ComputorEdge™ Online — 04/12/13

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Game Console Rumors, Wi-Fi Blocking Paint, and More!

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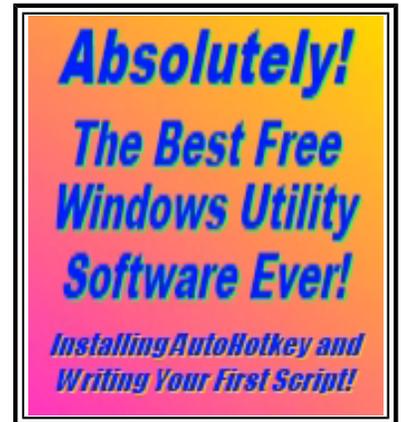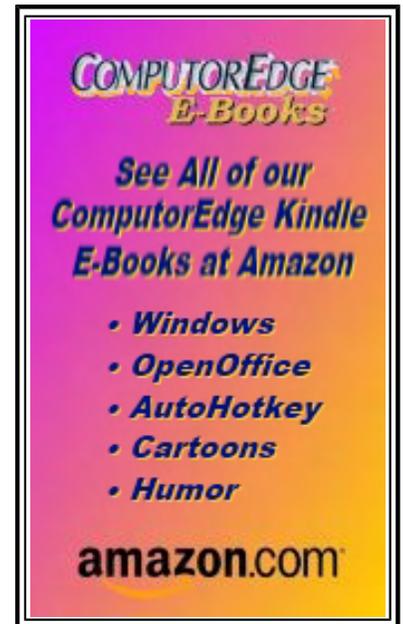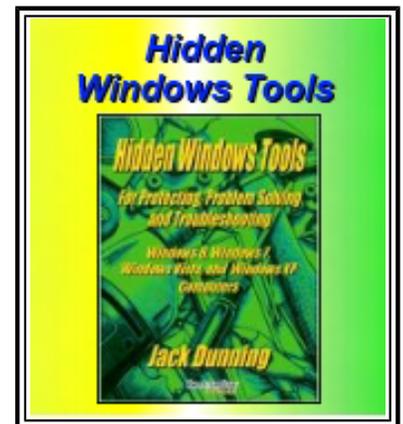
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Digital Dave

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

Changing Autologin for Internet Explorer; Strange Behavior in Internet Explorer 10; YouTube, Gmail, and Internet Explorer 10 Problems.

Dear Digital Dave,

My Internet Explorer version or some added program offers to remember login names and passwords to access Web sites. I made an error keying in one login name. When I make a correction in order to access a Web site the correction isn't remembered by the program. How can I access my login name library to fix this problem?

Thanks!

Mike

Dear Mike,

This data is stored in the Registry and can be accessed with the proper tools. NirSoft has a free utility called IE PassView (*www.nirsoft.net/utils/internet_explorer_password.htm*) which should work for up to Internet Explorer 9. You may need to temporarily disable your antivirus software for it to run.

However, you should try the following first:

1. Enter the first letter of the saved user login. The AutoComplete list should pop up.

2. Highlight (but don't click) the target name on the dropdown list.

3. Hit the delete key.

You should get a dialog box giving you the option to delete the saved name and password. Then you can go ahead and add the new name and password.

You may want to check all of your settings. Open Internet Options from the Tools menu. (You may need to hit the ALT key to see the Tools menu.) Select the Content tab and click Settings in the AutoComplete section (see Figure 1).
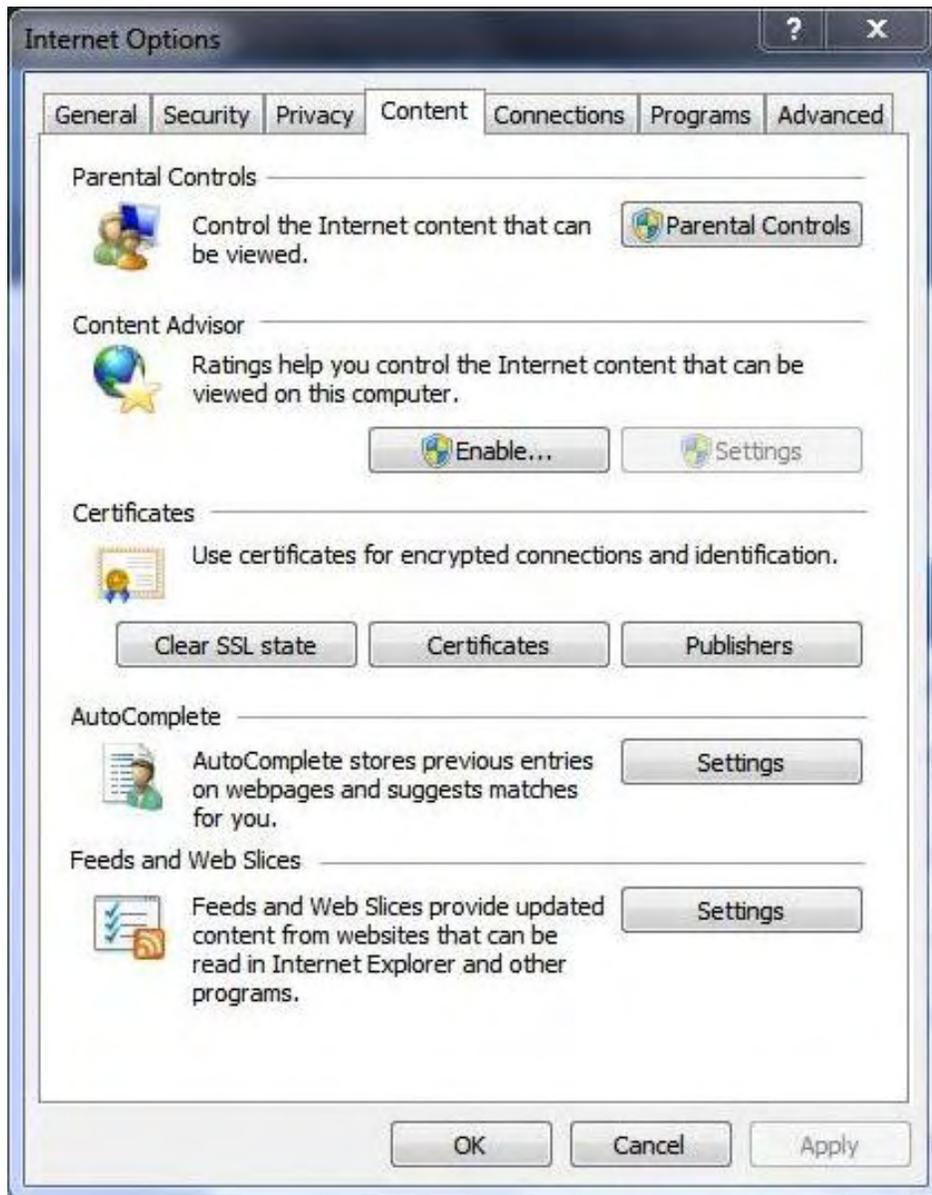
Figure 1. Select Settings in the AutoComplete section of the Content tab of the Internet Options window.

The AutoComplete Settings window opens (see Figure 2). If you don't see "Ask me before saving passwords" checked, it's possible that's the reason you don't get the Save Password dialogue when changing it.

Figure 2. To save names and passwords, plus see the Save Password dialogue, check both "User names and passwords on forms" and "Ask me before saving passwords."

If none of the above options help with the problem, then you may need to "Delete AutoComplete history..." This is a much more drastic action since it will delete all of your names and passwords requiring you to later rekey each of them.

When you open the Delete Browsing History window, you have the option to only remove selected categories, not individual items (see Figure 3).
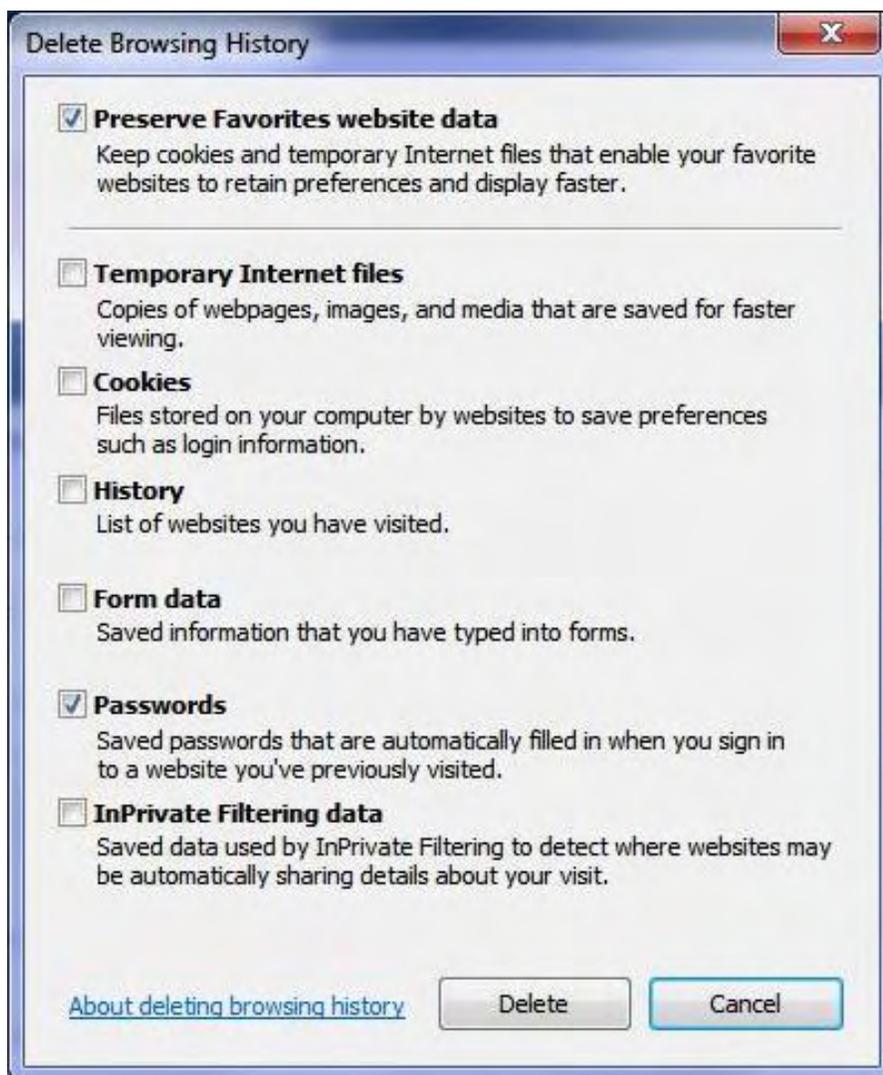
Figure 3. To delete passwords, check Passwords in the Delete Browsing History window.

If you want to clear out all of the saved passwords, this is the best way to do it.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Ever since the recent update of Internet Explorer to version 10, I have not been able to have two instances of Explorer open. The first autostarts, but when I try to start a second instance Windows 7 takes me to the first instance. IE is also no longer shown in the recently used programs accessed by the start bubble. Is this a "new feature" offered by IE or am I missing something?

John Vehonsky
Aurora, Colorado

Dear John,

While I was not able to duplicate your situation, it is possible that your settings are causing a new instance of Internet Explorer to open as a tab in the current instance. (I don't necessarily think that this is the problem. There have been many complaints about Internet Explorer 10 in Windows 7. See the following letter.)

Open Internet Options from the Tools menu. (Click the little gear in the upper right-hand corner or ALT+X.) Select the General tab (see Figure 4).
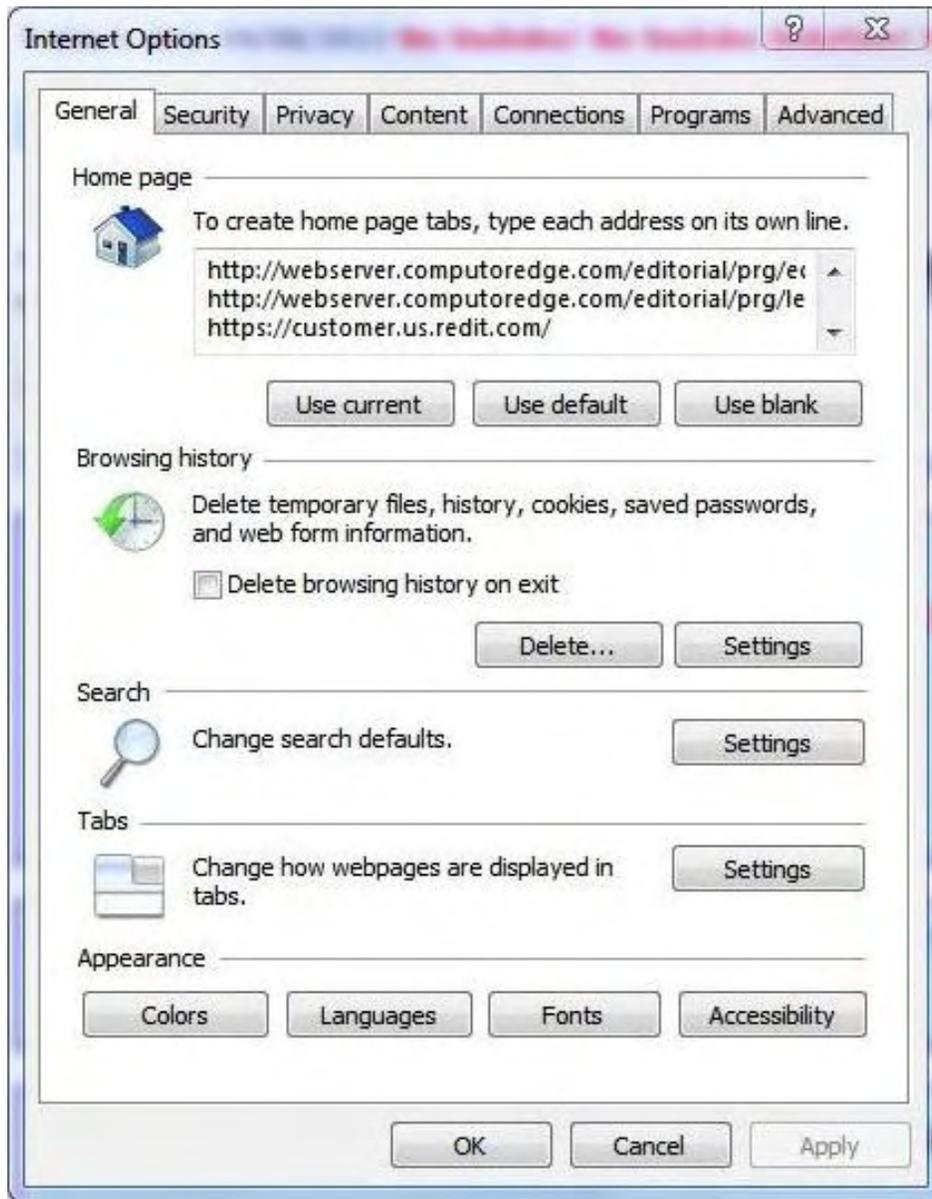
Figure 4. The General tab in the Internet Options window.

Click Settings in the Tabs section of the window. The Tabbed Browsing Settings window will open (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. The Tabbed Browsing Settings window in Internet Explorer.

You might try setting everything to open new windows, although when is turned them off, it didn't affect my ability to open a new instance of IE from the Taskbar.

Your problem may relate to many which have cropped up with Internet Explorer 10 for Windows 7. See the following letter for more details.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a PC with Windows 7 and Internet Explorer 10, the latest updates. When I try to use my Gmail while using my IE 10, I'm unable to "paste" info into the body of the message, attach a file or even paste a Web site address into the body of the message. And I can't even upload a video to YouTube while using Explorer anymore.

I have had to download Chrome to do all of that and then everything works fine. Is this something I'm not doing or missing—or is this a "diabolical plot" by Google to force me to download and use Chrome and not Internet Explorer? Or is this a problem on Explorer's end (or my mistakes)?

Thanks for your help,

Jerry Michael Hughes
San Diego, CA

Dear Jerry,

It's not you (or a plot by Google), but there have been a number of problems with the release of Internet Explorer 10 for Windows 7. There are a few things short of uninstalling IE 10 that you can try.

The first is to put Windows 10 into the Windows 9 mode. You can do this by pressing F12 or selecting "F12 developer tools" from the Tools menu (ALT+X). Select Browser Mode from the top of the window (see Figure 6). Try Internet Explorer 9.
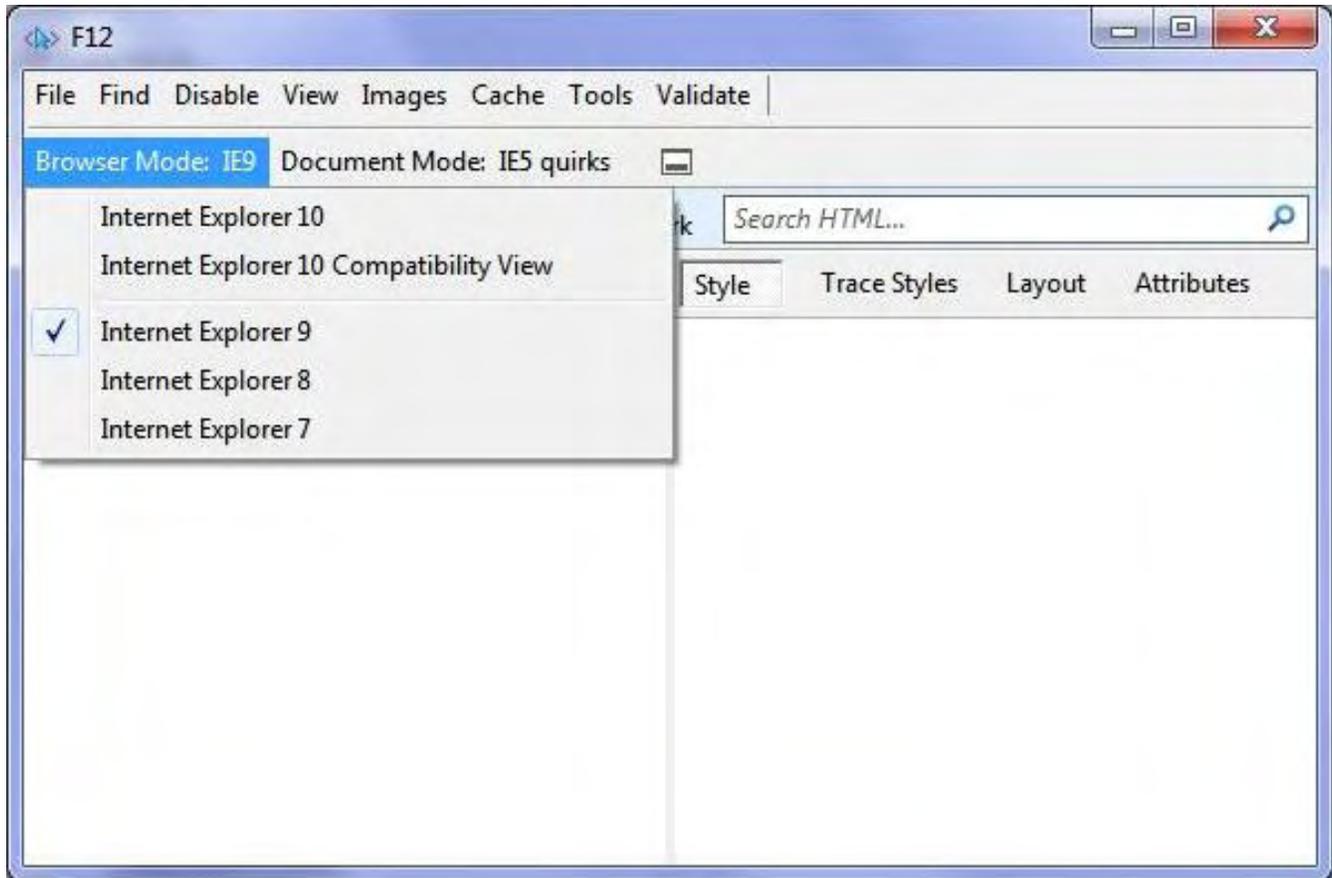
Figure 6. Using the F12 developer tools window, Internet Explorer 10 can be set to IE 9 mode.

If this doesn't fix the problem, try disabling all of the add-ons (open from the same Tools menu). This has worked for some people. If you find success, you can add the extensions back in one at a time until you find the culprit.

Still no success, uninstall Internet Explorer 10. It should revert back to the last installed version. You can also try restoring to an earlier restore point.

The solution I liked the best was when you downloaded Google Chrome. I rarely look at Internet Explorer anymore. Problems like these are just going to drive more people away from Microsoft toward either Chrome or Firefox.

Digital Dave

Game Console Update, Wi-Fi Blocking Paint and Other Little Known High Tech Stories

"Game Console Rumors, Wi-Fi Blocking Paint, iWatch Wars and Third World Tech" by Marilyn K. Martin

Gaming Consoles; Cyber-Security Challenges in 2013; U.S. and Cyber-Warfare: Who's the Lead Agency?; Wi-Fi Blocking Paint from 2007; Wi-Fi Blocking Wallpaper and Chicken Wire; iWatch Wars?; Supercomputer Updates; Pro Sports Enhancements; Third World Tech; Ideas for Fresh Water Innovation; Third World Pedal-Power.

Gaming Console Update

The Seattle Times Brier Dudley reported in mid-February 2013 that Xbox continues to sell (*blogs.seattletimes.com/ brierdudley/2013/02/14/npd-xbox-leads-console-sales-for-25th-consecutive-month/*) well into the New Year. Despite a 17% drop in game hardware sales in January 2013, the Xbox continues to lead console sales for the 25th consecutive month. The slump in sales may reflect the downtime between Nintendo's WiiU introduction in November 2012, and the upcoming consoles anticipated from Microsoft and Sony this year.

Later in February 2013, Dudley reported that Sony had "sorta maybe" previewed their upcoming PlayStation4 console (*blogs. seattletimes.com/brierdudley/2013/02/20/game-on-sony-unveils-playstation-4-new-entertainment- services/*) at a press event in New York. Despite the tease of brilliant new games and social features triggered by a new "Share" button on the console's controllers, Sony refused to show the actual console or divulge its price. The release date is just "Holiday 2013," which sounds like end of the year.
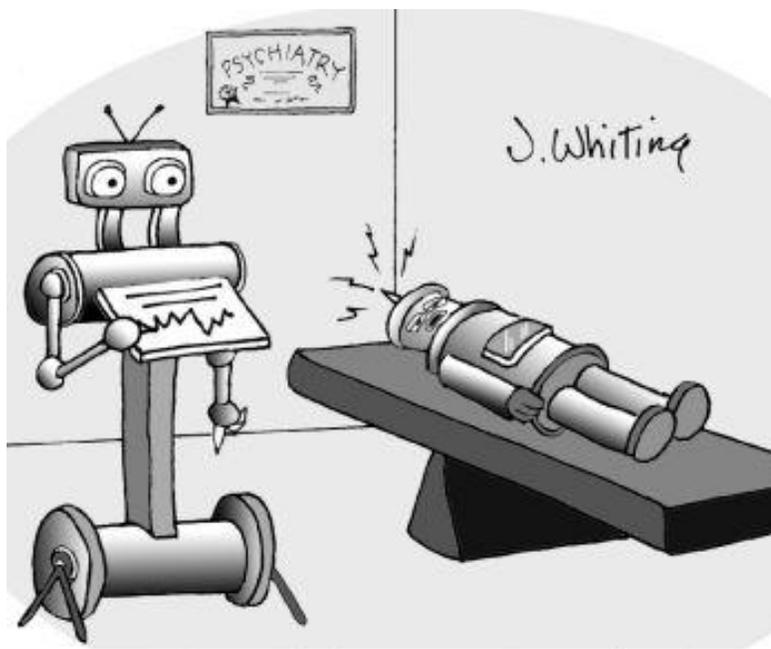
In mid-March 2013 stock analysts through BGR were predicting that—sight unseen—Microsoft's new Xbox is already poised to dominate (*bgr.com/2013/03/13/xbox-720-sales-wedbush-371367/?utm_source=b-yahoo- orig_pub&utm_medium=feed*) the next gen of video game consoles. New Xbox features like Skype and TV service integration, and possible set-top box functionality, are predicted to secure its place as the winner of the game console wars. A quick check of VGChartz (*www.vgchartz.com/*) in mid-March shows that WiiU is selling the best globally, with current models of Xbox (30.2% sales) and PlayStation3 (29.7% sales) almost neck-in-neck for global gaming hardware sales behind the WiiU.

Seattle Times Brier Dudley followed up with another rumor near the end of March that the upcoming Xbox may have a new disc-handling system (*blogs.seattletimes.com/brierdudley/2013/03/20/xbox-720-leak-du-jour-new-disc- handling-kinect-sensor-detailed/*) that could prevent the resale and even sharing of game discs. The game discs will be used once to install the game on the console's hard drive, same as productivity software is installed on a PC. A new and improved Kinect sensor is also rumored to be coming on the new Xbox console. All this will be clarified when Microsoft unveils its new Xbox 720 in June at the E3 Expo (*www.e3expo.com/*).

Cyber-Security Challenges in 2013

With computer hacking on the upswing, from Anonymous hacktavists to full-blown state-sponsored hacking now targeting whole governments and corporations, the New Year started on a sour note for computer security companies. According to the *New York Times* in January 2013, the antivirus industry is falling short (*www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/technology/antivirus-makers-work-on-software-to-catch-malware-more-effectively.html*) amid an explosion of new computer viruses. And too-slow reactions let lightning-quick hackers steal-and-run, many times an entire month before the antivirus product even detects the intrusive virus with clunky, updating detection mechanisms.

A new study by Imperva (*www.imperva.com/index.html*) found that the initial detection rate among even the top antivirus companies was less than 5%. Most top security companies are now dropping the term "antivirus" while trying out new detection techniques. Symantec (*www.symantec.com/index.jsp*) is experimenting with "behavior-based blocking," which examines 30 characteristics of a suspect file before letting it run.

"It's hard for me to admit this, but I was hacked."

U.S. and Cyber-Warfare: Who's the Lead Agency?

In the Fall of 2012, both the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense were jockeying to take the lead in addressing cyber-warfare issues. DHS even took the unusual stance of advising everyone to disable Java since it had a backdoor for hackers that a patch couldn't fix. However, a March 2013 article in *The Week* disclosed that the National Security Agency (NSA) has been the lead agency (*theweek.com/article/index/241522/nsa-had-cyber-attack-authority-since-1997*) for cyber-warfare since 1997. Newly declassified documents from 1997 state that "the Secretary of Defense officially delegated to the National Security Agency the authority to develop computer network attack techniques."

In February 2013, President Obama signed an Executive Order on cyber-security (*www.zdnet.com/obamas-cybersecurity-executive-order-what-you-need-to-know-7000011221/*). The Executive Order (*www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/executive-order-improving-critical-infrastructure-cybersecurity*) only contains half of the attacks on privacy in the dreaded Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act (CISPA) bill, which passed the House but not the Senate (yet). The EO did garner American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) support, but privacy implications are still to be sorted out. The EO just basically sets up a framework for sharing information with the government about cyber-attacks and cyber-threats to privately owned "critical national infrastructure."

In March 2013, *The Week* attempted to sort out the truth from the jumble of fears and misunderstandings about how the government is keeping us safe now that state-sponsored cyber-war (*theweek.com/article/index/241245/cyberwar-5-key-questions-answered*) is sporadically upon us, like what hit the banking industry last Fall. Congress is in a headlock with privacy advocates over cyber-bills, so don't expect a lot there. Banking has learned that the best policy to ward off government intervention is to self-police, so the industry conducts its own tough audits and sets standards, and your money is safer than it's ever been—for now. But "deep packet inspection" of all digital data that comes into the U.S. is still technologically beyond us.

The good news is that most of the government and private critical infrastructure seems to be well fortified. But, as noted above, private citizens and their data are still vulnerable, and computer security programs have problems. They suggest backing up your data redundantly. (Such as saving your data to discs and e-mail files, and possibly opening another account with a different bank, strictly for online purchases.) This is an evolving issue, so things might be totally different in six months.

Wi-Fi Blocking Paint from 2007

Wi-Fi blocking wall paint (*emsectechnologies.com/press_releases/press1.php*) was first announced in 2007 by EM-SEC Technologies. The American company said it had successfully tested their "Coating Solution," with a one-time application successfully protecting (*www.theregister.co.uk/2007/03/23/rf_proof_paint/*) wireless devices and other electronic equipment. Their RF-paint was even approved as a TEMPEST countermeasure by the National Security Agency (NSA). EM-SEC also had RF-proof fabric at its disposal, in addition to paint. Later information said that the paint blocked all frequencies, which was a problem if someone wanted to use a cell phone inside such a painted room.

Wi-Fi Blocking Wallpaper and Chicken Wire

In May 2012, there were numerous stories about a new kind of wallpaper (*arstechnica.com/information-technology/2012/05/anti-wifi-wallpaper-lets-cellular-and-radio-through/*) that would block Wi-Fi signals, preventing them from being broadcast beyond the confines of an office or apartment, but—unlike the wall paint—allowed cell phone and other radio waves through.

Bloomberg ran a profile in January 2013 of Eymin Petot Tourtollet, the scientific director of the French pulp and paper research institute that invented the snowflake-patterned wallpaper (*www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-01-31/guy-eymin-petot-tourtollets-wi-fi-blocking-wallpaper*) that blocks Wi-Fi signals. He wanted the discovery for better data security and network speed. He also wanted to help create Wi-Fi-free-zones in homes and hospitals for better privacy and health protection from electromagnetic (EM) waves. Finnish materials company Ahlstrom (*www.ahlstrom.com/en/Pages/default.aspx*), which helped fund the project, plans to have MetaPaper commercially available later this year.

PlanetThrive said in February 2013 that the MetaPaper wallpaper should be available soon (*planetthrive.com/2013/02/wifi-blocking-wallpaper-available-soon/*) for about $12/square meter. They also noted that in order for the wallpaper to be 100% effective it would have to cover ceilings, windows and doors too, although researchers have expressed plans to develop a transparent version for windows. For people with electromagnetic sensitivity, however, even partial protection might be helpful.

For people wondering why they get no Wi-Fi or cell phone reception in old houses, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in 2009 that chicken wire also blocks (*online.wsj.com/article_email/SB126221116097210861-lMyQjAxMTIwNjAyMTIwMTExWj.html*) Wi-Fi signals. Before drywall became a popular building material in the 1950s, construction crews would build walls by applying plaster to a lath of chicken wire stapled to wood. Physicists are calling chicken wire a "Faraday cage," since it is almost a perfect match for the wavelength of a Wi-Fi signal, acting just like a solid piece of metal.

iWatch Wars?

It's already been leaked that one of Apple's upcoming new devices will be a smart iWatch. Then *Forbes*, in mid-March 2013, reported that South Korea's Samsung is also working on a smartwatch (*www.forbes.com/sites/haydnshaughnessy/2013/03/19/samsung-and-apple-to-do-battle-over-watches/?partner=yahootix*). There is no agreement on public demand for a smartwatch since conventional watch sales may not accurately predict people willing to buy a more expensive smartwatch. But everyone does agree that the smartphone market growth is in decline, and both Apple and Samsung need to find new product lines to survive.

But *Fortune*, also in mid-March 2013, claims that the front-runner (*tech.fortune.cnn.com/2013/03/13/forget-the-iwatch-with-pebble-wearable-computing-is-already-here/*) of the smart-watch wars is the Kickstarter funded Pebble Watch (*getpebble.com/*). Founder and CEO Eric Migicovsky became an overnight sensation last year when he snagged over $10 Million in funding on Kickstarter for his Pebble smartwatch—over 100 times what he hoped to raise. The start-up now has eleven employees, has already shipped out 25,000 watches, and expects to ship out 50,000 in March. The watch is priced at $99 for early supporters, but is going retail for $150.

Supercomputer Updates

Supercomputers haven't been in the news a lot lately, what with all the new products and rumors out of the Tech Giants. But

some interesting little supercomputer stories did emerge in the last half of 2012. Like the Geek.com story about how *Jeopardy* winner Watson learned to swear (*www.geek.com/articles/geek-cetera/teaching-watson-the-urban-dictionary-turned-out-to-be-a-huge-mistake-20130110/*). In 2010, IBM researcher Eric Brown wanted to improve Watson's natural language and conversational skills by teaching it the Urban Dictionary, or street slang. When Watson started responding to questions with "Bullsh*t!" the researchers had to back off the Urban slang lessons.

With the success of the inexpensive, bare-bones Raspberry Pi computer, Geek.com reported in September 2012 that a company called Adapteva (*www.adapteva.com/*) was using Kickstarter to launch a $99 supercomputer called Parallella (*www.geek.com/articles/chips/99-parallella-supercomputer-appears-on-kickstarter-20120928/*). The final product will be just 3.4 x 2.1 inches, with a 16 core board and 13GHz of performance. The current Adapteva Web site says they delivered the prototypes by the end of December 2012, and are now taking reservations for future Parallella Boards.

National Geographic ran a story in October 2012 that the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's supercomputer, Titan, has been named the World's Fastest Supercomputer (*news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2012/10/121029-titan-fastest-supercomputer/*). The speed comparison is if each of the world's 7 billion people were able to carry out 3 million calculations per second. Titan harnesses video game technology for an energy saving "hybrid" architecture that boosts the power of the CPUs by marrying them to high-performance, energy-efficient graphical processing units (GPUs).

In February 2013, NASA introduced their Pleiades Supercomputer (*www.nas.nasa.gov/hecc/resources/pleiades.html*) as part of their HECC (high-end computing capability). Pleiades currently ranks 14th on the Top 500 list of the world's most powerful supercomputers, and is used by NASA scientists and engineers to conduct modeling and simulation for NASA missions. It has a distributed-memory SGI ICE cluster connected with InfiniBand in a dual-plane hypercube technology.

Pro Sports Enhancements

Boston.com reported in January 2013 that the New England Patriots football team is studying how to make their stadium experience worth the price of season tickets by adding some of the comforts (*www.boston.com/business/2013/01/19/patriots-aim-enhance-stadium-experience-home-viewing-keeps-getting-better/rvA34GcIlWh5PN6spfu5LI/story.html*) of the home-watching experience.

Ideas the Patriot executives are exploring for better stadium-technology include streaming-audio of the offensive coordinator's play calls to quarterback, Tom Brady. And maybe locker room video at halftime stadium attendees can view on their smartphones. New apps could direct fans to the best parking spaces, and allow them to order/buy food and drink from their mobile devices, then pick up their orders without waiting in line.

In February 2013, Yahoo announced that European football (called soccer here) is breaking into the Digital Age with a revolutionary new system (*uk.eurosport.yahoo.com/blogs/world-of-sport/football-catches-digital-age-154151482.html*) to allow players, scouts, clubs and agents to connect online. Called Fieldoo (*www.fieldoo.com/*), it is a Web platform for players to create a profile to represent themselves, while clubs and agents can quickly sort through the profiles when they need a player for a specific position. So far, testimonies have been positive, with success stories like the Slovenian player and Serbian scout finding a Thai club, and the deal completed through a Spanish agent in weeks instead of months.

Third World Tech

In December 2012, *NextBigFuture* ran a story on China's proposed High Speed Rail (*nextbigfuture.com/2012/12/high-speed-rail-in-china-are-enabler-of.html*) (HSR). A Morgan Stanley analysis found that HSR makes sense for China, which has very high passenger usage on its train lines, compared to rail usage in the U.S. China's HSR system could connect more than 250 cities and regions, with the number of passengers expected to triple by 2020. The high-speed network could also positively impact freight transportation, boosting productivity, and create super-city clusters (SCCs) for faster and shorter commuting times.

Bloomberg announced in January 2013 that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is helping finance an alliance pushing for electronic transactions in the Third World (*www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-01-23/bill-gates-hates-cash-dot-*

heres-why?campaign_id=otbrn.bw.tech), over cash payments. The Better Than Cash Alliance (*betterthancash.org/*) feels that electronic payments are more efficient and transparent for governments to disburse benefits such as salaries, pensions and social welfare stipends. While shifting humanitarian aid and emergency relief to electronic payments can help expose and block corruption and theft. Unbanked people can also establish good credit with records of their on-time bill payments, which can be an "on-ramp" for them to eventually qualify for loans and other services.

In February 2013, a *New York Times*' editorial by Thomas L. Friedman discussed the high tech innovators in India (*www. nytimes.com/2013/02/13/opinion/friedman-when-et-and-it-meet-id.html*), who are focusing on making their entire country "unpoor." India's high tech association, Nasscom (*www.nasscom.in/*), is helping home-grown innovators solve poverty problems using cloud-based technology tools and open-source platforms—which require very little capital. Most of the innovators are working on Energy Technology to bring power to every village, and then connect them to the Internet for education and a larger market for their goods. One such idea is Gram Power (*www.grampower.com/*) to try and reach the 400 million people in India relying on kerosene with Smart Microgrid systems of renewable-power, consisting mainly of solar panels on cell phone towers.

The Seattle Times ran a story in March 2013 how Microsoft—as sales flatten in the U.S., Europe and Asia—is investing millions in Africa (*seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2020573891_microsoftafricaxml.html*). Other high tech companies (from Google to IBM to Intel) are also expanding their presence in Africa. With the political situation in many African countries stable, and governments more open to cooperating with or forming joint projects with multinational corporations, more tech infrastructure is being built. Undersea fiber optic cable systems are bringing faster broadband connections to Africa's coasts, as terrestrial cables extend the networks inland. With a growing African middle class and rapid urbanization, young people especially are serious about wanting high tech and are willing to pay for it.

Also in March 2013, the *Seattle Times* reviewed a new book that examines the impact of exploding tourism (*seattletimes. com/html/books/2020551966_bookoverbookedexml.html*) on foreign cultures and environments. *Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism* (by Elizabeth Becker, Simon & Schuster) reveals that global travelers in 2012 set a new record, surpassing 1 Billion international trips for the first time. In light of the recent problems with Carnival Cruise Lines, the author tells how this cruise line was formed in the 1970s. The owners repurposed the ships from transport to entertainment and operate them under foreign flags, thus avoiding stricter U.S. labor and environmental laws. The author also cites cities and countries where tourism overdevelopment has caused serious damage and pollution. While Costa Rica is considered the best at sustainable tourism.

Ideas for Fresh Water Innovation

Access to reliable supplies of clean water in the developing world is getting steadily more difficult—as demand keeps rising. Ideas new and old are being explored and refined, from better filtering to trendy water-from-the-air projects. In 2009, an Aquaduct Water Filtration Tricycle (*ecolocalizer.com/2009/01/30/innovate-or-die-aquaduct-water-filtration-tricycle/*) won the Innovate or Die contest to create pedal-powered solutions to help combat climate change. The Aquaduct is a pedal-powered vehicle that you fill up with water, then a filtration system purifies it as you pedal home to deliver fresh and clean water. It got a lot of press at the time, but I couldn't find where the Tricycle went into production after the contest. Still...it's a good idea.

The Seattle Times reported in March 2013 on a University of Washington project using a grant from the EPA to experiment with ways to capture fog (*seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2020570127_fogcatcherxml.html*) and wring out its moisture for irrigation and other uses in Peru. Artificial fog now hisses out of high-pressure nozzles into a plastic greenhouse on the campus to test fog-catchers they hope to someday study on a larger scale in Lima, Peru. So far, it takes 45 minutes to collect a third of a gallon of condensed water from the fog. Ancient people used fog-collectors thousands of years ago, and one current operation on the highlands of Guatemala provides nearly 2,000 gallons a day to a village of 200. The UW project wants to explore new materials and designs to boost the water yield from fog, and lower the cost.

Also in March 2013, *Gizmodo* (from Reuters) reported that making salt water drinkable could soon get 99% cheaper (*www. gizmodo.com.au/2013/03/making-salt-water-drinkable-just-got-99-percent-cheaper/*). Engineers at aerospace giant, Lockheed Martin (*www.lockheedmartin.com/*), have just announced a new salt filter (*www.lockheedmartin.com/ us/news/press-releases/2013/march/lockheed-martin-achieves-patent-for-perforene-filtration-solutio.html*)

that could reduce desalination energy costs by 99%. It uses a Reverse Osmosis process with a thin graphene membrane called Perforene that lets more water through while capturing more dissolved salts. Kilo for kilo, Perforene is 1,000 times stronger than steel, and "500 times thinner than the best filter on the market today." The filter is still in R&D with tearing issues, so there is no projection when it'll hit the market.

Third World Pedal-Power

I've reported before on foreign prisons that let their prisoners pedal-for-power for their personal use or to earn days off their sentence. But more ideas are being tested using pedal-power for scarce energy. *Gizmag* reported in August 2012 on a pedal-powered washing machine (*www.gizmag.com/giradora-pedail-power-washer/23548/*) that is perfect for developing countries. Students at the Los Angeles Art Center College of Design (*www.artcenter.edu/accd/index.jsp*) came up with GiraDora (*www.behance.net/gallery/GiraDora-human-powered-washer-spin-dryer/4519945*), an award winning, foot-pedal washer and spin dryer that is inexpensive and portable. It only costs $40—which might even fit into domestic bunkers for the Zombie Apocalypse.

A site called Energy Planet Pedal Power (*www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/human-powered/pedal-power/*) features more green-energy, pedal-power ideas from around the world. From Afghanistan's pedal-powered laptops, to a hand or foot cranked generator from Windstream Power (*www.windstreampower.com/*), human-generated energy could give the third world needed power supplies, and even serve as after-disaster power sources for use in any country.

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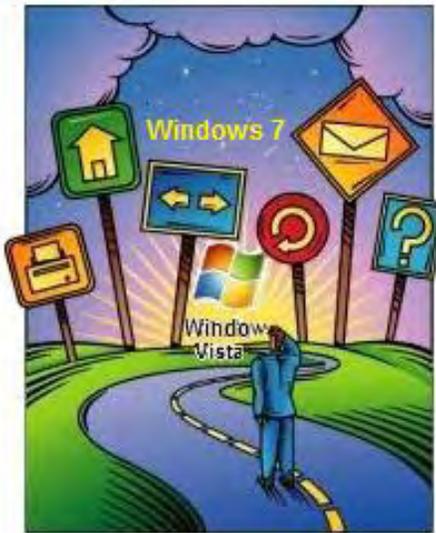
Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows 8 Is More Like Windows 7 Than You Know

"Don't Throw Out Your Windows 7 Books Yet!" by Jack Dunning

While there are significant differences in Windows 8 (missing Start Menu), many of the old Windows 7 tricks still work. The "God Mode" is just one of them.

From Chris Romel, posted on a Digital Dave column:

I ran into this interesting article that might help people take better control of their new Windows 8 OS settings:

*"Quick Tip: Invoke god mode to take control of settings in Windows 8 (*www.techrepublic.com/blog/window-on-windows/quick-tip-invoke-god-mode-to-take-control-of-settings-in-windows-8/7456*)."*

This feature of Windows, the "God Mode" which is certainly an interesting trick, made me think about a couple of other Windows characteristics. First is how much has *not* changed from Windows 7 to Windows 8. Second, I don't use the "God Mode"—even though I've highlighted it in the past—because there is easier access to these Control Panel features and suggestions built into Windows. The little known technique describe in the linked article as a Windows 8 feature is not new to Windows. It was first introduced in Windows 7 and, in the past, I've written about it in this column and included it in *Windows 7 Start Menu Secrets (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0075YO7LC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0075YO7LC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)* and the Amazon Windows 7 Secrets four-book bundle (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00801M5GS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*).

The Life of a Computer Book

I was once told that the life of a computer book is relatively short since the information goes out of date so quickly. That's true when comparing technical writing to great novels. But even with computers, the more things change the more they stay the same. Of the five books I've published on Windows 7, only one does not apply to Windows 8 most of the time. That book is the Windows 7 Start Menu (which is missing from Windows 8) e-book—even then it contains the "God Mode" tip which does apply to Windows 8 and the Modern Start Screen. As for computer books in general, I own many of them on various topics such as programming and operating systems (including FreeBSD) which I've had for years and I still find them useful.

The point is that you don't need to throw away all of your Windows 7 books just because you bought a Windows 8 computer. Yes, there are a number of differences which will no longer apply, but there will be even more techniques and tips which are just as true in Windows 7 as Windows 8. Many of them go back farther than Windows 7.

When I was putting together Hidden Windows Tools (*/www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00B8Z2ASG/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00B8Z2ASG&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*), I made a point of testing each of the features and techniques in Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8. I was surprised at how many of the tools had the same (or similar) names and were found in the same place. Some key features

were deliberately moved to a new location (e.g. Startup was moved from the System Configuration utility in earlier versions of Windows to the Task Manager in Windows 8), but for the most part I saw a gradual evolution of Windows with the specific tools improving with each version. Admittedly it can be like going to Costco when they have just done one of their major reorganizations. If one item is not in its usual place, then you need to tour the entire store to find it—that's if they still carry it at all!

The "God Mode"

The other realization was that even though I was well aware of the "God Mode" technique and had set it up on my Windows 7 computer, I never use it myself. The reason is that if you open the window to display all the options, the list is way too long to browse—at least if you're looking for a specific answer. There are easier ways in both Windows 7 and Windows 8 to quickly access the same list while filtering it for your current needs—and they are automatic.

One of the great features new to Windows 7 was the ability to type a word such as "disk" into the Start search field and see (in addition to any files or programs) a list of recommendations appear on the Start menu. These are the same items that are included in the "God Mode"—only filtered by the keyword. This is also the result from doing the same search in the Control Panel in Windows Explorer, plus the result found in Windows 8 (See Figure 1) is identical when conducted in the Control Panel in File Explorer. (Windows Explorer is called File Explorer in Windows 8.)
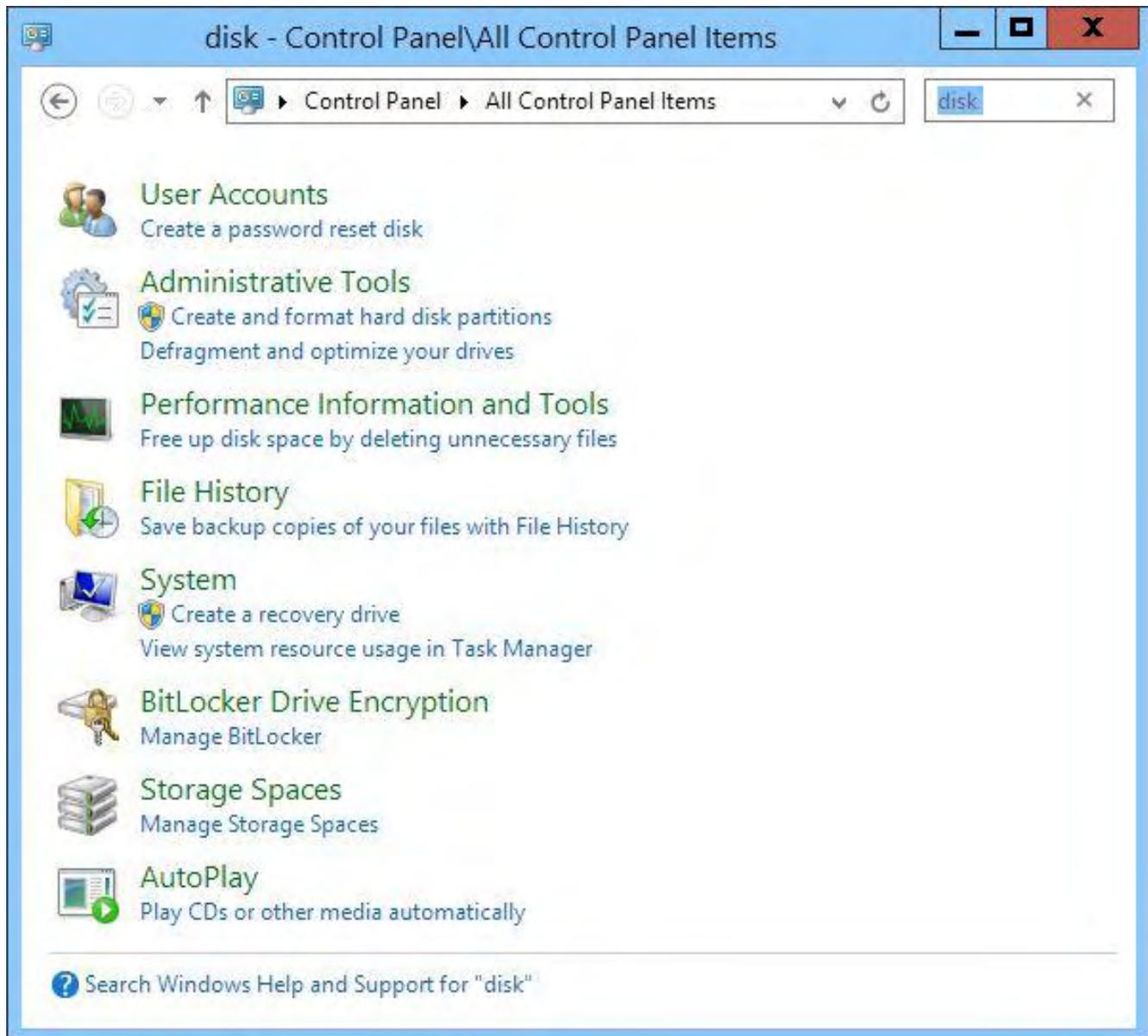

Figure 1. When searching the Control Panel in Windows 8 filtered suggestions are displayed.

Of course you can't do this in the Windows 8 Start Menu because there isn't one, but you can do it in the Modern Start Screen. Enter "disk" into the Settings Search Screen (⊞+W) and press ENTER (see Figure 2).
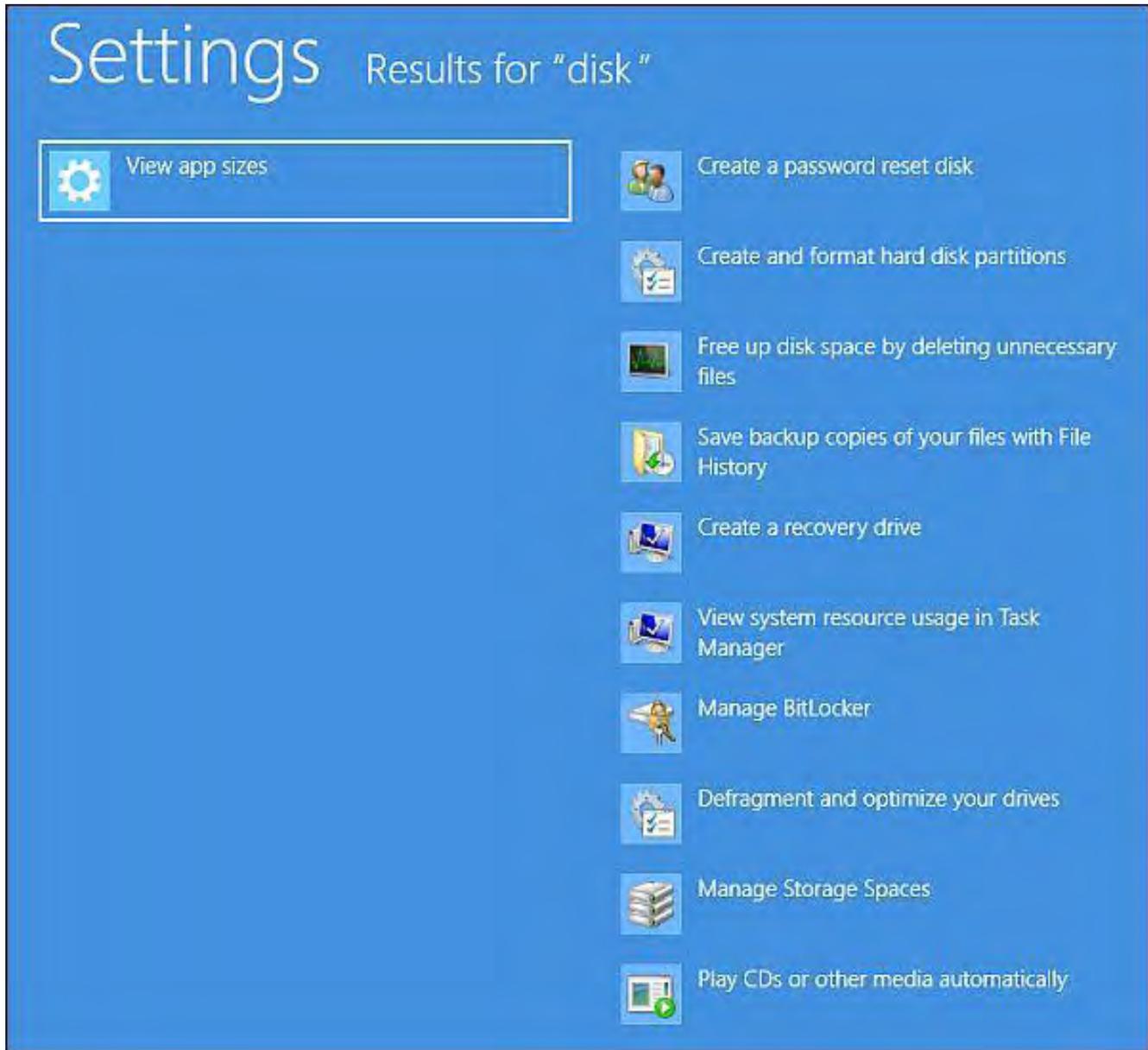
Figure 2. When searching settings in the Windows 8 Modern Start Screen, the same items from the "God Mode" appear.

Certainly the help items in the "God Mode" are extremely useful, but you don't need one huge listing—unless you're looking for things you didn't know existed. In most cases, a simple search in the Control Panel or Start Menu (Modern Start Screen in Windows 8) will do the trick much more quickly and more accurately.

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers (*www.amazon.com/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*).*
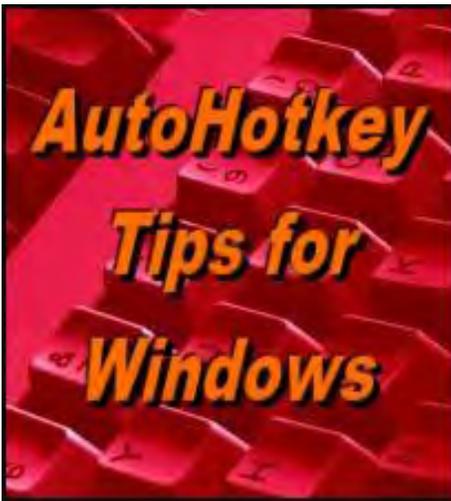
Our second compilation of stupid *ComputorEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputorEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?" (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*)*

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

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

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

Adding a Help Window to the AutoHotkey Reminder Script

"The Reminder App Gets an Improvement by Activating the Help Button" by Jack Dunning

As work on the Reminder script continues, the nonfunctional Help button is make functional.

*AutoHotkey is a powerful Windows scripting language which allows you to build either simple or more complex personal utilities. Many of the techniques are easy scripts which anyone can implement on their Windows computer in a few quick steps. (A script that autocorrects for the 5,000 most common misspelled words in English.) If you are unfamiliar with AutoHotkey or want to start at the beginning, then check out our Web page "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (*www.computoredge.com/misc/ Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*)" which includes links to the earliest beginning level columns at the bottom of that page.*

The discussion in this AutoHotkey column builds on information in earlier columns. Links to the first part of this particular topic and successive columns can be found at the end of this column. However, if you have never written a script or program before, then reading this column could make you think that AutoHotkey is not for you. It may seem complex, but if you start at the beginning with the page linked above and work your way through the building process at your own speed, you will get great rewards. Plus, by the time you get back here, it will make sense.

This time I'm taking a look at a sticking point in the Reminder app. I started writing the app a couple of months ago and have made a number of modifications. I intend to continue working on the app adding such features as multiple reminders, regular reminders, and review and editing of reminders, as well as improvements which eliminate some awkward implementation. The purpose of this journey is to help others learn how to write their own AutoHotkey scripts for Windows computers.

As for awkward features, I had previously added a Help button to the reminder MsgBox which displays at the appointed time. The button was set as the default just in case the RETURN key was inadvertently hit as the window popped up. Otherwise, the RETURN could cause the reminder window to close—possibly before it was ever seen. I put the label "Waiting" on the Help button (see Figure 1).
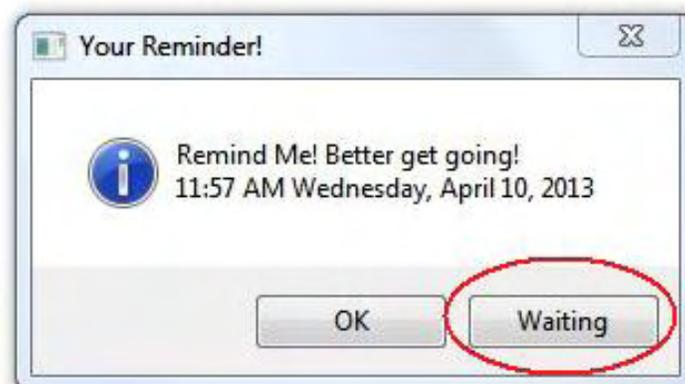
Figure 1. When the reminder window pops up, the default button is a Help button labeled "Waiting" which does nothing when clicked.

The "Waiting" button is innocuous enough, but it doesn't do anything when clicked. Since the button now exists, why not use it?

Adding Help to an AutoHotkey Message Box (MsgBox)

The reason I didn't previouisly implement the Help button feature was because it is a little more involved technique than I wanted to discuss at the time. It requires two conditions and interacts with the Windows Message System (*msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/desktop/ms632590(v=vs.85).aspx*) using the AutoHotkey OnMessage function (*msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/desktop/ms632590(v=vs.85).aspx*). There are many useful ways to interact between AutoHotkey and the list of Windows Messages (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/misc/SendMessageList.htm*). This example barely scratches the surface.

Now is the time to use these techniques and add code to the Reminder app which in the future will make a more complete information feature possible. This time all I plan to do is open another message box when the Help button is clicked (see Figure 2). This will prove the functionality of the technique. I can add the data to the new windows at a later date.
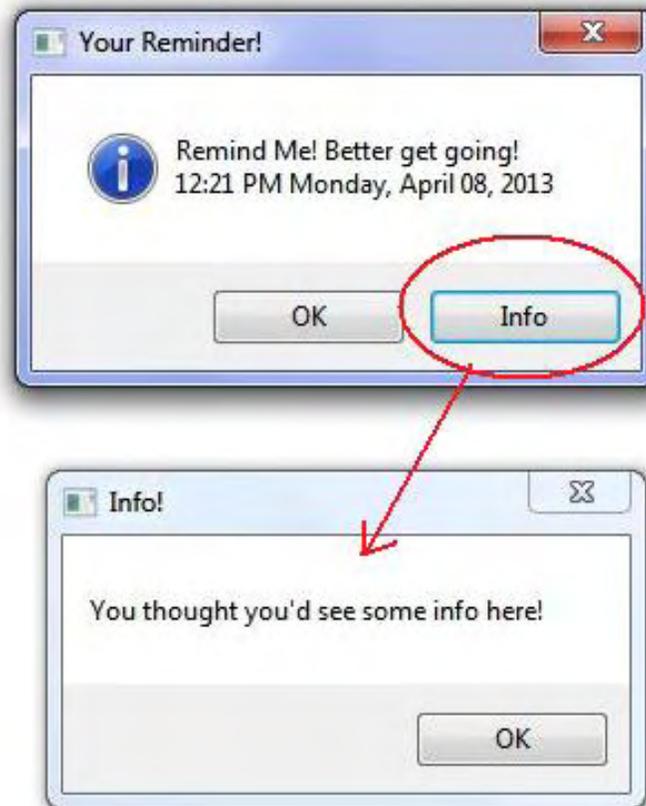
Figure 2. When the "Info" (Help) button is clicked, it opens a second message window which can be used for more detailed information or instructions.

The Help button is a standard option which can be added to any MsgBox command (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/MsgBox.htm*) by adding the number 16384 to the total of the option parameters. In this case, the command looks like this:

```
MsgBox,20800,Your Reminder!, %MyNote% %RemMessage%`n%Rightnow%
```

The options (20800) are composed of 4096 for always-on-top, plus 16384 for adding the Help button, plus 256 to make the second button (Help) the default button, plus 16 for "Icon Asterisk (info)" icon. (More information on MsgBox options can be found

in the "Cleaning up the Reminder App" portion of the linked AutoHotkey column.)

To change the label on the Help button to "Waiting" the following line of code was added:

```
ControlSetText, Button2, Waiting, Your Reminder!
```

in the *ChangeButtonNames* subroutine. Changing the word "Waiting" to "Info" changes the label on the Help button to Info.

The two requirements for activating the Help button are adding dialogue ownership ("Gui +OwnDialogs") to the appropriate subroutine and using OnMessage to monitoring the Windows WM_HELP message (0x53). This enables the Windows Help message which responds to the pressing of the F1 key. If properly implemented the new message box will pop up when the "Info" button is clicked or when the F1 key is press while the message box is the active window.

It is important that the ownership command appear before the MsgBox command is issued inside the subroutine as such:

```
Gui +OwnDialogs
MsgBox,20800,Your Reminder!, %MyNote% %RemMessage%`n%Rightnow%
```

Otherwise the feature will not work.

The OnMessage function is used to set up the monitoring and designate the other function (*WM_HELP()*) to execute:

```
OnMessage(0x53, "WM_HELP")
```

The numerical label (*0x53*) is the actual designator for the standard Windows Message. The *"WM_HELP"* (must be in quotes) is the name of the function called and does not need to be the same as the Windows Message name. It can be any function name as long as the function exists in the script. However, using the same name as the Windows Message makes it easier to remember the purpose of the OnMessage function.

The function called when the "Info" button is clicked is as follows:

```
WM_HELP()
{
    MsgBox,4096, Info!, You thought you'd see some info here!
}
```

This function can appear anywhere in the script, but should not be inside the subroutine (i.e. between the beginning of the subroutine (label) and the RETURN at the end). All functions and subroutines in a script must be self contained. A function will end with a closed curly bracket "}" and a subroutine will end with a RETURN.

The function *WM_HELP()* opens a message box titled "Info!" and displays the text "You thought you'd see some info here!" This function can be later modified to display information about the current Reminder app, give help, or offer other data.

The following shows the implementation of the feature in the ShowReminder label which is called in the app when the reminder pops up:

```
ShowReminder:
FormatTime, RightNow
#persistent
OnMessage(0x53, "WM_HELP")
IfExist, %A_WinDir%*bckslsh*nircmd.exe
  {
```

```
    If SetSpeak = 1      ;new line
      SetTimer, TalkToMe, 15000
  }
Hotkey, IfWinActive, Your Reminder!
Hotkey, Esc, StopEscape
SetTimer, ChangeButtonNames, 50
Gui +OwnDialogs
MsgBox,20800,Your Reminder!, %MyNote% %RemMessage%`n%Rightnow%
MyNote := "New Reminder!"
SetTimer, ShowReminder, Off

IfMsgBox, OK
   SetTimer, TalkToMe, Off
   Hotkey, IfWinActive
return
WM_HELP()
{
    MsgBox,4096, Info!, You thought you'd see some info here!
}
```

To see the code for the entire app download the Reminder 1.8.ahk (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/ QdMY1dNuy7*) file. (This version does not contain the changes mentioned last week to #INCLUDE the app in another script.)

The Beginning for the Reminder App

It can be pretty difficult to jump into the middle of a conversation—especially if it's about writing a script. If you would like to start at the beginning of the Reminder script, then click the first link below.

A Cool Little Appointment Reminder for Windows
Lonely? Make Your Computer Talk to You!
A Talking Reminder for Windows
Tweaking the Reminder and QuickLinks AutoHotkey Scripts
Improving the Reminder App
How to Make the Reminder App Last for Days
Add a Toggle for the Speaking Feature to the Reminder App

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

Just Released! *Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers (*www.amazon.com/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*).*

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Apple?" (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?
ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

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

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

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

Wally Wang's Apple Farm
"The Mobile Wave" by Wally Wang

The Mobile Wave; No More Optimism for the PC Market; Cordless Users; Fade In Professional; Three Year Anniversary for the iPad; Clear Safari History.

Three years after Apple introduced the world to tablet computers with the iPad, most of the world has suddenly realized that mobile computing devices like tablets are the future and desktop and laptop computers will gradually become less important over time. The capabilities of tablet computers will just continue increasing just like the capabilities of PCs eventually eliminated much of the need for minicomputers and mainframes.

PC Magazine even predicts that tablet computers will continue selling (*www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2417410,00.asp*) while traditional PCs will continue losing sales. "While there will be some individuals who retain both a personal PC and a tablet, especially those who use either or both for work and play, most will be satisfied with the experience they get from a tablet as their main computing device," Carolina Milanesi, research vice president at Gartner, said in a statement. "As consumers shift their time away from their PC to tablets and smartphones, they will no longer see their PC as a device that they need to replace on a regular basis."

The future is mobile computing, despite the relentless criticism rallied against the iPad. For a humorous look at how completely wrong such anti-Apple critics were about the iPad, visit the iPad Death Watch (*aaplinvestors.net/stats/ipad/ipaddeathwatch/*) site where you can read the latest predictions that the iPad will soon fail because rival tablets will prove far superior one day.

Anyone who refuses to use a smartphone or a tablet today is no different than people who refused to use a PC or get on the Internet back in the 90's. The less you embrace current technology, the further behind you'll get. Clinging to ancient technology like netbooks and avoiding smartphones and tablets is simply a recipe for rapid obsolescence in the near future.

To learn more about the future of mobile computing, read *The Mobile Wave (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593157207/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593157207&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*)* by Michael Saylor. One interesting point this book makes is that many people still see e-books as digital versions of printed books, which is like thinking of movies as filmed versions of stage plays.

Instead, publishers really should be thinking of e-books as software. Like software, an e-book could be given out for free by showing the first three chapters as a demo. Then if you like it, you can purchase a license key that will unlock the rest of the content. In this way, people could browse an e-book at no cost and then only buy it if they want to finish reading it.

In addition, e-books can incorporate video and audio along with interactivity to fully engage a reader in ways that no printed book could possibly match. By looking beyond the idea of static printed pages, e-books can flourish as a separate type of information category as unrelated to printed books as printed books are unrelated to clay tablets that people once used to write and store information.

The Mobile Wave also talks about how mobile computing can provide 24/7 access to information that makes printed materials completely obsolete including maps, medical records, and textbooks. Mobile computing eliminates the middleman and allows content producers to directly reach their audience of content consumers.

Just as some people will continue resisting the advantages of mobile computing, some people are also still resisting the advantages of using a personal computer. Those people will simply fall behind the rest of society and wonder what happened. If you don't want to become a casualty of technological progress, read *The Mobile Wave* and see how the future of mobile computing will likely change your world whether you like it or not.

No More Optimism for the PC Market

Back in the 90s, nearly everyone used a Windows PC because there wasn't much reason to use anything else. Back then, you never saw any article mentioning the decline of the PC market simply because there was no reason to talk about something that wasn't happening. That's all changed now.

Today, the media constantly prints pessimistic articles questioning the future of the PC market. *InfoWorld* recently questioned the future (*www.infoworld.com/t/desktop-pcs/hps-and-dells-falls-may-be-closer-you-thought-215697*) of Dell and Hewlett-Packard since both are heavily dependent on the Windows PC market. The Motley Fool, an investment site, even goes so far as to declare Windows 8 a failure (*beta.fool.com/joekurtz/2013/04/06/microsofts-windows-8-has-failed-now-what/29367/?source=eogyholnk0000001*) due to its low adoption rate and murky future.

How did Microsoft go from dominating the computer industry to having so many people question their future? It's not Windows bashing just for the sake of attacking a company using made up beliefs and ignoring actual facts. (People usually attack Apple for that reason.) Instead, it's just multiple people seeing the same facts in front of them and concluding that the PC market will never experience the massive growth that it once enjoyed during the past two decades.

If someone wrote an article back in 2000 claiming that the Windows PC isn't that important, nobody would have printed that since nobody would believe it. Print that same article today and many more people not only believe it, but can also point to trends and facts that support that idea.

No matter what happens, the traditional desktop or laptop PC just isn't as critical any more. With smartphones and tablets capable of accessing the Internet, the need for the latest and most powerful PC has greatly diminished. Buy a new PC today and its technical specifications may be more advanced, but will it do anything a year old PC can't do just as well, except maybe a little slower? The fact that so many Windows XP PCs are still around demonstrates that a Windows 7 or Windows 8 PC doesn't offer dramatically different computing features than a trusty Windows XP PC. If a Windows XP PC works, what compelling productivity advantage will someone get if they upgrade to a Windows 8 PC? The answer to this question (or lack thereof) is the real reason why the PC market is slowly declining with little hope of ever returning back to its former glory days of the past.

Cordless Users

It all started when people started cutting their landlines in favor of using mobile phones as their primary phone number. Now people are starting to cut their cable TV bills (*www.sfgate.com/business/technology/article/Broadcasters-worry-about-Zero-TV-homes-4415897.php*) and just relying on the Internet to watch TV shows and movies.

The problem is that cable TV costs too much for what little it offers combined with confusing bundles of channels you may not want while having to pay extra for the channels you do want. By picking and choosing TV shows or movies off the Internet, it's far easier to watch what you want at less cost and greater convenience since you can watch your favorite shows on a smartphone, tablet, or computer.

Truck driver James Weitze, simply watches videos on his iPhone and sleeps in his truck because he doesn't have an apartment. He says that it's easier for him to navigate his smartphone than to figure out how to use a TV set-top box and the button-laden remote control.

"I'm pretty tech savvy, but the TV industry with the cable and the television and the boxes, you don't know how to use their equipment," he says. "I try to go over to my grandma's place and teach her how to do it. I can't even figure it out myself."

Anyone remember the complexity of old mobile phones before the iPhone appeared? The same problem currently plagues TV sets and remote controls, which is why rumors persist that Apple is developing their own TV set that will simplify remote controls and give people access to the TV shows and movies that they want at a reasonable price.

Watch the cable TV companies go into a tailspin soon because they insisted on keeping prices high and complexity even higher. When you don't meet the needs of your customers, they'll have no trouble abandoning you at the first sign of something better.

Fade In Professional

In the corporate world, many people use Microsoft Word just because everyone else uses Microsoft Word. Often times they don't need any particular feature of Microsoft Word; they just need to share files and don't want to risk dealing with file incompatibilities (even though different versions of Word may still have slight file incompatibilities).

In the screenwriting world, many people use a script writing program called Final Draft because Hollywood has adopted the Final Draft file format as the standard for screenplays along with another format created by a rival script writing word processor called Movie Magic Screenwriter.

Both Final Draft (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0023VR1II/ref=as_li_tf_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B0023VR1II&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*) and Movie Magic Screenwriter (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000V5SRAE/ref=as_li_tf_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B000V5SRAE&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*) retail for $249. Although both programs have their supporters in Hollywood, both programs also have a large number of critics. Final Draft version 7 proved a disaster with its numerous bugs that practically made the program unusable while Movie Magic Screenwriter has its own share of bugs that never seem to get resolved.

While screenwriters continue using Final Draft and Movie Magic Screenwriter, it's often more because they have to rather than because they really want to use either of those two programs, much the same way that corporate users use Microsoft Word less out of desire and more out of self-imposed necessity.

In case you don't want to use Final Draft or Movie Magic Screenwriter, look at a much less expensive program ($49.95) called Fade In Professional. This script writing word processor works just like Final Draft and Movie Magic Screenwriter. However, Fade In Professional lets you import and export a Final Draft script. Now you can collaborate with someone using Final Draft while you use the less expensive Fade In Professional program instead.

In addition to importing and saving files in the Final Draft format, Fade In Professional can also import (but not save) files in the Celtx file format, which is created by the free Celtx script writing word processor (*www.celtx.com/index.html*).

I originally started with Movie Magic Screenwriter and found it useful, but buggy. Rather than buy the latest update, I switched to Celtx, but found minor limitations. Then I switched to the $49.95 Montage (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000H27PUO/ ref=as_li_tf_tl? ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B000H27PUO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*), which is a Macintosh-only script writing word processor. Although Montage proved slightly better than Celtx, it too felt lacking. That's when I switched to Fade In Professional (*www.fadeinpro.com*). Despite its $49.95 price tag, Fade In Professional felt like the perfect combination of features that I needed.

One feature that Fade In Professional offers is the ability to print "sides," which are just those pages containing dialogue for a specific character. As an actor, you just need to know your parts and not necessarily care about lugging the whole script around with the hassle of flipping through all the pages just to find your speaking parts.
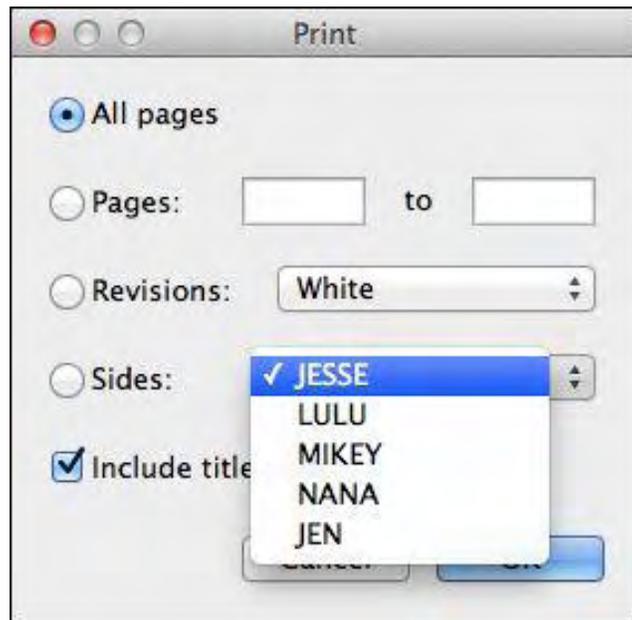
Figure 1. Fade In Professional makes it easy to print "sides".

Fade In Professional also offers a unique feature for manipulating entire scenes within a screenplay. With other script writing word processors, moving an entire scene involves copying and pasting a large chunk of text. With Fade In Professional, moving a scene involves just dragging that scene heading to a new location in your list of scenes. By viewing your list of scenes, you can also see how many pages each scene takes up.

Figure 2. Fade In Professional can show you the number of pages in each scene.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of Fade In Professional is that it runs on Windows, Linux, and OS X. (Neither Final Draft or Movie Magic Screenwriter run on Linux.) Download the demo and see how Fade In Professional compares to your current script writing word processor. If you're tired of paying high prices for Final Draft or Movie Magic Screenwriter, and get frustrated by bugs in e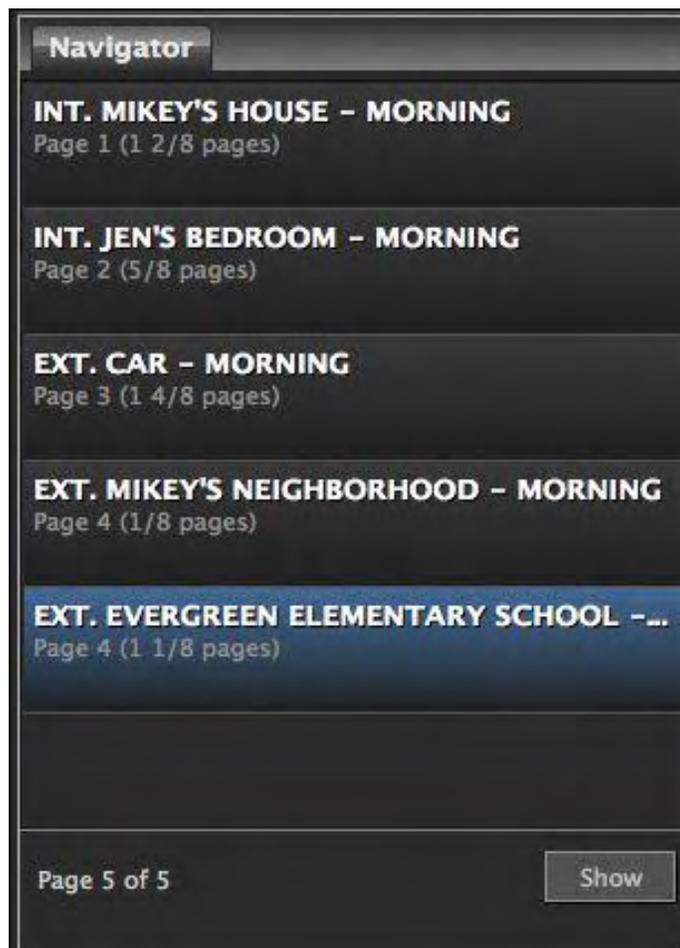ither program that never seem to get fixed in a timely manner, take a close look at Fade In Professional. You may find that this little known script writing word processor is far superior to Final Draft while still remaining compatible with Final Draft.

Three Year Anniversary for the iPad

On April 3, 2010, Apple introduced the first iPad. Despite the predictions of failure by critics who kept comparing the iPad to a netbook, the iPad has not only thrived, but helped kill off the netbook market and the PC market at the same time. In the meantime, rivals keep launching tablets of their own that critics fail to dismiss as doomed like they did with the original iPad.

Just in London alone, the iPad has transformed the way people work and play (*www.standard.co.uk/news/ techandgadgets/ipad-city-how-the-apple-tablet-is-powering-london-8557940.html*). Violinist Daniel Hope says: "I've been using the iPad as a digital music stand for a year. With the AirTurn bluetooth footpedal and Forscore App, you have complete freedom to play complex scores without ever worrying about turning the page. You can also mark things directly into the music, something which will have important implications for orchestras and ensembles in years to come."

At Matches boutique shop, assistants carry iPads. Now if customers like what they see in the store, the assistants can get online and order it in your size. At The Thirsty Bear in Southwark and the Lazy Fox in Fulham, each table has a beer keg with a tap on each table so you just pour as much as you like and an iPad tracks how much you've poured. Now you no longer have to wait for a bartender to serve you. By using the iPad, you can also play music and order food without waiting for a waitress to come around to take your order.

At the Brick Oven pizza restaurant in Chiswick, they have a daycare area monitored with video cameras. As you eat at your table, you can use the iPad at your table to watch over your children.

More doctors in the UK use iPads than in any other European country, with 31 per cent of them owning the devices, according to a survey by Manhattan Research. Cardiology staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital use iPads to instantly access 3D images of patients' hearts. "They can make a real difference," says Mark Large, IT director at the hospital. "If an urgent case conference is called to discuss treatment for a sick child, clinicians can join it no matter where they are and access information. Clinicians need to be able to access data and update records while they are at the bedside, to ensure each patient gets the best care."

At Bowes Primary School in Enfield the iPad helps children learn to read to the point where children now graduate with above average literacy. Teachers also use the iPad for class group exercises. "The screen is so large, we find it is perfect for group work," says Gulev Karayel, ICT coordinator at the school, adding that "the iPad's brilliant visual quality also really engages children with any kind of learning difficulties".

With so many examples of how the iPad has changed life just in London alone, you can question why netbooks and ordinary Windows PC laptops didn't have the same impact. In the meantime, you can use these inspirational stories for how the iPad has helped people to look for ways you can improve your own life using an iPad.

Ask all these people in London if they would get rid of their iPads and go back to the way they used to work, and chances are they would say no. If the iPad can change people's lives in three years, how much more do you think the iPad and mobile computing in general will change life for everyone in the next three years? You can spend the next three years being productive with an iPad or you can spend the next three years learning the arcane and cryptic commands necessary to learn Windows 8 so you can accomplish the exact same tasks you can perform right now using any previous version of Windows.

For even more fun, load Internet Explorer in the desktop mode and through the tile interface of Windows 8 to see two browsers that have the same name (Internet Explorer) but look and behave differently (*news.cnet.com/8301-10805_3-57405765-75/ie10-in-windows-8-metro-style-vs-desktop-style/*). Now ask yourself if having two different browsers with the same name but different appearances makes Windows 8 easier and more intuitive to use. If so, then you should be happy using a Windows 8 tablet instead of an iPad.

BabyTime with the iPad

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles recently deployed iPads in its neonatal intensive care unit so mothers can see their newborns (*www.tuaw.com/2013/04/08/hospital-uses-ipads-to-help-moms-stay-in-contact-with-newborns/*) and interact with hospital staff when they can't do so in person. Cedars-Sinai notes that approximately 20 to 30 percent of new mothers who undergo C-sections "do not feel well enough to travel from their bed in the Labor and Delivery unit to the NICU for the first 24 to 48 hours."

By using iPads, mothers can see their newborn and interact with the nurses and doctors keeping an eye on their baby. Using FaceTime, both the mother and baby can see and talk with each other.

Figure 3. The iPad makes it easy for mothers and babies to see and interact with each other.

Of course, such video conferencing capability has long been available on ordinary desktop and laptop PCs, but getting near a desktop computer can be clumsy and holding a laptop computer at a convenient angle can be troublesome as well. Yet holding an iPad is easy and convenient.

With hospitals using iPads, it's only a matter of time before more people discover a use for a tablet computer, even all those people who originally thought the iPad couldn't possibly succeed because there was no use for it.

*   *   *

Safari keeps track of the Web sites you've visited so you can jump to that particular site later. However, if you don't like the idea of Safari keeping track of the sites you've visited, you can tell Safari to automatically clear your history at periodic intervals.

Just load Safari, click the Safari menu, and choose Preferences. When a Preferences dialog appears, click in the "Remove history items" pop-up menu and choose a setting such as After one day or After one year.
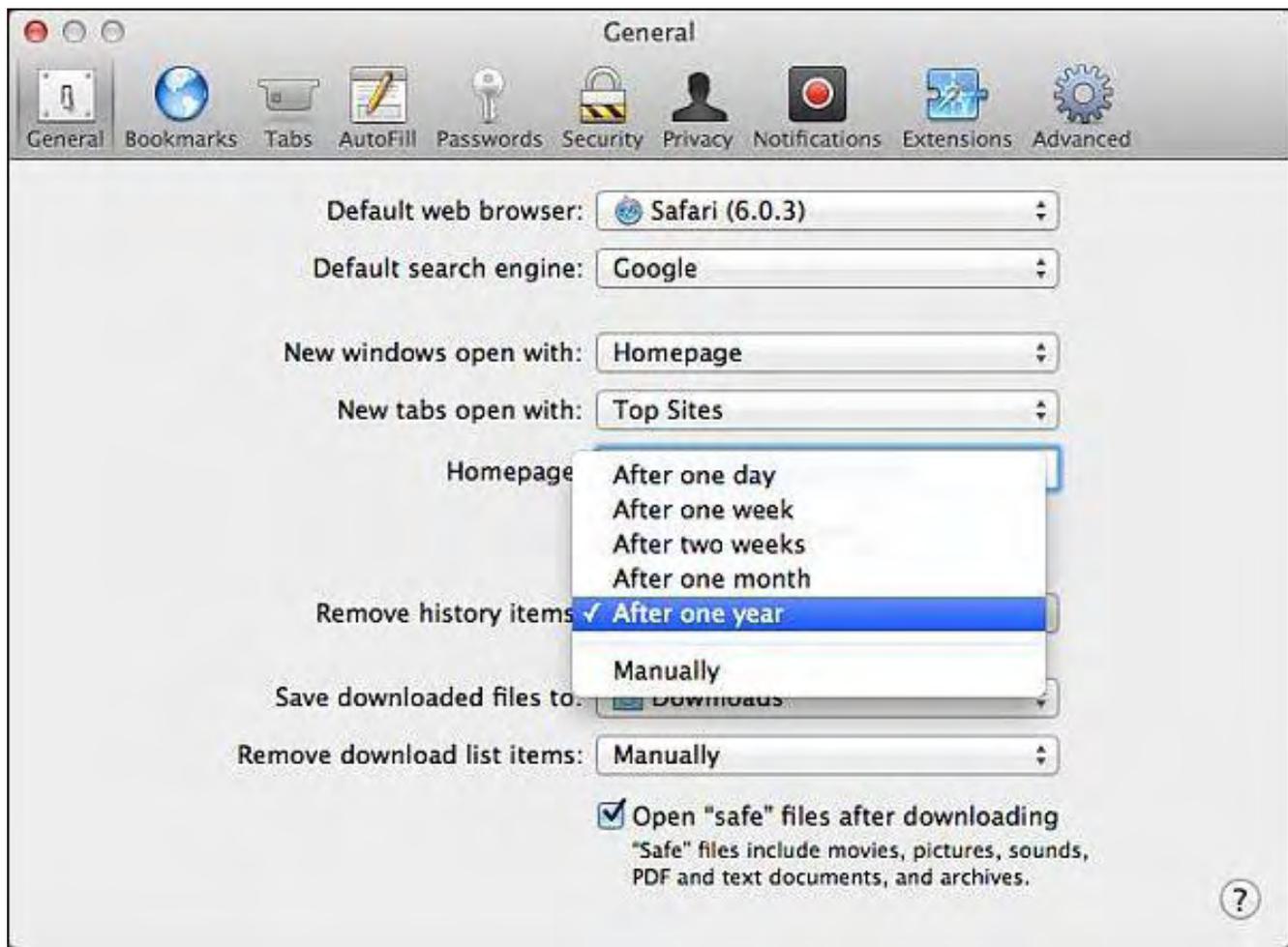
Figure 4. You can define how long Safari keeps track of your browsing history.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

*My New Mac, Lion Edition (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908*)*
*My New iPad 2 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X*)*
*Steal This Computer Book (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050*)*
*Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987*)*
*Beginning Programming for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702*)*
*Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541*)*
*Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468*)*
*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*

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

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

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

Why You Aren't Making Any Money With Your App; Getting Car Body Damage Estimates in the 21st Century; Keyboard Cover for iPad; Aliens: Colonial Marines (Single player).

Don't say we didn't warn you.

What is that store's return policy?

We've seen better; we've seen worse.

You'll probably be happy you did.

What are you waiting for?

Why You Aren't Making Any Money With Your App

Manish Sehgal asked us to share a piece he recent wrote for his site, Nov8Rix.com:

From time to time I get asked some variation of this question: How can we make more money with our mobile app?

The interesting part is my de facto reply always holds true. Making money with an app involves many of the same things as making money with any business: You have to market it!

I was asked the above question a few weeks ago by one of our clients (which inspired me to write this post). Immediately I went to their company Web site, looked through all the pages and found no mention of the app anywhere. No link. No badge. No banner. No anything.

In their print magazine there is no QR code that links to their app, no announcement, no information at all that communicates that they have an app to their readership.

As an added bonus, this particular client which publishes content on some really cutting edge technology and sexy luxury items (for boys who like toys) also happens to have among the most arcane Web sites I've seen. The design looks like it was created in 1985.

The business owner insists that their demographic is older and that updating the Web site doesn't really matter. This is a bit ironic given they have an iPad app, which is among the most modern/cutting edge things to do. If the audience doesn't appreciate or want modern, don't have an app! If you have an app, you are raising the bar of your brand quality, so it makes sense to raise it across the board!

I responded to the client with the following tips:

• Create a marketing plan

• Research how your competition are doing it, and do what the successful ones are doing

• Print magazines/publications should now include a QR Code linking to your app

• Add a badge or banner in a prominent place on your Web site home page, put it "above the fold" (so people don't have to scroll to see it)

• Add a link to your app in the e-mail signatures of your employees (use a URL shortener)

• Add a QR Code to your printed business cards, on your invoices, everywhere

• Get a modern Web site that allows you to blog actively

• Weave in social media (if you don't know how, contact us and we'll tell you)

• Do a press release

• The more content you publish online, the more search engine optimization (SEO) value is created

• Think of your content as part of a whole, and the app as a channel

There is so much that can be done—I could ramble on and on.

But the most simple answers: Do nothing and nothing will come. Take some action, even minor, and make it consistent, and you'll

see results improve. Take massive action and you'll reap the rewards.

Manish Sehgal is the Co-Founder and CEO of Nov8rix. Read more of his stuff at www.nov8rix.com (*www.nov8rix.com*).

Getting Car Body Damage Estimates in the 21st Century

A new Web service and Web site, BodyShopBids.com (*BodyShopBids.com*) aims to create a new way for residents in our home city, San Diego, to take at least a little of the pain out of fender benders by simplifying the lengthy and confusing process of price shopping for auto body repair and, hopefully, saving users money in the process:

If you were to take a vehicle with some body damage—be it a scratch, dent, paint transfer, or more serious body damage—to three different body shops, you'd likely get three completely different estimates. The average difference between high and low estimates? $750.

Now BodyShopBids, which is launching its service in San Diego, is simplifying the process of shopping around for auto repair and saving San Diego residents big bucks in the process.

Basically, if you have any external damage to your vehicle, you snap a couple pictures and submit them with a brief damage report (takes about 3 minutes) through BodyShopBids' free app for iPhone, Android, and the Web. Within 24 hours, you receive at least three certified estimates from nearby body shops that have been vetted by the guys at BodyShopBids. You'll be able to compare reviews and prices, and then you can then take care of getting your car fixed without ever leaving your home or office.

Keyboard Cover for iPad

Product name: Ultrathin Keyboard Cover
Manufacturer: Logitech
Web site: www.logitech.com (*www.logitech.com/en-us/product/ultrathin-keyboard-cover/*)
Price: $99.99

Newcomers to the iPad could face some challenges in adapting to this device's user interface. For example, the iPad (unlike desktop or portable computers) has a virtual keyboard rather than a physical one. The virtual keyboard displays on screen and requires the user to tap on the screen to produce text. This requirement could be particularly challenging for speedy touch typists and people with fat-finger syndrome. For users who prefer a physical keyboard over the iPad's virtual one, Logitech offers the Ultrathin Keyboard Cover (UKC).

The UKC comes in a box roughly the size of a paper pad. Its exterior is white with green trim on the front and sides, and has photographs of and information about the UKC on both the front and back.

Inside the box you will find an English-only Getting Started pamphlet that has clear, concise illustrated instructions and an Important Information pamphlet that has safety, regulatory, and warranty information in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. These pamphlets are wedged into a cardboard tray within the aforementioned box, and the UKC sits on top of them. Additionally, a microfiber cleaning cloth and a USB to micro-USB charging cable are included. These items are inside a compartment within the tray that I found difficult to open; your mileage may vary.

After removing the UKC from its box and reviewing the Getting Started pamphlet's instructions, this product is a snap to get up and running. Its battery comes adequately charged from the factory, so the user can push the cylinder-shaped on-off switch (located on the right side when looking down on the physical keyboard, between the USB port for battery recharging and the Bluetooth connect button switch; Figure 1) and complete the first-time setup.

"Ultrathin" is an appropriate word to describe this product. It measures just over one quarter of an inch thick—0.34" to be precise. Its other dimensions are essentially identical to an iPad's—9.5" high and 7.3" wide—and it adds 11.6 oz. to the iPad's weight of 1.33 lbs. Combining their weights, an iPad plus the UKC weighs in at just over 2 lbs.

Figure 1. The right side (edge) of the UKC has a Bluetooth connect button, on-off power switch, and micro USB port for charging.

One of this product's most compelling features is its easy installation. Simply insert an iPad 2 or newer model into the UKC's groove (Figure 2), power on both devices, press the UKC's Bluetooth 3.0 connect button after turning on the iPad's Bluetooth, and voilà!

Figure 2. After powering on the UKC and iPad with both devices' Bluetooth enabled, insert the iPad (green arrows) into the UKC's groove (white area above the special function keys). A magnetic clip on the cover's top edge (blue arrows) holds the iPad in place.

What keeps the iPad from moving and/or falling out? It's held in the groove by a magnetized clip at the top of the UKC (Figure 2) that contacts the iPad's magnetized bezel. All iPads except the first generation have this feature, hence all models except the first generation are compatible with the UKC. However, iPad owners who have another protective cover (e.g., sleeve or case) probably will need to swap between the UKC and the other cover as appropriate. Accessories that depend upon the iPad's Dock connector should be compatible with the UKC given that this connector is readily accessible.

After installing an iPad in a UKC's groove, the former's back side is exposed and the latter serves as a protective cover for the screen when closed (as shown in Figure 3). This very compact, lightweight package is not only protected from potential damage, it also is exceptionally convenient for mobile users (especially on flights where the seatback tray is small and/or cramped). A notebook computer looks bulky and heavy in comparison.

Figure 3. Mobile users might prefer an iPad and UKC over a notebook computer because the former is so light (33 oz.), compact, and protected from potential screen damage when closed.

Although the UKC is thin and compact, it has enough room inside to accommodate a powerful battery. The battery is officially rated to last up to six months on a single charge while averaging two hours of use per day. Testing for this review was too constrained to (dis)confirm Logitech's official rating; your mileage may vary.

In addition to this product's ease of installation, compactness, and convenience for use on the go, the UKC has several additional compelling advantages to keep in consideration. One such advantage is that its physical keyboard makes the iPad's virtual keyboard unnecessary, thereby freeing up the entire screen to display a document. Another compelling advantage is that the keyboard looks and functions almost identically to a Mac's—it includes standard QWERTY layout; 14 special function keys (10 of which double as numeric keys); function, control, option, and command keys to the left of the space bar; option, command, and four arrow keys to the right of the space bar; caps lock, tab, delete, shift and return keys where you would expect them (Figure 4); pressing option-left arrow moves the insertion bar one word to the left of its current position, command-right arrow moves it to the beginning of the current line, option-8 produces a bullet on screen, and so on. One more compelling advantage is the instant on/off feature; open the UKC and the iPad automatically wakes up, close the UKC and the iPad automatically goes to sleep.

Figure 4. The UKC's keyboard layout closely resembles a standard Macintosh keyboard except the numeric keys above the QWERTY keys also have special functions appropriate for the iPad such as cutting, copying, pasting, controlling music features, etc.

Although the UKC has numerous compelling advantages (including ease of installation, compactness, and convenience for mobile users), it also has some weaknesses that should be kept in mind when making a purchase decision. Perhaps the most serious one is that the keys are pretty small. My hands don't suffer from fat-finger syndrome, yet the more that I used the UKC, the more I longed for my MacBook Pro's keyboard or Logitech's K760 Wireless Solar Keyboard reviewed in this column previously. I made typing mistakes on the UKC that were highly unlikely on these other two keyboards; e.g., pressing the space bar when intending to press the neighboring command key, wishing to press an escape key that doesn't exist, pressing the Caps Lock key (for which an indicator light is lacking) instead of the letter A, and so on. In addition, the UKC's "feel" takes some getting used to. I find the feel to have a short travel, without haptic feedback. Again, your mileage (time required to adapt) may vary.

The magnetic clip that holds the iPad in the UKC's groove is clever but potentially unreliable. A user can pick up the keyboard and tilt it thinking that the iPad is secured only to find the iPad falling out and onto the user's hands. It therefore is important to remember that the iPad is just resting in the groove, held in place magnetically rather than securely snapped in. One additional related point—because the groove is fixed in place, the iPad is oriented at one angle only. If this angle is unsuitable for any reason (glare, etc.), the user has little recourse.

Lastly, the user needs to remember that there is no mouse or trackpad; you still need to tap or perform gestures on the iPad's screen to access features that are missing from the UKC's special function keys.

In conclusion, the UKC is reasonably priced (considering its battery and Bluetooth support), very easy to set up, compact, and highly convenient for mobile users. It makes the iPad a more realistic substitute for a bulkier, heavier notebook computer while on the go. Veteran users who are highly accustomed to a standard sized keyboard and/or pointing device, however, might experience a longer time to grow accustomed to the UKC than newbies who are accustomed to typing on a cell phone's small sized keyboard.

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Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

Aliens: Colonial Marines (Single player)

Developer: Gearbox
Publisher: Sega
Web site: www.sega.com (*www.sega.com/alienscolonialmarines/*)
Price: About $50
Also on: PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and Wii U
Rating: M for Mature

I think most people pretty much agree that the best Aliens game so far has been 2001's Aliens Versus Predator 2. The second best title was, in my opinion, the much under-appreciated 2010 sequel to that game, Aliens vs. Predator.

The newest title in the series, Aliens: Colonial Marines, is way down on the list. And that's somewhat inexplicable because the two games I mentioned demonstrate that someone over at SEGA knew what people wanted: suspense, suspense, suspense.

Aliens: Colonial Marines is like the other two games in that you can play it as a Marine, a Predator, or an Alien, making use of the abilities and weapons of each. The three run-throughs are different but with similar settings and events.

The action takes place in lots of dark locales (especially for the Marine) as-well-as jungles and swamps in the area around colony called Freya's Prospect where everything has come apart at the seams.

Aliens: Colonial Marines is not a horrible game. Sound and music are pretty good. Voice acting isn't awful. But it misses so many

opportunities. The developers go to so much trouble to set up a great situation then blow it by throwing wave after wave of Aliens at you. And then some more. And then *a lot more*. It just gets so tiring. I'm not kidding. Your mouse finger will literally start to ache.

When that happens in the game (and it happens so many times) you start to get the feeling that you're no longer in a story but in a shooting gallery. What happened to the suspense that the earlier games worked so hard to create?

You can get Aliens: Colonial Marines, but you'd be doing yourself a favor if you just got the 2010 game Aliens vs. Predator instead. It's on Steam right now for $15. You can't go wrong.

🌐 ◖

Review contributed by Daryl Greisner

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

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

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

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

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

for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition.

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

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

Learn more at *www.charlescarr.com*.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Thanks for AutoHotKey Tutorial," "Take Control of Windows 8 Settings," "Win 8 Versus Win 7," "Standardization?"

Thanks for AutoHotKey Tutorial

[Regarding the March 29 A Simple Way to Automate Mouse Movement, Plus Text Formatting column:]

I have a problem using my Connection Manager software in Windows 8. It often loses the modem with the error "device not found." I have to exit and restart the program and enter the proper button presses to reconnect. There was only so much I could do with a batch file. Autohotkey's SendInput commands (left, right, and enter) filled in the missing pieces.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

Take Control of Windows 8 Settings

Ran into this interesting article that might help people to take better control of their new Windows 8 OS settings:

"Quick Tip: Invoke god mode to take control of settings in Windows 8 (*www.techrepublic.com/blog/window-on-windows/ quick-tip-invoke-god-mode-to-take-control-of-settings-in-windows-8/7456*)."

-Chris Romel, San Diego, CA

Win 8 Versus Win 7

[Regarding the March 22 Digital Dave column:]

I have both Win 7 and Win 8 and switched back and forth a couple dozen times to try the differences. My opinion is with a non-touch screen device you will find Win 8 clumsy and you will be clicking your mouse two or three times compared to once on Win 7. Also, you will go for the red x in the upper right hand corner to x out, but the charms bar will encroach and you will have to fiddle to get it moved out of the way…and in some applications you will not find any way to get out of it. As I mentioned in a previous suggestion on this subject you will find Win 8 is a heavy user of your video card and you might have to upgrade that board to keep up with applications like Photoshop CS6, DVDfab, etc. Final opinion is get it with Win 7 as Dave suggested.

-Richard Manteufel, Lemon Grove, CA

Standardization?

[Regarding the March 8 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column:]

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

Later you say, "Starting in the fall, Arkansas State University students will need to either buy an iPad upon arriving on campus or rent one..." I certainly hope that ASU wises up and offers the opportunity for students to use what tools they want to not hamper

their productivity in the classroom.

Cheers.

-Rob Spahitz, San Diego, CA

To Rob Spahitz,

Yes, standardization just for the sake of standardization is pointless. People should have access to the tools they need to get the job done whatever the manufacturer may be. Of course, if one tool is clearly superior to another, then it only makes sense to use that superior tool. Forcing people to use something inferior makes no sense whatsoever just to standardize on it.

In the case of ASU, they're likely using the iPad since it's proven to be versatile and easy to use. With the ability for teachers to create their own textbooks using iBooks Author and distributing them through iBooks on the iPad, the iPad offers many features that other tablets lack. If people want to use another tablet, they should have that option, just as long as that alternative tablet can do what the iPad can do. If it can't match all the necessary features of the iPad, then choosing a rival tablet makes as much sense as writing with a quill pen and an ink well instead of a word processor just to exercise freedom of choice while sacrificing efficiency.

It's all about achieving results, not blind loyalty to any particular company or product.

-Wally Wang

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