFixit has discovered that although the iPad is one of the least repairable devices on the market, Microsoft's Surface Pro tablet takes the dubious honor of being the hardest device to repair (*www.ifixit.com/Tablet_Repairability*).

Figure 1. iFixit ranks the hardest devices to repair.

Based on iFixit's data, critics can now claim that Microsoft's Surface Pro tablet must also be useless because it's so difficult to open up and modify. Of course, not being able to open up a device and modify it doesn't stop people from buying microwave ovens or pacemakers. Then there's the question of why you would even want to open up any device if it already has a reputation for extreme reliability?

PC World found that the iPad topped all tablets (*www.pcworld.com/article/244603/ tablet_reliability_and_satisfaction_ipad_comes_out_on_top.html*) in reliability. If Apple made it easy to open up and modify the iPad, would the iPad be as thin, light, and reliable? If critics aren't willing to vocally complain about Microsoft's Surface Pro being useless because it's so difficult to open up and modify (even if that has nothing to do with the features it does offer), what does that say about the validity of their earlier complaints about the iPad?

Learning Computer Programming

Computer programming used to be relatively simple. With the BASIC programming language, commands are complete words that make BASIC programs easy to read and understand. Unfortunately, given the choice between readability or machine efficiency, computer scientists have gravitated towards machine efficiency at the expense of readability, which is why the C programming language and its derivatives, Java and Objective-C, have taken over.

The problem with C-style languages is that they emphasize symbols instead of English words, which makes them easier for computers to parse and for programmers to type, but harder for people to read and understand. As a result, programming languages like C# and Java create huge obstacles for anyone who just wants to learn the basics of programming a computer.

While BASIC is still perfectly good for learning programming and even creating full-blown applications, an even

easier programming language to understand is LiveCode, which is based on Apple's old HyperCard and its English-like programming language called HyperTalk.

Because LiveCode makes it easy to write and read commands, 25 percent of Scotland's high schools have adopted LiveCode (*uk.prweb.com/releases/2013/2/prweb10449626.htm*) as the language for teaching programming. Now students can learn the basics of programming without getting bogged down with the seemingly arbitrary and cryptic syntax of the C language.

Here's the LiveCode command you need to count the number of words in the fifth line of text:

put the number of words in line 5 of theText

Now here's the equivalent code in Java:

```
public static int line_word_count(String theText, int theLine) {
String [] lines = theText.split("*bckslsh*n");
if(theLine > lines.length) return 0;
else return lines[theLine - 1].split(" ").length;
}
```

Anyone want to guess which program will be easier to write, understand, and modify? Notice that what LiveCode can do in one line of code takes other programming languages several lines of cryptic code to accomplish the same task.

LiveCode recently got funding through Kickstarter to release their programming tool as an open source project (*www.kickstarter.com/projects/1755283828/open-source-edition-of-livecode*), so now everyone will be able to use the LiveCode language and understand programming as easily as learning BASIC. If you use the open source version of LiveCode, you must release your own programs as open source too. However, if you buy a commercial license from LiveCode, you can keep your source code proprietary if you want to sell your program to others.

With LiveCode, you can create cross-platform programs for Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Android, and even iOS. Now you can freely experiment with turning your ideas into an actual program and when you're ready, buy a commercial license and start selling it.

Although LiveCode remains a relatively obscure programming language today, its open source version (available by April) promises to make programming easy and fun for novices once more. By giving more people the chance to make their own programs, LiveCode can make programming accessible to more than just computer scientists, and that means a flood of creativity among programs in the future.

For another perspective on the importance of learning programming, visit the Code.org (*www.code.org*) site, dedicated to increasing computer programming education. This non-profit organization believes that computer science and computer programming should be part of the core curriculum in education, alongside other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, such as biology, physics, chemistry and algebra. As Steve Jobs once said, "I think everybody in this country should learn how to program a computer because it teaches you how to think."

Arkansas State University to Require Students to Use iPads

Starting in the fall, Arkansas State University students will need to either buy an iPad upon arriving on campus or rent one as part of the university's iPad Initiative (*www.universitybusiness.com/news/arkansas-states-ipad-initiative-will-require-all-incoming-students-have-apples-tablet*) with its motto of "Learn on the move."

Freshmen will be able to download an ASU-developed iBook as part of a required course, "Making Connections." As a first-year experience course, "Making Connections" teaches students how to use the iPad in a learning environment and help them transition from high school into college. Not only do students enjoy using the iPad, but teachers have found creative uses to use the iPad as a teaching tool.

"The director of the art education program," said Dr. Gina Hogue, the university's Associate Vice Chancellor for

Academic Services, "she used iPads in her classes to engage her art education students with students in preschool environments and elderly people in assisted living communities. The students worked with those two groups in order to create and share art in a cross-generational manner."

Math teachers had students running graphing programs on the iPad while geography teachers showed students how to research and view content on countries they're learning about. In campus libraries, librarians carry iPads with them, negating the need to return to a reference desk to answer visitors' questions.

"Our students love the iPad," Hogue said.

With the iPad changing the way we learn in so many positive ways, who knows how much faster and more productive people can be using an iPad than if they didn't use one at all. Certainly the iPad has changed education in the same way that personal computers changed education back in the 80s and 90s.

One day people will look back and wonder how anyone could possibly have learned anything without a tablet. To see what a lack of curiosity can do to the human mind, just look at all those people who still refuse to admit the benefits of an iPad.

Facebook Losing its Cool

One reason why Apple thrives is because it's the only place to get their products. If you wanted to eat a great, gourmet, vegetarian meal, you have no choice but to go to that one gourmet vegetarian restaurant in your city. Windows PCs are more like Starbucks. Each Starbucks is different but they basically offer the same product so you can go to any Starbucks and get a Starbucks coffee just as you can go to Hewlett-Packard, Acer, or Dell and get a Windows PC that's mostly the same as any other Windows PC.

On the other hand, Facebook is more like a corner lot where people gather every Friday to socialize, cook, and sell or share food and drink. There's nothing particularly special about that corner lot just as there's nothing particularly special about Facebook. The moment people decide to hang out in a different corner lot, there's no reason for anyone to hang around that same lot any more. Likewise, just as soon as people stop hanging around Facebook, there's no reason for anyone to hang around Facebook either, just like people abandoned MySpace.
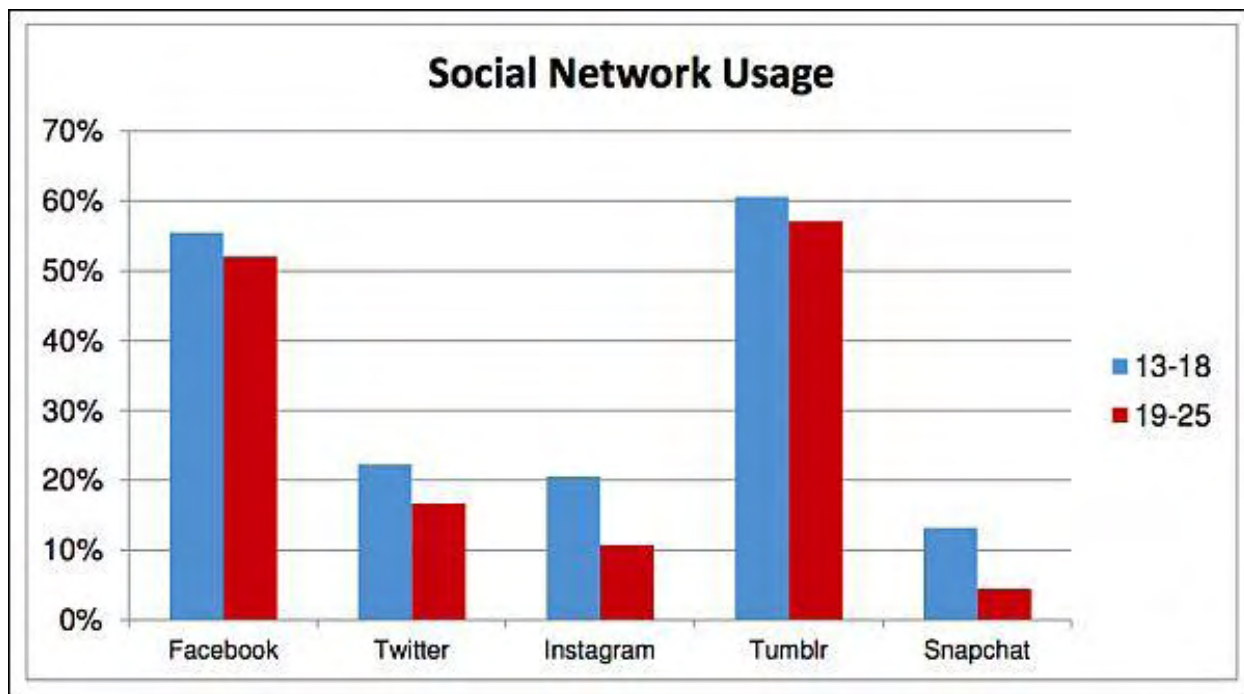

Figure 2. Facebook is losing popularity among social media networks.

Unlike Apple or even Microsoft and their legion of partners, Facebook's appeal is simply its gathering of people who can easily change their minds and switch to other social media networks. Now that parents can get on Facebook with their kids, many teenagers are looking for alternative social media networks to use instead.

With a business built entirely on its customers showing up regularly, Facebook is in a precarious situation. Given the fickle nature of consumers, they'll switch to something else if there's little reason to stick with what they already have. In the hardware world, it's hard for people to dump their equipment and buy new stuff. In the social media network world, it's easy to just login to something else.

In another few years, will Facebook be like MySpace? Or can Facebook do what no other social media network has done and always stay ahead of the competition? Given enough time, it's easy to see Facebook's ultimate fate.

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

If you have an external disk and want to copy the entire contents, you could copy individual files and folders manually, or you can just duplicate the entire disk instead. Peek inside the Applications folder and look inside your Utilities folder and you'll find the Disk Utility program. By clicking on the disk that you want to copy and clicking the Restore tab, you can copy an entire disk and store that copy somewhere else.
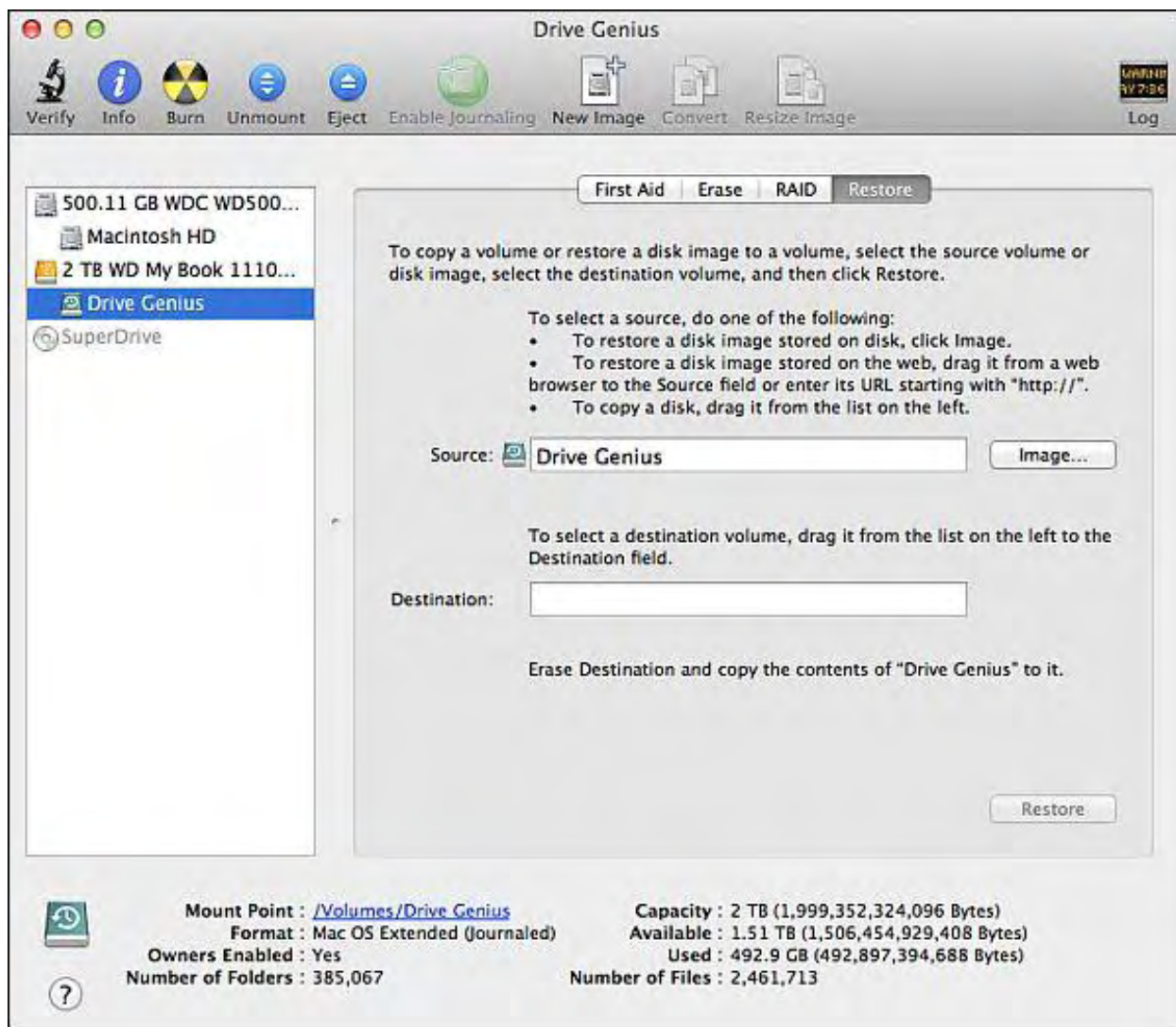

Figure 3. Disk Utility makes it easy to copy entire drives.

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*.

Beyond Personal Computing
"Managers: Love 'Em, Hate 'Em--Stuck With 'Em" by Marilyn K. Martin

Amusing anecdotes all about managers.

Managers are a strange breed. They aren't considered "leaders" as much as crowd-control or people-herders. And instead of fences and gates, they have objectives and goals. Which most employees interpret as...fences and gates.

Some managers are well paid just to "manage" an efficient self-managed team. While other managers get paid more just to put a choke-hold on unmanageable chaos. They have their own offices, due to an advanced degree, vast experience, or being related to the boss. And too many corporate structures today still reflect the Peter Principle that "everyone rises to the level of their own incompetence—and stays there, since you can't promote *or* demote them."

Some of the warm-and-fuzzy managers everyone loves can't actually manage anyone, or get anything done. While some immature bully-managers think every effective employee is out for their job, so constant criticism and back-stabbing means lots of turnover—or "ample transfer potential in a fast-paced environment." Some technology managers may be sheer geniuses, but they have all the social skills of a piranha. So, as the old joke goes, managers are just like a certain body orifice: Everyone has one, and they all stink. So managers are ripe (no pun intended) for humorous exploitation.

A Preschooler Test for Future Managers

1) How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator? (Open the refrigerator, put in the giraffe and close the door. This tests whether you tend to do simple things in an overly complicated way.)

2) How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator? (Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, put in the elephant and close the door. This tests your ability to think things through from beginning to end.)

3) The Lion King is hosting an animal conference, and invites all the animals but one. Which animal does not attend? (The elephant—that is in the refrigerator. This tests your memory.)

4) You have to cross a river, but it is filled with crocodiles. How do you do it? (You swim across, since all the crocodiles are attending the Lion King's conference. This tests your mental retention, and how quickly you learn from past mistakes.)

Words Of Wisdom

"Failing businesses are over-managed and under-led."

"The first myth of management is that it exists."

"Management by objectives is no better than the objectives."

"A glass may be half full to an optimist, and half empty to a pessimist. But to a project manager, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be."

"Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm."

"I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things, they ought to have the sense to do without my persuading them." Harry Truman

Employee Training

A young man reported for his first day of work at a supermarket. The manager greeted him with a warm handshake and a smile, then gave him a broom. "Your very first task will be to sweep the entire store."

The young man looked hurt. "But Sir, I'm a college graduate!"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" replied the manager, taking back the broom. "Here, I'll show you how."

Definitions of a Committee

"A group of people who can do nothing individually, but as a group decide that nothing can be done."

"A group of people who set out to make an improved horse—and end up with a camel."

Do-it-Yourself Management Training

For a lot of managers, it's all just a game of making others think that you understand everything, and are on top of everything. This is simple to mimic, if you want people to start thinking of you as "management material":

"What's the margin on that, by the way?"

"So when's this turkey going to get basted?"

"Sounds good. Copy everyone, and put up extra copies in the cafeteria and restroom."

"Sure, I love employee input! Put one of those in my motorcycle just last week."

Different Types of Project Managers

"If you get in my way, I'll kill you!" - ideal project manager

"I am the way! Kill me if you can!" - messianic project manager

"Don't kill me, and I promise to not get in your way!" - lovable but ineffective project manager

"If youse getta ina my way, I gonna breaka youse arm!" - union project manager from New York

"If get kill in will way I you!" - dyslexic project manager who just tipped off why his projects always fail

"Kill me, it's the only way!" - every project manager to date

Short Prayers For Very Stressed Managers

"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I cannot accept, and the wisdom to know where to hide the bodies of those I had to kill today because they got on my nerves."

"...and help me to be careful of the toes I step on today, as they may be connected to the feet I may have to kiss tomorrow to get a promotion."

"God help me remember that it takes 42 muscles to frown, 28 to smile, and only 4 to extend my arm and smack someone across the mouth."

Office Jargon for Managers

Seagull Manager: Flies in, makes a lot of noise, poops on everything then leaves.

Chainsaw Manager: Brought in to reduce the employee head count, and leave upper management with clean hands.

Alpha Geek Manager: Brilliant and technically proficient, but nobody understands him since he's totally unable to teach or explain what he wants done.

Adminisphere Manager: Drops decisions like feathers on all the rank and file below, which are usually inappropriate, irrelevant or idiotic in reference to the problems presented earlier.

Analyzing Management: The Law Of Diminishing Returns

The sport of choice for the unemployed is basketball.

The sport of choice for project managers is football.

The sport of choice for middle managers is tennis.

The sport of choice for corporate managers is golf.

Conclusion: The higher you are in the corporate structure, the smaller your balls become.

Another Three-Guys-in-a-Car Joke

A project manager, a hardware engineer and a software engineer were in a car starting down a hill, when the brakes failed. The driver managed to get it stopped by using gears and a convenient dirt track. Then all three jumped out to go peer under the car.

"I think I see the problem, said the hardware engineer. "I'll get a roll of duct tape from the trunk, and I think I can fix it well enough to get us to the next town." The project manager was shaking his head. "No, no, no! Before we do anything we need to decide on a vision for our future, figure out a plan and assign individual deliverables." At which point the software engineer offered, "You know what? Let's push the car back up to the top of the hill and see if it happens again."

Classical Bully Manager

"My boss was so unpopular as a child, her parents had to tie a porkchop to her ankle just so the dog would play with her."

What The Bully Manager Puts on Your Performance Appraisal

"I would not allow this employee to breed."

"This associate is not so much of a has-been, as a won't-ever-be."

"Works well under constant supervision, and when cornered like a rat in a trap."

"He sets very low personal standards, and then consistently fails to achieve them."

"This employee should go far—and the sooner he starts, the better for us."

"Got into the gene pool when the lifeguard wasn't watching."

"She's got a room temperature IQ."

"He's so dense, light bends around him."

"If he was any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week."

The Two-Cow Test of Management Philosophy

Corporate: You have two cows. You sell one, force the other to produce the milk of four cows, then act surprised when it drops dead.

Bureaucracy: You have two cows. A multi-national company takes them both, shoots one, milks the other, pays you for the milk, then pours it down the drain.

Capitalism: You have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull. Then you run him for Congress, while you donate the only "product-producing" cow to a foreign country.

You May Be in Big Trouble if Your Manager…

...is left in charge when upper management goes to a seminar, since they want to see the company functioning "in a worst case scenario."

... just finished reading *Excel for Dummies*, and now the rest of your department is reading *The Dummy Unleashed*.

...tells you on your first day of work, "Over the years I've trained 6 people who eventually became my manager. I guarantee that's not going to happen to you."

...is extremely cautious, and tells you "I've learned that valuable lesson from repeated failures."

...tells you on your first day of work, "So glad you took the job! Our first ten choices got better offers."

Managers and Problem-solving

A manager was golfing one day, behind a particularly slow group of golfers. The manager turned to his caddie. "What's with these guys? Each one swings sixteen times before he hits the ball, and then it goes anywhere but toward the next green."

"Oh, Sir," replied the caddie sadly. "Those are blind firemen who saved our clubhouse from a devastating fire last year. So they can play anytime they want, and no player is allowed to play past them."

The manager stared at the group of blind golfers a moment, then turned back to the caddie. "So why can't they play at night?"

From One Manager To Another

"Give all orders verbally. Never write anything down, or keep it in a computer file that might end up in a Pearl Harbor meltdown-type lawsuit."

"Rome did not create a great empire by having meetings. They did it by killing all those who opposed them."

"Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines."

Always open your directors' meetings by stating, "All those who are opposed to the plan I am about to propose, will reply by saying 'I resign'."

"Indecision is the key to flexibility."

"Remember, 'stressed' spelled backwards is 'desserts.' The more chocolate, the better."

"To steal information from a person is called plagiarism. To steal information from the enemy is called gathering intelligence."

But Some Workers "Need" a Manager's Overview

http://www.cvr-it.com/images/job-almost-finished.jpg

(Many of these humorous anecdotes are available at multiple Internet jokes sites. But special thanks to workjoke. com (*workjoke.com*), bitoffun.com (*bitoffun.com*), and bullyonline.org (*bullyonline.org*).)

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!

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers
"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"Steampunk Not for Me," "Of Internet Troll," "Anti-adware, Virus Protection for iPad," "Loved Your Article on Doctors and Mobile Computing"

Steampunk Not for Me

[Regarding the February 22 Beyond Personal Computing column:]

Well researched and interesting. Its value to me is that now that I know what Steampunk is, I also know that I want nothing to do with it.

-Richard Hardy, San Diego, CA

Richard, thanks for your comment. I wasn't too sure what Steampunk was either, that's why I decided to research it. At least its retro-coolness is positive and refreshing, with no hidden Agenda. It's not for everyone, of course, but it would be a healthier expression for teens than Goths and Emos, or those addicted to violent video games.

-Marilyn, Texas

Of Internet Troll

[Regarding Jack Dunning's February 22 article, "Beware of Internet Trolls!":]

Yes, there are trolls. There are also racist sites that block opposing views. There are papers that don't let you state a drunk driver is danger to society. Thus being anonymous is required at times.

-Bob, Denver, CO

Anti-adware, Virus Protection for iPad

[Regarding the February 22 Digital Dave column:]

Hello Dave,

Thank you for answering my question on available security apps for my iPad. I did find one, great app made for browsing on my iPad instead of Safari. It's called AVG Safe Browser and considering how well the AVG antivirus software I have on my PC works, I thought I'd give it a try. Works as well as Safari, so far.

Thanks again,

-Jerry, San Diego, CA

Loved Your Article on Doctors and Mobile Computing

[Regarding the February 8 Wally Wangs Apple Farm column:]

I just copied and pasted your article today, on Doctors and Mobile Computing to send to my daughter. My daughter is a first year neurosurgery resident at Loma Linda University Hospital and I think she recently purchased a tablet, but not sure which. She has used tech devices the whole time she was in medical school at UC Davis. She was the second class in their new campus which has made UC Davis the most high tech medical school in the nation. So that has been engrained.

I liked your comments about the Universal Doctor Speaker and the new mini iPad. Fortunately her brother is a relatively new employee at Apple in Cupertino (August) and he is able to get her and all family members a significant Friends and Family discount if she chooses to go smaller. Of the 11 close members in our family, 8 are pretty much converted over to Apple. I am just waiting to receive a new iPad from my son. 10 of the 11 have iPhones. But I have to admit I still use my Windows desktop at times secondary to large monitor and a less expensive Android tablet (if it gets broken, there is less of a loss) for client treatment. But at family gatherings you see an abundance of Mac Pros being used.

In October I attended the California Occupational Therapist's Conference in Pasadena and on one day, I attended sessions all devoted to Telehealth and the multiple uses of the Tablet (preferably iPads) in treatment, education and business uses such as documentation. Plus, there was a session on adapting the iPad/tablets for our disabled clients. Right now I am using an Android tablet with almost half of my clients, some are just able to touch the screen to get a result with a drawing result. So despite the fact they are "profoundly retarded" in some cases, they are still being introduced to high tech devices. This was just a far-fetched dream when I started in my profession in the later 60s of ways to enable clients such as new spinal cord injuries to communicate without going through each alphabet letter one by one to spell a word.

Thank you again for the many excellent and relevant articles you have posted over the many years I have been a reader (late 80s-early 90s??) when I picked up hard copies, one for my father and one for myself at the local distributor.

-Susan Fisher McClure

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/*).