

ComputerEdge™ Online — 05/24/13

This issue: More Little Known High Tech Stories



Boston Bombing Tech: Biometric Failure and Amateur Sleuths; More on Disaster Tech; New and Interesting Computer Hardware; Wearable Gadgets; Devastating Drop in PC Sales: Blame Microsoft's Windows 8?; More Green Tech: Is Renewable Energy Doable?; Universities and Business: Start-up Labs to Research Alliances; Retail's Same-Day Delivery Wars; Motivation For Innovation; Robot Updates; Massive State-Sponsored Computer Hacking Continues; Updates on Solar Power.

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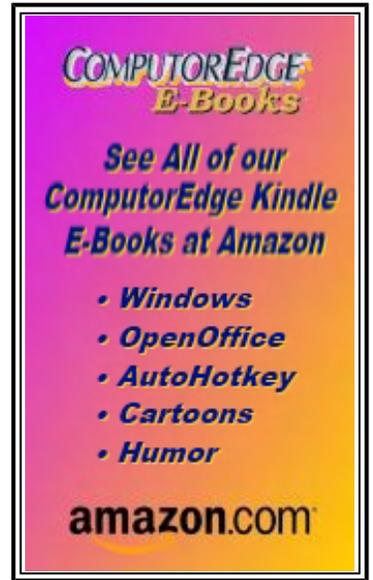
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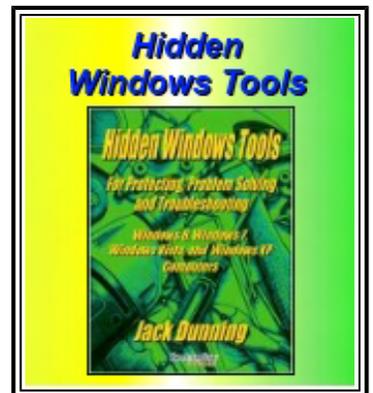
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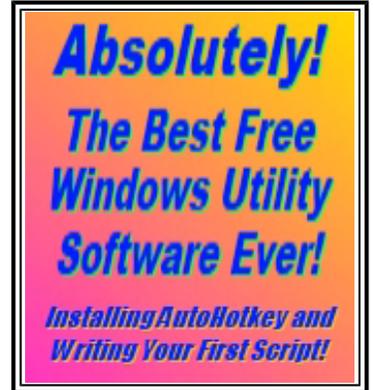
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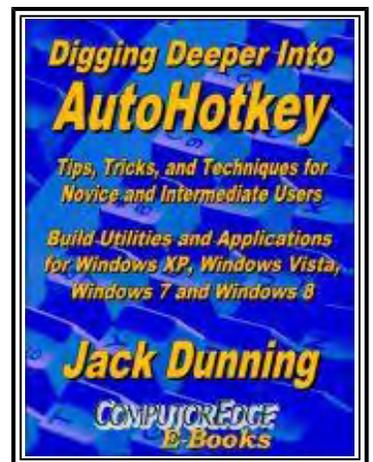
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Digital Dave

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

Google Chrome Still Running When Closed; Windows System Idle Process Slowing Down Computer; Wireless Keyboard with Tablet.

Dear Digital Dave,

I just used CCleaner and got a message that Chrome had to be closed so CCleaner could check it. However, Chrome was not open. But CCleaner continued to see it open. I went to the Task Manger to see that there were seven Chrome processes working. Yet, Chrome was indeed closed. What is going on? Why are Chrome processes running when the application is not active and why so many?

Thanks again for all your helpful inputs over the years.

*Ron Delprincipe
Oceanside CA*

Dear Ron,

If you have certain Chrome extensions or apps which use Chrome, they will set Chrome to run in the background—even when you have closed all Chrome windows. (Google Cloud Print is one of them.) Plus, since Chrome starts a new process for every window (tab or app), you could easily find multiple processes running.

If you want to prevent Chrome from running in the background enter Settings => Show advanced settings (see Figure 1). Next, uncheck the "Continue running background apps when Google Chrome is closed" box under Background apps.

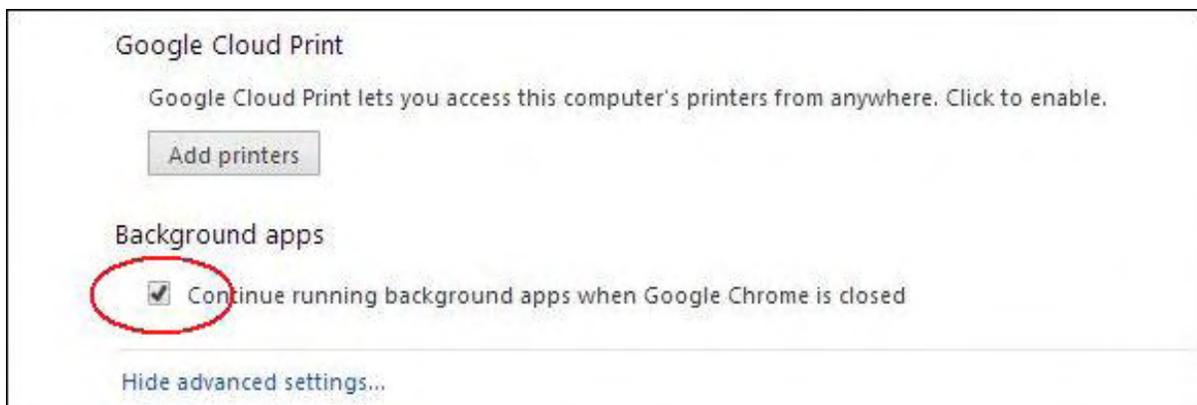


Figure 1. Advanced Settings in Google Chrome. Uncheck Background apps to prevent Chrome running in background.

However, if you do use some extensions which require Chrome, they most likely will be disabled when Chrome is not loaded.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I am using good old reliable Windows XP and I have a problem I have not seen before in the many years I have used this operating system. The computer slows down to the point where it using it is nearly impossible.

By bringing up Windows Task Manager I find the culprit is System Idle Process which is using 99% of the CPU. Using Microsoft's Windows Process Explorer is of no help. It shows a graph of System Idle Process using nearly 100% of the CPU, but does not indicate why it is using so much CPU power.

System Idle Process cannot be stopped or disabled from Windows Task Manager.

I can find no virus or other malware on this computer.

What is the problem and can it be corrected?

Thank you,

*Bob
San Diego, CA*

Dear Bob,

While the System Idle Process is a symptom, it is not the problem. High System Idle Process actually means low CPU usage. It is commonly used by Windows to determine when to run certain background activities. However, the fact that your computer slows way down is an indication that something else is going.

Open Task Manager and under the Processes tab check "Show processes from all users." Now click the CPU column heading to sort by usage. (If it shows all 00's then click the heading again to reverse the order of the sort.) System Idle Process is the amount the CPU is not being used (100% less all the other usage). Look at everything else in the list with usage. If there is no obvious culprit, then you may have another problem.

Also check the memory usage under the Performance tab in Task Manager. If the available memory is extremely low, it could be contributing to the slowdown.

Does it sound like the hard drive is spinning all the time? Maybe thrashing. If it's not software, there's probably a bottleneck somewhere.

In many cases this type of problem can be caused by hardware interrupts coming from faulty hardware or loose connections. It may be time to check all your hardware connections (reset boards and connectors) and reinstall drivers. In some cases, the problem is cured with something as simple as a new battery. In other cases an IDE board for the hard drive was faulty. Since you've used this computer for many years and the problem just came up, there is a decent chance that something is starting to fail.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

A couple years ago I bought a Motorola wireless keyboard to use with my XOOM tablet, and it worked fine. I now have a Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 tablet, but it doesn't recognize the keyboard. Are wireless keyboards brand-specific or should any keyboard work with any tablet?

*Don Hicke
San Diego, CA*

Dear Don,

You should be able to pair most Bluetooth keyboards with any tablet computer. However, the process can be a little tricky depending upon the situation.

Generally, each device needs to be put into a pairing mode where each is seeking a new connection. If a keyboard has been previously paired with another device, it may not appear on the list of available devices on the new tablet. Often a button to pair or send a new pairing code needs to be pressed (on the back of the keyboard?) while the tablet is searching. Then the tablet may generate a code that needs to be keyed into the keyboard. This will override any previous settings.

If you can get both the tablet and the keyboard in the pairing mode at the same time, then the keyboard should appear in the tablet's list. While I don't have the specific hardware you're using, there may be other readers who have more information to pass along.

Digital Dave

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More Little Known High Tech Stories

“Bombing and Disaster Tech, Newest Routers, Wearable Gadgets, Delivery Wars and More”

by Marilyn K. Martin

Boston Bombing Tech: Biometric Failure and Amateur Sleuths; More on Disaster Tech; New and Interesting Computer Hardware; Wearable Gadgets; Devastating Drop in PC Sales: Blame Microsoft's Windows 8?; More Green Tech: Is Renewable Energy Doable?; Universities and Business: Start-up Labs to Research Alliances; Retail's Same-Day Delivery Wars; Motivation For Innovation; Robot Updates; Massive State-Sponsored Computer Hacking Continues; Updates on Solar Power.

Boston Bombing Tech: Biometric Failure and Amateur Sleuths

Despite all the positive publicity for face-recognition (biometric) software, Ars Technica reported that Boston's police chief said (arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2013/04/boston-police-chief-facial-recognition-tech-didnt-help-find-bombing-suspects/) that facial recognition tech didn't help them nail the Marathon Bombers, despite images for both brothers in official databases. Facial recognition systems still have limited utility when it comes to grainy, low-resolution images captured at a distance from cell phone or surveillance cameras.

In the end, Boston investigators watched video segments hundreds of times to establish a timeline. And finally settled on two men in baseball caps who had brought heavy black bags into the crowds near the finish line—and left without them. But facial recognition software continues to improve, and the FBI will release a large-scale facial recognition apparatus next year for a consortium of police agencies in California and eight other Western States.

There is also continuing controversy over the amateur-sleuths on Reddit (tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2013/04/amateur-photo-sleuths-try-to-solve-boston-bombing-1.php) using uploaded photos of the crowd near the finish line to form their own theories. But, to be fair, there were also private contractors (www.globalresearch.ca/contractors-at-boston-marathon-stood-near-bomb-left-before-detonation/5332069) as added security near the Finish Line, and they too wore the same tan pants as the now-dead bomber, adding to the confusion.

More on Disaster Tech

According to FuturisticNews, Lorenzo Mahchi Larach has designed a portable shelter (futuristicnews.com/portallife-shelter-for-disaster-situations/) for quick deployment in disaster zones. The Portalife Shelter by Ryobi is a solar-powered, inflatable and portable option for temporary housing. It self-inflates with one touch of a button, and provides solar power to charge the battery for its own operations, as well as three additional batteries for other tools and aid accessories. Air-pocket insulation helps keep the inside comfortable, and the modular design lets four Portalifes be attached to form a cross.

An April 2013 article in Gizmodo introduced a half-dozen bomb-proof materials (gizmodo.com/5994745/the-bomb+proof-miracle-materials-that-will-make-the-future-safer?tag=materials) that will (hopefully) make the future safer for all of us. A new kind of

concrete has short, narrow steel fibers, giving it a tensile strength 10X higher than normal steel-reinforced concrete. The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate has created a new kind of bomb-proof glass which sandwiches woven glass fibers between a couple slim sheets of regular glass. And a blast-proof fabric called Zetix can withstand multiple bomb blasts. It absorbs and disperses the energy from explosions, thanks to an inner structure that gets fatter the more you stretch it.

Also in April 2013, Inhabitat previewed a spherical, self-sufficient globular home (inhabitat.com/spherical-ekinoid-house-is-an-off-grid-prefab-solution-for-global-housing/) on stilts that is both prefab and disaster-proof. Its energy will come from both wind and solar power, it collects rainwater and recycles grey water, and could include a hydroponics garden for growing food. The globe-home is 34 feet in diameter, with enough storage and living space for a family of four. Requiring no infrastructure utilities, this prefab home could be set up anywhere, for everything from disaster housing to housing for the masses. The Ekinoid Project is currently seeking funding and partnerships to build an improved prototype. They hope to eventually sell kits for around \$78,000, minus furnishings and the hydroponic system.

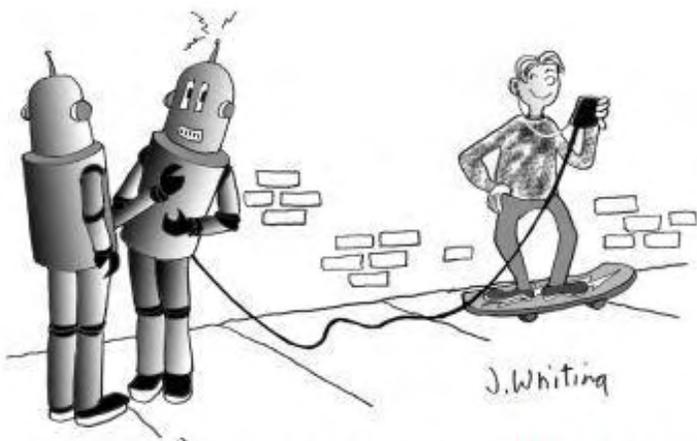
New and Interesting Computer Hardware

In March 2013, the *Boston Globe* announced that gear makers are now offering a new generation of routers (www.boston.com/business/technology/2013/03/20/the-new-big-bucks-but-big-boost-speed/zvHuas8NVHM7GHH4ewwfgM/story.html). Our wireless networks are now so overloaded with the volume of videos and music we download that consumers are craving more speed.

So the industry came up with new AC routers that use a frequency that carries less traffic. They also use a technology called "beamforming" that electronically aims the radio signal at each device on the wireless network for better reception. This reviewer found these AC routers a serious improvement, but not equal to their lavish promises of delivering "gigabit Wi-Fi." Most computer Wi-Fi chips are not yet AC-compatible, however, and these routers are pricey at around \$200 each.

Reuters reported in April 2013 that Hewlett-Packard made a deal with Leap Motion (www.leapmotion.com/) to let hand-swipe technology (www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/16/us-hp-motion-control-idUSBRE93F0SU20130416) hit the mass market sooner than later. The hand-swipe sensors are already on sale for \$80, but HP will first ship Leap Motion's sensors with its products before embedding the technology directly into HP computers at a future date.

Wearable Gadgets



**"I don't mind if people use my USB port.
I just don't like where it's installed!"**

PhysOrg ran a story in March 2013 that wearable electronics (phys.org/news/2013-03-wearable-electronics-iphone-iwatch.html) is the hot new trend out of Silicon Valley. Chip and sensor costs have dropped dramatically, helping researchers envision a new ecosystem of wearable devices that will multiply over time and interact with each other.

Beyond Apple's iWatch and Google's Glass, Uniqlo (www.uniqlo.com/us/) is offering tech-embedded clothing that uses the body's evaporating moisture to heat knee-high socks. Or how about a new snowboard helmet with \$600 Oakley Airwave goggles (www.oakley.com/products/7094/?promotion_id=96&cm_mmc=msn-semsearch--brand-products-men-goggles--airwave-snow) that work with GPS and can stream audio? Using the computing prowess available on the cloud, researchers are even working on a head-mounted computer developed by PARC (www.parc.com/) and Motorola Solutions (www.motorolasolutions.com/US-EN/

[Home?WT.tsrc=Georedirects](http://www.georedirects.com/)). It could enable an expert to help someone in a remote location work through a complicated problem or repair in real time.

Honkiat ran an undated 2013 article about the Ten Hottest Wearable Gadgets (www.hongkiat.com/blog/wearable-gadgets/). Some are on the market, while others are still in the concept stage. Like an Equalizer T-shirt with a few AA batteries, which reacts to the sounds around you. Rusty (www.rusty.com/) has come up with a hoody whose string-ends double as earphones, with a pocket jack to plug in your music device. There are also USB flash drives that double as necklaces or cuff links, and plenty of smartwatches. Nike (www.nike.com/us/en_us/?cp=USNS_KW_0611081620) is offering FuelBands with LED lights to pre-set goals and then track your daily exercise and calories burned. Adidas even has a Wearable Sports Electronics company, Textronics (www.textronicsinc.com/), working

on "wearable textile sensors", like a heart-sensing sports bra.

Devastating Drop in PC Sales: Blame Microsoft's Windows 8?

As reported in Huffingtonpost in early April 2013, PC sales are plunging (www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/10/windows-8-sales_n_3055157.html) as mobile devices reshape the way people use technology. According to multiple research trackers, 2013 first quarter shipments of PCs fell 11-14% worldwide from the same time last year. And PC sales have now fallen from year-ago levels for four consecutive quarters. Microsoft's introduction of Windows 8 last Fall has been judged a failure since it required a relearning process that most consumers and corporate buyers weren't ready to take, and may have slowed the PC sales market.

It was announced in mid April 2013 that Microsoft had released their quarterly financial results, which beat analysts' forecast (finance.yahoo.com/news/microsoft-3q-earnings-beat-street-203844872—finance.html) with a \$.72 per share net income, up 18% over a year ago. It was also announced that an updated version of Windows 8, code-named "Blue," will be released later in 2013, partially in response to customer-feedback. Despite flat revenue in the Windows division compared to a year ago, MS posted solid results in all its other divisions. It is also working with manufacturers to produce a line of small touchscreen devices powered by Windows.

More Green Tech: Is Renewable Energy Doable?

In early April 2013, the *New York Times* reported on a new office building in Seattle that will not only be green, but practically self-sustaining (www.nytimes.com/2013/04/03/realestate/commercial/the-bullitt-center-in-seattle-goes-well-beyond-green.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130403). Tenants had already started moving into the six-story Bullitt Center in advance of its grand opening on Earth Day, April 22nd. Once settled, they will be part of a "living laboratory" with strict energy and water budgets, composting toilets and no on-site parking.

The Center must complete a list of 20 demands during a one-year certification process to qualify as Self-Sustaining. All its water will be supplied by rainwater captured in a cistern, with a rooftop array of photovoltaic panels for power. And the Bullitt Foundation wants to make the entire process transparent. Literally. Mechanical and electrical rooms will have large glass windows for walls, with QR (Quick Response) tag points for tourists to use their smartphones to learn more about individual elements. As well as a kiosk to let visitors see real-time measurements about the building's air quality, energy consumption, and so on.

EcoChunk reported in May 2013 that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has come up with a new approach for offshore wind machines, to offer a floating wind energy storage technology (www.ecochunk.com/7481/2013/05/04/new-mit-floating-energy-storage-looks-promising-for-offshore-wind/) to counter the "intermittency problems" with insufficient wind. Spheres weighing thousands of tons apiece would be located on the seafloor under the floating wind turbines, and could store energy to run the blades when there isn't sufficient wind.

Universities and Business: Start-up Labs to Research Alliances

In January 2013, Xconomy ran a story about how Harvard's i-Lab has been sprouting start-ups (www.xconomy.com/boston/2013/01/28/harvard-i-lab-sprouts-startups-nucleik-pollvaultr-vaxess-more/). Open for business since early 2012, The Harvard Innovation Lab is finally hitting its stride, "with a number of current and former residents making noise in the local and national start-up scene." The i-Lab is a \$20 Million effort, and the building houses classes and meetings, seminars and even office space for student-led companies. Despite some criticism that MIT is farther ahead with start-ups, and that the i-Lab is just a "derivative enterprise," Harvard students, administrators and local business leaders are too busy to worry.

Other universities take slightly different approaches. Pennsylvania has a variety of programs for start-ups (www.newpa.com/business/startups), including competitive grant programs to help companies, researchers and students "realize an improved level of access to technology and resources to grow firms." As well as PennTAP, which is a federal-state-university partnership for economic development at Penn State, providing Pennsylvania companies and start-ups with "technological assistance and information to help resolve specific technical questions or needs."

The University of Rochester (New York) reaches out to potential (www.rochester.edu/research/corporations.html) corporate partners and start-ups through their Offices of Technology Transfer, Center for Emerging and Innovative Sciences, and Office of Research Alliances, among others. There is even a Web site for Creating Startup Universities (startupuniversity.uservoice.com/forums/176917-general), although they were closed to new submissions the day I checked in early May.

Retail's Same-Day Delivery Wars

An article in *Forbes* in December 2012 revealed that online giant Amazon was going to cut shipping times (www.forbes.com/sites/ups/2012/12/05/amazon-takes-on-same-day-delivery-how-can-small-businesses-compete/), and offer same-day delivery service in some metropolitan areas. Walmart soon followed suit, and then eBay joined the same-day delivery battle.

While some bemoan the hit small businesses could take if these Internet and Big Box giants can make good on same-day deliveries, others envision small businesses surviving by "re-conceptualizing" with better in-store experiences and quality niche products. In actuality, there has been similar advice around for years to help small businesses (voices.yahoo.com/small-business-vs-wal-mart-1766021.html?cat=35) survive a Walmart coming to town. Another idea is the service in London called Hubbub (www.hubbub.co.uk/hello) which delivers goods from a selection of local shops to homes for a small fee and commission.

Associated Press ran a story at the end of March 2013 that now even Google is running a San Francisco experiment to provide same-day delivery (news.yahoo.com/google-deliver-goods-quickly-online-shoppers-213009918-finance.html) of food and other products bought online. Called Google Shopping Express (www.google.com/shopping/express/about/), Google's goal is to increase consumer reliance on the Internet, so it can reach more people with online ads, which generate most of its income. If the pilot program goes well, Google intends to expand these same-day services to other markets. So same-day delivery service is here to stay, but it probably won't be a factor outside of cities.

Motivation For Innovation

An April 2013 article in Lifehacker discussed all the people searching far and wide for inspiration (lifehacker.com/seeking-inspiration-stop-looking-and-start-doing-476417146). Whether for music, writing or a start-up, they read, attend lectures, meet and talk to others—and wait for a thunderbolt from the blue to "inspire" them. This short article basically advises to amplify your gathered ideas by applying it to your work. Then you'll probably be "inspired" to pursue something new by building on what you already do professionally.

An article in the *New York Times* in April 2013 suggested that people attending professional conferences use the conference's down-time (travel.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/travel/professional-conferences-double-as-vacation-venues.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130406&_r=1&) to visit entertainment venues and meet others. Some conferences draw people with big ideas who want to change the world, and casual chats over beer or a conference-planned field trip or dinner can let you meet someone with similar interests for friendship, partnership or even marriage.

If travel and conferences aren't in your budget, but you still can't get your ideas to coalesce into the next big thing, Lifehacker recommends Mind Mapping Tools (lifehacker.com/most-popular-mind-mapping-tool-xmind-477809585) for a sort of guided-brainstorm. An informal poll of MMT users found that XMind (www.xmind.net) was the favorite, followed by Freemind (freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page). Both are free for individuals to download. Mindjet, MindNode and Coggle rounded out the other top apps, and are more geared toward businesses.

Robot Updates

Futurity ran a story in March 2013 on how researchers are working in the new field of terradynamics (www.futurity.org/science-technology/convex-legs-let-tiny-robots-scurry-in-sand/), or studying how legged animals and vehicles move on granular and other complex surfaces. Georgia Tech and the University of California (Berkeley) are working on non-wheel locomotion for smaller robotic devices, since the trend now is toward smaller robots. Working with granular surfaces (sand to glass beads), researchers have found that C-shaped convex legs work best for small robots to move over granular surfaces.

The Boston Globe ran a story in April 2013 about a couple of pint-sized robots created especially to work with autistic children (www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/04/18/haverhill-school-tests-french-made-robots-way-teach-children-with-learning-disabilities/yB2GOWEKcRnm0eXFxSO7iO/story.html). The robots, manufactured by Aldebaran Robotics (www.aldebaran-robotics.com/en/), are 23 inches high and have 25 joints, plus loudspeakers, cameras, and 17 sensors. They can react to a touch with a wide range of responses, from talking to dancing. They also gesture to emphasize the words when they talk. The goal is to help teach autistic children social skills that can later be transferred to interactions with people.

In February 2013, Futurity ran a story on how a robotic bat-wing (www.futurity.org/science-technology/robot-bat-wing-gives-lessons-in-flight/) is helping Brown University researchers understand the aerodynamic forces of a moving animal wing. Just making the faux-flapper added new insight into how real bats fly. And with the research partially funded by the US Air Force, it's not hard to imagine better wing-technology ending up in military planes someday.

Massive State-Sponsored Computer Hacking Continues

Sophisticated hacks on US banks and online giants (like Facebook and Twitter) since last year are suspected of being state-sponsored attacks from Asia. AP (through the *Seattle Times*) ran another story in March 2013 that South Korean intelligence charged that North Korea is "training a team of computer-savvy cyber-warriors (seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2020634934_apasskoreacomputercrash.html). Malware shut down 32,000 computers and servers at three major South Korean TV networks and banks recently, and although they suspect North Korea, some of the malware code came from the US and three European countries. One North Korean defector said that the North routinely recruits students to their top science schools specifically to become cyber-warriors, as well as sending some future hackers to study in China and Russia.

A Yahoo! article in March 2013 said that China believes half its hacking attacks in the first months of 2013 were from the US (news.yahoo.com/china-says-u-top-source-081501037.html). Chinese military Web sites especially have been bombarded with attacks from the US after an American computer security company charged in February that a secretive Chinese military unit was probably behind a series of recent hacking attacks primarily targeting the US.

A story in the *New York Times* in March 2013 discussed how US companies and intelligence agencies are scrambling to understand why China continues to target the US (www.nytimes.com/2013/03/04/us/us-weighs-risks-and-motives-of-hacking-by-china-or-iran.html) for massive computer hacks. Especially since Chinese hackers like to break into energy systems, like Telvent (www.telvent-gis.com/information/), which monitors more than half the oil and gas pipelines in the US. China has been hacking into multinational oil and gas companies all over the world since 2011, and our Department of Energy even confirmed in January 2013 that it too had been infiltrated by Chinese hackers. Are the Chinese planting bugs in certain systems to someday try and shut them down? Or are hackers just trolling for industrial secrets to boost China's economy? No one seems to know.

Updates on Solar Power

Yahoo! reported in early April 2013, that as solar energy continues to gain popularity, Internet searches for solar panel costs are up a huge 335% (finance.yahoo.com/blogs/big-data-download/interested-solar-panels-not-alone-151555984.html) from the same period last year. Big city tenants are heavily into solar panel searches on the Internet. But Los Angeles is at the top, with 25% more searches than the rest of the metro areas tracked by Yahoo!.

At the end of April 2013, Silicon Valley ran an article on tips for solar power shopping (www.siliconvalley.com/personal-technology/ci_23063439/solar-power-shopping-here-are-some-tips). With thousands of different solar panel models, and hundreds of different panel installers around San Francisco, California, the best of intentions to install ever-more-inexpensive solar panels can be a daunting task. The California Energy and Public Utilities commissions run a Web site (gosolarcalifornia.org/) with a lot of helpful information. As well as a Solar & Renewables Index Page (www.pge.com/en/myhome/saveenergymoney/solarenergy/index.page) from California public power company, PG&E. Both sites have tips and suggestions for people interested in solar who are living anywhere.

EcoChunk reported in July 2012 that there is now a portable solar power generator (www.ecochunk.com/1036/2012/07/17/portable-solar-power-generator-can-power-a-refrigerator-for-four-days) that can power a refrigerator for up to four days. As sold on Hammacher Schlemmer (www.hammacher.com/Product/82949?source=cj&PID=1830967&cm_mmc=CJ-_-1408768-_-1830967-_-Hammacher+Product+Catalog), this emergency generator is silent and provides zero-emission back up power. It can also connect to solar panels to recharge, or provide endless power to off-grid appliances. The price is \$2,000. Other emergency solar powered generators are from Ogsolar (www.emergencysolarpowerunit.com/?gclid=C1vljK-x_bYCFcdU4AodLn0ACQ), and SolarBackup (www.mysolarbackup.com/).

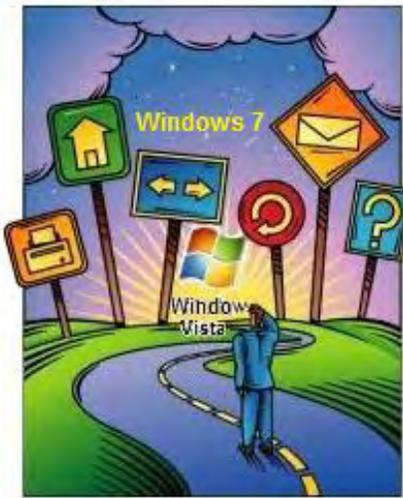
Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. Besides short stories published in various magazines, she also has some new e-books available on Amazon Kindle: *Hunting Monster Aliens* (www.amazon.com/s/?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=Hunting%20Monster%20Aliens%20martin&linkCode=ur2&rh=n%3A133140011%2Ck%3AHunting%20Monster%20Aliens%20martin&tag=comput0b9-20&url=search-alias%3Ddigital-text) is an on-going series of novellas, about a wise-cracking team of ghost investigators who occasionally turn into alien-monster hunters. *Culture Crash! A California Yankee Transplanted to Texas* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CKXF8GQ/ref=as_li_ss_tf?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CKXF8GQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) is a collection of humor essays chronicling her adventures in her new home-state.

ComputerEdge E-Books has converted many of Marilyn's computer humor columns into four e-books.

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Windows Tips and Tricks

A Free Windows App for Temporary Hotkeys

“Setup Hotkey Text for Inserting into Documents and Web Pages” by Jack Dunning

Sometimes you just need a quick way to temporarily enter repetitious and/or long text (e-mail addresses, account numbers, etc.) into documents or forms. Here is a free, quick and dirty app that will do the job with no hassle.

A couple of weeks ago Digital Dave answered a question about techniques for inputting data when your "E-mail Address Is Too Long." Dave talked about using the Clipboard to save the text for later pasting into other documents and fields. (He also highlighted using AutoHotkey (www.computeredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html) for a more permanent solution.) The Clipboard approach is fine for a temporary solution, but what if you don't want to tie up your Windows Clipboard? If you use your Clipboard for something else during the session (other than the e-mail address), you're forced to copy it back into the Clipboard again. Plus the Clipboard only allows you to have one paste item at a time.

I now have a quick and easy solution for a temporary hotkey to paste any text into any Windows documents or application. It's remarkably simple to do and you don't need to do anything other than download the small *InstantHotkey.exe* app I put together. (Although I wrote this script in AutoHotkey, I've compiled it into an EXE file which will run on any Windows computer with a double-click of the mouse. You don't need to use AutoHotkey or know anything about AutoHotkey.) The InstantHotkey app is available at the *ComputerEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox (www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7).

The InstantHotkey app is designed for those times when you are using names, titles, phrases, account numbers, or e-mail addresses in a session of computing and you don't want to continually type (or copy-and-paste) the terms over and over again. For example, since I'm using the term InstantHotkey as the name of this app and it will appear a number of times in this column (as well as the AutoHotkey column which explains the script), I've used *InstantHotkey.exe* to create a new hotkey (CTRL+ALT+J) which inputs "InstantHotkey" every time I press it. It is only available for this one session (until I exit the app or log off), but this may be the only time I need it. If I need it again, I can quickly set it up again.

Even better, InstantHotkey is not limited to setting up just one hotkey combination. If I run multiple instances of the app, I can set up multiple hotkeys.

How It Works

Once you download the *InstantHotkey.exe* file (found at the *ComputerEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox (www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7)), all you need to do is double-click the filename. (If you have trouble downloading the EXE file, then it can also be found in the ZIP file by the same name, *InstantHotkey.zip*). The "Instant Hotkey" window will open (see Figure 1).

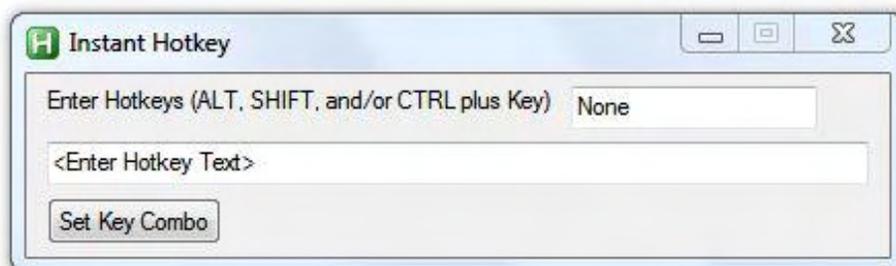


Figure 1. The InstantHotkey app displays two data fields. The first will accept the hotkey combination. The second text field is for the name, title, phrase, account number or e-mail address for insertion into any editing field when the key combination is hit.

There are only two decisions to make. The first is the hotkey combination. To create a hotkey combination you must combine at least one modifier (CTRL, ALT or SHIFT) with a letter or number key. Hold the keys down simultaneously and they will appear in the hotkey field. If you use an invalid combination the value of the combination will return to "None." (Note: If you type a single key other than one of the modifiers, CTRL+ALT will automatically be added to that key as the combination. The WIN key, , does not work with this quick and dirty app.) Next, type the text that you want to paste into documents into the field displaying "<Enter Hotkey Text>." Then, click the "Set Key Combo" button to turn on the hotkey. The window will close automatically.

In this example, I entered CTRL+ALT+J as my hotkey combination, then entered the text "InstantHotkey" into the next field (see Figure 2). Finally, I clicked the button labeled "Set Key Combo" to activate the hotkey. Now, whenever I hold down CTRL+ALT+J, "InstantHotkey" is entered into the active program or Web editing field at the location of the cursor in the window.

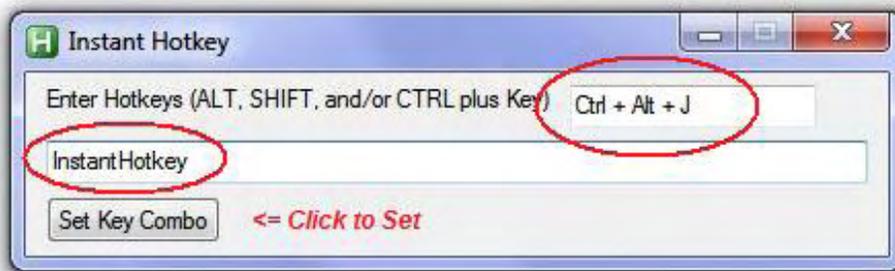


Figure 2. The hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+J is entered into the hotkey field by simultaneously pressing all three keys (or just the letter J). "InstantHotkey" is the text assigned to the hotkey combination.

The InstantHotkey app is set up so that you cannot enter a single letter or number as a hotkey. If you enter a single letter or number, CTRL+ALT will automatically be added to the combination. This serves a number of purposes—most of which involve the elimination of errors caused by using the same letter in both the hotkey and the pasted text.

If you would like to set up more than one temporary hotkey combination, then launch *InstantHotkey.exe* a second time (double-click on the app filename). For a third, launch *InstantHotkey.exe* again. Each time you launch the app, an additional green icon will appear in the System Tray (see Figure 3). Each icon will coincide with a hotkey combination.



Figure 3. The InstantHotkey app displays a green icon with the letter H inside it in the System Tray. By right-clicking on the Hotkey icon in the System Tray on the right side of the Taskbar, the hotkey can be removed (Exit) or changed (Showhotkey).

To remove the hotkey, right-click on the appropriate System Tray icon and select Exit. To reopen the InstantHotkey app window, right-click on the icon and select ShowHotkey. The window will appear as it was last displayed. The different instances of the app can be identified by hovering the mouse cursor over the System Tray icon. The Tooltip message box will display the special characters for the hotkey combination (+ is SHIFT, ^ is CTRL, and ! is ALT) plus the insertion text (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Hover the mouse cursor over the System Tray icon to identify each InstantHotkey. The Tooltip will display the special characters for the hotkey combination (+ is SHIFT, ^ is CTRL, and ! is ALT) plus the text to be pasted into documents.

You can use the ShowHotkey option at the bottom of the icon right-click menu in the System Tray to change the insertion text by editing the old text and clicking the Set Key Combo button. If you need a different combination (usually due to interference with another Windows or program hotkey), you can change the key combination in the same manner by editing the hotkey combination and clicking the Set Key Combo button. The old hotkey combination will be cancelled. To exit the InstantHotkey app select Exit from the right-click menu or change the key combo to "None" and click the set button.

Certain punctuation marks (e.g. ^, #, !, +) will not appear in the pasted text without special consideration. These symbols are used by AutoHotkey as special characters. To display a special character enclose it in curly brackets (i.e. {!} will display the exclamation point).

Using InstantHotkey

The InstantHotkey app is an easy way to set up a temporary hotkey combination to paste text into any document, program or Web page. It's useful when you know that you'll need to add repetitious and/or unusually long words or numbers to your work during a particular computer session. The hotkeys disappear after you log off. It's not meant to be a permanent solution. It's simple and quick.

If you need a more persistent solution such as automatic expansion of e-mail address or other unchanging data, then you may want to investigate the techniques found in the AutoHotkey column referenced by Digital Dave, "A Beginner's Tip for Super Quick E-mail Address Input." Or you could add the needed text to an AutoHotkey AutoCorrect file which loads whenever you boot up. If this is the case, then you may want to check out using AutoHotkey yourself. For more information, see the [ComputerEdge AutoHotkey Web page \(www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html\)](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html).

If you would like to see the inner workings and hidden mechanisms of the InstantHotkey app, then see this week's AutoHotkey column.

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.computoredge.com).

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).

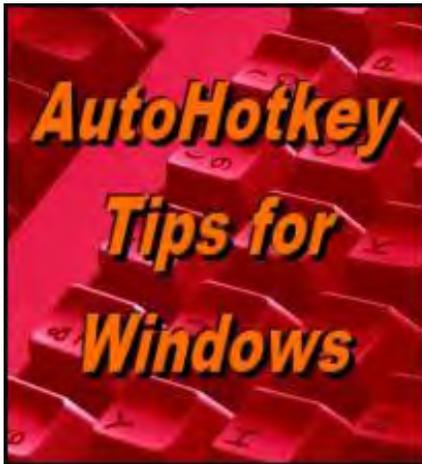
Available exclusively from Amazon, *Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00801M5GS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20),

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.

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Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!

The Inner Workings of the InstantHotkey AutoHotkey Script

“How the InstantHotkey AutoHotkey Script Makes Setting Up Hotkeys Easy” by Jack Dunning

It's a relatively simple script for setting up hotkeys without writing or editing another AutoHotkey script. These techniques are useful in many other AutoHotkey apps.

In this week's Windows Tips and Tricks column I've offered up an AutoHotkey app I call InstantHotkey. It is designed to solve the problem of typing long e-mail addresses and/or inserting repetitive text on a temporary basis by setting up hotkey combinations without the need to write or edit an AutoHotkey script. It works by first entering into a pop-up window the new hotkey combination, then the text to be pasted when the combination is used (see Figure 1). For more details on how the InstantHotkey app functions see the Windows Tips and Tricks column linked above.

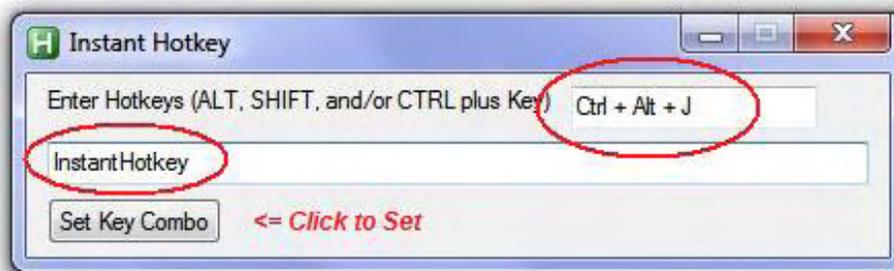


Figure 1. The InstantHotkey app sets up hotkey combinations for inserting text on the fly.

This script is relatively short and illustrates the power of a few more AutoHotkey commands and options. In particular, InstantHotkey uses the HOTKEY parameter (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Hotkey) in the GUI command. The #SingleInstance command (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/_SingleInstance.htm) is used to allow the setting up of multiple hotkeys by running the app multiple times, plus there are a few more tricks.

The Hotkey Feature of the GUI (Graphic User Interface) Command

The Gui, Add, Hotkey (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Hotkey) command gives an AutoHotkey script the ability to set up hotkey combinations on the fly. That means the user can create and modify hotkeys without writing or altering a script. This is important since it is unrealistic to expect every user to learn scripting (even though it can be pretty simple). The command takes the form:

```
Gui, Add, Hotkey, vChosenHotkey
```

This line creates an editing field in any GUI window. The variable *ChosenHotkey* saves the hotkey value when the Gui, Submit command is executed.

When adding hotkeys to the editing field the text form of the keys are automatically displayed, although the special character values are actually saved in the variable. For example, CTRL+ALT+J would display "Ctrl+Alt+J" in the editing field while "^!J" is saved in the variable. Only valid hotkey combinations are accepted. Otherwise, the field displays "None" with the variable saving null on submit.

The GUI, ADD, HOTKEY command is limited in that only CTRL , ALT, and SHIFT can be used as modifiers in the editing field. If you want to add additional modifier such as the WIN key (⊞), then a checkbox which adds a conditional # to the hotkey variable string is required.

There are options for further limiting the input to the hotkey edit field. This is important since some uses of the feature can cause errors or seemingly infinite loops. For example, in the InstantHotkey app if a single letter is used as a hotkey and that same letter appears in the insertion string, the hotkey will attempt to replace itself every time it's inserted into a document and start looping. To resolve the problem Limit1 was added to the options. The Limit options are as follows:

- 1: Prevent unmodified keys.
- 2: Prevent Shift-only keys.
- 4: Prevent Control-only keys.
- 8: Prevent Alt-only keys.
- 16: Prevent Shift-Control keys.
- 32: Prevent Shift-Alt keys.
- 64: This value is not supported (it will not behave correctly).
- 128: Prevent Shift-Control-Alt keys.

The Limit options are numerical and are implemented by adding the values and appending the sum to the word Limit. For example, to force all hotkeys to use a modifier, but prevent the use of the SHIFT key alone, the option would be Limit3—the sum of 1 (prevent unmodified keys) plus 2 (prevent Shift-only keys).

The InstantHotkey Script

While InstantHotkey is not a beginning level script, if you've been following along with this AutoHotkey column, you will find it straightforward. (If you're new to AutoHotkey, then you may find the e-books *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) and *Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CTACUMK/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CTACUMK&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) from Amazon useful—also available at ComputerEdge E-Books (www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-E-Books-EPUB-format-iPad-NOOK-Kobo_c8.htm) in EPUB format for the iPad, NOOK, and other EPUB compatible devices and software.) Once you understand how this script works, you'll be able to modify it or use the commands to implement these AutoHotkey features in other scripts.

The code consists of a short routine to set up the window (GUI) and subroutines (labels) to create the hotkey combination, paste the text into any editing windows, and to reopen the window for modification:

```
#SingleInstance off
Gui, Add, Text,, Enter Hotkeys (ALT, SHIFT, and/or CTRL plus Key)
Gui, Add, Hotkey, vKeyCombo ys Limit1
Gui, Add, Edit, w400 vTextInsert xs, <Enter Hotkey Text>
Gui, Add, Button, gSetupKey, Set Key Combo
Gui, Show, , Instant Hotkey
Menu, Tray, Add, ShowHotkey
return
SetupKey:
Gui, Submit
If KeyCombo !=
    Hotkey, %KeyCombo%, TextAdd, On
Else
    ExitApp
Menu, Tray, Tip, %KeyCombo% %TextInsert%
Return
TextAdd:
SendInput, %TextInsert%
Return
ShowHotkey:
Gui, Show
Return
```

The first line of code, `#SingleInstance off` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/_SingleInstance.htm), allows the app to run multiple times without affecting other instances running. Normally, and by default, `#SingleInstance` is set on to prevent a script from running multiple times. In this case, turning the condition off allows the user to set up multiple hotkey combinations with different outputs without them interfering with each other—as long as different hotkeys are used for each.

The second line of the `InstantHotkey` script uses the `Gui, Add, Text` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Text) command to place descriptive text in the pop-up window.

The third line of code uses the `Gui, Add, Hotkey` command described above. The hotkey variable `KeyCombo` saves the hotkey value when the `Gui, Submit` command is issued in the `SetupKey` label below the main routine. The `ys` option forces the hotkey edit field to appear to the right of the previous text rather than below it. (See the formatting chart in the "How GUI Control Positioning and Sizing Works" section of the March 29 AutoHotkey column.) The `Limit1` option forces the use of hotkey modifiers (no single letter or number keys) as described above.

The next line of code uses the `Gui, Add, Edit` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Edit) command to add the field for inputting the hotkey insertion text. The width is set to 400 pixels (`w400`). The variable `TextInsert` saves the text from the edit field when the `Gui, Submit` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Submit) command is issued in the `SetupKey` label below. The `xs` forces the new edit field to the left margin below the previous controls. The "<Enter Hotkey Text>" is the default text displayed in the edit field.

The last control added to the window is `Gui, Add, Button` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Button). This command adds the button which sets the hotkey combination. The label (routine) called by the button is `gSetupKey`. The "g" indicates that this option is a label to be found below followed by a colon (i.e. `SetupKey:`). The name on the button is "Set Key Combo" found at the end of the line of code after the other options.

The `Gui, Show` command is needed to display the new GUI window. Without it nothing else will happen.

The `Menu, Tray, Add` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Menu.htm) command is used to add an item to the right-click menu of the AutoHotkey System Tray icon. This is important for changing the hotkey text—if necessary. The label `ShowHotkey` is assigned to the menu item which also become the name of the menu item in the System Tray right-click menu. The `ShowHotkey` label found below merely reissues the `Gui, Show` command to reopen the same window.

The `Return` (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Return.htm) command marks the end of the main portion of the routine.

The heart of the action of the `InstantHotkey` script is in the `SetupKey:` label (routine). It first uses the `Gui, Submit` command to save all the variables from the GUI window. (It's common to forget to add the `Gui, Submit` command and wonder why nothing is working. No data from the window can be saved or used without the `Submit`.)

The IF conditional looks for a non-blank `KeyCombo`, the new hotkey (`!=` for not equal). If found, then the `KeyCombo` is made into a hotkey combination with the `HOTKEY` command (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Hotkey.htm). The `TextAdd` label (routine found below the `SetupKey:` label) contains the action executed when the hotkey combination is pressed.

It's important to note that each time the Set Key Combo button is clicked it creates the new hotkey. If you change the hotkey combination, then it will turn on the new hotkey without turning off the old one. All hotkeys created will continue to work (giving the identical output) until the app is exited. This isn't very elegant. To turn off the old hotkey requires saving it in a new variable. This could be done by adding the line

```
OldHotkey := KeyCombo
```

after the conditional IF structure, then adding

```
If OldHotkey !=
    Hotkey, %OldHotkey%, Off
```

before the conditional. The new IF conditional will prevent an error the first time the label runs when `OldHotkey` has no value. (Note: I've added these lines of code to the `InstantHotkey.ahk` and the `InstantHotkey.exe` files found in the Dropbox account.)

The ELSE portion of the IF conditional, `ExitApp`, does just that—closes the app and releases and hotkeys.

The MENU (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Menu.htm) command which appears after the conditional, *Menu, Tray, Tip, %KeyCombo% %TextInsert%* is for identifying multiple instances of the app in the System Tray (see Figure 2). The values of variables used in InstantHotkey, *KeyCombo* and *TextInsert*, are displayed when the mouse cursor hovers over the System Tray icon.



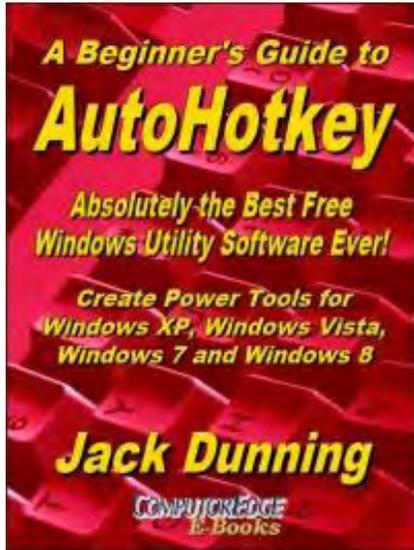
Figure 2. The Menu, Tray, Tip command is used to change the System Tray Tooltip to the hotkey characters and insertion text.

The *TextAdd*: label is the action activated when the hotkey combination is pressed. In this case it merely sends, SendInput command (www.autohotkey.com/docs/commands/Send.htm), the text in the variable *TextInsert* to the active document or editing field.

The *ShowHotkey*: label responds to the *ShowHotkey* menu items added to the right-click menu of the System Tray icon. It displays the associated GUI windows with its last values.

You can find this *InstantHotkey.ahk* script at the *ComputerEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox page (www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7) along with the compiled version and a ZIP folder with both.

* * *



Now available in e-book format from 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).

Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while working on the Web. AutoHotkey has a universality not found in any other Windows utility—free or paid.

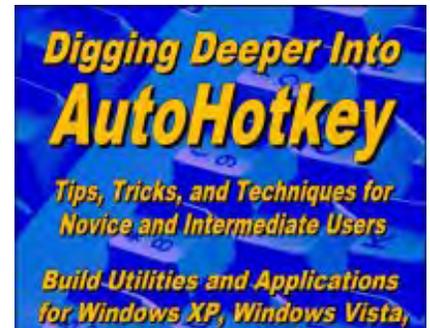
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of windows, making any window always-on-top, copying and moving files, and much more.

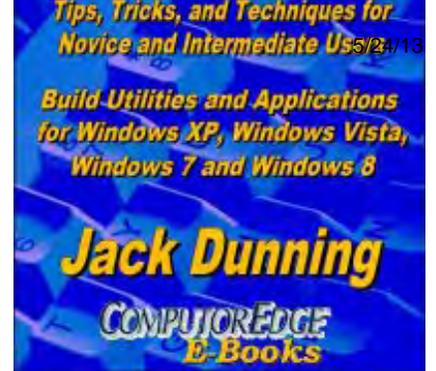
Each chapter builds on the previous chapters.

For an EPUB (iPad, NOOK, etc.) version of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here! (computoredgebooks.com/A-Beginners-Guide-to-AutoHotkey-EPUB-format-iPad-Nook-etc-AUTOHOTKEY-1.htm)

* * *

My new AutoHotkey book which is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from the last six months is now available at Amazon for Kindle hardware (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CTACUMK/ref=as_li_ss_tl?





ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CTACUMK&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20) (or free software) users. Since the columns were not all written in a linear fashion, the book has been reorganized and broken up into parts by topic. The book is not for the complete beginner since it builds on the information in *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?

ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20). However, if a person is reasonably computer literate, they could go directly to this book for ideas and techniques without the first book.

If you've been following along with my AutoHotkey columns, then there is little new information in the book (although I have added more clarification for techniques I felt were either confusing or wrong). The only reason I can see to buy it would be as a handy reference. The AutoHotkey commands used are included in a special index to the chapters in which they appear. Even I can't remember everything I wrote.

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 ceditor@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 Fall of the Tech Titans” by Wally Wang

The Fall of the Tech Titans; The Microsoft Inductive User Interface; The Steve Jobs Lost Interview; Adobe Creative Cloud; Customize Icons in the Finder Window.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

There will always be companies that fail in business. Sometimes they fail through their own incompetence but often times they simply fail because they neglected to spot and react to clearly visible trends that threaten their main business. Even more disturbing is that many companies simply ignore threats until it's too late.

InfoWorld recently listed several technology leaders (www.infoworld.com/slideshow/100400/when-tech-titans-fall-grace-218380#slide1) who eventually stumbled, usually through their own arrogance and inability to adapt to change. First, there's Blackberry, which once dominated the smartphone market until the iPhone and Android destroyed their market. Blackberry simply clung to the belief that physical keyboards were absolutely necessary, so when the iPhone appeared and people realized that physical keyboards weren't necessary, Blackberry lost their leadership position and will likely never regain it.

Like Blackberry, Nokia used to dominate the smartphone market until they discovered their Symbian operating system couldn't compete against the iPhone. Nokia's trying to cling to Windows Phone 7 to boost their market share, but Nokia's chances of returning to their former glory is as minuscule as Blackberry's chance.

AOL once dominated the Internet access market with phone service, but when people started switching to high-speed Internet access through DSL and cable modems, dial-up Internet access became obsolete. To survive, AOL has been rebranding themselves as a media company with properties such as *The Huffington Post*.

Yahoo! once dominated the search engine market until they let Google take over and leave them as second best. Another search engine, Lycos, once competed in the search engine market, but now they're even less relevant. Sun Microsystems used to dominate the high-end server and workstation market with their Solaris operating system. Now people can duplicate much of Sun's previous products using ordinary PCs.

Perhaps the greatest collection of tech titans stumbling has been Gateway, Hewlett-Packard, Dell, and Microsoft. All of these companies pinned their fortunes on the Windows empire, but as soon as people started to shift away from PCs to smartphones and tablets, their business started to shrink at the same time.

In nearly all of these cases, something new made the current leader's products obsolete. With Sun Microsystems, the company allowed the growing power of PCs to creep up and eventually destroy the Sun workstation and server market, which is no different than what's currently happening with smartphones and tablets creeping up to PCs. Eventually smartphones and tablets will be nearly as powerful as PCs, so it's no surprise that PC-oriented companies are stumbling too.

While few people expect companies like Blackberry or Nokia to return to their once dominant positions, people are still in denial that companies like Microsoft could suffer from changing market conditions. Microsoft has the money and resources to deal with any problem, but the real question is will they make the right decisions? Perhaps Microsoft can ask Yahoo! how they let the search engine market slip away or how MySpace let the social media market slip to Facebook.

Sometimes smaller companies with less money and resources can be nimbler and quicker to react to change, and that can spell all the difference between being a company like Blackberry or Palm Computing, and a company like Apple and Google.

The Microsoft Inductive User Interface

If you've tried using Windows 8 and think it's too radical a departure from the Windows 7/XP user interface, you're not alone. However, if you read this 2001 document from Microsoft (msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms997506.aspx), you can see how Microsoft once designed user interfaces for their Money 2000 program to make it easier to use.

Microsoft clearly identified the problem by stating "Most software is too hard to use." Then Microsoft further expanded on the problem by stating "Many commercial software applications include user interfaces in which a screen presents a set of controls, but leaves it to the user to deduce the page's purpose and how to use the controls to accomplish that purpose." Microsoft's solution was to break their Money 2000 user interface into a series of pages that would give users clear choices for one task they could do.

For example, one screen in Money 2000 only lets users select an account to use while previous versions of Microsoft Money displayed multiple options on the screen simultaneously and forced the user to decide which option to choose. According to Microsoft's own research, bombarding users with too much information and then expecting them to figure out what to do and how to do it is simply a path towards confusion and frustration.

Yet look at the Windows 8 tile interface that displays colorful tiles that constantly change, bombarding the user with too much information. Now look at how Windows 8 hides its Charm Bar off the screen and expects you to figure out how to find it, even though it's hidden from view so most people will never know it even exists. The Windows 8 user interface violates multiple principles in Microsoft's own research for designing efficient user interfaces.

Why did Microsoft spend so much time researching effective user interfaces back in 2001, and then completely ignore their own research that demonstrates the best ways to design a user interface when they created Windows 8? Even stranger is why did Microsoft ignore the flood of beta testers who were confused by the Windows 8 tile interface, yet Microsoft went ahead and released that tile interface anyway, and now they profess to be shocked that people find Windows 8's interface too confusing to learn?

The problem with Microsoft isn't that they don't have the resources and talent to do a good job (or even a great job). Instead, it seems that Microsoft's problems stem mostly from human errors and illogical decisions, which plagues most large organizations.

An anonymous developer, who claims to work for Microsoft, summed up the problem (www.infoworld.com/t/microsoft-windows/windows-developer-says-kernel-dev-being-mismanaged-218423?page=0,0). Basically, this anonymous developer said that Microsoft lacks a corporate mandate to improve the Windows kernel performance, the Windows developer team doesn't want to accept patches from outsiders, and that small changes that improve performance get no notice while the company focuses on adding new features.

No matter how smart the Windows developer team might be, they'll never be able to spot all the problems in the Windows kernel code on their own. That's what makes open source solutions like Linux so powerful because with so many people studying the source code from their own perspective, they can improve their chances of spotting and fixing problems to make Linux faster, more efficient, and reliable.

Perhaps the biggest problem with most companies is that instead of focusing on the consumer, companies focus on their bottom line, not realizing that by focusing on the consumer, they'll eventually improve and protect their bottom line.

Microsoft seems intent on doing anything they can to protect Windows and Office, yet that risks ignoring the needs of their customers. What's best for customers is an operating system that stays out of their way. What's best for Microsoft is to come out with a new version of Windows every few years and get people to upgrade to this new version all over again, whether it helps people work more efficiently or not.

With Windows 8, Microsoft is trying to create an operating system that works on all types of devices from PCs to tablets to smartphones. Yet from a customer's point of view, all they really want is something that's easy to use, which may not necessarily be the same operating system interface on every device.

Customers want to achieve specific results. Microsoft wants the same operating system interface on all devices. Those don't have to be mutually exclusive goals, but when Microsoft focuses more on the technical aspects of cramming the same user interface on all devices while ignoring their customer's actual needs, that's when both the customers and Microsoft will suffer.

The answer is simple: focus on your customer's needs first. For many people, they simply wanted an improved version of Windows 7. For Microsoft, they wanted to people to upgrade (and buy) Windows 8 instead. As soon as any company starts forgetting about their customers, you can be sure that their customers will start forgetting about them.

The Steve Jobs Lost Interview

In *Forbes*, Drew Hansen admits (www.forbes.com/sites/drewhansen/2013/05/11/steve-jobs-lost-interview/) that he didn't like Apple until he read an interview where Steve Jobs describes how Apple worked. After reading that interview, Drew Hansen said that he turned from an Apple hater into a fanboy when he realized that much of his own ideas matched those of Steve Jobs.

In the interview, Steve Jobs said "I've built a lot of my success off finding these truly gifted people and not settling for B and C players, but really going for the A players...I found that when you get enough A players together, when you go through the incredible work to find five of these A players, they really like working with each other. Because they've never had a chance to do that before. And they don't want to work with B and C players and so it becomes self-policing and they only want to hire more A players. And so you build up these pockets of A players, and it propagates."

Who wouldn't want to work with the best people around? Great people want to work with other great people. Talented people don't want to waste their time with whiners, complainers, or mediocre people. Why bother when you can spend your time surrounded by people who inspire you and make you think rather than people who just get on your nerves and cause problems?

Steve Jobs also mentioned "Ultimately it comes down to taste...Picasso had a saying, 'Good artists copy. Great artists steal.' And we have always been shameless about stealing great ideas. Part of what made the Macintosh great was that the people working on it were musicians and poets and artists and zoologists and historians who also happened to be the best computer scientists in the world...We all brought to this effort a very liberal arts attitude that we wanted to pull in the best of what we saw in these other fields into this field. I don't think you get that if you're very narrow."

One huge problem with technology is that it's often designed by tech-savvy people for other tech-savvy people. The result is a complicated mess that others defend by simply claiming anyone can use it if they will only devote much of their time to becoming as tech-savvy as they are.

The whole idea behind personal computers wasn't to cater to the tech-savvy crowd, but to the average person. When the average person can use a tool like a computer, the computer suddenly becomes an extension of their creativity. When computers bog people down with unnecessary complexity, then people have to waste most of their time simply dealing with the complications of using the computer. Tech-savvy people love complexity because it's like a puzzle for them to play with, but tech-savvy people don't realize that most people don't enjoy dealing with technical complexity. Most people just want to achieve results as quickly and painlessly as possible.

When tech-savvy people realize that not everyone wants to devote their lifetime learning to become tech-savvy like them, they might actually start designing computers for the average person. Until then, tech-savvy people will continue to wallow in complexity and proclaim that everyone can use it if they only take enough training, read enough books, and spend enough years learning the arcane commands necessary to control it. If that's the type of future you prefer, then you know which type of computer you can use while the rest of us use something so we can actually get something done.

Adobe Creative Cloud

The old way of selling software is fast becoming obsolete. In the old days, you could go to a store, buy a boxed copy of software, and then store that software box at home so you could load it on your computer. Often times, the software publisher would offer bug fixes and patches that you could download off the Internet. When the company introduced a new version, you could upgrade for a reduced fee.

While some companies will still sell software that way, software is migrating away from separate boxes. One trend is towards app stores where you buy software online and download and install it directly to your computer. Now if you get another computer, you can download the software all over again.

A second trend is through the software as service model, which is what Adobe recently announced with their Creative Cloud. By paying a monthly fee, you get access to all of the programs formerly packaged as Creative Suite. As long as you keep paying your monthly fee, you can use the software.

For companies like Adobe, software as service provides predictable revenue. For users, software as service lets you spread out the cost of software over time. Adobe's Creative Suite typically cost \$1,000 or more, depending on which version you got. With Adobe's Creative Cloud, you can get access to the same software for much less. When Adobe introduces a new version, you automatically get access to that new version as well.

Microsoft is trying to migrate people away from boxed copies of Microsoft Office and steer them towards their cloud-based Microsoft Office 365 instead. Expect more companies to shift away from boxed software to software as service models in the future.

Some people dislike not having a boxed copy of software while others prefer the greater convenience of software as service. Whatever your feelings, chances are good that boxed copies of software will soon become a rarity much like vinyl records and 8-track tapes.

Of course, such changes in the software world will open opportunities up for rivals. Already, people can switch from Microsoft Office to LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org). If you don't need the full power of Photoshop, consider Pixelmator (appledailyreport.com/2013/05/10/with-pixelmator-2-2-who-needs-photoshop/), a \$14.99 graphics editor that's simpler to use than Photoshop, although not quite as powerful.

For professionals, you might want to stick with Photoshop, but for anyone else who needs a low-cost solution, Pixelmator just may be one of the best Photoshop replacement programs around.



Figure 1. Pixelmator offers powerful graphics editing features.

* * *

If you look in the left pane of the Finder window, you can see icons that represent certain folders such as Documents or Devices. If you want to customize which icons appear in the left of each Finder window, click on the Finder icon on the Dock, then choose Finder -> Preferences.



Figure 2. The System Memory tab shows how much free RAM you have.

When the Finder Preferences window appears, select or clear the check boxes of the items you want to appear or hide in the left pane of the Finder window.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

My New Mac, Lion Edition (www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468)

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

Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1590791894](http://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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70))

The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M))

Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362))

Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A)

[ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A))

The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI)

[ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI))

The 15-Minute Movie Method ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8)

[20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8))

Erotophobia (A novel) ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20)

[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20))

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "The 15 Minute Movie Method.

(www.15minutemoviemethod.com/)" Wally can be reached at wally@computoredge.com.

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Worldwide & Product news reviews



Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

Google Glass Will Make Everything—including You—Look Different; The Digital Turn, How the Internet Transforms Our Existence; Get (Your Wallet) Ready for the "Creative Cloud"; Boost Mobile Kyocera Hydro.

Google Glass Will Make Everything—including You—Look Different

The college media information company, Study Breaks (studybreakscollegemedia.com), writes in with what they're calling "must-know" information about the new tech innovation, Google Glass, including tips for how marketers can best utilize the future technology:

The latest and greatest next-big-thing in the tech world, it's only a matter of time before Google Glass infiltrates everyday life, and it's crucial for marketers to be prepared for the upcoming opportunities to reach people like never before.



Providing the ability to plant (often location-based) promotions and content directly and instantly in the target's vision, the advertising and marketing possibilities of Google Glass are endless.

Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of a nation of Glass-wearers to marketers is the addition of social media involvement with one's page. Suddenly, precious content marketers have so longed for could fall directly into their laps.

As we approach the midpoint of 2013, marketers know one thing for sure—the landscape is quickly changing. Print ads are literally transforming into video, thanks to augmented reality. Social media is constantly evolving and adding new features (along with new social sites). And still, e-mail marketing and door-to-door flyers hold on strong to their niche of communication media. For the most part, small business owners have been willing (and even eager) to adapt, as most are technology lovers themselves, and many more understand the

benefits added when one connects directly with their customers. Rarely does a technology come along that knocks the floor out from under marketers' preferred platforms (think television/smartphones/Facebook), but Google Glass seems to be one of those, or at the very least of their nature.

While many people know that Google has released some beta forms of Google Glass to various tech-venturers for documented testing, what's not clear is how business owners (or members of society in general) are going to react to the onslaught of issues regarding the technology. Many have voiced concerns over a lack of privacy (not being able to see what/when someone is recording, along with the availability for hacking into one's vision.) Meanwhile, others praise the headset for its uniqueness and ease of use. For example, one can imagine the possibilities that would result from taking a picture instantly from their eyes' perspective: candidness like never before. Debates regarding Google Glass seem to be void for now, until its full launch sometime next year. In the meantime, the question is whether marketers should begin changes now that could place their business ahead of the game when Google Glasses inevitably appear.

Many industries such as movie theaters and casinos are already banning the technology from entrance into their facilities and would have to undergo drastic (and at this point, unforeseen) changes before any allowance could occur. But for most small business owners, the question remains: Do the potential pros of embracement outweigh the cons?

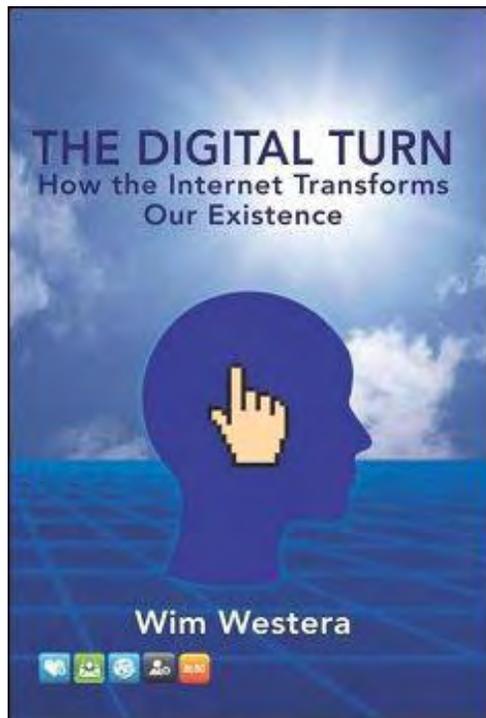


Perhaps the most beneficial aspect of a nation of Glass-wearers to marketers is the addition of social media involvement with one's page. Just as the camera phone saturated social sites with a plethora of photos, Glass will serve as a catalyst for all forms of recordation. Check-ins, "foodie" photos, and general updates could potentially skyrocket as a new form of communication demands our attention. Suddenly, precious content marketers have so longed for could fall directly into their laps, providing a definite advantage for those who are ready for the technology's infiltration into everyday life.

It's always a goal to cut through advertising noise, and what better way could there possibly be than by running a promotion through a medium that links directly to the advertising target's eyeball. The possibilities for advertising with Glass are, in a word, endless. Video links, coupons, and even notifications when a customer is within a certain radius of one's business, are not only possibilities but definites. In a future where Glass roams free, one will be drifting constantly through a virtual/real world hybrid, constantly complete with everything the Internet has to offer. The idea of marketing online but not within the Glass realm simply won't exist. Of course, only those who wear the product will be susceptible to this virtual reality, which may be enough evidence to initially embrace the technology, and therefore attract the users.

For now, all marketers can do is wait and plan. After all, no one fully knows that the market for what's essentially a funny-looking cell phone will take off, and some who do appreciate the look might not buy into the idea over privacy concerns. To implement changes anticipating a target market that doesn't yet exist may seem counter-productive in the truest sense of the word, but if there's one thing marketers can know for sure, it's that the landscape is quickly changing, and it's always a good idea to be prepared.

The Digital Turn, How the Internet Transforms Our Existence



Kristen Broyles has info about a new book, *The Digital Turn* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ARCXPRQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ARCXPRQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0020), written by Open University of the Netherlands professor Wim Westera which details the impact of digital media on our lives:

In an online world everything will change, nothing will be the same. The thing is: we have eagerly adopted new media technologies such as smartphones, tablets, Facebook and Twitter because of the useful services they offer, but we fail to notice that these technologies radically change our living environment as well as our behaviors, modes of communication and our knowledge of the world. At tremendous pace we are transforming our species.

Indeed we're living in a breathtaking time. Ten years ago there were no e-books, smartphones, mobile apps, social networks or virtual worlds. Now, they are dominating our lives. We spend over 7 hours per day watching our screens, like computers, television, tablets, smartphones, checking for news or sending messages. Human life is rapidly migrating to an online world: we shop, book our flights and hotels, gossip, do our banking, study, pay our taxes and even flirt—all online.

This 100,000 years old modern man we are, is no longer a hunter-gatherer, but spends its time on virtual events and transactions. Consequently, our observation of the world becomes more indirect, truncated and detached. We hardly see things "with our own eyes" anymore.

This inevitably affects our understanding of the world. In the extreme case we may find ourselves ruling the world from our dashboards, just the way drone pilots operate their weapons from their control rooms. Life will increasingly look like a computer game and we will be confirming our decisions with a mouse click without being aware of its real impact. As technology advances, it will become extremely difficult for us to distinguish between the reality and the virtual world we have created.

The Digital Turn explains the impact of this virtualization of our living environment. To what extent will our ancient brain be capable of adapting to these new conditions of life? What will be the value of knowledge if all answers of the world are only a single mouse click away? How do we perceive the world when all limitations of time and space seem to have been removed? What do we understand of the world now that all certainties of the material world lose their significance and new economic and social principles will prevail? How do we deal with fundamental concepts of friendship, identity, closeness, social cohesion and—in the end—life at large?

Check the book for yourself at www.thedigitalturn.co.uk (www.thedigitalturn.co.uk).

Get (Your Wallet) Ready for the "Creative Cloud"

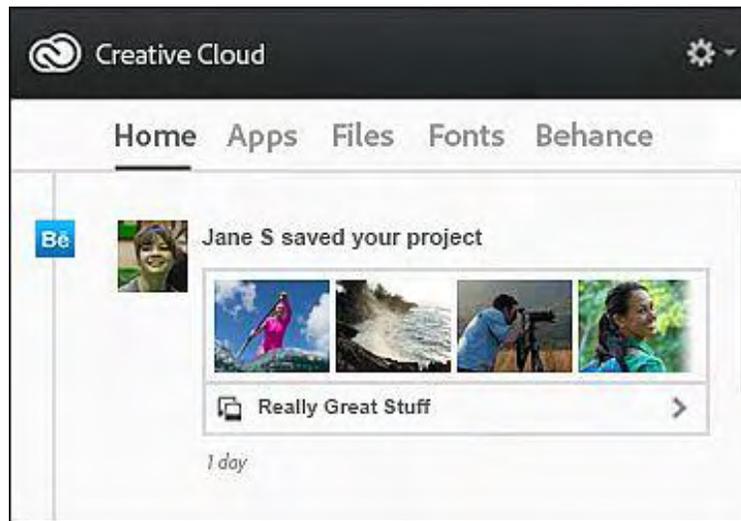
Jon K. Carroll has an article over at Tom's Hardware titled, "The Suites are Dead, Long Live The Cloud," detailing Adobe's move from Creative Suites to what it calls the Creative Cloud and a brand new pricing model:



At [the recent] Adobe MAX 2013...Adobe let loose with a pretty earth-shattering announcement. Creative Suite 6 is the last Creative Suite release from Adobe. Though it will continue to be available for sale and supported, Adobe is moving its focus to the Adobe Creative Cloud.

With this shift, the Adobe applications are being rebranded using the Creative Cloud name, becoming the new set of "CC" desktop applications instead of "C". Presumably, this also resets the version numbers again.

The updated Adobe "CC" products, Photoshop CC, Indesign CC, Illustrator CC, Dreamweaver CC, and Premiere Pro CC, will only be available through creative cloud subscriptions. This represents a major shift from Adobe to software as a service model as opposed to the more traditional Suites packaging. Really, it means there will be no packaging at all, just downloads.



The Creative Cloud installers themselves will be slightly revamped to support the installation of either the CS or CC revisions of the applications in order to meet the user needs. No word as to how long the prior version will be left available—in two years, when CC 2 comes out, will you still be able to install and use CS? Only time will tell.

Adobe Creative Cloud subscriptions come with a variety of plans. There is a single application plan, for \$19.99 a month that allows you to download and install one application—they even figure most people will use it for Photoshop.

The normal Creative Cloud membership is \$49.99 per month with a one-year contract, and allows you to install all of Adobe's major applications, giving you the equivalent of the Adobe Master Collection, which retails for \$2599 for a full copy and \$1049 as an upgrade, for \$599.88 a year.

People who own CS 3 to CS 5.5 can get their Creative Cloud membership for \$29.99 per month for the first year. Teachers and students can get the membership for \$19.99 per month. There is also promotional pricing (at a rate not mentioned) for CS6 users.

Adobe expects the new Creative Cloud and new CC versions of their applications to be available June 17.

Read the entire piece at www.tomshardware.com (www.tomshardware.com/news/adobe-creative-suite-cloud-subscription,22465.html).

Additional info at www.adobe.com (www.adobe.com/products/creativecloud.html)

Boost Mobile Kyocera Hydro

Carrier: Boost Mobile

Manufacturer: Kyocera

Model: Hydro

Web site: www.boostmobile.com (www.boostmobile.com/shop/phones/kyocera-hydro/)

Price: \$89.99 with no monthly contract. Monthly plans start at \$55.

The little guys, the minnows, the guppies, in any business often have to come up with a business model that the big guys don't have to mess with. Ask my uncle Guido who came up with all kinds of clever ideas that allowed him to survive in the pizza business for 25 years with a Domino's and a Pizza Hut just down the street from his Bronx shop.



Same with wireless companies. Virgin, Cricket, and the one we're reviewing today—Boost Mobile—have to come up with all sorts of ways to lure us away from AT&T and Verizon. And they often come up with some pretty good incentives.

For example, pretty much all Boost offerings come with free shipping, free activation, the ability to keep your current phone number, a 30-day money back guarantee, and no contract plans.

On top of that, someone over there came up with a pretty interesting idea called Shrinking Payments. The way it works is, for every six payments that you make on time, the company will reduce your monthly bill by five dollars. And the payments don't have to be consecutive. When you get to six, you get the discount until you get to \$40 a month, where the reductions stop. So, that means, if you make every monthly payment on time you could be paying \$40 in as little as 18 months.

As far as reception goes, Boost Mobile uses Sprint towers so, if you get Sprint in your area, you should be OK for service.

OK, that was all about Boost; let's talk about the Kyocera Hydro phone.

First off, know that this is a 3G, not 4G, phone. If you're OK with that then it's not a big deal. Some people want the fastest speed all the time but, for me, 3G was enough to get all my stuff done.

Next, they call this phone "Hydro" for a reason. It's water-resistant. And I can vouch for that. I once dropped it into a sink filled with soapy dish water and it still worked fine. For a lot of people that will be a really big thing. That doesn't mean you can go snorkeling with it, just that in a lot of situations where another phone would be ruined, this one will very likely keep going.

The 1 GHz Qualcomm processor is surprisingly snappy. And the phone is small enough so that it is very easy to use with one hand but still has pretty much all of the smartphone features you could ask for.

Negatives? I wish the screen was a little crisper and that it shot higher resolution pics, but those things might not bother you at all.



Review contributed by Carilyn Praynuck

Specs (from Boost Mobile):

Height 4.53"

Weight 4.16 oz

Width 2.44"

Screen Size 3.5" HVGA IPS touchscreen

Depth 0.5"

Removable 1500 mAh Lithium Ion battery

Talking Time 8.4 hrs

Supports microSD card up to 32GB (2GB card included)

1 GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon processor

Android 4.0

3.2MP camera with flash and video

Waterproof

Certified waterproof for IPX5 and IPX7

GPS/Navigation

Visual Voicemail

Multimedia, IM and text messaging

Bluetooth

Certified by the independent UL Environment, this phone contains environmentally preferable materials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.

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Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

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

iTunes iTurns Ten; Nauseous from Naxos...?; Kickstarter Redux (sort of...); Teenage Red

iTunes iTurns Ten



A decade ago, as the ugly slap fight between the music industry and Napster seemed to be done, with new aspects of the legal issues constantly arising nonetheless, along with contenders for the dubious honor of file trading champ, it was hard to imagine that Steve Jobs would step forward to become a music mogul and a sort of poster boy, to wax trite, for what would finally become an industry that recognized the necessity of embracing digital content (requisite delivery systems, et al.).

Apple is the current digital music champ—with regard to content and its tightly integrated hardware—but merely defending a position is not what the company has become known for. So, the issue of this anniversary would seem obvious: what's next? With the rise of Spotify and other streaming services, along with the obvious demand by younger

consumers, or potentially anyone with a smartphone, Apple has seemed destined to capture a portion of that market. What would Steve do?

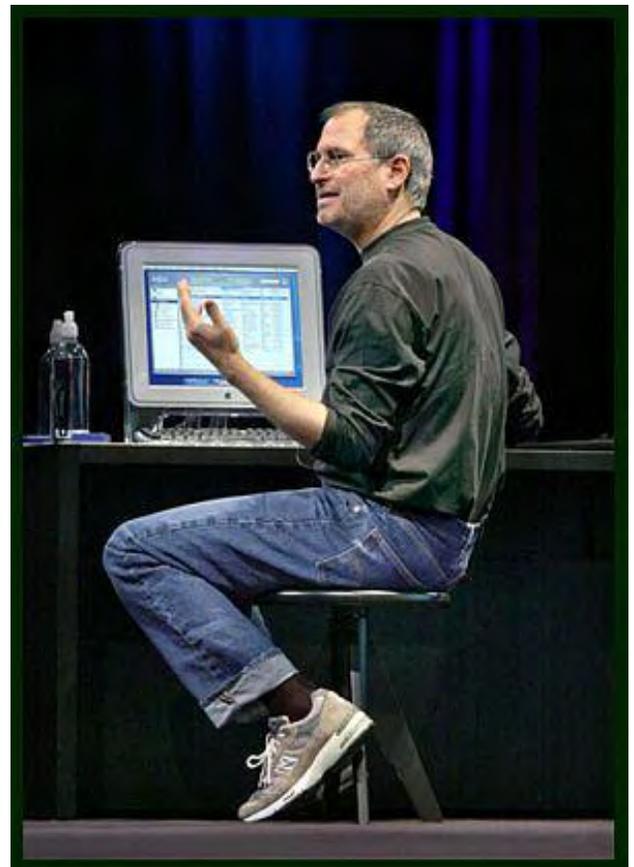
"Jobs never believed in streaming, he felt that people wanted to hold the content they purchased but then he was a major control nut. But events showcased a different path," said Rob Enderle, Principal Analyst with the Enderle Group. "Big problem for Apple and streaming is that the company doesn't do cloud well and steaming is clearly a cloud application."

"Cook is clearly in the 'anything that pays' camp and streaming pays, getting it done well is proving daunting," said Enderle. "For now they continue to make more money with downloads than streaming sites but streaming is slowly gaining ground and appears to be increasingly preferred (better value) over downloads."

Enderle also said that if Jobs were around today, "he'd have fired Tim Cook by now."

"Steve was pretty rigid in his views but even though they sucked at cloud he did do MobileMe and iCloud, so he'd have likely done streaming eventually, probably fired several teams in the process, and...eventually bought a company that did streaming well," added Enderle. "However, until he got there, he would be preaching the benefits of purchase (your music goes with you, no monthly fees, no concerns about connectivity, no ads, nobody in the service tracking you, etc.) and comparing folks that used streaming to idiots (subtly)."

My personal opinion has been that streaming would be far too prosaic a move for Jobs. In the very least, we can say that with Jobs at the helm, Apple delved into the chaos, helping to reinvent an industry, and we can hope that the company can still live up to even a hint of such hubris and panache.



Nauseous from Naxos...?



OK. Are you ready? Here's an example of how *not* to handle digital music promotion: charge for monthly samplers that consist of select tracks from new releases. Yes, I'm talking to you, Naxos—but I'm certain they're not the only ones. Are you [censored] kidding us? This is particularly true of classical music: if a consumer just listens to the

sampler and doesn't buy anything, they wouldn't have purchased music

from you anyway. Record companies are obviously (emphasis on the word "obviously"—tediously so) trying to reach people who will buy an entire album once they hear a track.

If you search Amazon for free label samplers, you'll probably OD—and if you downloaded them all, you'd either crash your computer, clog your HD, or both. Enough said? I'm annoyed, and it's time to move on. Apologies (to you, dear reader). Incidentally, do yourself a favor and stop by naxos.com or classicsonline.com to check out some amazing music from an ever expanding roster of international classical labels (just politely suggest that they give the samplers away if they want your business ;). Right.

Kickstarter Redux (sort of...)

I wrote about Kickstarter last year, a company you're probably familiar with. Just in case you're not, very simply, it gives registered users the ability to raise funds for a creative endeavor, using an "all or nothing" model, meaning that if the project doesn't reach its financial goal stated at the onset, they get nada. As I had hoped at the time, other companies that operate in a similar manner do exist.

The screenshot shows the Indiegogo website interface. At the top, the Indiegogo logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'browse', 'learn', and 'create' are in the center. On the right, there are links for 'Sign Up' and 'Log In', and a search bar labeled 'search by title'. Below the navigation, a banner reads 'The Indiegogo Community are already racing to help tornado victims in Oklahoma.' with a 'LEARN MORE' button. The main content area features a campaign for Jane Woodman releasing 'Teenage Red' on April 30. The campaign description states: 'I've spent the last year recording new songs for this full length album, and I am so psyched to finally release it! Please help with these final steps...'. The location is listed as 'Music - San Francisco, California, United States'. Below the description are tabs for 'Campaign Home', 'Updates / 12', 'Comments / 21', and 'Funders / 37'. A video player shows the album cover for 'Teenage Red'. To the right of the video, a progress bar shows '\$1,230' raised of a '\$3,000 Goal'. A timer indicates '0 time left'. At the bottom right, it says 'Flexible Funding campaign'.

According to Indiegogo spokesperson Cara Morgan, "Indiegogo was founded in 2008, before crowdfunding was even a word, and has gone on to become the largest crowdfunding platform in the world. Indiegogo is the trusted, global funding platform that empowers musicians with an equal opportunity to fund what matters to them and is focused on the democratization of fundraising through a completely meritocratic approach."

"While most crowdfunding platforms typically focus on only one area and frequently have an approval process, Indiegogo is all encompassing, allowing campaigns from all categories anywhere in the world to raise funds quickly and accessibly, without a waiting period," said Morgan.

A huge differentiating factor between Indiegogo and others, such as Kickstarter, is that they offer "Flexible Funding," which allows a project's creator to receive all of the pledges, even if the target amount isn't reached.

With regard to pros and cons of the site, independent musician Jane Woodman likes how Indiegogo "interfaces well with social sites and fans." Beyond that, she wishes "the fulfillment page would have sorted by perk." The perks, which depend upon the level of one's financial involvement, can range from tangible items such as shirts, to digital media—including, of course, downloadable MP3 singles, EPs, or albums—and more (private performances, ad infinitum).

"Actually it would have been nice to be able to do everything from that one fulfillment page; print labels etc. So I think they could do more with that," added Woodman. "I would have liked to keep the campaign shipping completely separate from PayPal and just have it show up as a payment there instead—but probably asking too much and not sure about the database and tracking logistics. Glad it's not my problem."

Payment systems are often a source of frustration or even apprehension for consumers as well, and not everyone is pleased with PayPal. Online security is always a critical issue, but some companies turn to Amazon, as an example, quite simply for familiarity's sake—so many people have established accounts. A smaller issue, in a sense, that's easily resolved, however, because I hope to see more companies like Indiegogo pop up, and subsequently more creative individuals/indie musicians successfully using them.



Teenage Red

Woodman, a San Francisco Bay Area-based DIY artist, recently released Teenage Red ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CU4EV9K/ref=as_li_ss_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CU4EV9K/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CU4EV9K&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CU4EV9K&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CU4EV9K/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CU4EV9K&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)), her first full length solo album.

If you've read this column, then you know that I don't offer orthodox reviews, per se—at least not yet. I tend to briefly discuss music that has caught my attention, I suppose work that appeals to my sensibilities (the kid raised on rock, particularly punk, who secretly adored Stravinsky), and I've displayed a clear bias to soundtracks (film scores), classical, neo-classical, and a numbing array of sub-genres that fall into ambient or post-rock.

In all candor, I find labels amusing (as in categories, not record labels, although they often make me cackle, chortle, chuckle, et al.). But, I do like Ms. Woodman's self-imposed "Apocalyptic Romanticism."

Moving onwards, with this album, there are drums, electronic manipulation, I suppose, but the oneiric guitar and voice are the stars. Headphone listening is requisite, I would say, and this 12-song album is an aural treat. If not for the noble goal of supporting indie music, buy this album, I dare you, to find some part of your life that it's the perfect soundtrack for.

For me, Teenage Red complements the late/early, quiet nights of insomnia, working on jobs, projects, and tending to anything and everything that begs for attention around the darkened house, poetically so, in lights of green and blue. How about you? Please leave a comment about this, or even other subjects you'd like to see discussed here. Thank you.



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

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

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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

"News Feed Spam in Facebook," "Bob Todd's Long E-mail Address," "Maxtor Backup Software," "Windows Live Mail"

News Feed Spam in Facebook

[Regarding Jack Dunning's May 3 article, "Facebook Is King of the Social Networking Hill, But Will It Stay There?":]

I can't speak for loyal Facebook users since I rarely use it. But I went to my page when my wife said it was hacked. Actually, it wasn't hacked; what she saw was a news feed ad (news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57576695-93/facebook-makes-risky-bet-on-news-feed-ads-that-track-you/).

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

Bob Todd's Long E-mail Address

[Regarding the May 10 Digital Dave column:]

If you are using Microsoft apps (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) you can use the Autocorrect feature to quickly add text items into a doc. You will find AutoCorrect in the Tools menu. Once you have added an item to AutoCorrect it becomes universally available to all the MS apps. All you need to do is type in a couple of characters and then tap the spacebar. Every time you type in a space the app does a spell check on the "word" you just typed. It will detect a spelling error and replace it with the text you want.

-Don Davies, Ramona, CA

I keep my e-mail address on my computer's Windows 7 Sticky Notes. No, not on a post-it note stuck to the screen; it is in Accessories. It's simple to copy & paste it from there into a document.

-David L, Colorado Springs, CO

I noticed that Jack Dunning has put together a pretty cool little free app for inserting text with hotkeys. You don't need to know AutoHotkey to use it. It could be useful for students and anyone else who need to write non-traditional terms for a short period of time.

-Digital Dave

Maxtor Backup Software

[Regarding the May 10 Digital Dave column:]

I love the older Seagate Manager software that used to come with Seagate external/backup USB drives and it's still available as a free download.

Since Seagate now owns Maxtor, it probably will work on/with the Maxtor drive as well, worth trying. I know their Disk Wizard, imaging/cloning software (also available for free download) works with external Maxtor drives.

It does constant backups but runs in the background so it doesn't impact the system, even on my older systems, vs. having to run it separately/occasionally. I haven't checked recently, but it may even do versioning, haven't had to use it to restore in ages.

Here's a link for the download (www.seagate.com/support/downloads/item/fa-2.6-master), you must accept their terms before it'll let you download.

Hope that's helpful,

Rich

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Windows Live Mail

[Regarding the May 22, 2009 Windows Vista (Windows 7) Tips and Tricks column:]

I went from using Windows XP and Outlook Express to Windows 8 and Windows Live Mail. Outlook Express was far more useful and fun than Windows Live Mail—I could send animations, etc. All my accounts were received and sent in one main account, not divided up into individual accounts, each having its own Inbox, Drafts, etc.

I had several accounts which I kept. It was a pain to check each account for e-mails in Windows Live Mail.

So I created a message rule that all my incoming messages went to a folder called Inbox All, for example, of one account which I designated my default account. It has worked great! Just have to remember to check other accounts for the Sent e-mails using other accounts and move them to the appropriate folder if you wish to keep track of them. Now I really don't have to check all the accounts.

-Bird, TX

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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