

ComputerEdge™ Online — 04/19/13



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Coming Soon! The Computer Worn Like Glasses: Google Glass

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Martin

Audiophilia: Brilliance or Buffered Bluff?

chips and memory

intel

Windows 7 Or 8 \$100

\$249

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2.6Ghz 2MB Cache
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Digital Dave's Product Links!

Answers with Links to Stuff

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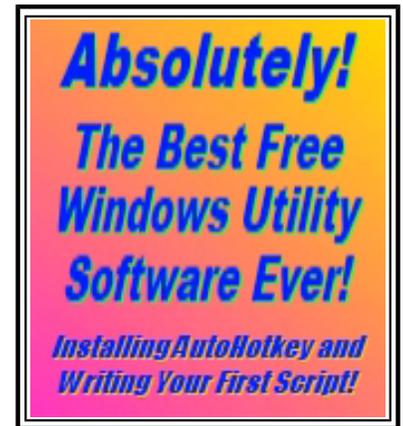
DEPARTMENTS:

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

ComputerEdge Staff

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns.

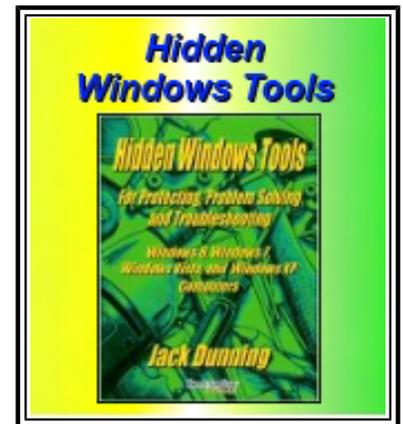
"Windows Blue," "Custom Computers," "SSD Drives," "Single Photo from DVD"



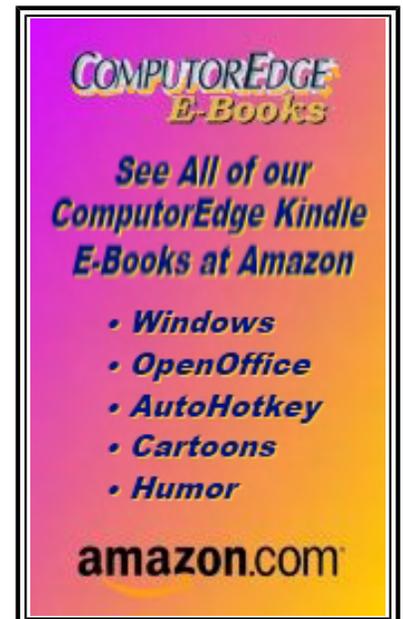
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Digital Dave

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

Chipset Driver Updates; ComputerEdge E-Books with ZIP Extension; Unwanted Firefox Behavior.

Dear Digital Dave

I have a program named "Driver Manager" that checks for driver updates and offers to download them. Driver Manager states that two Intel chipset managers need updating. Intel ICH 9 family PCI express rootport and ICH 9 family USB. When I attempt to download the updates I get an error message, "file is read-only please close down any programs that might be accessing this file." Help topics in Driver Manager state that chipset drivers may only be loaded during initial programming. Any thoughts about this problem?

*Mike
Cardiff, CA*

Dear Mike,

Chipset software (called firmware) sits in a chip with Read Only Memory (ROM) and needs to update when it is not in use—before the operating system boots. Firmware updates usually run a program that reboots the computer and loads the firmware before the OS loads. Often there will be performance or reliability improvements in these, so they are sometimes worth doing—although if everything is working fine they may not be worth any possible trouble caused by the update. (I custom edited my router firmware because of an annoying bug that was cropping up sometimes, but I like to live dangerously.) I guess if you believe it is worthwhile to update drivers, then the same holds for firmware. The main difference is the possibility of turning your hardware into a brick if something goes wrong, so there is a bit more risk involved.

It sounds like your problem is with either the firmware file that Driver Manager pulled down, or just that the Driver Manager program is doing it wrong. Firmware updates are usually as simple as running an executable and answering questions. If it's more complicated, there should be documentation at the site where you got the firmware.

Personally, I wouldn't use a program like Driver Manager. If you have any Windows versions after XP, then Windows Update includes driver and firmware updates (delayed from release because Microsoft says they certify them in some way). Anything else I want, I just go directly to the source and get it. You should be able to get these updates at Intel's Web site if you want to try them out. Their version should be tailored for proper installation without the use of any other program.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I use a Microsoft Surface Pro and when I go to ComputerEdge and select "Download ComputerEdge as an E-book EPUB Format (iPad, Nook) (Click here)" and I do click here the window that opens up says "What do you want to do with ComputerEdge 3115.zip". When I do save it, it does save in a zip format. Yes I can extract all files from the zip file but opening any of the files comes up with various errors. I have an e-book reader program installed which is Adobe Digital Editions 2.0 and does work with the EPUB format without a problem. How can I download your magazine in EPUB format?

*Frank J. Hibbard
San Diego, CA*

Dear Frank,

That is certainly odd behavior on the part of the Surface Pro. I don't know if that's a security feature, but it should download the file with an .EPUB extension. That's how my Windows computers downloaded it. However, your fix should be fairly simple.

An EPUB is merely a collection of compressed (ZIP) files in a format very close to that of the typical Web page (HTML). All of the files are catalogued within other EPUB format files inside the same ZIP folder. It sounds like all you need to do is change the ZIP extension to EPUB (i.e. ComputerEdge 3115.zip => ComputerEdge 3115.epub) . Then you should be able to read it in Digital Editions.

As a side note, Digital Editions is one of the clunkiest e-book readers. Almost all of the other free e-book readers (see the "Reading E-books on Your Computer" section of the linked article) are easier to use and read. If you want to maintain a library which will also convert the e-books to other formats, try the free Calibre (calibre-ebook.com/).

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

Ever since about version 17 of Firefox, I've had a problem I never had before. About half the time I click on anything on a page open in Firefox, I get a pop-up window telling me I'm the 10,000th visitor, or my Flash is out of date, or a survey that starts with the question "Male or Female?" In addition, just about all windows/tabs have about a 1" high box at the bottom of the page, that can be gotten rid of by clicking on the X. That one goes away if you click on some part of the page to refresh it, or move to a new screen, but then it comes back if you're on that screen for more than a few seconds. I have pop-up blockers activated in Firefox.

Any ideas?

*Larry McLaughlin
Aurora, CO*

Dear Larry,

While it might be a virus, my guess is that an unwanted add-on or extensions has infiltrated your Firefox browser. There are a couple of steps you should take to eradicate the problem.

First, check your list of both add-ons and extensions by opening the Tools menu and selecting Add-ons. (If you don't see Tools at the top of the window, press the ALT key and it will appear.) A window will open similar to Figure 1.



Figure 1. Tools => Add-ons in Firefox opens the Add-ons Manager window.

In the Extensions section look for anything strange or startling which may be the source of the unusual behavior. If you're not sure whether you need something, you can always Disable it to watch the effect. In the above case in Figure 1, We-Care is an add-on that somehow keeps returning to my version of Firefox. I'm not sure why.

If you decide that you don't need the extension, "Remove" it. However, this may not get rid of the problem if there is another program installed as Windows software. Some programs such as our example are installed in Windows and can add itself back to the browser. You should check Programs and Features (Add or Remove Programs in Windows XP) for other forms of the same recalcitrant software (see Figure 2). Open Programs and Features through the Control Panel or type "programs" into the Start Search field (Search settings, +W, in Windows 8) and select it from the list.

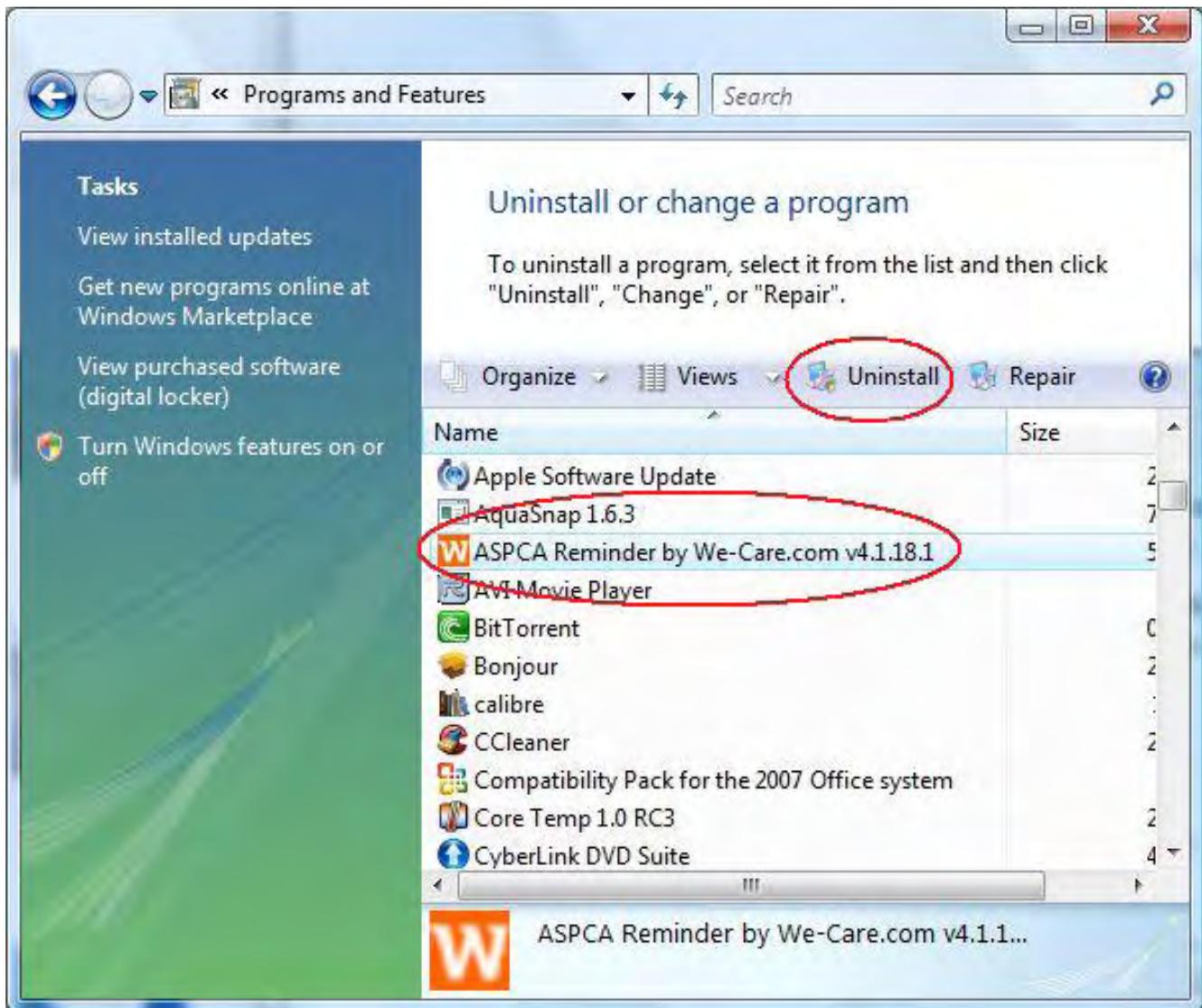


Figure 2. We-Care appears in Programs and Features.

Select and uninstall the program. (When I uninstalled We-Card, it went through some strange gyrations, but did seem to work.) However, some uninstall programs may not work—deliberately so. In that case, download the free version of Revo Uninstaller (www.revouninstaller.com/revo_uninstaller_free_download.htm). This should be enough to do the job and remove all of the extra bits in the Registry.

If none of this does the job, then you may be infected with some unwanted Adware that your virus protection hasn't detected. Run the standard scans, plus try other malware detection program—if necessary.

Digital Dave

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Google Glass Is Coming

“Soon You Can Put a Computer on Your Head!” by Jack Dunning

Google Glass is coming later this year. Will it be game changer like iPad or merely another geeky accessory?

I really don't know what to make of Google Glass, the head-mounted computer that may be available to consumers later this year. I'm terrible at predicting the success or failure of new hardware. I certainly don't place much credence in the rave reviews (www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-04-12/apples-coach-campbell-sees-google-glass-starting-era-of-intimate-objects) or the doomsday reports (www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2417784,00.asp). There is no doubt that it offers a different way of computing and, if it makes it, could be as significant and have as much impact as the iPad has had on the computer/smartphone market. It is impossible to say what people will want and do with new technology until they actually get their hands on it.



“I might trust that Borg at the end of the bar if there weren't so much human in him.”

train. (Fortunately, a nearby couple pulled him to safety. They weren't texting. Otherwise, he would have been a goner.)

There is also a debate brewing about invasion of privacy. Anyone wearing Google Glass can record anything in their view at anytime. But this

no more of a problem than people carrying a cell phone who seem to be recording all of time. That's not to say that surreptitious video capture isn't an issue—it is just that the problem is already here. Besides, Google Glass has a little red light visible when it's in record mode—although I'm sure people will figure out how to disable it.

The geek factor of people wearing these Star Trek type glasses won't be an obstacle. I still can't get over all the people who had no qualms about clipping a huge bluetooth device to their ear. Once people grow accustomed to seeing people wearing their Borg ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borg_\(Star_Trek\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borg_(Star_Trek))) glass, it will become fashionable. There will be an aftermarket for fake Google Glass devices which don't do anything—they're just for show.

You can decide for yourself whether Google Glasses will be a game changer like the iPad or a fabulous flop like 3D TV (www.hdtvtest.co.uk/news/3d-tv-dead-201304102848.htm)—at least so far.

Google Glass Features

Short of actually testing Google Glass, a look at it and a review of its features help to determine its true value. It looks harmless enough. The guess is that Google Glass will retail for about \$700.



Figure 2. Google Glass is lighter than a pair of sunglasses.

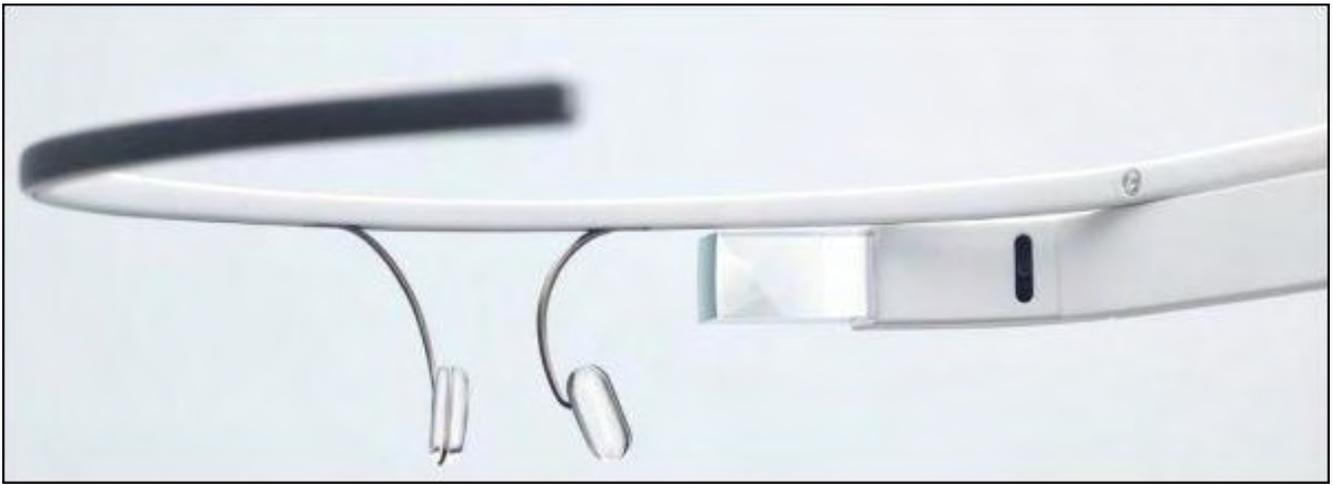


Figure 3. To see the viewing screen glance up and to the right.



Figure 4. There are plans to fit Google Glass on prescription glasses.

The way they are now advertised, you would think that the most important feature of Google Glass is the camera. It can take photos and record 720p HD video. This is a much better option than the handheld video camera (tape) I owned many years ago. When I took it to Disneyland with the family, I saw all the fun through the viewfinder and missed most of Disneyland. I could watch it later, but it wasn't the same. With Google Glass I could record everything without missing anything—although I may have lost it on Splash Mountain.



Figure 5. This picture was obviously taken while the Google Glass wearer was running backward—showing up all the other runners.

I did notice when watching the sample video (www.google.com/glass/start/how-it-feels) that there was a lot of jerkiness from the head motion. I was a little nauseous.

Google Glass uses bone conduction for audio. "Sound goes through bones in the cranium, which is a little freaky at first, but you get used to it."

Google Glass "requires a companion smartphone app (www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/4890543/google-glass-to-transmit-audio-through-skull-bones.html) to communicate with wirelessly, which will allow the glasses to operate GPS and SMS messaging." Does that mean you also need to own a smartphone to use Google Glass?



Figure 6. Not shown here is when the Google Glass user was hit in the face with the football because he was looking at his hands—or glancing at the Glass monitor.

Google Glass Voice Commands

Since a keyboard is impractical, Google Glass responds to voice commands. These commands (taken from Wikipedia) give us insight into its suspected use.

- Record video, "OK, glass, record a video."
- Take picture, "OK, glass, take a picture."
- Use Google Now, "OK, glass, [question]."
- Start Google+ hangout, "OK, glass, hang out with [person/circle]."

- Search, "OK, glass, google [search query]."
- Search photos, "OK, glass, google photos of [search query]."
- Translate, "OK, glass, say [text] in [language]."
- Give directions, "OK, glass, give directions to [place]."
- Send message, "OK, glass, send a message to [name]."; "OK, glass, send [name] that [message]."; "OK, glass, send [message] to [name]."
- Display weather—none/automatically (Google Now), "OK, glass, how is the weather in [location]?"; "ok, glass, do I need an umbrella today?"
- Give flight details—none/automatically (Google Now), "OK, glass, when does flight [flight number] depart from [airport]?"

All this could go bad the first time your significant other catches you glancing at the glass when he or she is telling you about their day. It even looks rude. In fact rudeness may be the biggest obstacle to Google Glass (www.technologyreview.com/view/512541/the-meaning-of-the-google-glass-backlash/). Although for some people that's exactly the reason they would want one of their own.

My guess is Google Glass will find its niche. But you should watch out for anyone wearing one (you can't call it a pair of glasses, because it isn't) while playing Scrabble. They might be cheating.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. 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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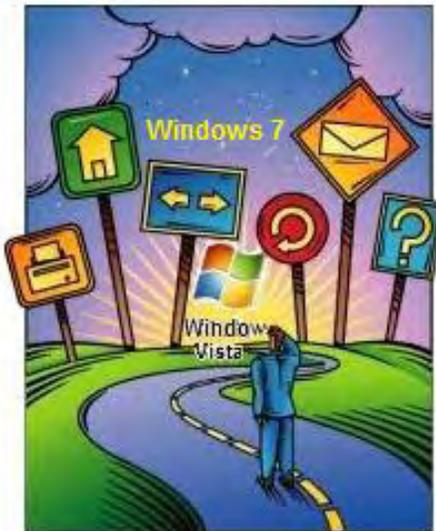
Currently only at Amazon.com, *Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Get Started!* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20).

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Also available at Barnes and Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463) and ComputerEdge E-Books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer).

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Windows Tips and Tricks

Windows Tips and Tricks: Text-to-Speech

“How to Get to the Windows Voice Options” by Jack Dunning

The text-to-Speech voices are not great in Windows, but they have improved with more options in Windows 8.

I've never paid much attention to the text-to-speech voices in Windows until I added it to the AutoHotkey Reminder script. If I was going to listen to a reminder being read out loud, I wanted to know a little more about the voices.

While text-to-speech is available in Windows XP and above, they are not all the same. In Windows XP the voice, Microsoft Sam, is pretty poor, sounding like the robot in "Lost in Space." If I was running the Reminder app on an XP, I wouldn't bother to implement the audio feature.

The voice improved in Windows Vista and Windows 7 which both offer the same Microsoft Anna. While far from perfect it is way better than Microsoft Sam and much easier on the ears—although some people hate it when compared to Microsoft Sam. Go figure. I found that Anna was even better when I slowed it down slightly.

It was not until Windows 8 that Microsoft decided to get more serious with text-to-speech voices. There are now three voices available as options in Windows 8: Microsoft David (American English); Microsoft Hazel (British English); and Microsoft Zira (American English). Each of these voices is smoother than any of the previous Microsoft voices—almost sounding like the real thing. It's nice to have a choice.

Why Not More Voices?

I looked into what it would take to add more choices to the list, but unless you're willing to pay, the options are extremely limited. (It seems that you may be able to get free voices for Windows XP.) Most of the lines I pursued ended with the possible purchase of voices for about \$35 to \$40 each either with a text-to-speech program or individually. If you're planning to use text-to-speech extensively, it may be worthwhile to purchase a more interesting voice or two. CereProc (www.cereproc.com/en/store) offers a variety of voices with different accents including Irish and Scottish English. (You can even get an English Lancashire accent or a sexy french accent in English for a lower \$16.99 price.) You can listen to the various samples. Someone who knows more about text-to-speech than I do may be able to tell us what's available in free voices.

Accessing Voice Controls

In Windows XP the text-to-speech controls can be accessed through Control Panel => Speech (see Figure 1).

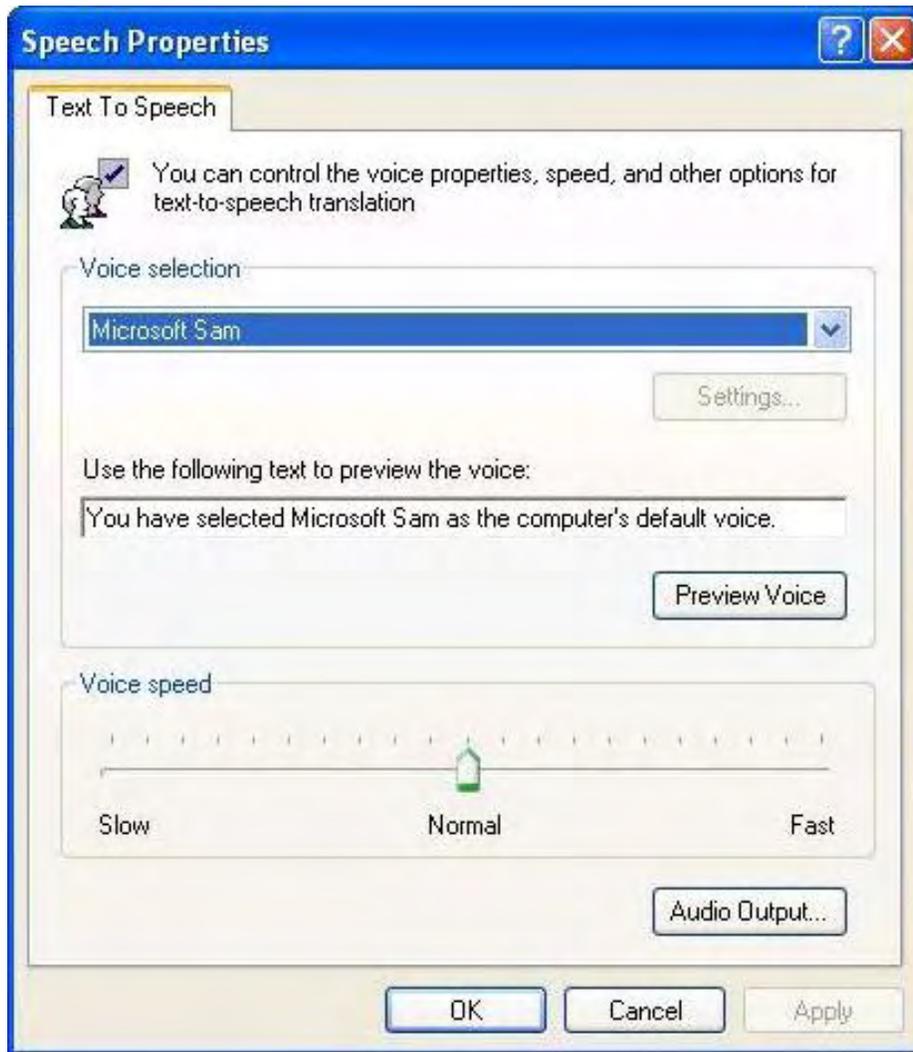


Figure 1. Speech Properties window in Windows XP with the Microsoft Sam voice.

In Windows Vista find the controls in Control Panel (Classic View) => Text to Speech. Or, enter "text" or "speech" into the Start Search field.

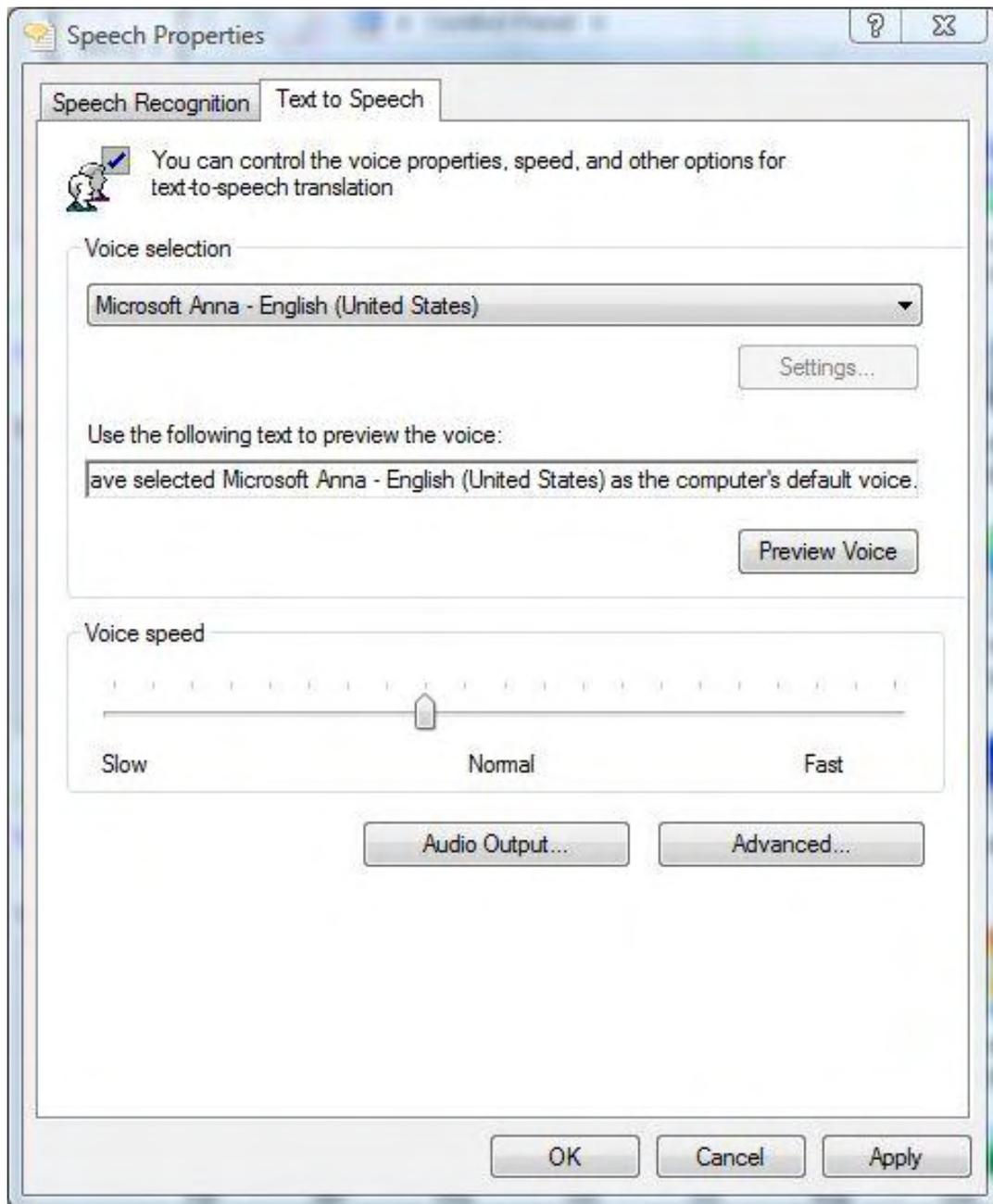


Figure 2. Speech Properties window in Windows Vista and Windows 7 with the Microsoft Anna voice.

In Windows 7 use Control Panel => Ease of Access (Category View) => Speech Recognition => Text to Speech or Control Panel => All Control Panel Items (Icon view) => Speech Recognition => Text to Speech. For both Windows Vista and Windows 7 open the Text to Speech tab in the Speech Properties window (see Figure 2). To use the Start "Search programs and files" field in Windows 7 use the word "speech" since the word "text" does not return a useful link.

In Windows 8, the method for opening the Speech Properties window is similar to Windows 7 except the Settings search (Win+W) is done in the Modern Start screen (see Figure 3).

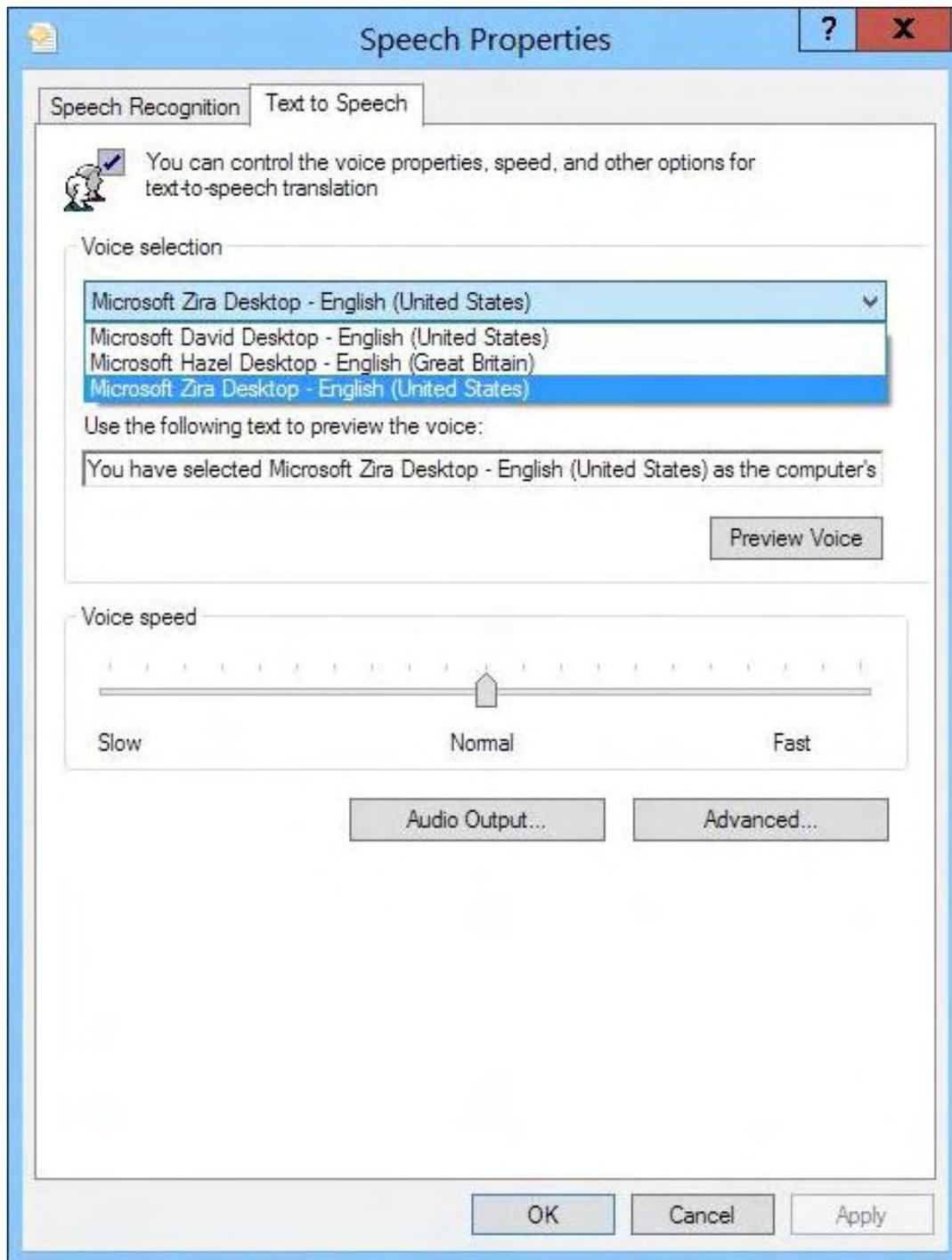


Figure 3. Speech Properties window in Windows 8 with the Microsoft David, Hazel, and Zira voices.

Most people won't make use of the Windows voices, but for those who need it, it's an important feature. If so, it could be worthwhile to invest in some better voices.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. 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:

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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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

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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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)

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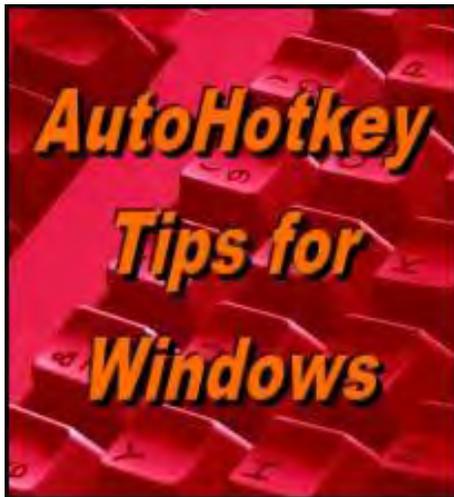
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and *That Does Not Compute!* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0052MMUX6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20)

ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

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Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!

Free Resources for New AutoHotkey Users

“Where to Get Answers to Your AutoHotkey Questions” by Jack Dunning

Whether new to script writing or a long-time programmer, there are free resources at the AutoHotkey Web site.

If you're unfamiliar with AutoHotkey or just want to know what the fuss is all about, then this beginner's video guide (www.autohotkey.com/board/topic/92512-autohotkey-a-beginners-video-guide/) has just been posted on the AutoHotkey Forum. It is one of the best introductions I've seen for getting a feel for what AutoHotkey can do for you—or why you should care—in only ten minutes. (I learned a couple of things from watching it.) If you decide to move forward, then use the documentation discussed in this column and take a look at our Starter's AutoHotkey Page (www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html).

* * *

When learning or using any programming language it is important to know where to get help. For AutoHotkey the primary source is the AutoHotkey Web site (www.autohotkey.com/) (see Figure 1) and the AutoHotkey_L Web site (l.autohotkey.net). (AutoHotkey_L is the current fork of AutoHotkey which is downloaded from the main AutoHotkey site. You should use the AutoHotkey_L installation since it has many more capabilities and is currently supported and updated.)

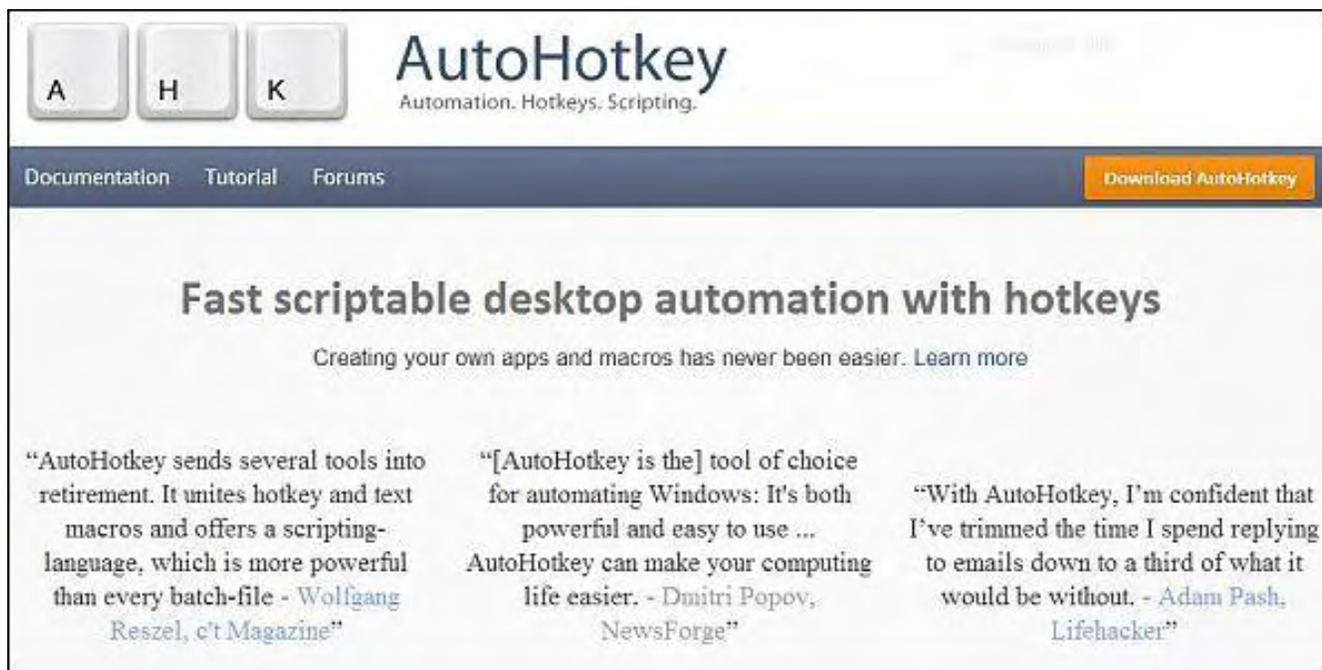


Figure 1. The main AutoHotkey Web site is the starting point for your AutoHotkey journey.

The AutoHotkey site is broken into three main categories: Documentation, Tutorial, and Forums (although

the Tutorial is actually a subset of the Documentation section).

AutoHotkey Documentation

If you're new to AutoHotkey then I highly recommend that you review the Quick-start Tutorial (www.autohotkey.com/docs/Tutorial.htm) first. It's important that you develop a feel for what AutoHotkey can do. Cut-and-paste some of the short scripts into AHK files to test how they work. There is nothing like seeing what it does for yourself. (If you prefer, there is also a Tutorial in the AutoHotkey_L Documentation (l.autohotkey.net/docs/) which is a little more up-to-date for the current version.)

While it is useful to follow all of the links in the Documentation section of the site, pay particular attention to the Command Reference (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands.htm). This is a list of the commands (and their syntax) which will make your scripts work. Over the long haul when script writing, you will spend more time reviewing these commands than any other support page. (There is also a Command Reference (l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/index.htm) for AutoHotkey_L which includes the commands added for this version. If you are just starting, you may wish to stick with the more basic list since many of the AutoHotkey_L command are more advanced.)

AutoHotkey Forums

The AutoHotkey community is quite active and they help each other out through the AutoHotkey Forums (www.autohotkey.com/board/) (see Figure 2). If you plan to continue working with AutoHotkey, then it is worthwhile to join this forum. (I recently joined the forum to help AutoHotkey beginners.) There are plenty of people who regularly visit the board with the goal of helping others. I rarely see a question asked which isn't answered within a short period of time. Most of the people are very respectful and encourage newcomers.

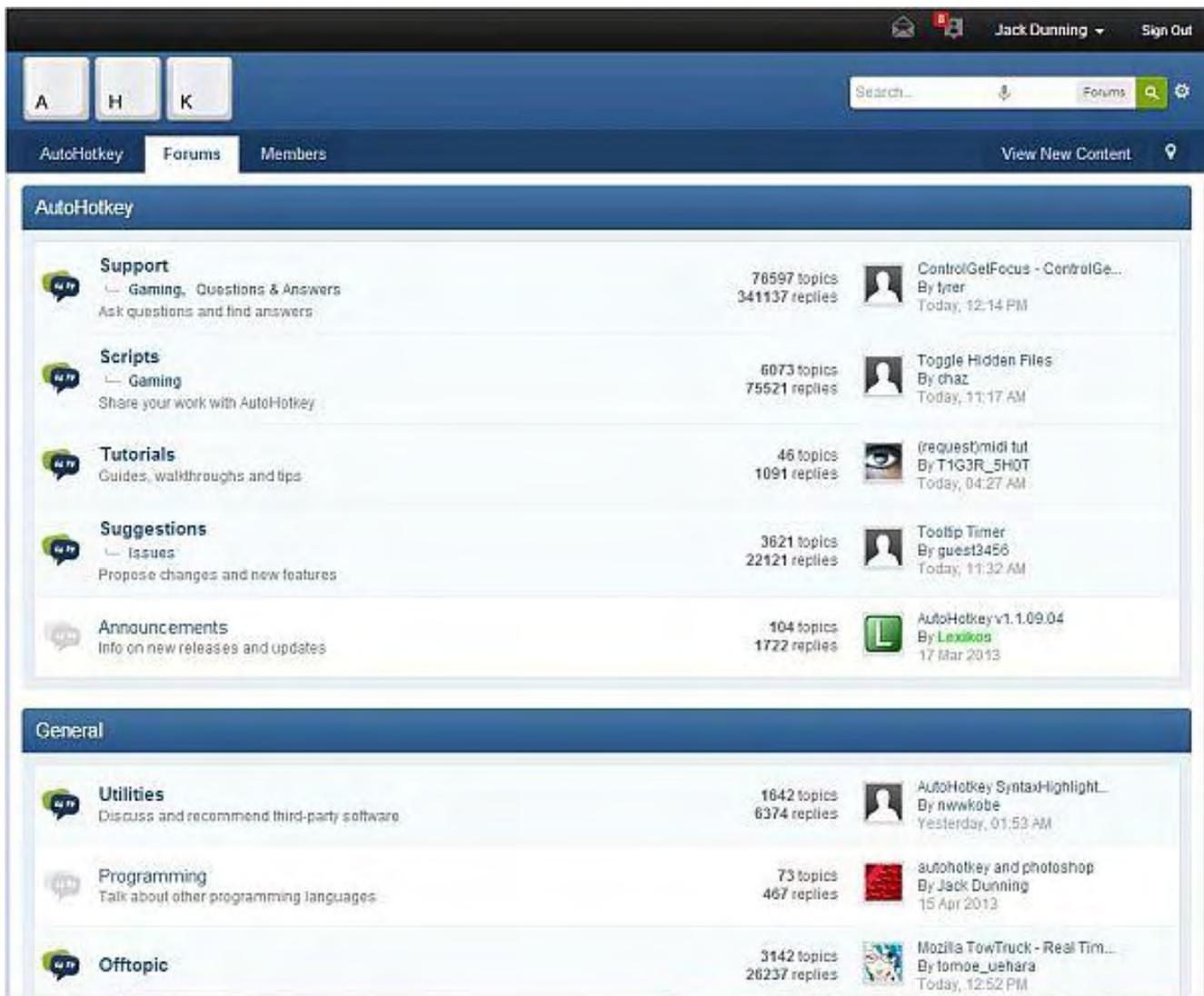


Figure 2. The AutoHotkey Forum is a place to learn from other AutoHotkey users.

However, there are a few cautions about using the AutoHotkey Forums.

First there are specific forums for different topics. If you are asking questions, then make sure you post in the Support forum. This is where it is expected that people will ask questions rather than offering scripts or making suggestions to the AutoHotkey developers.

Make sure that you have reviewed and worked with the documentation before you ask a question. While the advanced users love to share their knowledge, they are not amenable to teaching the step-by-step basics in the forum. If your question is too basic, mostly likely they will just refer you to the online tutorial. But, if you are working on a real script and can't get it to work or you're looking for some ideas on how to do a particular task, then posting the problem may get you a quick answer.

Be as clear as possible about what you're trying to do in your questions. The clearer the question, the clearer the answers.

Often it's easier to ask the question than to search the forums for an answer. The forums are long and a search will bring up many posts that are totally irrelevant to your problem. If you're stumped and can't find your answer in the documentation, go ahead and ask. That's why the forum is there.

While there is nothing wrong with saying that you're new to AutoHotkey (that helps people know your level), there is no need to apologize. Members answer questions because they want to help. If they feel

you're a bother, they just won't answer the question. You'll find that different people will respond to different types of queries. For example, some people will post long scripts in hopes that someone will find their error. While I won't usually take the time to debug someone's code, there are others who will dig right in. On the other hand if the code is short and basic, I'll jump right in while others are not challenged by helping beginners. You won't have to look for the right people, post your problem and they will find you.

At least for now, I regularly review the AutoHotkey Forum looking for questions I can answer. I use the cleverly deceptive user name Jack Dunning. If you have an interest in continuing with AutoHotkey or sharing your knowledge, I hope to see you there.

Jack is the publisher of *ComputerEdge* Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called *The Byte Buyer*. His Web site is www.computoredge.com. 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 *ComputerEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009JY65QQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009JY65QQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

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 ComputerEdge 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.

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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Disaster of Ron Johnson” by Wally Wang

The Disaster of Ron Johnson; Skipping the Middlemen; More Bad News for the PC; T-Mobile's iPhone; Learning Other Languages; Open Source HyperCard Clone Now Available; Remove Existing Cookies.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Ron Johnson used to work for Target and then Apple, running Apple's retail stores. Based on his track record JC Penny made Ron Johnson their CEO, and the first thing he did was eliminate bargain coupons that made JC Penny so appealing to their customers in the first place.

Not surprisingly, JC Penny's sales plummeted and JC Penny finally fired Ron Johnson. Given Ron Johnson's track record with Apple and Target, what could possibly have gone wrong?

The real key is that the right people in the wrong job will always deliver the worst possible results. Just because someone is good at marketing Apple products or retail products at Target doesn't necessarily mean they know how to market products sold at JC Penny. This is like taking a chef who specializes in French cuisine and making him cook in a Chinese restaurant. Just because he knows how to cook doesn't necessarily mean he'll know how to cook everything well.

For some odd reason, the corporate world has no trouble hiring executives for millions of dollars and letting them make completely irrational decisions while laying off workers and cutting back benefits as cost-saving measures. The result is predictably lower sales and poor employee morale, which translates into lower productivity. This triggers another round of layoffs and cost-cutting measures that further exacerbates the problem.

Rather than pay executives for their past successes, why not pay them only when they deliver results? Nobody hires a plumber based on his past success installing sinks and toilets for a baseball stadium three months ago. Everyone only pays a plumber after he's completed the job.

Then again, it's hard to measure what results an executive actually contributes in any company's success. Read the financial reports of any company and when their stock goes up, they congratulate themselves for their business strategy and vision, but when their stock goes down, they blame outside circumstances and the economy for their failure. It seems just as accurate to claim that luck made the company prosperous in the past quarter and blame their own incompetence and lack of a strategy for their failures, but that never happens.

Like all positions, there are a handful of hard-working people who love their job and produce superior results, a much larger group of competent people, and a handful of totally incompetent people who don't deserve to be anywhere near their current occupation. Given the vast differences in pay between executives and the workers, it seems like a company could boost productivity by spreading their millions

among employees in the form of higher salaries and better benefits rather than giving it to a single executive in hopes that a multi-million dollar bonus will translate into profitable corporate decisions. Then again, the people responsible for making these decisions are the corporate executives who decide that giving themselves huge bonuses is the wisest use for company funds that will improve company productivity the fastest.

Ultimately, executive success in one company won't always translate into success in another company. Since corporations have made horribly expensive mistakes in the past by hiring incompetent executives (think of the last few CEOs at Hewlett-Packard), you would think that the corporate world would look at all the numerous mistakes that companies have made in the past and not be so willing to give millions to CEOs until they prove themselves first. Then again, that would require thinking and learning from the past while also forcing executives to actually work for their millions, and that's something few executives want to do when they don't have to.

Skipping the Middlemen

In the old days, reaching the public was never easy. Corporations controlled the TV networks, the radio networks, the newspapers, the distribution of vinyl records, and the magazines. Take away the middlemen with the Internet and suddenly you can see why newspapers and magazines are going out of business, TV and radio networks are losing their audience, and record companies are struggling. The Internet lets anyone reach their audience without going through the gatekeeper mentality of the middlemen who take a cut of the profits just for existing.

Comedian Joan Rivers recently said that if she were a struggling standup comedian today, she would skip the trouble of appearing in comedy clubs around the country and just reach an audience straight through the Internet (www.usatoday.com/story/tech/columnist/talkingyourtech/2013/04/13/joan-rivers-online-comedy/2079325/). "Why go into the trappings of 'regular broadcasting'," Rivers says, when "on the Internet, people will find you. (Your audience) will tweet, and they will let each other know" about you.

Instead of promoting yourself through magazines and newspapers, anyone can set up a Web site and a blog along with a Twitter account and a Facebook page. Instead of struggling to get a radio show, anyone can create podcasts. Instead of trying to get on TV, just upload a video to YouTube or any of the other video sharing sites. If you're a band, it's easy to make your own albums and sell them at your concerts or through iTunes using audio tools like GarageBand.

With the costs of reaching an audience coming down, it makes more sense to either skip the middlemen altogether or use the Internet to supplement any promoting the middlemen may do for you. What's not smart is to do nothing and continue to complain that opportunities aren't available when they really are all around you.

More Bad News for the PC

Writing for *Forbes*, Roger Kay makes an interesting comment (www.forbes.com/sites/rogerkay/2013/04/12/the-pc-industry-is-digging-its-own-grave/?partner=yahootix) that likely slipped by most PC supporters. Roger Kay runs a company called Endpoint and says that Microsoft and Intel recently stopped doing business with his company in the past year.

"And the reason? Because they don't like independent analysts, who have to tell it like it is even when the picture isn't pretty. They want 'message force multipliers,' tame hacks who will help their public relations efforts. Tell them what they don't want to hear, and you're shown the door.

"Microsoft didn't like a study we ran that showed that its InTune offering was badly priced. The company wanted marketing support, not real information."

Essentially, Roger Kay is admitting that Microsoft (and Intel) has paid people in the past to promote their products. As soon as he started reporting facts that Microsoft didn't want to hear, they stopped paying him.

The next time you read something positive about any Microsoft product, ask yourself if that person has been paid by Microsoft to do so as a "message force multiplier (gawker.com/271485/)." As the evidence mounts that Microsoft has paid journalists (techrights.org/2011/09/29/bad-journalism-and-swpats/) to write positive stories about its products, the real question is why so many people insist that Apple must pay writers to say positive things about their products while completely ignoring actual evidence that Microsoft has been doing this for years (www.bizjournals.com/seattle/blog/techflash/2010/06/microsofts_e3_xbox_bribery_makes_journalism_ethicists_squirm.html).

The excuses keep piling up for the reasons why sales of Windows PCs keep dropping. Initially the reason was the economy, despite the fact that Apple kept increasing sales of Macintosh computers in the same economy. Then the reason was the hard drive shortage in Thailand, despite the fact that Macintosh computers also used hard drives as well. Finally, the excuse was that people were waiting for Windows 8. After being released in the fall of 2012, Windows 8 hasn't helped PC sales.

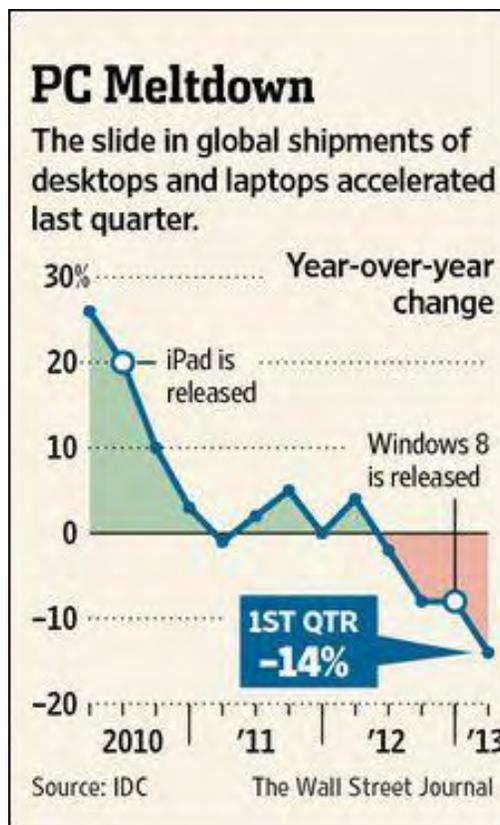


Figure 1. Windows PC sales keep plummeting.

Now the latest excuse for declining PC sales is that the PC market must be saturated. This is like claiming that people aren't buying Yugo cars because the automobile market must be saturated, completely ignoring the fact that Yugo cars were poorly made and undesirable in the first place.

One reason why PC sales aren't increasing is that Windows 8 isn't that appealing. Interviewing several people, the *Wall Street Journal* found that many simply don't see how Windows 8 helps them in any way (online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324695104578414973888155516.html).

"I'm not entirely thrilled with Windows 8," Carrie Soukup, a 32-year old tech support contractor living in Austin, Texas, said. "There's a lot of show I don't see the functionality in."

"I don't think there's anything wrong with [Windows 8]," said Mr. Rothenberger, the chief operating officer of Ricoh Americas Corporation. "But I think there's minimal value in the incremental changes that are there."

In the old days, people eagerly bought more advanced PCs to get more advanced features. Nowadays, the marketing message is "Buy a Windows 8 PC so you can spend more money, learn a whole new way of working, and wind up with the same productivity capabilities you have right now with your current PC."

As NBC News says, "If you have a working 3- or 4-year-old PC, you have few reasons to upgrade and one really big reason to stand pat (www.nbcnews.com/technology/gadgetbox/7-ways-bring-back-pc-1C9319686): the new Windows 8 operating system that makes it harder to get things done."

Even Dell Computers blames Windows 8 (www.theverge.com/2013/4/1/4170028/dell-says-pc-business-in-danger-from-poor-windows-8-sales) for its own lackluster sales. In Dell's most recent SEC filing, the company stated declining revenue due to "...the increasing usage of alternative PC operating systems to Microsoft Windows..." and "...the uncertain adoption of the Windows 8 operating system, unexpected slowdowns in enterprise Windows 7 upgrades and the increasing substitution of smartphones and tablets for PCs..." For people who don't like to read this information, feel free to write angry letters to Dell Computers, accusing them of "Windows bashing."

One PC manufacturer that hasn't lost sales is Lenovo. Lenovo's strategy to survive involves selling Windows 7 PCs along with selling PCs with no operating system whatsoever so consumers can install whatever operating system (www.infoworld.com/t/microsoft-windows/how-lenovo-kept-pc-sales-strong-while-everyone-else-tanked-216244) they wish, which could include older versions of Windows or Linux. If Lenovo's strategy keeps selling PCs, why don't other PC manufacturers just imitate Lenovo?

Even *Time Magazine* has finally recognized that the future no longer lies with traditional PCs. "The key to going forward is to focus on where the value lies. Right now value has shifted (techland.time.com/2013/04/15/the-ipad-sized-nail-in-the-pcs-coffin/) from clamshell and desktop form factors to truly mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. This is where consumer value lies and this is where profit opportunities exist."

Given the lack of desirable new features that appeal to ordinary users with the lower cost and greater portability of smartphones and tablets, it's easy to see why most people don't see a need to buy a new Windows 8 PC. As long as newer versions of Windows don't offer any compelling, must-have feature and people have more choices for accessing the Internet through smartphones and tablets, the PC market will never return to the massive growth of the past. Even journalists paid by Microsoft will have a hard time finding a positive way to present this information.

T-Mobile's iPhone

As the last of the four major carriers in the United States to get the iPhone, T-Mobile has been gradually losing subscribers despite selling BlackBerry, Android, and Windows Phone 7 phones. Now that T-Mobile finally has the iPhone, they reported lines of customers (www.slashgear.com/t-mobiles-first-day-iphone-sales-exceeds-all-expectations-13277694/) wishing to get an iPhone.

Oddly enough, T-Mobile is selling the iPhone 5, which should soon be superseded by the next version of the iPhone this summer, which will either be called the iPhone 5S or the iPhone 6. Whatever its name, the iPhone has proven to attract and retain customers, which is why Verizon, Sprint, and finally T-Mobile worked so hard to get the iPhone on their networks. Referring to the lines of customers at T-Mobile stores around the country, T-Mobile Chief Marketing Officer Mike Siever said, "Clearly they want the iPhone 5, and they are voting with their feet that they want it from T-Mobile."

With the new iPhone due in a few months, it's probably better to wait for the new iPhone model rather than

get the iPhone 5 now. If you still want an iPhone 5, its cost will drop as soon as the newer iPhone model appears, so you can save money by getting the iPhone 5 instead of the newer model. The only drawback is that you have to wait and be patient until this summer.

Learning Other Languages

One of the biggest challenges facing schools is the flood of non-English speaking students (news.yahoo.com/instruction-students-learning-english-bleak-120129780.html). While many schools provide bilingual education, that only helps students who speak that second language, usually Spanish. Since schools can't possibly teach subjects in every language a student might already know (French, Arabic, German, Japanese, etc.), the best approach might be to provide English training classes along with translation tools.

With an iOS app like Word Lens (www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2OfQdYrHRs), students can point to printed phrases and see the translation on their iPhone or iPad screen. By providing immediate translation in real-time, students can understand topics as they gradually gain familiarity with the English language.

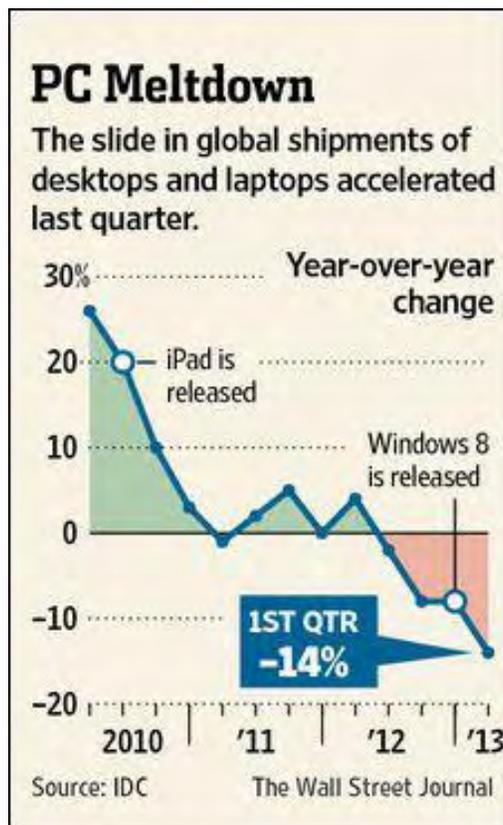


Figure 2. Word Lens can translate signs in real-time.

While Word Lens only works with the languages that use common characters such as English, Spanish, French, and Italian and only works with printed words, two other apps called Voice Translator and Translate Voice lets you speak in one language and the app prints and speaks the translated version. By carrying an iPhone or iPad around using Voice Translator (skylandapps.wix.com/skyland#!voice-translator/cfyf), you can talk to someone who doesn't speak your language as long as you have an Internet connection.



Figure 3. The Translate Voice app lets you choose the language to translate and the language to output.

Besides speaking your translated words out loud, Voice Translator can also translate your spoken words into text so you can send them out as a text message or an e-mail. Although the translation won't be 100

percent accurate, the meaning of your message should still be clear enough for others to understand, especially if they know that you're not a native speaker and are relying on a computer translation program.



Figure 4. The Translate Voice app can speak and print out your translated words.

With translation tools like Word Lens, Translate Voice, and Voice Translator, schools can greatly aid non-English speaking students as they gradually master the English language. For business use, such apps can also prove handy when dealing with other countries. If you're learning a foreign language, such apps can make learning far more exciting than the old fashion way of staring at a boring textbook for hours at a time. Such translation apps won't be perfect, but they're useful for communicating basic thoughts to make learning a foreign language more interesting.

Not everyone will speak the same language so it's in everyone's best interests to learn other languages and use tools to make communication easier. The more we can understand each other, the more likely we'll all be able to cooperate.

Open Source HyperCard Clone Now Available

For anyone who remembers Apple's original HyperCard, you can now run your HyperCard stacks using the free, open source LiveCode (www.runrev.com) program instead. Unlike the original HyperCard, LiveCode runs on Windows, Linux, and OS X and can also create executable files for all three operating systems in addition to iOS and Android.



Figure 5. LiveCode is now free and open source.

Unlike HyperCard, which was meant more as a programmable database, LiveCode is more focused as a compiler for creating your own programs. If you come from a traditional programming background like C++

or Java, you may find LiveCode's English-like language cumbersome. However, if you find traditional programming languages too cryptic to understand, you'll find LiveCode a refreshing change of pace.

Since LiveCode is free, download a copy and see what you can create. If you create something particularly useful, buy a commercial license so you can sell your programs to others. If you don't want to sell your programs, just use LiveCode for free and enjoy creating programs without wasting time learning cryptic programming language syntax to do it.

* * *

When you browse different Web sites, your browser may collect cookies, which are text files used to track your activities on a particular site. Cookies are the reason why a site like Amazon.com can welcome you by name the next time you visit.

Of course, cookies can reveal which sites you've visited so if you don't like the idea of someone tracking your browsing activity, click the Safari menu and chose Preferences. Click the Privacy icon and now you can choose to block cookies from certain types of Web sites or remove any existing cookies from your computer.



Figure 6. You can block or remove cookies from you.

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 particples 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=1590791894)
How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70)
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.

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Beyond Personal Computing: The Audiophile

"Audiophilia: Brilliance or Buffered Bluff?" by Marilyn K. Martin

Jokes, gifts, blogs and more for audiophiles.

The planet is full of music-lovers, and high-end audio systems have their devotees. But "Audiophiles" seem to have an addiction to all-things-audio, doing strange things to their hardware, CDs and even furniture to maximize their "audio experience." They also speak in mystical terms about things like the perfect bronzy Treble, or a room's Bass traps.

These folks must have the latest high-end, car-priced audio electronics, with garages and basements full of boxed CDs or vinyl LPs. Are they Music Lovers Gone Wild? Or more of Elite Hardware Connoisseurs? Maybe they're really just Audio Snobs over-describing instrument notes they can't hear any better than the rest of us? Or do they truly possess an Audio Super-Sense? You decide...

Evolution According to an Audiophile

"All life forms up through humans have retained the primordial ability to recognize threats of danger through analyzing energy patterns through sound. Now, surrounded by all these new electronic and electrical devices, we exist in a suppressed physiological state, and are thus unable to hear—let alone enjoy—the subtleties of sound. Instead, we exist in a state of constant tension, since many of these unnatural sounds are interpreted as 'threats' by the most primal parts of our brains."

Some audiophiles even believe that "all objects in our environment have energy patterns that adversely affect our subjective perception, and thus our enjoyment of sound through attenuation." Some even believe that the act of just photographing someone "imposes a temporal asymmetry on the subject's internal energy patterns." (And here I thought it was just called a hangover...)

Audiophile Bragging 101

Things overheard at a party or in a chatroom to let one and all know a genuine "Audiophile Genius" is present.

- "When setting up stereo speakers in your home, you'll always get reflections that distort the sound."
- "If you pay enough for high-end speakers, you can't hear the distortions so much—but they're still there."
- "You got some nice sound subtleties going on in here, but some bass traps (www.readyacoustics.com/what-is-bass-trap.html?chapter=0) would still help."

How to Speak Like an Audiophile about Music



Bass licks need to be more defined, with pitch definition enhanced...Studio details DO count, like handclaps with a more fleshy feel...You want to hear bass that isn't bloated or fattened, just more real sounding...Harps (really harmonicas) ideally need to be heard in a more spotlighted fashion...Voices and bells need to be perfectly separated, and more finely outlined as to their location...

[The cartoon is by the late Charles Rodrigues (www.amazon.com/s/)]

[_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-author=Charles%20Rodrigues&linkCode=ur2&search-alias=books&sort=relevancerank&tag=comput0b9-20](#)) who gave us so many humorous looks into our daily life.]

Audiophile Jargon

- Tube-guys = Hard-core audiophiles from yesteryear, when vintage amplifiers and analog audio equipment ruled.
- Cans = Headphones
- DIY = Do It Yourself
- Cheap Tweaks = Ideas for inexpensive and easy DIY "tweaks" (forum.audiogon.com/cgi-bin/fr.pl?ymisc&1002498109&openflup&192&4&&st0) for audio components.
- Freezer Tweak = Strange theory that putting all your CDs, cables and components in the 'fridge, then freezer for awhile, can enhance quality.
- Burn-In = Controversial term meaning running audio components and cables for several hours after purchasing them. (While most components just need 15 minutes of warm-up, new speakers may need 4 hours of burn-in.)
- Voted as the dumbest audiophile descriptive terms are: musicality, rightness, minty, tubelike, smurfalicious, tuneful, bassality, and leading-edge transience. (Sounds like a toddler TV show on Disney Channel.)

Perfecting an Audiophile Environment for a Super-Sound Experience

One audiophile had a coffee-stained wooden table that he felt distorted the sound of his music. Then he read that stressed plants secrete chemicals, such as glucosinolates. He found a furniture cleaner with the same stressed-plant chemicals, and applied it to the table with the coffee-stain. He swears that the music he listened to in the same room as that table went from "dreadful" to "exceptional."

Some audiophiles apply "special products" to their CDs to (hopefully) realize a superior sound quality. One example is a UK company called PWB Electronics (www.pwbelectronics.co.uk/). They sell both "Cream Electret" and "Rainbow Foil" for the equivalent of \$30 per cream jar, or three foil strips.

Their claim is that these products have "a profoundly beneficial effect on the perceived sound." The tiny foil strips are for CDs and furniture, and the cream is to be applied to all the fuses within the main plugs of all home electrical appliances. Primarily for "domestic audio," they were reviewed as "having to do with reflexive perception, or conditions under which a listener's comprehension of music can be altered, given the presence or absence of certain non-sonic stimuli." (Non-sonic stimuli? Does that mean the pet dolphins have to go?)

Or how about the unnamed salesman in a high-end audio store, who painted the top of all his CDs with green paint to "avoid laser dispersion thru the disc." He also shaved the outer edges of his CDs to "make certain they are perfect circles for balance." And he firmly believed that cables (including power cords) made an audible difference. He'd hit Play on a CD track, then immediately hit Back to start the track over "to reset the clocks and reduce jitter." And forget the miniscule increase in fidelity between high-end audio upgrades, since "it's really about the whole experience that will bring tears to your eyes - and you can't put a price on that."

You Might Be an Audiophile if...

- Your speakers can be mistaken for the monolith in "2001."
- You swear you can hear differences between battery brands in your mobile CD player.
- You jump at every sign that says Audio or Headphones.
- You find treasure in abandoned equalizers, huge old speakers, tubes, guitar strings or stage amps.
- You can name seven brands of turntables off the top of your head.
- Your spouse wants to get high definition cable—and you think he/she is talking about Cardas.
- You head straight to the basement at estates sales looking for old tube gear.
- You snicker when you see someone wearing Bose headphones.
- You care more about a movie theater's acoustics than what's showing on-screen.
- You introduce your wife as "My Wife Acceptance Factor."
- Your idea of a "good, relaxing read" is the Audio Advisor Catalog.
- You've ever taken the back off your TV just to check out the "build quality."
- You've ever saved a power cord from a broken appliance just to check out how it sounds in your audio system.

Audiophiles and Graphic Design

What do audiophiles consider eye candy? Check out this branding site (www.behance.net/gallery/Audiofly-Headphones/3380283) for AudioFly.

Jokes about Audiophiles

Q: How many audiophiles does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Seven. One to actually put the bulb in the socket, five to determine whether the cable running to the lamp will affect the quality of the light output, and one to argue that cables are meaningless without a light meter that will measure in millionths of candle power.

An audiophile was on his way to a Linn dealer to have his LP12 adjusted/tweaked for the hundredth time. He stops by the bank, leaving his precious turntable in full view in the back seat. Upon returning to his car, he sees that one of the back windows has been smashed. Panicked, he checks the back seat—and sees two LP12s now instead of his one.

Q: How can you tell if an audiophile is sitting in his "sweet spot" with his "listening chair" perfectly level?

A: He's drooling out of both sides of his mouth.

Gifts for Audiophiles

For a "specialty product" for an audiophile from a company known for "legendary performance," McIntosh sells a MCLK12 Mantle Clock (www.mcintoshlabs.com/us/Products/pages/ProductDetails.aspx?CatId=Accessories&ProductId=MCLK12). It has the same faceplate and meters as its amplifiers, "including hands that fly back in retrograde fashion when they reach the end of their scale." Just a cool \$2,000.

The perfect gag gift to determine a true audiophile is to give them a vinyl LP—when you know they don't have a turntable. The fake audiophile will look hurt and frustrated, complaining that they don't have a turntable. The true audiophile will get a strange glow in their eyes, and proudly inform you that they will gladly take out a second mortgage to buy a new audio set to play that beauty.

Home Hardware for Audiophiles



"Horns" Plywood Speakers. Published with permission of Nelson Pass (www.passdiy.com)

Beyond stereos, tuners and headphones, most audiophiles turn their homes into DIY (Do It Yourself) havens for the ultra-sound experience. Like these acoustic panels (imgur.com/EPTt3vY&q18iL8x#0), desk set-up and audio components (imgur.com/a/DO5TN).

Blogs For Audiophiles

Reddit (www.reddit.com/r/audiophile/) has a great little site for audiophiles to ask questions like: Venues with great sound? (or) Do I lose any sound quality playing audio through bluetooth? Good passive monitors? As well as share photos, videos and seek recommendations.

Audiophiles Opine on What's Most Important: Music, Hardware or Both?

"Audiophiles don't listen to music. They listen to their stereo systems."

"Shaded Dogs (www.shadeddog.com/) in mint condition? Terrific! How much?"

"Record companies spend millions of dollars getting that recording's sound just right—then we buy it and turn the bass up."

"Live performances always win out! All audiophile equipment and recordings do is just try to recreate that live experience."

"I listen to all kinds of music through studio monitors directly from a very good CD player, in a room that has been acoustically treated with bass traps."

"Poor recording quality is brutally revealed on a decent audio system."

"I have a Physicist friend who loves debunking some high-priced component maker's claims because they simply make no sense under the laws of physics."

Do Extreme Audiophiles Have a Super-Sense?

Maybe. It is estimated that 3% of the world population has Super-Hearing (listverse.com/2008/06/28/9-extraordinary-human-abilities/), or Perfect Pitch. "It is not simply a better ability to hear, but the ability to mentally class sounds into remembered categories." It is unknown if it is genetic or learned, but it is strongly influenced by one's exposure to music at crucial developmental stages. Some audiophiles may also have other super-senses like Echolocation or Sound-to-color Synesthesia.

(Most of these jokes and anecdotes can be found on multiple Internet sites. But special thanks to TheSpeakerCompany.com (TheSpeakerCompany.com), soundstage.com (soundstage.com), sterophile.com (sterophile.com), head-fi.org (head-fi.org), audioaficionado.org (audioaficionado.org), bikeforums.net/archive (bikeforums.net/archive), urbandictionary.com (urbandictionary.com), 6moons.com (6moons.com), and ecoustics.com (ecoustics.com).

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 *ComputerEdge*. ComputerEdge E-Books has converted many of Marilyn's computer humor columns into four e-books. Now available in a four-book Kindle bundle from Amazon.com *The Best Computer and Internet Humor, Anecdotes, and Jokes Found on the Web* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20). Marilyn's collection of the funniest stories about our computing machines and how we use them at home, the office, and in cyber space. Save 25% off the individual book price!

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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Windows Blue," "Custom Computers," "SSD Drives," "Single Photo from DVD"

Windows Blue

[Regarding Jack Dunning's April 5 article, "Code Name Windows Blue":]

Excellent article. Lots of good info. I use XP on three home computers, but my wife and I have 7 on laptops. I'm trying to migrate to a version of Linux (Fedora) before the 2014 deadline for XP support. I took a Fedora class from CNM. With the OpenOffice Suite, I wouldn't miss anything from Windows.

-Mark Burton, Albuquerque, NM

Although this article said little about Windows Blue details, I especially enjoyed the refreshing common sense in these excerpts:

"But tablets are not killing PCs anymore than forks are making spoons obsolete."

"They certainly don't want to learn OS X. They will get Windows 8 before settling for a Mac."

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

At the present time, Windows XP for me is just the OS upon which I run Linux-originated applications: FireFox, Thunderbird, LibreOffice, Gimp image editor, Scribus Desktop publishing, GnuCash accounting, etc. So why am I still using Windows at all? Mainly because when I tried to install Linux, my Radeon video card couldn't handle it. When I find a Linux-capable video card, before XP support goes, Windows will be gone.

Why? Because I want my computer to do what I want, not what Microsoft wants. Windows is too expensive, too restrictive, too bossy. I tried 7, but it wasn't for me, and I won't try 8. I'm through with MS.

-Bobdi, San Diego, CA

Custom Computers

[Regarding the April 5 Digital Dave column:]

This is in reply to Jan Pflimlin and the request to have a computer built!

I built custom computers for years when parts were readily available at computer stores and I lived in California! Now I live in the Midwest and have to order everything online. Still, I built my custom Gamer from high end parts and the most powerful CPU available at the time.

The key, I think, to having a computer built is cost. How much are you willing to spend? What is the application? I found an MSI Gaming Laptop computer available online that will do pretty much anything you want for about \$1700. Hope this helps

bytesponge

-Bill M., Columbia, MO

SSD Drives

[Regarding the March 29 Digital Dave column:]

Hi Dave. Many years back, when flash drives and USB came out, I saw the ability to increase the speed of my computer by putting the virtual memory on the flash drive. It worked great for about a month and a half. Then the flash drive died. It was just unusable. In doing some research at the time, I found that the memory on it was limited to 100,000 read writes. SSD drives have extra memory and programming to determine when memory it reaching its limit, and redirecting the storage. Eventually you will run out. You can prolong the life by redirecting anything like virtual memory to a real HD and only active programs that will be read only to the SSD.

-Mike Pilling, Apple Valley, CA

Single Photo from DVD

[Regarding the April 5 Digital Dave column:]

You can make a jpg file for any image from a movie using VLC in options just take a snapshot, kmplayer has this function too.

-Mauro Valles, Tijuana, México

Good going Dave! Love your column! I have been a fan for many years!

I agree that capturing the screen as you described using Paint is easy and controllable. Select and crop are available to capture only what you want. Paint has been around a long time and does what most people will want!

bytesponge

-Bill M., Columbia, MO.

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

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