

# ComputerEdge™ Online — 03/15/13

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 Social Robots, Computerized Humor, and Nationwide Free Wi-Fi, and More Little Known Stories



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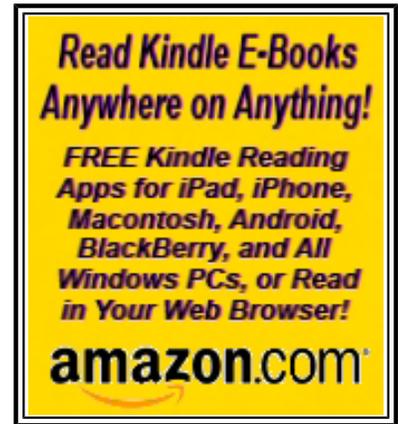
or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution  
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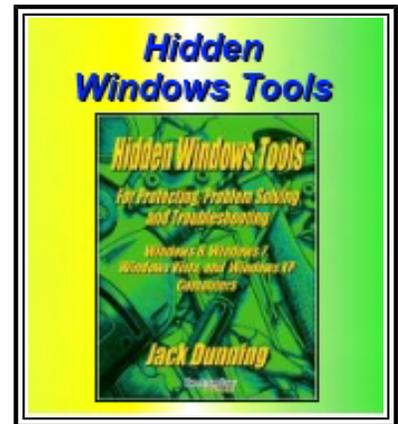
Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.  
 "DOCX Viewer," "Win 8 Boot Times," "Start Menu Simulation with 2 Toolbars," "Reminder App with Windows 8"



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## Digital Dave

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

Mini Laptop Printer and External Monitor Problem; Synchronization of Computers; Shortcut to Shutdown or Restart Windows Computers.

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*My used Dell Inspiron mini laptop was operating fine with my HP D4160 Deskjet printer and Samsung Syncmaster 193's flat screen monitor in parallel to the mini monitor. After a month or so, the monitor flashes on for a second then goes blank and the printer won't print anymore, not even a test page. Both are connected via a USB 2.0 line. Computer diagnostics say everything is operating OK. Any ideas?*

*Len*

*Len Infield  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Len,

Since both the monitor and the printer are connected via the USB port, I would suspect that is the source of your problem. It is not unusual for USB ports to go bad.

I once had a laptop with USB problems. I had to disable the ports in the Device Manager and add an expansion card with USB ports on it. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like your mini laptop has any expansion capability. You will need to go another direction to bypass the USB port on the computer.

First, if you have an alternative video port on your computer, try that with the external monitor. (I don't think it's a coincidence that the video and printer go out at the same time, so there probably isn't a video problem—although it's possible.) If that doesn't work or you don't have another video option, then just to be sure, test the monitor with another computer. If the monitor works, then it must be the video in the computer. Other than taking it in to get repaired, there may not be much that you can do for the video in a mini laptop. For video the problem is the monitor, the video card, or the connection between the two.

The best overall solution for your printer may be to add a Wireless Router ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007IL6OR2/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007IL6OR2&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007IL6OR2/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007IL6OR2&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)) with a printer USB port to your system. That way you could use the Wi-Fi on the computer to access the printer which would be attached to the router. There are other options, but they may be more complicated.

For example, you could try a Network to USB print server ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00006BBDW/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00006BBDW&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00006BBDW/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00006BBDW&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)) to attach the USB printer, but you will likely need at least a Network switch to handle the connection—although it is possible that a direct connection to the computer could work—possibly with a crossover

network cable.

Digital Dave

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*Dear Digital Dave,*

*In your response to Chris Romel, you mentioned that you sync your files from one computer to another. What software have you found most beneficial for synchronizing your computers, and is it necessary that both computers run the same system? (I have one Vista and one Win 7 computer.)*

*Rowland Byerly  
Mesa, AZ*

Dear Rowland,

If one of your Windows computers is Professional or Business level, then it has the sync capability built-in. You would use the Pro or Business computer to sync to the other machine—which can be any version. First you use Windows Explorer to map a drive to the target folder on the other computer. Then right-click on the folder and select "Always available offline" (see Figure 1). The computer will immediately start creating and syncing the folders. This allows you to use copies of the files of the synced computer even when not connected. The files will sync again the next time connected. This process can be controlled via the Sync Center.

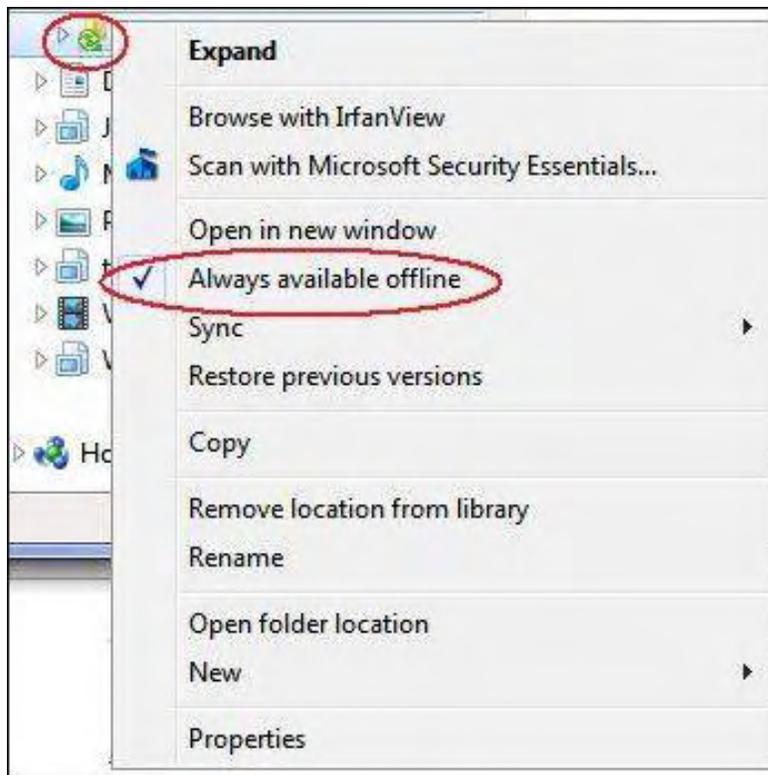


Figure 1. Right-click on the mapped (or Library) folder from another computer and check "Always available offline."

If you don't have the Windows Pro or Business sync capability then there is a free utility called SyncToy ([www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=15155](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=15155)) which allows you to sync virtually any two devices. Lately, I've seen references to FreeFileSync ([freefilesync.sourceforge.net/](http://freefilesync.sourceforge.net/)), an open source program which many people claim is better than SyncToy.

Digital Dave

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## Digital Dave's Tip

Many Windows users know that the key combination ALT+F4 will quickly close an open window. Less well known is that the same hotkeys can open a dialog window for shutting down, restarting, or executing other power options (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. When the ALT+F4 combination is used on the Windows Desktop, the Shut Down Windows options window opens.

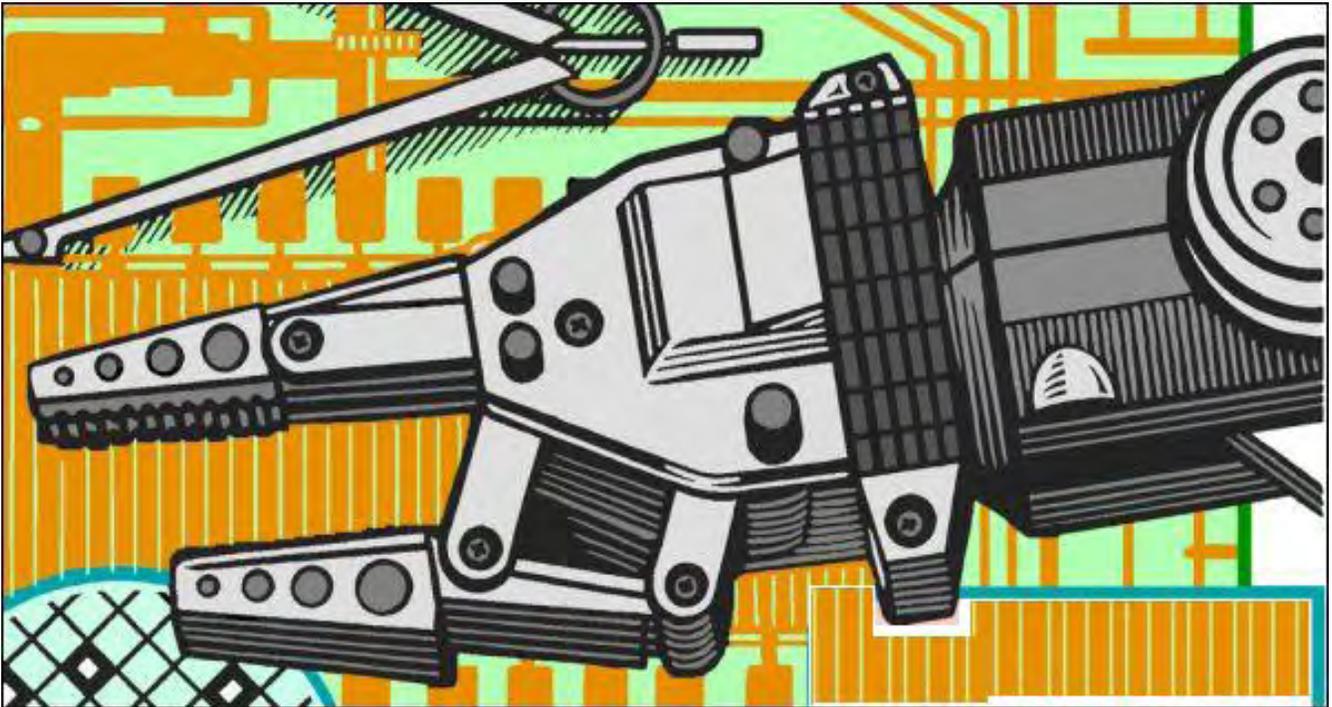
When on the Windows Desktop (no other window is active) the ALT+F4 combination opens the Shut Down Windows options. This feature was not really needed in most versions of Windows which have the Start Menu, but with Windows 8 it can be difficult to locate the Power Options.

There are other techniques for pinning a Shutdown or Restart shortcut to the Windows 8 Taskbar, but I consider it a dangerous option. With a single accidental click of the icon you could suddenly find your computer shutting down.

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## Little Known High Tech Stories

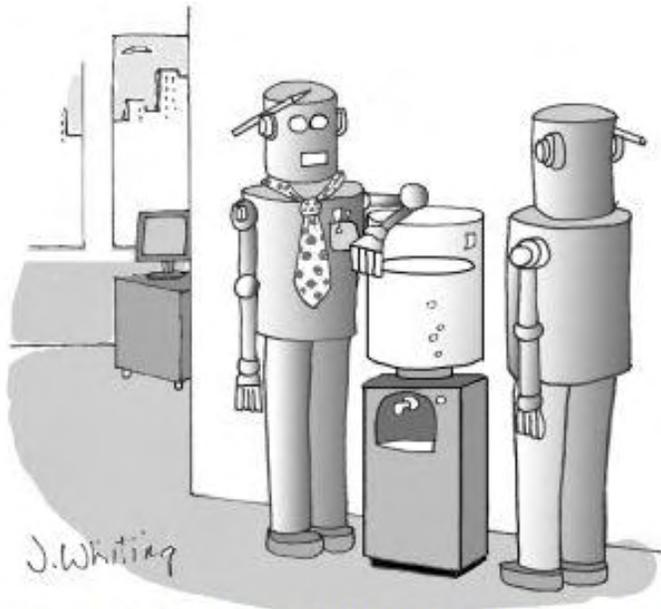
“Social Robots, Computerized Humor, and Nationwide Free Wi-Fi” by Marilyn K. Martin

Automation, Social Robots and a Robo-Snake; Can Humor Be Computerized?; Apple's "Profit Rocket" Slowing— But They Are Still Rolling in Cash; Digital Printing and Learning; High Tech Romance: E-Flirting...to iDelete and iSpy; No Incentive for Gigabit Internet Speeds; Controversy Over Free Wi-Fi and TV Streaming; Cyber War!; Child Privacy Laws and Kid-Apps; Video Gaming: Top Games Breaking Records, Rest of Industry Tumbles; Semi-Autonomous Cars: Avoidance Technology, New Fuel, Wireless Charging.

### Automation, Social Robots and a Robo-Snake

In January 2013, the *New York Times* reviewed the recent Automate 2013 ([www.nytimes.com/2013/01/24/technology/robot-makers-spread-global-gospel-of-automation.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit\\_th\\_20130124](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/24/technology/robot-makers-spread-global-gospel-of-automation.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130124)) trade show in Chicago. Plenty of worker-bots were on show,

including Rethink Robotics' Baxter, which learns tasks by human mimicry instead of reprogramming.



**"I learned from my human workmate that we're supposed to take a ten minute coffee break every half hour, surf the Web for gizmos, send e-mail to our friends, and play video games. This job is great!"**

and devices in our homes with some "social robot" functions, such as a fork that vibrates when you are eating too fast.

In February 2013, *SiliconValley* ran a story on RoboKids ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_22598955/robokid-robots-help-children-attend-school-despite-illnesses](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_22598955/robokid-robots-help-children-attend-school-despite-illnesses)), which are robots that let homebound kids virtually attend school. Devon Carrow's life-threatening allergies won't let him go to school. But a 4-foot-tall robot with a wireless hookup lets Devon attend school remotely. While adults are startled to see a robot standing in a line of giggling second graders, other children take their virtual classmate in stride, telling the Devon-bot jokes and asking him to join their Lego projects. When the class made Get Well cards for Devon during a hospital stay last year, the kids all drew him a little boy—not a robot. The robot, VGo ([www.vgocom.com/](http://www.vgocom.com/)) was introduced in 2011, and a handful of homebound students across the country are using it.

*SiliconValley* also reported in February 2013, that California utility PG&E has a new 12-foot long robo-snake ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_22648898/wireless-robots-make-life-easier-pg-e-inspections](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_22648898/wireless-robots-make-life-easier-pg-e-inspections)), with cameras on both ends. It is a 250 pound, untethered wireless robot the public utility has started using to inspect hard-to-reach, natural gas pipelines in Central and Northern California. PG&E was forced to upgrade their pipeline testing methods following a 2010 explosion that killed eight people, injured dozens more, and destroyed or damaged 108 homes. The Explorer robot is built by Pipetel Technologies, Inc ([www.pipetelone.com/](http://www.pipetelone.com/)), has a drive train that allows it to cut through the natural gas, while sending streaming video and pictures to topside operators and engineers. The robo-snake can even navigate 90-degree bends and other acute angles in pipelines.

### Can Humor Be Computerized?

In January 2013, the *New York Times* ran an article about computer-generated jokes ([www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/opinion/sunday/can-computers-be-funny.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/06/opinion/sunday/can-computers-be-funny.html?_r=0)), or "computational humor." With growing demand for "social computers" that can communicate in natural fashion with people, grappling with computer-humor has suddenly become more important. But computer-generated humor is no easy

Speakers refuted scare-stories of robotics stealing jobs, arguing instead that automation will create new kinds of jobs that will be better paying because they will require higher-skilled workers. Showcased were some chief executives of small American manufacturers, who described how they had increased employment and were now better able to compete in a global market by relying heavily on automation and robots.

Also in January 2013, the *New York Times* reported on Simon, a humanoid robot ([www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/opinion/sunday/our-talking-walking-objects.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/opinion/sunday/our-talking-walking-objects.html)) being developed at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Georgia IT is "exploring intuitive ways for people and machines to live and work alongside one another." Simon can understand spoken sentences and use social skills to respond correctively. It raises its arms if it doesn't understand a request, or cocks its head to express confusion. Simon is not meant to be sold, but is one of a growing collection of "social robots" used in research to understand and react as a human would. There are already appliances

task, since humor is complex, filled with abstraction and ambiguity, and varies considerably among countries and even regions.

Plus, a truly successful humor program needs to navigate all the shades of humor, from irony to word-play, as well as understand humor's dependency on context. So far, the most successful computation humor programs have focused on simple linguistic relationships, like double meanings or puns. Applying machine-learning algorithms, research and experiments with computational humor have had the most success in teaching computers to recognize, and thus understand, what is funny.

Scotland developed a System To Augment Non-Speakers' Dialogues Using Puns (STANDUP ([inf.abdn.ac.uk/research/standup/](http://inf.abdn.ac.uk/research/standup/))), which is a program to generate punning riddles to help kids with language disabilities. In the US the first-ever US symposium on the artificial intelligence of humor, was held in November 2012.

UC Berkeley (California) has developed a program that doesn't create humor as much as learn to tailor already-written jokes to individual tastes. It uses a collaborative filtering algorithm called Eigentaste, to recommend jokes through their research Web site ([eigentaste.berkeley.edu/user/index.php](http://eigentaste.berkeley.edu/user/index.php)), based on your ratings of previous jokes. Eigentaste ([eigentaste.berkeley.edu/info.php](http://eigentaste.berkeley.edu/info.php)) was patented by the University of California at Berkeley in 2003, which sees future applications for their recommendation-program to eventually extend to books, music, and even stocks.

### Apple's "Profit Rocket" Slowing—But They Are Still Rolling in Cash

After the death of Steve Jobs in 2011, and Tim Cook now the new CEO, Apple is still adjusting to a new management style. *The Oakland Tribune*, through Silicon Valley in January 2013, announced that Apple has fallen ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_22453611/apple-no-longer-most-valuable-company-exxon](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_22453611/apple-no-longer-most-valuable-company-exxon)) from its sterling post as World's Most Valuable Company, returning Exxon Mobil to that top spot. Too many gloomy investors, fearing slow growth at Apple, have jettisoned their investment shares.

Also in January 2013, Associated Press through the *Seattle Times*, reported that Apple's "profit rocket" has indeed slowed drastically, with iPhone sales plateauing, and no new revolutionary products on the horizon. (As noted earlier, a string of incremental upgrades has also garnered criticism.) Their stock plunged more than 10% as the year began, wiping out a year's worth of gains. In fact, Apple has lost 35% of its value since September 2012. While CEO Cook insists there are plenty of new products in Apple's pipeline, he offers no details.

On the upside, the *Miami Herald* reported in February 2013 that Apple is sitting on a stash of cash ([www.miamiherald.com/2013/02/27/3257482/amount-of-cash-securities-held.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/02/27/3257482/amount-of-cash-securities-held.html)) (\$137 Billion to be exact). The money legally belongs to the shareholders, so why the company is stockpiling so much cash is a mystery.

*The Washington Times* then reported that an influential investor, Greenlight Capital ([www.greenlightcapital.com/](http://www.greenlightcapital.com/)) was suing Apple ([www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/7/greenlight-sues-apple-over-capital-allocation/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/7/greenlight-sues-apple-over-capital-allocation/)) in a New York federal court. The suit was over Apple's proposal to "make it more difficult for Greenlight to issue preferred stock," by closing down one avenue for Apple to reward shareholders with more cash.

### Digital Printing and Learning

In November 2012, *NextBigFuture* announced that a Japanese company, BFS-Auto ([www.k2.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp/vision/BFS-Auto/](http://www.k2.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp/vision/BFS-Auto/)), can digitize books at over 250 pages per minute ([nextbigfuture.com/2012/11/japanese-robotic-system-can-digitize.html#more](http://nextbigfuture.com/2012/11/japanese-robotic-system-can-digitize.html#more)). The speedy system relies on automated, high-speed page flipping, real-time 3D recognition of each page, and high-accuracy restoration to a flat document image.

In 2011, the *Denver Post* reported that Rangeview Library District and its Anythink libraries ([www.anythinklibraries.org/](http://www.anythinklibraries.org/)) received multiple grants to design a digital learning lab ([yourhub.denverpost.com/adamscounty/anythinktm-wins-grant-competition-design-digital-learning-lab/tRES5PI43mulL5YTRk5m7M-ugc](http://yourhub.denverpost.com/adamscounty/anythinktm-wins-grant-competition-design-digital-learning-lab/tRES5PI43mulL5YTRk5m7M-ugc)) for teens at Anythink Wright Farms in Thornton, Colorado. They were one of 12 museums and libraries in the US to receive this grant to "serve as a national prototype for the learning labs project, and improve digital literacy with hands-on learning."

A January 2013 update about the Anythink Wright Farms learning center said that construction on The Studio had started ([yourhub.denverpost.com/adamscounty/work-begins-studio-at-anythink-wright-farms-thornton/SS9G2iBoBh9ngVPGegd3eJ-story?hl](http://yourhub.denverpost.com/adamscounty/work-begins-studio-at-anythink-wright-farms-thornton/SS9G2iBoBh9ngVPGegd3eJ-story?hl)). It will feature new video equipment, a green screen (to add computer-generated backgrounds), and a recording studio. It was slated to open in March 2013.

### High Tech Romance: E-Flirting...

Relationships and marriages have been made easier with smartphones and social media. But have they made dating a minefield of text-interpretation? Or has "trust" gone out the window with the rise of erasable-media and partner-checking apps? Read on...

In January 2013, Yahoo's love-and-sex site, Shine, offered new rules for Online Dating ([shine.yahoo.com/love-sex/5-rules-online-dating-every-woman-know-195500509.html](http://shine.yahoo.com/love-sex/5-rules-online-dating-every-woman-know-195500509.html)). With online dating now the third most common way couples meet, new books outline ways to avoid the pitfalls of e-flirters who don't want relationships.

The suggestions start with joining multiple dating sites, from general to niche, and a cycling strategy of trying new sites and occasionally revisiting the older ones. Give your Personal Profile the same attention to detail as your job resume is advised. And stress the positive and fun, since "purposefully casual" profiles get the most hits. Uploading photos, writing out the qualities you are looking for in a partner, and being wary of liars or those hiding something, round out the suggestions.

In January 2013, the *New York Times* ran a story on how our e-dating culture ([www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/fashion/the-end-of-courtship.html?ref=technology&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/13/fashion/the-end-of-courtship.html?ref=technology&r=0)) has devolved into an exchange of text messages or Facebook posts that leave everyone wondering how to land an actual date. Instead of being asked to meet someone new-and-interesting one on one, today's young people would rather text that they're at such-and-such bar with a "group of friends," and ask a text-acquaintance to meet them. In a hook-up culture, is just "hanging out" the New Dating?

### ...To iDelete and iSpy

In December 2012, *Newser* ran a story on a new iPhone app from Facebook that makes text messages disappear forever ([www.newser.com/story/159754/facebook-unveils-new-poke-app.html](http://www.newser.com/story/159754/facebook-unveils-new-poke-app.html)), after a few seconds. The app, called Poke ([itunes.apple.com/us/app/facebook-poke/id588594730?mt=8](http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/facebook-poke/id588594730?mt=8)), lets users send a photo or video and then set the time for self-destruction at anywhere from one to ten seconds. A similar text-destroying app is called Snapchat ([www.snapchat.com/](http://www.snapchat.com/)), known as the "safe sexting app." Some foresee a great future for these "erasable media" apps, to not leave an embarrassing trail of photos and practical jokes cached forever on the Internet.

And now there's even an app to see if your partner is cheating ([www.nydailynews.com/life-style/partner-cheating-app-article-1.1218612](http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/partner-cheating-app-article-1.1218612)). *The NY Daily News* reported in December 2012 on a new app called Qoqoriko ([www.qoqoriko.com/en/](http://www.qoqoriko.com/en/)) that uses crowdsourcing to check e-mail addresses or mobile phone numbers to see if they have been entered by someone else who might be a romantic rival. A search can turn up suspicious others, or the suspicious partner can set up an Alert, to be notified the moment someone searches for a loved one's contact details on the site. The site also offers forums for suspicious partners to discuss potential infidelity, or be directed to gather more evidence.

## No Incentive for Gigabit Internet Speeds

In February 2013 *NextBigFuture* reported that cable companies have a 97% margin profit on Internet services, and thus have no incentive to offer a gigabit Internet ([nextbigfuture.com/2013/02/cable-companies-make-97-margin-on.html](http://nextbigfuture.com/2013/02/cable-companies-make-97-margin-on.html)). This leaves consumers frustrated and feeling trapped with the Internet giants, especially as more people want to launch a start-up or other project from home, or businesses want more international access.

I've already written about a bold experiment in the MidWest by high-speed Google Fiber, turning parts of Kansas into a high-tech hub nicknamed "Silicon Prairie." This is opposite of the other Internet companies, who are focused on capitalizing on existing cable infrastructure—not building out high-speed fiber connections to homes and businesses.

## Controversy Over Free Wi-Fi and TV Streaming

The *Washington Post*, through the *Seattle Times*, ran a story in February 2013 how the government wants to create powerful Wi-Fi networks ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020320679\\_wirelessplanxml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020320679_wirelessplanxml.html)) across the US that consumers can use to make calls or surf the Internet without paying a cellphone bill. The FCC plan to offer free access to the Web in most cities and many rural areas has seriously jolted the \$178 Billion wireless industry, which has launched a fierce lobbying effort against the idea. An equally intense campaign has been launched for the idea by tech giants like Google and Microsoft. They believe that free Wi-Fi access could spark an explosion of innovations and devices to benefit everyone—especially the poor.

*The Seattle Times* reported in February 2013, that Intel Corp. is working on a TV set top-box ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020340636\\_apustecinteltv.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020340636_apustecinteltv.html)) that could totally replace cable-for-entertainment. The box will deliver Internet movies and shows directly to your TV, much as Roku and Apple devices have already done. But Intel is aiming for their box and streaming service to be a total replacement for cable. Intel would also make the video service available on non-TV devices like the iPad. Experts say Intel needs to grow beyond their PC-processors, with PC sales stagnating. And Media companies are beginning to show some flexibility, beyond offering just limited but profitable "packages" of programming.

## Cyber War!

*The Seattle Times* ran a series of stories in February 2013 about how state-backed cyber spies, like the Chinese, can steal high-value secrets ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020389550\\_apaschinahackingthecost.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020389550_apaschinahackingthecost.html)) from both foreign governments and corporations. US security firm Mandiant Inc ([mandiant.com/](http://mandiant.com/)), confirmed a torrent of suspicions that Chinese hackers are stealing state secrets from numerous Western companies. These state-sponsored hackers aim for better guarded but more valuable information, wanting to use the stolen secrets to gain a military or commercial advantage.

Apple reported in February that some of their headquarters' Macs had been infected ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020386939\\_apustecapplehacked.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020386939_apustecapplehacked.html)) by malicious software, similar to the attack Facebook had reported the previous week. In both cases, the computers were infected by software downloaded from a site for software developers that took advantage of flaws in Java. (In January, the Department of Homeland Security had recommended that everyone disable Java in their Web browsers.)

The current US Administration has started examining fines and other trade actions against China, in response to their blatant cyber-espionage ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020384566\\_apchinahacking.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020384566_apchinahacking.html)). Mandiant Inc. has identified the cyberspies as Unit 61398 in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, stationed in Shanghai. Security experts say the US

needs to change their strategy to deal with state-sponsored cyber-espionage, from just telling corporations to increase their security, to focusing more on deterring the hackers and the countries backing them.

### Child Privacy Laws and Kid-Apps

In early December 2012 the *New York Times* ran a story on a new report by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) on how several hundred of the most popular kid apps don't give parents basic explanations about what kinds of personal information the apps collect ([www.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/technology/many-mobile-apps-for-children-fall-short-on-disclosure-to-parents-ftc-report-says.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit\\_th\\_20121211](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/11/technology/many-mobile-apps-for-children-fall-short-on-disclosure-to-parents-ftc-report-says.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20121211)) from their children. An agency review of 400 of the most popular child educational and mobile gaming apps found that only 20% disclosed their data collection practices. Federal law requires Web site operators to get parents' permission before collecting or sharing kids' personal information.

A week later, the Associated Press through the *Denver Post* reported on the expected fallout ([www.denverpost.com/technology/ci\\_22213582/developers-worried-about-new-rules-phone-apps](http://www.denverpost.com/technology/ci_22213582/developers-worried-about-new-rules-phone-apps)) from the FTC's upcoming, more stringent child privacy rules. The new rules will limit "data sharing," or collecting personal information from preteens. This is an update of the 1998 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) to now include mobile devices. Developers selling games and educational apps for kids will have to incorporate the changes, and estimates of the costs run into the hundreds of millions. But parents have been pushing for stricter laws to prohibit the use of behavioral marketing techniques that target children.

### Video Gaming: Top Games Breaking Records, Rest of Industry Tumbles

Big changes are coming to gaming hardware, with upcoming consoles blocking used games and possibly using a cloud-subscription model. The big hit of the recent Consumer Electronic Show was Razer Edge's tablet, which now makes PC gaming mobile. But the *Seattle Times*' Brier Dudley says that video games, especially the most anticipated sequels, are still selling in huge numbers ([seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019835614\\_black\\_ops\\_ii\\_blasts\\_avatar\\_tak.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/technologybrierdudleysblog/2019835614_black_ops_ii_blasts_avatar_tak.html)).

In November 2012, *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* grossed an astonishing \$1 Billion in the first 15 days it was on the market. Activision ([www.activision.com/atvihub/home.do](http://www.activision.com/atvihub/home.do)) reported that BOII broke the previous sales record set by *Avatar* in 2009, which raked in \$1 Billion in over 17 days. It also noted that its military-themed action franchise, *Call of Duty*, has become more lucrative than the biggest grossing movies.

CNBC reported in January 2013 that December 2012 sales were bleak ([www.cnbc.com/id/100371472/Bleak\\_Sales\\_Greet\\_PC\\_Makers\\_Video\\_Gamers\\_in\\_New\\_Year](http://www.cnbc.com/id/100371472/Bleak_Sales_Greet_PC_Makers_Video_Gamers_in_New_Year)) for video games and consoles. Sales of video games overall and gaming consoles had tumbled 20%-26% in December, despite the holidays. The decline is attributed to the fact that consumers continue to migrate to tablets and smartphones for entertainment, and are generally content playing the same video games they already have. In March 2013 Video Game Chantz ([www.vgchartz.com/](http://www.vgchartz.com/)) reported that for February 2013, the Wii accounted for over 40% of global gaming hardware sales, while games *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* and *Crysis 3* were the global top selling games.

### Semi-Autonomous Cars: Avoidance Technology, New Fuel, Wireless Charging

The National Transportation Safety Board recommended in November 2012 that all new cars be equipped with "collision avoidance technologies." In January 2013, the *New York Times* ran a story on a semi-autonomous Volkswagen ([www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/science/drivers-with-hands-full-get-a-backup-the-car.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/12/science/drivers-with-hands-full-get-a-backup-the-car.html)) that zooms around the Stanford University (California) campus, and is equipped with such prototype technology.

Dr. Jesse Levinson's prototype VW Passat has a computer vision system he helped design that

automatically slows and stops the car if people or other vehicles appear in its path. A variety of optical and radar sensors are now showing up in evermore cars on our highways, some that can even track the driver's physical state. Four manufacturers (Volvo, BMW, Audi and Mercedes) will soon offer models loaded with software to let their cars drive themselves in heavy traffic at up to 37 mph. Steering, braking and accelerating are also being increasingly handled by computer software in vehicles, rather than drivers.

An AP story through the *Seattle Times* in January 2013, announced that three manufacturers are speeding development of cars that run on hydrogen fuel ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020231011\\_apusautosfuelcellalliance.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020231011_apusautosfuelcellalliance.html)). Ford is joining Daimler and Renault-Nissan to develop car engines that run on hydrogen, hoping to bring these new models to market in four years. The hydrogen is stored in special high-pressure tanks, and generates electricity after a chemical reaction. The only emissions are water vapor and heat. The manufacturer's alliance will invest equally in the technology, and the plan is to develop a common fuel cell system that all three companies can put in their vehicles. Another alliance between Toyota and BMW has them working together on next-gen batteries for green vehicles, called "lithium-air."

*Gigaom* reported in February 2013, that Wireless Power Consortium's (WPC) Qi wireless charging technology ([gigaom.com/2013/02/24/wireless-charging-platform-qi-lands-its-second-automaker/](http://gigaom.com/2013/02/24/wireless-charging-platform-qi-lands-its-second-automaker/)) is making progress getting auto manufacturers on board. Toyota was the first, and has already adopted the wireless charging technology for the Avalon, which is now available in 2013 models. The Qi automotive charging system was designed by Leggett & Platt ([leggett.com/](http://leggett.com/)), and uses induction to transfer an electric charge to a mobile phone inside the Qi equipped vehicle.

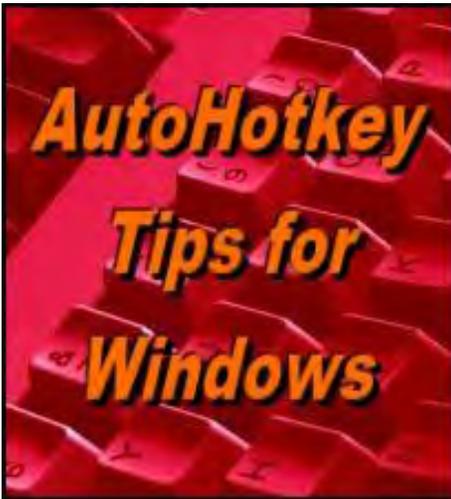
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Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. She has had short stories appear in the following 2011-2012 publications: *Deadman's Tome* ([www.demonictome.com/](http://www.demonictome.com/))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

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

[Make the Caps Lock Key Productive and Wait! What?](#)

“A Simple Trick for the Caps Lock Key, Jack's Mistakes, and Where to Save AutoHotkey INI Files”  
by Jack Dunning

A Simple Trick for Making Better Use of the Caps Lock Key; Calculating Ages, Wait! What?; There's a better place to Save INI Files.

## A Simple Trick for Making Better Use of the Caps Lock Key

If you're like me, the caps lock key is an annoyance. I occasionally hit it when I'm aiming for the right shift key. When I look up, I've thrown a bunch of capital letters up onto the screen. (Not that many because I don't type that fast.) In any case, I have little use for the caps lock key. I could disable it with AutoHotkey (Capslock:: ), but why not make better use of it? In this case, I turn the caps lock key into a hotkey for opening the Windows Calculator app. All that's needed is one short line of code:

```
Capslock::Run, calc.exe
```

Add this line to any new or used AutoHotkey script, run with AutoHotkey or compile it and run on any Windows computer, and your caps lock key become the calculator key. Anytime you hit caps lock (even accidentally), the Windows Calculator will pop-up.

*New to AutoHotkey? See "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script ([www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing\\_AutoHotkey\\_and\\_writing\\_your\\_first\\_script.html](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html))."*

You can do this trick with any key and any program. All you need is the list of AutoHotkey key commands ([www.autohotkey.com/docs/KeyList.htm](http://www.autohotkey.com/docs/KeyList.htm)) and the name of the command file you want to run.

## Calculating Ages

Last week I introduced the GrandKids app which used AutoHotkey to calculate the age of grandchildren (or anyone else). All that's needed is the date of birth which was stored in an INI file. It uses a function I wrote for making the calculations. I must admit that it took me some time and a number of mental gymnastics to finally get to a result that works. (If you find a problem with it, please let me know.) It is much shorter than most of the other age functions I found, although I don't know if it's more accurate. It's worth the time to review this function because it gives a better understanding of the issues of working with dates...

## Wait! What?

*What was I thinking? That was my question as I was writing the discussion of the age calculating function. I couldn't figure out why I did what I did—much less explain it. (This happens far too often.) I've found some errors in the function for calculating the age of the grandchildren so I'm putting off the discussion of*

the function until I get it right. This is why software goes through beta testing. There are so many things that can go wrong. Maybe next week.

## Where to Save INI Files

In the meantime Ron Cerrato has been testing the Reminder app in Windows 8. He found that if he used a local logon rather than the Microsoft logon, he had to mess with "Run as administrator" to get the app to run. It seems that the Reminder script which uses the AutoHotkey variable `A_Username` to create and save the `Reminder.ini` file storing data about the last reminder was creating a new file under the local logon name rather than the more generic Windows logon. In Ron's case the file would be found under Ron4 whereas all other files are located under Ron. The Reminder folder and INI file were the only files found in the Ron4 folder.

In our back and forth I finally put together a script that checked the value of some of the AutoHotkey system variables. When Ron ran the test script in Windows 8, the two variables `A_MyDocuments` and `A_AppData` showed the more generic paths to the data for the Windows logon Ron (see Figure 1).

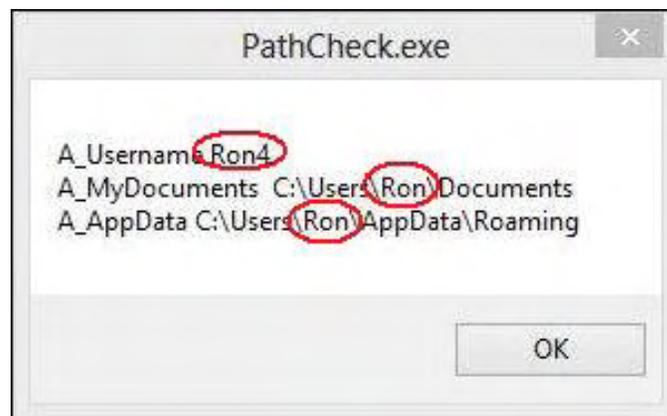


Figure 1. The variables `A_MyDocuments` and `A_AppData` give more consistent data paths between versions of Windows for saving data files in AutoHotkey.

The learning point for me is rather than specifying a path for saving data files using the `A_UserName` variable (`C:\Users\%A_UserName%\Reminder\Reminder.ini`), it's better to use `A_MyDocuments` or `A_AppData` which give more consistent paths across different versions of Windows, plus they include the entire path (`%A_MyDocuments%\Reminder\Reminder.ini` and `%A_AppData%\Reminder\Reminder.ini` respectively) negating the need to assume `C:\Users`.

I've modified the `Reminder.ahk` file to use the `A_AppData` path for the `Reminder.app` folder and file. This is more appropriate and should solve problems such as those encountered by Ron. The new version `Reminder 1.7.ahk` can be found at the *ComputerEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7)).

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00B8Z2ASG&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00B8Z2ASG&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)).

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

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

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

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

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

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## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Potential of the iWatch” by Wally Wang

The Potential of the iWatch; Follow the Leader; App from NASA; Lessons about the Obvious That Still Aren't Obvious; National Geographic's World Atlas; Adding More Fonts.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The two hottest rumors of potential products coming from Apple are the AppleTV and the iWatch. The AppleTV is supposed to change the way we access content on TV. Considering that cable networks provide bundles of channels that never seem to be what people really want, there's a huge potential for something different so people can pick the shows they want to watch and the time to watch them on the device they want whether it's on a computer, on a TV, on a smartphone, or a tablet.

The iWatch is supposed to be a wearable computer that looks like a wristwatch. Right away, people with little imagination beyond the ability to criticize everything, have claimed that the iWatch concept makes no sense because who needs a watch any more to tell time? The real key of an iWatch (which won't likely be its name) isn't the idea of strapping a smaller size iPhone on a wristwatch and calling that innovation, much like Hewlett-Packard slapping Windows 7 on a tablet and passing that off as innovation in the form of their Slate PC.

Most people look at a possible product like the iWatch and see only limitations. Swatch Group AG (UHR) Chief Executive Officer Nick Hayek said ([www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-06/swatch-chief-hayek-skeptical-that-watch-could-replace-an-iphone.html](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-06/swatch-chief-hayek-skeptical-that-watch-could-replace-an-iphone.html)), "Personally, I don't believe it's the next revolution. Replacing an iPhone with an interactive terminal on your wrist is difficult. You can't have an immense display." Nick Hayek is missing the point that the display isn't the important feature; the ability to do something new is the important feature, which is always overlooked by unimaginative critics.

With the rumored iWatch, people will be able to use a wearable computer as an identification device or as a medical monitor. Disney World is already experimenting with something similar called a MagicBand ([seekingalpha.com/article/1252241-disney-showcases-apple-s-iwatch-potential](http://seekingalpha.com/article/1252241-disney-showcases-apple-s-iwatch-potential)), which acts as each person's hotel room key, ticket to Disney World, and credit card.

As an identification device, an iWatch can always be with you so there's much less risk of misplacing it if it's strapped to your wrist. If someone steals your credit cards, they won't be able to use them without the iWatch to authenticate the transaction. If someone steals both your credit card and your iWatch, they might be able to use your credit cards, unless the iWatch also uses your body as an authentication method as well.

Suppose the iWatch measures your pulse and skin. Anyone stealing your iWatch won't have the same physical characteristics so they can't steal your identity just by stealing your credit cards and iWatch.

Beyond authenticating financial transactions, the iWatch could also monitor your health. Athletes could use an iWatch to optimize their physical performance by constantly checking the condition of their body. Such people who use objective data to measure athletic performance are known as "fitness quants ([www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-07/our-bodies-our-spreadsheets-fitness-quants-on-rampage.html](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-07/our-bodies-our-spreadsheets-fitness-quants-on-rampage.html))."

Wearable computing can even help monitor your body position ([www.cnet.com/8301-14013\\_1-57572726-284/when-wearable-computing-meets-the-pilates-shirt/](http://www.cnet.com/8301-14013_1-57572726-284/when-wearable-computing-meets-the-pilates-shirt/)) and signal you when you're in an incorrect position. Elderly and ill people can wear an iWatch that can alert them when they need to take their medication or alert someone else if the person wearing the iWatch falls or passes out.

Just by imagining these possibilities, you can see that wearable computing devices have tremendous potential that smartphones and tablets (and especially netbooks) can't easily duplicate. While Hewlett-Packard might try to mimic the iWatch by bolting a strap to their Slate PC and loading it with Windows 8 as their form of "innovation," it won't work as well as a specially designed device with an interface optimized for one-handed operation.

The future continues looking bright for innovators. For everyone else who insists that Windows PCs are the perfect technology right now that never needs to change, you can go back to using your netbooks (instead of a tablet) and sticking with clumsy mobile phones instead of smartphones. Then you can claim that wearable computers like the iWatch can be duplicated just by strapping a Windows 8 netbook to your wrist so you can read the current time at a glance while it's running Flash, which is critical for any computer to run or else it's completely useless.

### Follow the Leader

Microsoft's business model is to find what someone else is doing and then copying it. After Apple helped familiarize people with the graphical user interface of the Macintosh, Microsoft made a similar graphical user interface with Windows. After Lotus Development cornered the market with their 1-2-3 spreadsheet, Microsoft introduced a better spreadsheet called Excel. After WordPerfect cornered the word processing market, Microsoft took over with Word for Windows. After Sony took over the video game console market with the PlayStation, Microsoft shoveled billions to develop the Xbox.

The problem with Microsoft's strategy is that it works just often enough to create the illusion that it should work all the time. Rather than think of doing something different, Microsoft simply tries to copy what everyone else is doing. The problem with copying is that when the market changes, the leader and the copycat both get blindsided by change.

When CompuServe was the most popular online service, Microsoft tried to copy it with their Microsoft Network. Then the Internet appeared and wiped out online services like CompuServe and America Online along with the Microsoft Network. Rather than look ahead, Microsoft simply looked backwards to the past.

When Adobe conquered the Internet animation market with Flash, Microsoft tried to copy with Silverlight. Then the mobile computing world took over and Flash couldn't adapt, which also meant that Silverlight couldn't adapt, so that copycat project represented another wasted effort by Microsoft.

When Apple introduced HyperCard, Microsoft tried to offer a similar program called Toolbook. When HyperCard faded away, Microsoft lost interest in Toolbook and stopped bundling it with Windows.

When Apple conquered the MP3 player market with the iPod, Microsoft responded with the Zune, only to get blindsided less than a year later when Apple introduced the iPhone. Then Microsoft tried to duplicate the iPhone with Windows Phone 7, just as Apple blindsided them with the iPad. Microsoft tried to duplicate the iPad with Windows 8 and their Surface tablets, just in time for Apple to blindside them again with the iPad mini's smaller tablet size.

By always following the leader, Microsoft guarantees that they will never be the leader until the leader

stumbles. Sometimes this strategy works but it depends on the incompetence of the current leader to fail. When it doesn't work, Microsoft doesn't know what else to do except look for another market leader to copy and chase all over again.

Success often depends on a combination of luck and skill, as explained in the book *The Success Equation* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1422184234/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1422184234&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1422184234/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1422184234&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20)). The trick is realizing when your success depends on luck so you don't try to duplicate your success based on luck alone.

Someone who wins a chess championship most likely won through skill with a little bit of luck. Someone who wins the lottery wins entirely by luck, but nobody would consider a lottery winner as a great financial guru. If you win the lottery once, you'd be foolish to expect to win it again and again.

Yet Microsoft's success is less a result of its own skill and more on luck. As sales of Windows 8 remain dismal and Surface tablets trickle off the shelves, it looks like Microsoft is missing the boat on the whole mobile computing market once more. When Microsoft can't rely on lucky circumstances, their skill may not be enough to help them succeed.

You can bet that when Microsoft finally releases a smaller Surface tablet to compete with the iPad mini, a few months later Apple will release wearable computers, and then Microsoft will fall behind once again. You have to wonder when Microsoft's executives will ever figure out that chasing the leader doesn't always work and that innovating can provide far greater profits in the long run.

Until then, expect Microsoft and their partners like Dell and Hewlett-Packard to keep spinning in circles like a dog chasing its tail. The only difference is that when Microsoft catches its own tail, it's more likely to bite it off completely and then wonder why it's bleeding.

App from NASA

If you're interested in space exploration, you might want to download NASA's free app ([www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/iphone/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/iphone/index.html)). Now you can keep track of all of NASA's latest missions, view pictures that they may have captured of distant stars, and even track the movement of satellites overhead in case you want to look for them in the sky with a telescope.

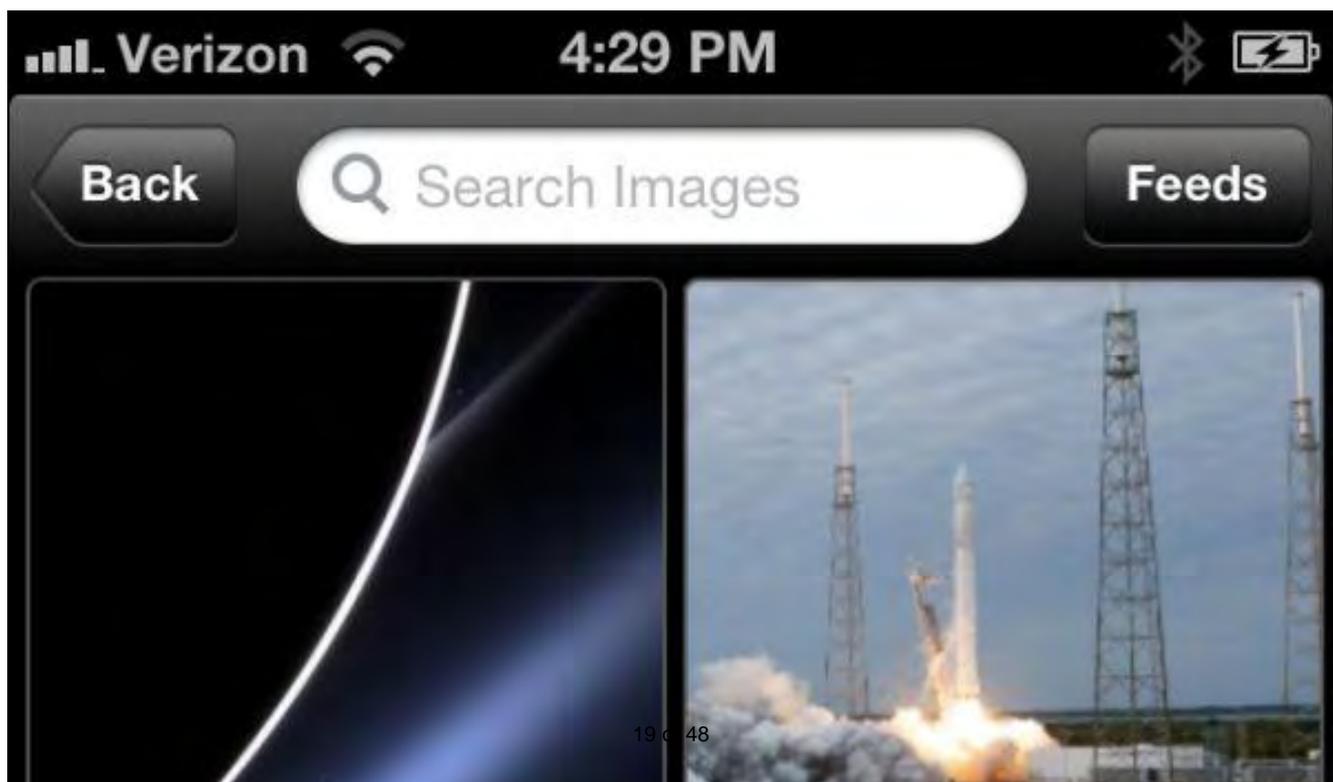
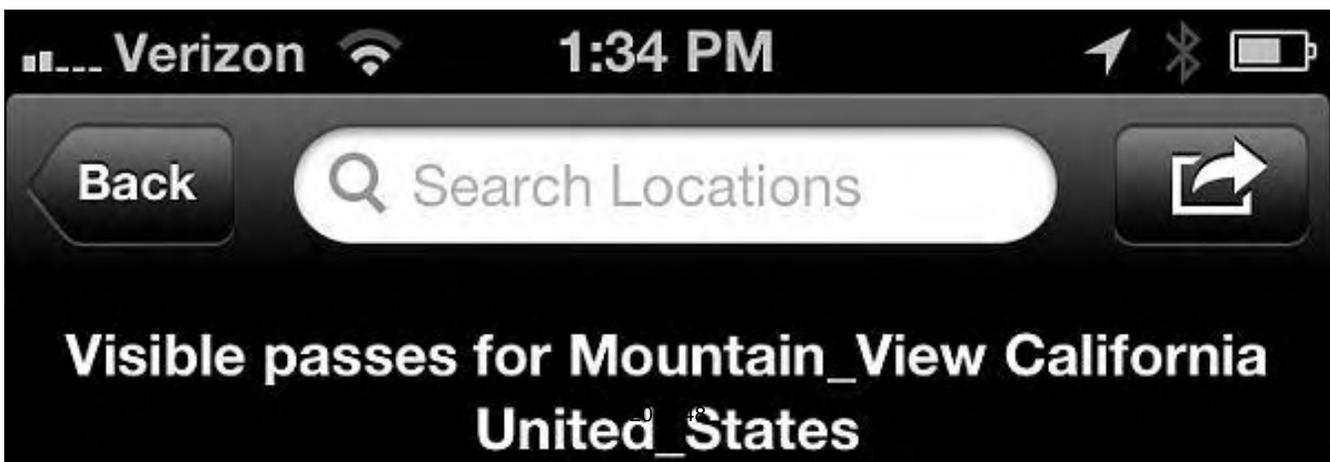




Figure 1. NASA's app lets you view pictures and track missions.

By tracking satellites or the International Space Station as it moves across the sky, you can turn an abstract idea into something you can actually see by looking in the right direction of the sky. Such viewing information can help NASA's space missions seem less like science fiction and more part of your own life, especially if you can spot a satellite from your own front porch.



# Visible passes for Mountain\_View California United\_States

Data current as of: Mar 06, 2013 01:34:41 PM

## 2013-03-10 ISS SIGHTING



Date: Sunday, March 10, 2013

Time: 06:48 AM

Duration: Less than 1 minute

Maximum Elevation: 10°

Approach: 10° above SE

Departure: 10° above SE

## 2013-03-12 ISS SIGHTING



Date: Tuesday, March 12,  
2013

Time: 06:40 AM

Duration: 3 minutes

Maximum Elevation: 28°

Approach: 10° above SSW

Departure: 28° above SE

## 2013-03-13 ISS SIGHTING

Showing 1 to 3 of 14 records



Heading



Figure 2. NASA's app lets you track the movement of satellites across the sky.

While you're star gazing using your iPhone or iPad, you can see yet another example of mobile computing that desktops and laptops can't do as easily. You can easily take your smartphone or tablet outside to help you look for a satellite overhead, but it's not as convenient to use a laptop or netbook to do the same task. With NASA's app, you can see more than just stars and satellites, but also the future of the computer market as well.

## Lessons about the Obvious That Still Aren't Obvious

On ZDNet's site, columnist Matt Baxter-Reynolds talks ([www.zdnet.com/will-90-percent-of-users-always-hate-windows-8-7000012348/](http://www.zdnet.com/will-90-percent-of-users-always-hate-windows-8-7000012348/)) about how he's been using Windows 8 for over a year since the early beta versions and found Windows 8 reliable enough to use as his main operating system.

However, Matt comes to the seemingly obvious conclusion that he likes Windows 8 because he's willing to learn something new and adapt to technology as a tech-savvy consumer. Yet he realizes that 90 percent of computer users simply want to get a task done and don't care about technical specifications, user interface design decisions, or how the operating system has evolved over time.

Why this simple fact remains so elusive to the tech-savvy crowd is an ongoing mystery. When confronted by Windows 8, tech-savvy users enjoy adapting to the changes so they think everyone should equally enjoy adapting to changes in technology. In his column, Matt realizes that most people don't think like tech-savvy users.

That's the huge difference between Microsoft and Apple. Tech-savvy users prefer Microsoft products because they like tinkering with options and customizing features. If the product doesn't work the way they want, tech-savvy users have fun changing the product until it does do what they want.

Apple users tend to want to accomplish a task without caring how it works. Even if the product doesn't offer as many features as rival products, Apple users don't care just as long as it meets their needs. This difference in thinking lies at the heart of the entire Microsoft vs. Apple debate.

In general, Microsoft users think everyone should be tech-savvy and be willing to spend days learning something new, even if it won't help them accomplish their tasks. Apple users just want something that they can use without thinking about it and just enjoy the benefits of using that product.

If you enjoy tinkering with technology, you can play with Windows 8, study the source code of Linux, or dig into the UNIX roots of Mac OS X. If you just want a product that makes your life easier and requires as little technical knowledge as possible to use, chances are good you'll look at an Apple product first and maybe never look at any rival product at all.

What the majority of Microsoft supporters fail to realize is that most people don't want to use a computer; they want to get the benefits of using a computer. If they could get those same benefits without using a computer, they would. The best technology products get out of the way so people can get those desired benefits as quickly as possible.

With that criteria in mind, ask yourself if you were having a heart attack and needed to use a machine to keep yourself alive in the next 30 seconds, would you want to use a product that's easy to use? Or would you rather use a product that forces you to learn how it works, read a manual to learn how to use it, and then customize it so it works the way you like best?

## National Geographic's World Atlas

In the old days, people used to look at paper maps printed in books. Such paper maps are expensive to print and relatively rare, so National Geographic has turned their map making skills of the world into a National Geographic World Atlas app. Instead of looking at bulky books containing maps of different countries, you can see a world globe on your iPad screen and spin it around to see any place in the world.

When you see a spot that you want to examine in more details, you don't need to flip to another page in a book to find it. Just pinch and zoom the screen and the app shows you more detail.

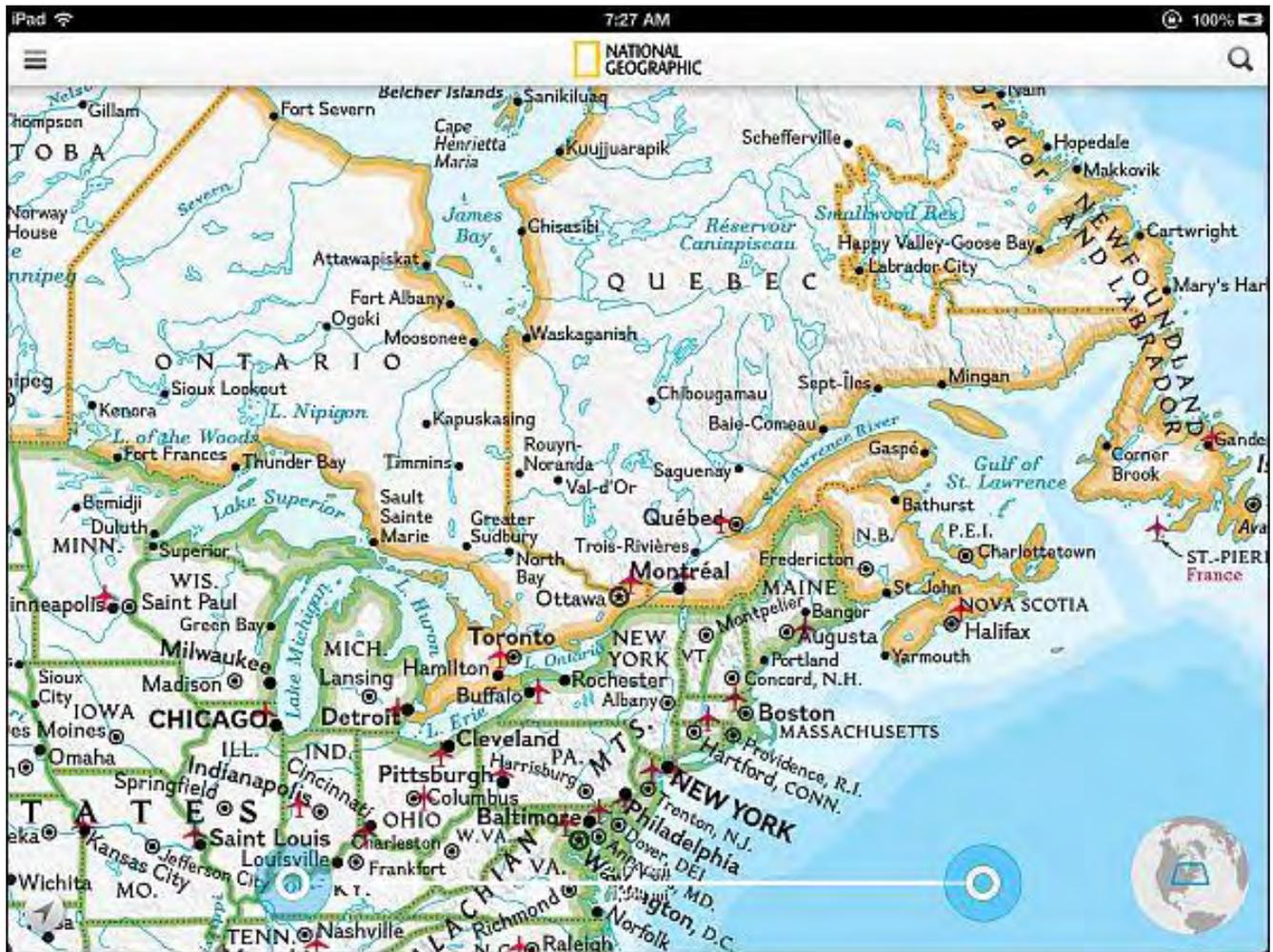


Figure 3. View a National Geographic map of any place in the world.

By zooming in, you can see details up to the major roads of a particular area. If you find a particularly interesting part of the world, save your map so you can find that location quickly the next time you use the National Geographic app.



Figure 4. Save your maps for future reference.

The idea of digging through a book of printed maps and having to flip around to find the exact location you want to see is completely obsolete. With the National Geographic World Atlas app, you can look at a world map on your iPad and find what you want much faster than any printed book of maps could ever let you do.

For those who still like the feel of a real book, try using a book of printed maps and then see how much easier it can be to use the National Geographic World Atlas app to find the same map of the world. After a while, the speed, convenience, and simplicity of the iPad app will make you realize that holding a printed book in your hands may be nice, but it simply can't compete with the virtual map on the iPad beyond looking nice in your house as an antique.

\* \* \*

If you ever want to add more fonts to your Macintosh, it's basically a two-step process. First, download the font you want to use, such as Courier Prime ([www.quoteunquoteapps.com/courierprime/](http://www.quoteunquoteapps.com/courierprime/)), which is a free font specially designed for writing screenplays.

**Courier Prime**

[Download Courier Prime](#)  
(It's free!)

[Courier Prime Support](#)

**It's Courier, just better.**

Since the beginning, screenplays have been written in Courier. Its uniformity allows filmmakers to make handy comparisons and estimates, such as 1 page = 1 minute of screen time.

But there's no reason Courier has to look terrible. We set out to make the best damn Courier ever.

We call it Courier Prime.

**Designed for Screenplays**

*The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.*

Figure 5. Courier Prime is a free font for screenwriters.

In the Finder window, select all the fonts and double-click on them. A window appears, showing you the fonts you're about to install. If you like the way they look, click the Install Font button and this will install it in your Font Book program, which is where you can see all the fonts stored on your Macintosh.



Figure 6. Double-clicking on a font displays those fonts on the screen so you can view them before installing them.

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 participle 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-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X))

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

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X))

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468))

*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=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](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70))  
*The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M))  
*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362))  
*Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us)* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A))  
*The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI))  
*The 15-Minute Movie Method* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as\\_li\\_tf\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8))  
*Erotophobia (A novel)* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20))

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

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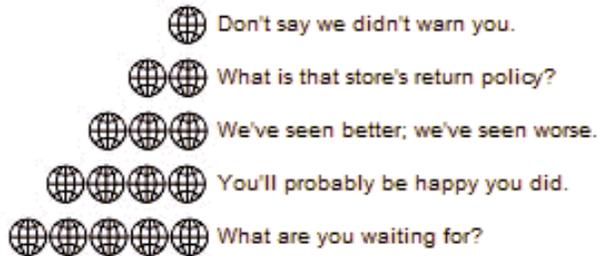
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# Worldwide & Product news reviews

## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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



Consumers' Wish List for Next iPad and iPad Mini;  
Video Game Industry Announces Ratings, Parental  
Education Campaign; Seven Reasons You Should Try  
the MedXCom Patient App (iOS and Android); Pioneer  
Electronics SMA Wireless Speakers.

### Consumers' Wish List for Next iPad and iPad Mini



TechBargains.com (*TechBargains.com*), a deal aggregation Web site that combines intelligent curation with real-time price-value discovery algorithms. writes in this week with information about what their users hope to see in the next iterations of Apple's iPad and iPad Mini tablets:

Apple has made highly anticipated iPad announcements in March for the last two years. With rumors surfacing that another announcement may be coming soon, new survey data reveals consumer interest in the iPad Mini has grown.

A TechBargains.com survey found interest in purchasing the iPad Mini has doubled since the tablet was announced in October. Consumers also reveal what they want changed in the next generation iPad and iPad Mini. Highlights from the survey include:

About three in four (77%) would like a retina display for the iPad Mini, a feature currently available in iPad third and fourth generations.

For the iPad Mini, 76% want a USB Port, 71% want better speakers, 53% desire the tablet to be lighter, 48% want it to be thinner and 47% hope for multiple user accounts.

For the iPad, 80% want a USB Port, 74% want better speakers, 63% desire the tablet to be lighter, 57% want it to be thinner and 50% desire multiple user accounts.

Longer battery life is a feature 87% of respondents want from the next iPad Mini and 86% want from the next iPad. 85% of those surveyed want a faster processor for both the iPad and iPad Mini.

"Before it was introduced the iPad Mini received lackluster interest in comparison to other Apple products, according to a previous TechBargains' survey," said Yung Trang, president and editor-in-chief of TechBargains.com. "Once consumers got their hands on it and saw the value, our recent data shows popularity for the iPad Mini has nearly doubled."

One in three (33%) surveyed consumers plan to purchase the next generation iPad Mini, 41% are undecided and 26% aren't interested. Interest in the next iPad matched that of the iPad Mini. 22% of respondents plan to purchase both. This is a substantial increase in interest for the iPad Mini compared to TechBargains.com's survey in September of 2012, which gauged consumer interest before the smaller tablet was officially announced.

Then, 18% planned to purchase the iPad Mini, 32% were undecided and 50% weren't interested. However, the data reveals a decrease in interest for the iPad compared to TechBargains.com's survey in February 2012, before the iPad third generation was announced. Then 48% planned to buy the iPad, 35% were undecided and 17% did not plan to purchase the tablet.

## Video Game Industry Announces Ratings, Parental Education Campaign

The ESRB, the non-profit, self-regulatory body which assigns age and content ratings for video games and apps to help parents make better-informed choices:

The US video game industry has announced a new national public education campaign to educate American parents further about the tools and information available so they can manage the entertainment choices for their families. The campaign's focal point will be a new series of Public Service Announcements (PSA) encouraging parents to review the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) video game ratings and utilize existing video game console parental controls.

"This campaign will connect with consumers in an immediate and sustained way in addition to the traditional mechanisms over TV outlets," said Michael D. Gallagher, president and CEO of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the US trade association representing video game publishers.

"No one knows better than parents when it comes to making decisions about which games their children should and should not play," said U.S. Senator John Thune (R-SD), ranking member of the US Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. "The video game industry makes games for people of all ages, but that doesn't mean all games are appropriate for everyone. I commend the industry for raising awareness of the tools available to parents that can help them make informed decisions about the games their children play."

Specifically, the industry will:

- Enhance public education efforts around video game ratings and parental controls by developing and funding a series of new PSAs;
- Utilize the unique interconnectivity and reach of the video game industry's platforms to promote these public service messages and related content;
- Coordinate with video game retailers to use both their physical store footprints and dedicated online networks to educate millions of their customers about video game ratings and parental controls;
- Work with policy makers to extend the proven ESRB rating system to the broader games ecosystem of smartphones, tablets, and online social games; and,
- Support and partner with non-profits using video games for educational and other pro-social purposes.

"The more parents know about the wealth of dynamic tools the video game industry has developed for monitoring game play, the more empowered they will be to make informed decisions about which video games are appropriate for their family," said Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL-23).

According to industry statistics, approximately half of American homes have at least one video game console. Every video game console has password-protected parental controls that allow parents to limit their children's video game use. As such, each of those consoles, handheld devices, and PCs can be activated to block types of video games and restrict access to the Internet.

For more than 18 years, all computer and video games sold at retail have been rated by the ESRB. 85%

of parents of children who play video games are aware of the industry's rating system and this campaign will build on the already high awareness rate. The Federal Trade Commission reports that parents are present when video games are purchased 9 out of 10 times.

According to a survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in 2012, 70% of parents regularly check the ESRB rating before buying video games.

For more information, visit [www.theESA.com](http://www.theESA.com) (*www.theESA.com*) or follow them on Twitter at @RichatESA or @ESAGovAffairs.

### Seven Reasons You Should Try the MedXCom Patient App (iOS and Android)

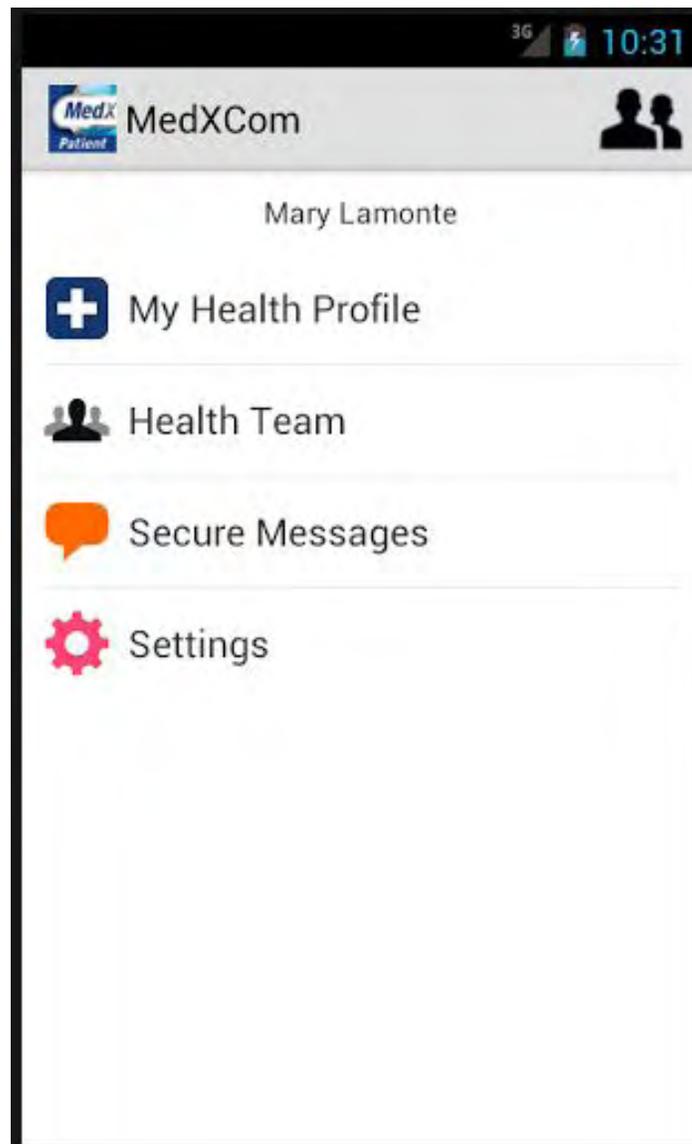
According to the folks who make the MedXCom Patient App, there are seven primary reasons every consumer should be aware of their new free patient app for iOS and Android devices:

1. Over 90 percent of doctors are using their smartphones to follow up with patients and give pertinent medical advice.
2. When your doctor calls you may not be readily available to take down important information/notes because many patients are busy with work, family schedules, using the MedXCom Patient APP it records the information and it is easily e-mailed to your phone to review later.
3. Bad News Deafness—when patients hear bad news from the doctor many cannot process the rest of a phone call. This app allows them to show the advice and instructions to family and friends and move forward with concrete information.
4. Patients aren't doctors—they don't understand some of the language used or they forget instructions once given them. This app helps you look back at the transcript, look up diagnoses, words, etc.
5. Liability—protect yourself with a recording of the physician phone call in the rare event there is medical lawsuit that you need to defend yourself in.
6. It's *free* for Apple iOS (iPhone, iPad), and Google Android devices
7. Created by a doctor.



MedXCom Patient is a HIPAA certified app for consumers with better than online banking system security. MedXCom Patient is the only HIPAA compliant, secure way to record important medical information with your doctor and is available at no charge.

"Whenever a patient hears something they're not happy with, they tend to blank out and they don't listen to anything the doctor says," said Dr. Michael Nusbaum, founder of Giffen Communications. "This is so important because a lot of the time, a doctor will give instructions to a patient, and it's too much for the patient to handle in that moment. With MedXCom Patient, they can re-listen to the information and forward all the steps involved to their patient portal. It is so unique because it reinforces the instructions and allows the patient the ability to review the information when they are more calm."

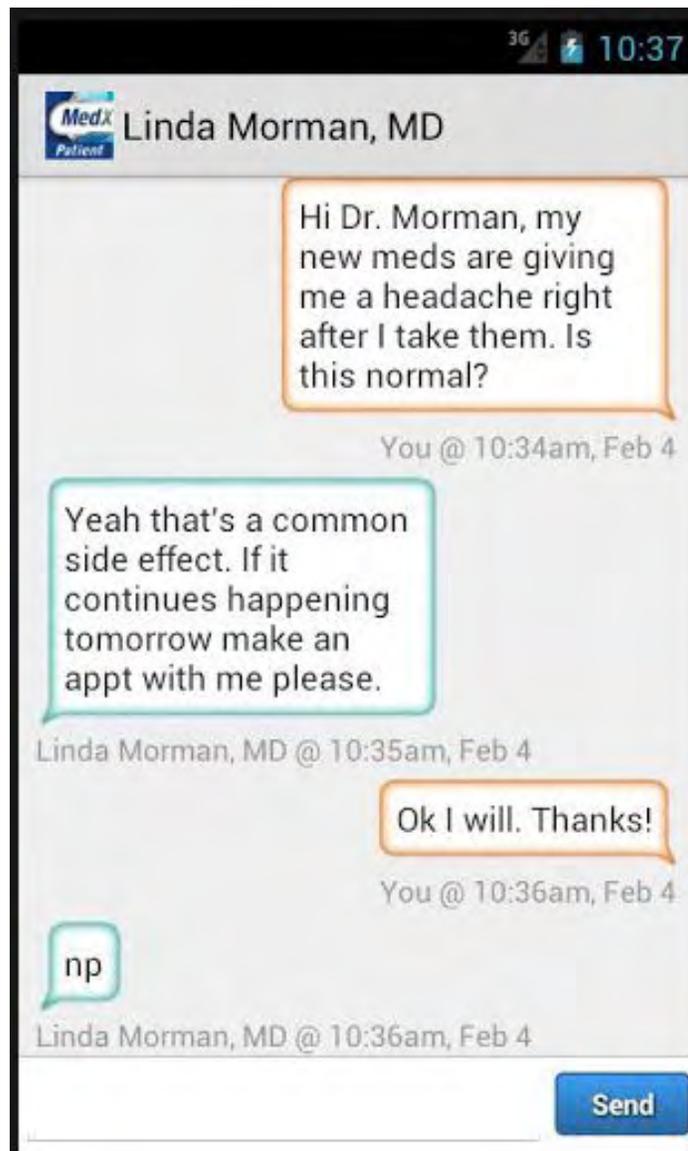


MedXCom Patient allows you store and manage all of your health information, as well as instantly share important data and updates with your doctors. This is the consumer/patient version of a secure, HIPAA compliant "Facebook Like Page." You can alert all of your doctors instantly to a medical status, such as being in the Emergency Room, while giving you complete privacy and full control over your personal health care information—you decide what to store, what to share, and who gets to see it.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for a medical profile. At the top, there is a status bar with '3G' signal strength, a battery icon, and the time '10:33'. Below the status bar is a header with the 'MedX Patient' logo and the title 'Medical Profile'. The profile information is organized into several sections, each with a bold heading and a list of details:

- Personal Info:** 5' 10", 160 lbs, Used to smoke
- Insurances:** Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association: Primary Insurance, Policy #: 88888
- Hospitalizations:** Chest Pain, 2008; Heart Bypass, 2008
- Surgeries:** Heart Bypass Surgery (CABG): Started 2012; Gastric Bypass: Started 2012
- Medical Conditions:** Diabetes mellitus, type 2: Started 2012; Abdominal Pain: Started 2005; Hypertension: Started 2012
- Medications:** Tylenol 8 Hour: Started 2010; Codeine: Started November 2012
- Allergies:** Peanut: Started 2012

MedXCom Patient is used in conjunction with MedXCom, a Web-based communications and social network platform designed to improve physician and patient interaction and enhance the quality of healthcare through innovative technologies. It includes the following unique features:



1. Upload all of your paper medical records, including surgical history, allergies, medications, lab reports and more.
2. Store images of your health insurance card and driver's license for faster processing through health care facilities.
3. View and update your profile anytime.
4. Add unlimited dependent profiles, both children and dependent adults.
5. Add providers to your "Health Team" to easily share medical records with doctors.
6. Instantly notify all of your health care providers if a health emergency occurs.
7. Track and graph your child's height and weight and see their growth curve and percentile.
8. Track your height and weight or your blood pressure and blood sugar values.

"We have so many reports of patients waiting weeks or months to get their medical records transferred from one doctor to another. MedXCom Patient does this with a click of a button. No more waiting—all of a patient's medical information is securely stored so that patients and their physicians can share information

instantly," says Dr. Nusbaum, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Giffen Solutions, Inc.

"It provides a new level of communication, accountability, and a personal touch in what has become an overworked, frenetic, impersonal business. MedXCom Patient also allows patients to take charge of their personal health with suggested preventive measures based on a patient's individual and family history. It also empowers their doctors by providing them access to a patient's medical information when they need it most and when it is necessary to make rapid diagnosis."

Only you and your authorized providers will be able to view your health records and profile information. You can convert all your paper records into one convenient record, stored securely, accessible via your app, and rest assured that your private data is safe.

## Pioneer Electronics SMA Wireless Speakers

Product: SMA Wireless Speakers

Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronics

Model: XW-SMA3-K A3 (two other models available: XW-SMA1-K A1 and XW-SMA4-K)

Web site: [www.pioneerelectronics.com](http://www.pioneerelectronics.com) ([www.pioneerelectronics.com/PUSA/Home/Wireless-Speakers](http://www.pioneerelectronics.com/PUSA/Home/Wireless-Speakers))

Price: \$399 list, about \$350 street ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKOC/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKOC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKOC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKOC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20))

*ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKOC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)

It seems like gizmo by gizmo, we're all, one by one, converting over to a wireless world. Some friends of mine paid quite a bit extra to fully wire up their home when they built it a few years ago. Go over there now and nothing is plugged into those sockets. It's all wireless. Wireless speeds are so fast and the technology is so reliable that you can move devices around wherever you need them, not just where there's a network plug.

For me, Pioneer's A3 Wireless Speaker fits right into that category. Easy to use. Easy to move. Fantastic sound. Right away I liked the A3's solid feel. It really seemed well-made with a nice heft (but not too heavy; about 8 lbs). It's got a sharp-looking black metal grille and a matte black capacitive touch control panel for easy access to pairing and volume. I also like the built-handle.



Sound is excellent. Punchy bass and crisp highs. The A3 features dual 3" woofers and a 1" tweeter. The dual 10W+10W amplifier delivers enough sound for almost any room or reasonably defined outside area. The A3 also comes with a rechargeable lithium ion battery that always gave me 4-5 hours of music—even a bit more if I listened at lower levels.



There are lots of ways to connect to wireless: conventional Wi-Fi, Apple AirPlay, HTC Connect and the A3 makes nice with all of them. And you can use your iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry, PC, or Mac to stream tunes right to the speaker using your device's controls to change volume levels and switch songs.

The A3 incorporates yet another wireless technology called Wireless Direct that allows you to set up the speaker as its own Wi-Fi wireless access point. That means you don't need a home network and can use it in situations where a Wi-Fi network might not be available.

Interestingly, the one wireless technology the A3 does *not* incorporate is Bluetooth. The company explains it this way:

"You don't need limits, especially when it comes to your audio experience. That's why instead of Bluetooth, Pioneer designed the A3 to be a true Wi-Fi speaker. Wi-Fi's higher bandwidth carries more audio signal, giving you higher audio quality. Not to mention far better range unobstructed by things like furniture or walls. Easy to set-up and pair, Wi-Fi gives you the portable audio experience you've always wanted. All of Pioneer's 2012 SMA Wireless Speakers are capable of receiving, decoding, and playing the highest quality uncompressed music files with up to 192kHz sample rates with 24-bit resolutions."

A couple of things could be better. First, the speaker powers down after just a few minutes of non-use. I realize they're trying to optimize battery life, but an ultra low-power mode might be a way to achieve that and would make it easier to startup the speaker. Or simply allow users the option of choosing their own power down period: 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes. It would also be great if the unit had a built in equalizer. Generally, though, you can achieve that through your player so that's not too big of a biggie.

All-in-all, I really liked the Pioneer XW-SMA3-K Wireless Speaker and would recommend it to anyone.



Review contributed by Janet Lindquest

Product specs (from Pioneer Electronics):

Model: A3 XW-SMA3-K

Features: AirPlay, DLNA Wi-Fi, Wireless Direct, HTC Connect, rechargeable

lithium-ion battery (included), remote control, and touch capacitive controls

Dimensions: 5.8 x 12.6 x 7.1 inches

Weight: 7.7 pounds

NOTES (Charles Carr): There are two other models of the SMA Wireless Speakers. The A1 XW-SMA1-K ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKIS/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKIS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKIS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKIS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)) has the same speaker configuration as the A3 (1" tweeter, 3" midrange) but costs about \$100 less because it does not have a rechargeable internal li-ion battery. An external AC power supply (included) is required. The A4 XW-SMA4-K ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKXI/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKXI&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00903HKXI/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00903HKXI&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)) costs the same as the A3 (\$399 list) and is a bit larger thanks to a built-in 4" subwoofer. Like the A1, the A4 requires an external power supply. So, if you have one specific place you plan to use the speaker and plan to rarely move it, the A4 would be the way to go feature-wise (bigger bass) and the A1 would be the way to save about \$100. Finally, of the three, the A3 is the only one designed and built specifically to be used outdoors for extended periods.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

## Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

“or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution” by Matthew W. Beale

Ripped!; Over the Rainbow; eMusic Addressed (finally); and Soundtrack Mania.

Ripped!



Amazon recently launched AutoRip, a new service that's hardly revolutionary. Essentially, it promotes CD purchases—not a bad idea, as I personally still enjoy owning a physical copy of a disc I really like, but I didn't actually just say that—by giving instant access to MP3 versions via the company's Cloud player/service/whatever. In some cases, however, you'll only have access to a few songs, and in many cases, CDs are not eligible for the AutoRip program at all—it depends, I suppose, on the digital rights that are part of a recording or an artist's contractual specs. Tedious, I say.

While we're on the subject, Amazon's MP3 Cloud player, which is central to AutoRip, is a bit of a mess. For my main Amazon account, I made the mistake of trying out the Cloud app for iPhones (for my first column), and now there's some bizarre 180-day time frame, inhibiting me from authorizing additional devices to access my Amazon music. Don't ask me to make sense of it. Isn't that my job, you ask? Sort of. But in all candor, I've often been at a loss with regard to the many attempts and shifting focus of Amazon's MP3 store and Cloud player. I've spent a cumulative of, oh, more hours than I'd care to admit, trying to sort this out with Amazon's customer service. To their credit, they have been generous—gracious, even—with me as I obviously seemed lost and occasionally pathetic. So, I negotiated some rebates and little

perks (small consolation), but I still emerged a bit dazed each time.

I did successfully complete Amazon AutoRip transactions with a newer account, but ultimately, since the CDs arrived within a relatively short period of time, the point was initially lost. Being a big boy (or so I'm told), armed with a computer, I'm capable of ripping my own digital files, danke.

But, there are advantages to having Cloud access to purchased recordings (lost or damaged CDs, for instance), and as part of the program, all CD purchases ever made with an Amazon account have been automatically added to a user's Cloud player. OK. That part was rather cool, and might be the best thing that I have to say (again, that's if the stars were in alignment and the digital rights were such that being a part of AutoRip was appropriate and possible).

I wouldn't necessarily advocate new purchases to test the AutoRip program (and yes, I've resisted saying "AutoRipped"—oops), but I would sign onto your Amazon account to see what's been added to the Cloud player based on previous CD purchases. According to my simple analysis, this is the key benefit for us. For the record industry, it's potentially a shot of [fill in the name of your favorite legal stimulant] for sales of physical products. For Amazon, armed with a restrictive TOS (that the music involved be for personal and non-commercial use), there's a greater degree of control as they use watermarked MP3 files to monitor your use of them. So beyond my scattered caveats, enjoy. (Any bets on how long it will take until I can pronounce, "AutoRIP?")

Over the Rainbow



After the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy, a group of students joined pop singer/songwriter Ingrid Michaelson in the studio of Tom Tom Club and Talking Head members Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz to record "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," a digital release to benefit the Newtown Youth Academy and United Way of Western Connecticut. Additionally, there was a performance at the pre-game show of Super Bowl XLVII in New Orleans.

According to the Newtown Youth Academy Web site, "donations will be used to expand programming and enlarge the scope of NYA's special activities and events to meet the needs of the Newtown community as they heal from the recent tragedy."

United Way of Western Connecticut said, in a press release, that "the funds are intended for people directly affected by the shooting including families who lost loved ones, families who have children in the school, personnel who work at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and first responders who were called to the school the day of the shooting."

The single is available at most online digital music outlets,

## AutoRip

- Thousands of AutoRip CDs are available.
- Look for the icon in search results and CD detail pages. [Learn more.](#)
- The MP3 versions of your past AutoRip-eligible CD purchases are available in [Cloud Player.](#)
- All your Amazon MP3s are **stored for FREE** in Cloud Player.
- Gifts are not eligible for AutoRip.
- See [terms and conditions.](#)

Play Your Music Anywhere

including iTunes, and Amazon. I would say, very simply, that it's nearly impossible to deny the beauty of the song, and between Michaelson's lead, and the chorus approach—and obviously the back story's pervasive presence—this will be a nice addition to your growing digital music collection.

### eMusic Addressed (finally)

I've mentioned or made vague references to (multiple) caveats in the past regarding eMusic's subscription service, deferring related discussion to a future column. "I've seen the future," crooned Leonard Cohen, but it's not murder, not yet at least. It's significantly more mundane.

Actually, I'm seeing a slightly improved eMusic now that the future is here. A longtime problem for subscribers has been that any unused account funds for music purchases vanished at the end of month. There's a 60-day rollover now, a tremendous improvement, something that should prevent diatribes from being directed at eMusic's customer service department (and a belated apology to all who have suffered any such communications from a customer with a name even remotely resembling my own. Grandma Soda, for instance—apologies, I meant to say odd anagrams ;).

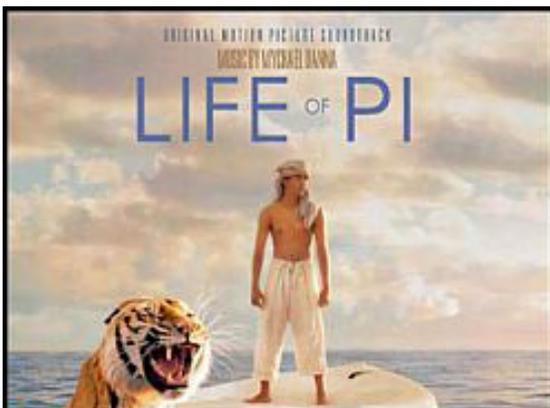


More recently, eMusic has announced a new aspect of its service. "We're launching an à la carte download store—as a way for people who aren't ready for membership to buy music at retail prices. As a member, you will continue to save 25-50% on those retail prices, with most songs still just \$0.49 each." But, "at this time, it's a separate feature that cannot be mixed with membership."

Membership advantages consist of small bonus amounts, depending on the subscription level. The "eMusic Fan" plan option, for instance, costs \$31.99 per month, granting a \$4 "bonus." The service also includes plan options that renew every 90 and 180 days, as well as annually. New members receive a \$20 introductory credit in order to try the service, and as I said in my holiday gift guide, "eMusic remains a great resource" with a range of genres, columns, a list to save items for future purchase, and a radio service (and there are subscription options for audiobooks). They've also recently added a confirmation layer for all download purchases (a seemingly small, but helpful change).

Critically, I'll mention that although they have a music recommendation feature somewhat like Amazon's, unlike the e-tailing giant, eMusic forces users to repurchase if additional downloads are desired (Amazon gets around this with the previously mentioned Cloud player, and the iTunes store gives access to purchased content for downloading, and streaming is an option with more recent releases of the iTunes software). Also, my eMusic Downloader experience is that it crashes unless opened prior to making a purchase (oops—I've just discovered that the recently released eMusic Download Manager 6 has fixed numerous problems, including this one). Visit [emusic.com](http://emusic.com) for additional information.

### Soundtrack Mania

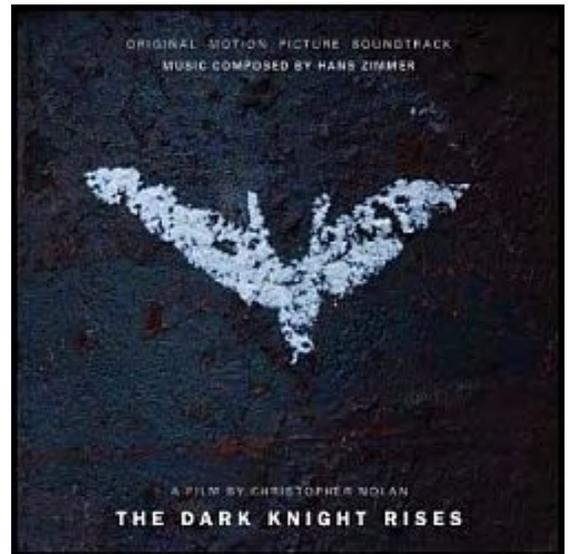


Mania is perhaps too strong a word choice, but in honor of the recent Oscars, I've had soundtracks on my mind (quite a revelation considering the overindulgence in my holiday gift guide). Although it's probably fair to characterize the Oscars as an institution struggling to maintain relevance, the award of best soundtrack this year was a fairly good one. The Life of Pi ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0093DX5L6/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0093DX5L6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?)



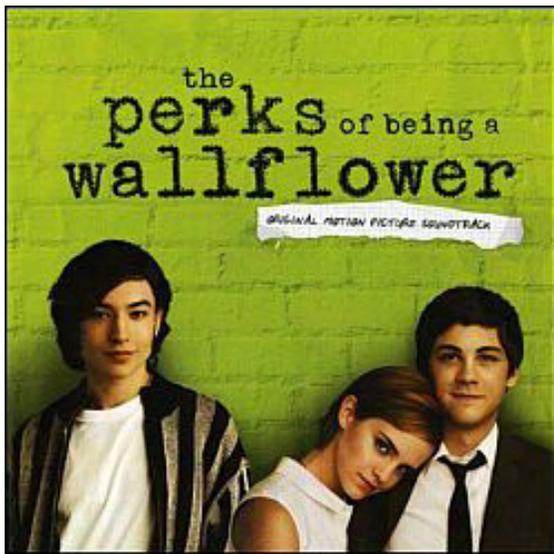
*ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0093DX5L6&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*), with a supporting PR push from Sony Masterworks (and I don't mean that as a dis, because, let's face it, they're responsible for unleashing some wonderful classical music every year—and besides, that's how the Oscar game is played, or so I'm told, and yes, I enjoyed my promo copy, thank you), earned its statue. Composer Mychael Danna was reportedly inspired by the sitar music of Ravi Shankar, hardly a first in the history of popular music (he famously worked with George Harrison, and John Coltrane named his son after Shankar—he also received a posthumous lifetime achievement Grammy this year, along with Glenn Gould, and Lightnin' Hopkins, among others). But it was clearly the first in a series of "choices," as Danna described the process that shaped a beautiful collection of Eastern-inspired classical work that my iTunes can only recognize as "New Age." Incidentally, Adele won the best original song Oscar for Skyfall, the theme of course for the latest James Bond adventure, film number twenty-three (a very nice pop piece, but I personally enjoyed the tone set by Chris Cornell for Casino Royale).

OK. It must be said that I'm maintaining my air of indignance, as best I can, over the exclusion/rejection of *The Dark Knight Rises* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008645YEE/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008645YEE/) *ref=as\_li\_ss\_tl?*)



*ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B008645YEE&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*). But there are scores of other soundtracks (apologies—that was an accident, actually) that eluded Oscar's limited ear, including *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008KL4KB6/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008KL4KB6/) *ref=as\_li\_ss\_tl?*)

*ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B008KL4KB6&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*), in both of its releases. Each piece of the score serves as a sort of beautiful correlate to scenes from a nicely-paced coming of age story, capturing the raw emotions, surreality, and wonder of it all, and the film doesn't shy away from the protagonist's psychological history and an attendant mental health crisis/"breakdown." Michael Brooke's music deftly and gorgeously becomes a vital, integral component throughout, covering the emotional range from the first day of high school, to a first kiss, and the difficult moment when an already fractious psyche cracked. The soundtrack, carefully curated, closely mirrors the

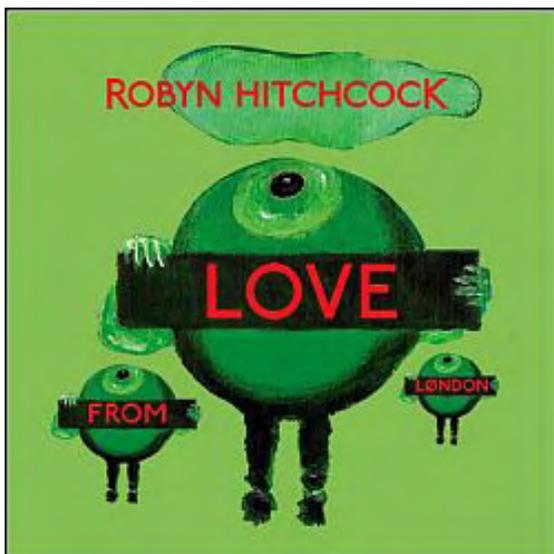


exchange of mix tapes by the film's characters, and is replete with appropriate selections from Sonic Youth, Cocteau Twins, Cracker, the omnipresent Morrissey, Johnny Marr, & The Smiths, and the key "tunnel song" scenes featuring David Bowie's Heroes ("... and I swear, in this moment, we are infinite!"). This is a set of MP3 albums worth downloading. Both Lions Gate Records releases (stop by lionsgate.com for additional info.), these have been featured as bargains at the Amazon MP3 store, something that is, despite my previously stated concerns, a nice resource for the music junkie on a limited budget. (As I write this, for instance, I just received an e-mail pushing a featured list of ten albums on sale for \$1.99 a piece for one day only.)

The great Thomas Newman, who scored American Beauty—one of my favorites—and has had a varied career, was back this past year with a couple of films, notably Skyfall ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009FBX5M0/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009FBX5M0/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009FBX5M0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)



[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009FBX5M0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009FBX5M0/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009FBX5M0&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)). The famous line, "no Mr. Bond, I expect you to die" (which can still get a chuckle), is actually relevant when discussing this latest film, as that is essentially where it begins, and we're of course taken on a fun, wild resurrection ride with Bond courtesy the amazing Sam Mendes (director of American Beauty), and Newman is a huge part of it all (making this sort of my honorable mention). Of note is the fact that You Only Live Twice also begins with the apparent death of Bond, but in this context, the score by then almost Bond veteran John Barry serves as a rather dramatic reminder of the reimagining of the franchise. Also, if you're into film scores and soundtracks, RockPaperScissors, an unorthodox 2006 entry by Brooke, is worth checking out.



Additionally, I'd be remiss if I didn't at least mention the recent Robyn Hitchcock album, Love From London ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AQ9984E/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AQ9984E/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00AQ9984E&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

*ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00AQ9984E&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*), celebrating the famously prolific and eccentric singer/songwriter's 60th birthday—another quirky pop excursion unleashed via Yep Roc Records. Hitchcock recently said that "Rock and Roll is an old man's game now, so I'm staying in it." I'm reminded of Diana Nyad's attempt last year to be the first person to swim from Cuba to the Keys without a shark cage. Nyad ultimately had to give in after she suffered punishing jellyfish and Portuguese Man-Of-War stings, but she was 62 at the time, and that's an extraordinary moment to have at least really tried (for a person of any age). With Hitchcock's virtuosic pop sensibility, exquisite grasp of the surreal, manic release schedule, and some 20 strange and wondrous albums since his band, The Soft Boys, broke up in 1981, he embodies a defiant stance against what being 60 has traditionally meant, and if in fact it means anything at all (I wouldn't be terribly surprised to see another album this time next year, perhaps a study or exploration of the perils of cohabitation with jellyfish and the Portuguese Man-Of-War). For more info, and to check out Hitchcock's other recordings, visit the [yeproc.com](http://yeproc.com) site. (Love From London, BTW, is *not* available via Amazon's AutoRip program.)

[On a brief personal note, I'd like to wish my brother a very happy, healthy, and amazing birthday. Prost, Mark!]

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My first published work focused on music, and related obsessions pushed me to become a DJ, Producer, and Music Director in college radio. With this column, I feel as though I'm sort of returning to something I love (although I've never left, really). I've been tracking the evolution of online music distribution since the days of Napster, and obsessively follow music releases across a range of genres. One of my music players (on each of my devices) is going from the time I wake up until the end of the day, lulling me to sleep (or what little I actually grab). "Without music, life would be an error." ~ Fred, the mad German

Significantly, I'm returning to work after a prolonged personal leave, functioning in the capacity as a caregiver. Please feel free to contact me with story ideas or suggestions about digital music releases at [withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hushmail.com](mailto:withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hushmail.com) (@).

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

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

"DOCX Viewer," "Win 8 Boot Times," "Start Menu Simulation with 2 Toolbars," "Reminder App with Windows 8"

### DOCX Viewer

[Regarding the March 1 Digital Dave column:]

Dave,

Microsoft also offers a free viewer for .doc and .docx files ([www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=4](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=4)) for those that do not have Microsoft Word or a Word-compatible product. (I found it by a Google search for docx viewer. It was the first hit.)

-Bob, Broomfield, Colorado

### Win 8 Boot Times

[Regarding the March 1 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

My 30 second Win 8 boot time includes approximately 15 seconds of BIOS boot from power on, and remember, this is a five year old dual core computer, not a new i7 or notebook already optimized for fast boot. I was comparing this to the original, out of the box restore of Vista plus all updates taking 5+ minutes to get to a usable desktop.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

### Start Menu Simulation with 2 Toolbars

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

I wound up creating a start menu simulation which auto updates with the installation of new programs using these two custom toolbar folders: "C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs" and "C:\Users\Ron\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs"

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

### Reminder App with Windows 8

[Regarding the March 1 Beginners AutoHotkey Tip for Long E-Mail Addresses and More Reminder App column:]

There seems to be a problem with Windows 8 when used with a Microsoft Account vs. a local account. The C:/Users/<username>/Reminder folder and Reminder.ini file are created in the local account even when it's not present since you are using the Microsoft Account. It's the account that results from the command prompt's "whoami" command. If the local account name and Reminder folder are deleted, the Reminder app just creates it again but never reads it.

\* \* \*

Correction to my previous comment. I misunderstood when the Reminder.ini file is used. It is only used when a previously set up reminder time has not yet passed. After the previous reminder is activated, the next reminder is new and does not show the previous time or message. What's unusual about Windows 8 is that it uses a separate local account folder structure instead of the Microsoft Account folder structure currently being used.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

As noted in my previous comments, the Reminder.ini file is in a different place in Windows 8 vs. Windows 7 on my system. Windows 8 includes the ability to set both a Microsoft Account and a Local Account, which use the same group of user folders (c:\users\<accountname>), changing only the name of the shortcut pointing to that group. In my case the user group name came from my online Microsoft Account. But no matter which Account name I log in with, the Reminder folder holding reminder.ini file is named after the Local Account (cmd: "whoami") and is always separated from the actual current user's folder group.

In order to update this file with UAC on, the app must be run using a shortcut set to admin mode, but in order to make the app start up with Windows the shortcut in the startup folder must not be set to admin mode. So if UAC is on it's not possible for the app to remember it's reminder through a reboot (i.e. by changing the reminder.ini file), if it had been started automatically at Windows startup, unless the app is restarted in admin mode prior to setting the reminder. Windows 7 doesn't require admin mode to update its reminder.ini file, so the problem doesn't exist. One could also avoid the problem in Windows 8 by turning UAC off completely, but that would also prevent the use of Windows Store apps: <http://www.eightforums.com/system-security/2434-disable-uac-completely.html> .

Another workaround is to use the Task Scheduler to start a program at logon "with highest privileges": <http://www.sevenforums.com/tutorials/67503-task-create-run-program-startup-log.html> . (Set to run "only when user is logged on"; "run with highest privileges"; trigger set for "at logon of any user".)

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

I suppose there is no benefit to using a different name for the Local Account, except that the shortcut pointing to your files will serve as a reminder you are not signed-in to Microsoft and the app store won't recognize you. And it has the disadvantage of breaking any Autohotkey app that uses the "A\_Username" code as the place to store files that must be updated without using Admin mode.

As it turns out the two simplest ways to avoid all the problems caused by having both a Microsoft Account and a Local Account is to either set up one or the other, never switching; or when you do set up a local account, use exactly the same name that Windows took from your online MS Account, the username that shows up under the path c:\users\<username> when you are logged in to your MS Account. Now the whoami Local Account will have the same name and path as the previously set up MS Account so the Reminder.ini file will be created within your actual user folder group and won't require Admin rights to be created or modified.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

*Ron and I have been going back and forth working on this Windows 8 logon problem. The solution seems to be changing the AutoHotkey variable used to save the Reminder.ini file. I have further discussion in this week's AutoHotkey column.*

*-Jack Dunning*

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*ComputerEdge* 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 [ComputerEdge.com](http://ComputerEdge.com) ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook](http://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 "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit [ComputerEdge E-Books](http://ComputerEdge E-Books) ([www.computoredgebooks.com](http://www.computoredgebooks.com)).

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Send mail to [cwebmaster@computoredge.com](mailto:cwebmaster@computoredge.com) with questions or comments about this Web site.

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