ComputorEdge™ Online — 07/12/13

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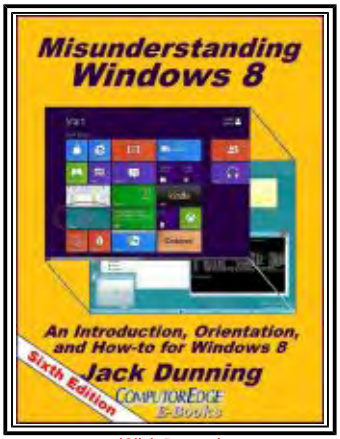

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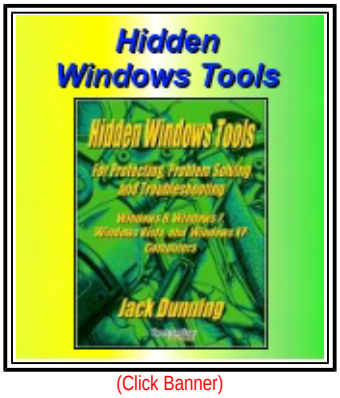

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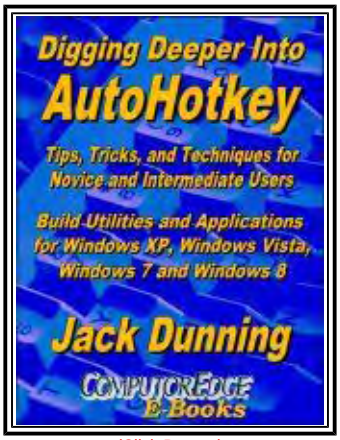

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Digital Dave

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

Adobe Will No Longer Sell Software on the Mac: You'll Have to Rent Instead; Cannot Access Internet with Internet Explorer 8 and Windows XP SP3; The Same Old Questions.

Dear Digital Dave,

*The article "Adobe Will No Longer Sell Software on the Mac: You'll Have to Rent Photoshop Instead (*www.cultofmac.com/226335/adobe-will-no-longer-sell-software-on-the-mac-youll-have-to-rent-photoshop-instead/*)" was a topic on today's Dennis Prager radio talk show. About two thirds of the calls stated that they were casual users of Photoshop, but the proposed fee structure is considered prohibitive. I know that many software development houses would prefer to rent (including Microsoft). This may be the start. What is your view?*

Chris Romel
San Diego, CA

Dear Chris,

This approach to licensing software is not new—especially in niche markets. I'm familiar with a small software company that produces an estimating program in a niche of the construction business. There are a limited number of businesses who would even consider using the software. In the early years they sold the product license at a reasonable price and built up a decent early revenue stream. The customers liked the product, however, they didn't feel obligated to upgrade every year and the guys doing the software found that revenues were dropping dramatically. The prospects for survival were dim since they needed a continuing stream of income to continue development and give support. They explained the problem to their customers and introduced an annual license fee.

While there was a great deal of grumbling (there always is), the transition worked and they continue with excellent client relations. Their customers are businesses that know the fee is actually cheap compared to the results and increased productivity that they get. That is the same decision users of Photoshop (or other Adobe programs) will need to make. What is it worth to you?

If my business depends upon a product, and there was no viable alternative, then I wouldn't hesitate to pay the fee. Adobe Creative Suite 6 Master Collection (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007R0RJRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B007R0RJRS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*) currently lists $2600. At $50 per month, it takes about four years to make up the price of the total package. If I'm in the business, then that doesn't sound unreasonable.

However, I'm not in the business and don't use Photoshop. There are plenty of alternatives—many of them free—for casual users like me. I certainly wouldn't use most of what's in the Adobe package. People only complain because they are getting real value out of Photoshop and don't want to see any changes (or they pirated the software in the first place as a protest against the high price). If there is little value in the software to the user, they will merely switch to something else. I'm guessing that most of the casual users of Photoshop don't even own the current version. The casual user is not Adobe's market and doubt that they are concerned about them.

In the past Adobe has been forced to introduce major upgrades to continue generating revenues. Even then I know that there are plenty of people using older versions of the software because they don't need more and won't pay for an upgrade. They can still buy Adobe CS6 right now and use it for many years to come. For the people who would have upgraded anyway, the change may be a blessing in disguise. There will be no more worrying about upgrading since their software will always be the current version.

From Adobe's perspective they will no longer need to add useless features to the software in an attempt to convince users that they need to upgrade. The developers can concentrate on those improvements and fixes that actually help their clients, rather than adding fluff to make it look different. Rather than selling a package and forgetting about support, the annual fee system requires that the customers be kept happy. (I'm not sure that Adobe is ready for this one.) If you make a regular payment to a company, you expect more. If you don't get it, then you start planning your exit.

I guess we'll see how it goes, but my feeling is that the serious people who love the Adobe products will make the transition with only

a modicum of griping. The others probably had no intention of buying the new version in any case.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

After a year of Internet access, Internet Explorer 8 has given the diagnostic page for a week. Do I need to upgrade Win XP SP3 & IE 8? The diagnostic indicates it cannot resolve the IP code. Should I try the latest version of Firefox? Will it run on my Dell PC?

Thanks,

James Taylor
SD, CA

Dear James,

I'm not sure that your problem has anything to do with Internet Explorer or your computer—although it wouldn't hurt to upgrade to the latest version of Internet Explorer.

When you enter the URL into a Web browser, the first thing it does is check a Domain Name System (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain_Name_System*) (DNS) server. This server looks up the name and resolves it to the IP address so it can find the Web site. It sounds like your problem could be associated with some missing settings.

You can determine if the problem is DNS by going directly to a Web site with the IP address. Here's the IP for the Google Web site: 74.125.239.41 (*74.125.239.41*). Click the link or copy-and-paste the IP into your browser. If the page loads without problem, then it's likely a DNS problem.

This Microsoft Support article (*support.microsoft.com/kb/305553*) describes how to configure your network connection to target a DNS server. If you're set to obtain automatically you might try designating the DNS servers from Google (*developers.google.com/speed/public-dns/*).

Another possibility that could cause the problem would be if your computer name and/or workgroup is missing. Open Control Panel => System and select the Computer Name tab to check.

Digital Dave

Dear Digital Dave,

I read your column every week and really enjoy any tidbit I can pick up. But I notice that you often get questions that I know you've answered before. Don't you ever get tired of repeating yourself?

Howard
Chula Vista, CA

Dear Howard,

I know that not everyone gets a chance to read every column. It's true that I do occasionally get what seem like repeat questions, but when I check my previous answers, they are just nuanced enough that I think it deserves another look. I might link to the old answer, but I want to give just a little more to tailor the answer to the specific question.

Plus, people ask the questions they have, not the ones that fit into my topics. The questions in this column reflect the problems that people are encountering. It doesn't bother me at all to cover the same concerns one more time. The reader may not have seen (or isn't able to find) my last words. I may have more to add or maybe the answer has changed with the times. I think we all need a reminder from time to time.

Digital Dave

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Five Cool Little Windows Apps

"A Dictionary, a Scratchpad, Easy Folder Switching, a Screen Magnifier, and Easy Foreign Characters**"** by Jack Dunning

Digging around the Web and the AutoHotkey community, Jack finds a few apps that any Windows user may like.

There are thousands of free programs available for Windows computers. While most of them are junk, there are always a few worth investigating. I've accumulated many of my favorites into the e-book *Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B008BLUZRS/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B008BLUZRS&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*),* but those are mostly full-blown programs rather than the quick apps which make my daily computing easier. Here I offer five interesting apps which you may find helpful and could make your computer more "user-friendly."

First, there is a dictionary app which does a quick Web look-up of definitions for words selected in any Windows program. It's much faster than loading your Web browser, doing a Google search, then accessing a dictionary site. Second, a pop-up scratchpad for instantly taking notes. Third, an app for quickly switching to favorite folders when opening and/or saving files. Fourth, a screen magnifier which is more useful and flexible than the Windows screen magnifier. Lastly, for those who work in foreign languages, a quick app that makes it easy to add those special accented characters to any Windows document or Web editing field.

What all these apps have in common is AutoHotkey. Since I've started working with AutoHotkey, I keep finding more little scripts that make my life at the keyboard simpler. Admittedly I've written some scripts myself (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3127&article=ahk*) for educational purposes and personal use, but there are many more written by others which you may find even more helpful. I've decided to pass along five of those others which either may have universal appeal or they solve a particular problem.

*Note: While AutoHotkey as an Open Source Windows scripting language has been around for a number of years, many people are only just starting to take advantage of the power that it can add to Windows computers. You don't need AutoHotkey installed to use any of the apps that I present here, although a tiny bit of knowledge can help you tweak these and other scripts to conform more to your requirements. If you want to learn what all the fuss is about see "Introduction to AutoHotkey (*www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/Introduction_AutoHotkey_Review_and_Guide_for_Beginners.html*)" for newcomers.*

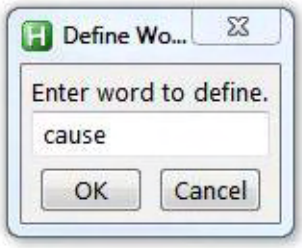
All of the apps found here are written in the AutoHotkey scripting language and are easy to use. You can download them in the compiled version (EXE) which will run directly on your Windows computer (double-click) without AutoHotkey installed or any AutoHotkey knowledge, or you can download the AHK file and either run it in conjunction with AutoHotkey or compile it yourself (which is safer) to an EXE file for running on any Windows computers. (Once you've downloaded the script—an AHK text file with lines of AutoHotkey code—compiling AutoHotkey scripts is a simple process , see "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*)").

The AutoHotkey Scripts Forum (*www.autohotkey.com/board/forum/49-scripts/*) has thousands of scripts available for anyone to use. That's part of the problem. There are so many AutoHotkey scripts posted that it can take a lot of screening to find one useful to you. Plus, most of the scripts are AutoHotkey utilities which are great if you know how to use them, but for the average person they are far too enigmatic. I've taken some time to begin digging through the scripts forum and the scripts which appear in the AutoHotkey Script Showcase (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/scripts/index.htm*) section to come up with a few which can be immediately valuable to most Windows computer users whether they understand AutoHotkey is or not.

I've only scratched the surface at the AutoHotkey Scripts Forum. No doubt there are many more gems hidden in there. I'll keep digging and will report back when I find others worth mentioning. I've posted most of these apps on the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download site (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) in a ZIP file with the same filename. The ZIP file contains both the AutoHotkey file (AHK extension) which runs when AutoHotkey is installed and the compiled command file (EXE extension) which will run with a double-click on any Windows computer. I have compiled all of these myself, so they are safe to load. (Those which I have not posted can be found at the link referenced in this article.)

Instant Dictionary Definitions

First off, one of the best general purpose Windows apps is the instant definitions (*www.autohotkey.com/board/topic/92790-dictionary-get-all-definitions-of-an-entered-or-selected-word/*) script posted by Robert Ryan (rbrtryn). It has several advantages over the usual Web search for definitions, but best of all it's fast.



This dictionary which I cleverly assigned the filenames *Dictionary.ahk* and *Dictionary.exe* is a cool little program which accesses Dictionary.com (*dictionary.com*) to look up either a word entered into a pop-up (CTRL+SHIFT+D, see image at left) or a word selected (click and hold left mouse button while dragging to highlight the word) in any window (CTRL+ALT+D) whether a text editor, Web page, or any other program with select-able text. (I changed this last hotkey combination from CTRL +⊞+D in deference to Ron Cerrato who doesn't have a ⊞ key.) Of course you could just go to Dictionary.com and look up any word you like, but then you would be forced to open your Web browser and deal with all of the chaff and advertising on the site (see Figure 1). Ryan's app reaches out and grabs the correct page from the Web, then removes all the annoyances before displaying a barebones definition.

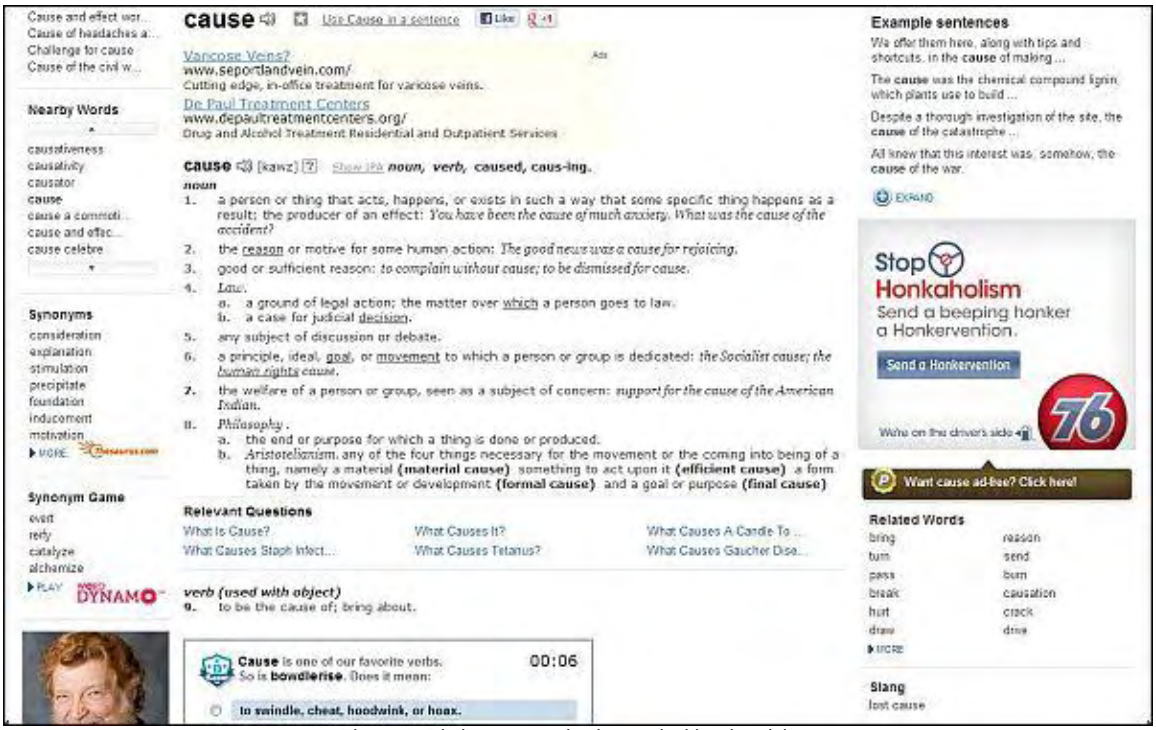


Figure 1. Dictionary.com is cluttered with advertising.

While there is more information available on the Web page than in the pop-up window (see Figure 2), what you get with the Dictionary app may be all that's needed when you're reading a Blog or e-book and want a quick definition. I prefer using the select a word (highlight with cursor while holding down the left mouse button), then CTRL+ALT+D method of searching for the definition over entering the word into the pop-up. I usually check the definition when I see an unknown word in an article or contemplate using other forms of words while I'm writing. I sometimes need to ensure that I'm using the correct word for the job.

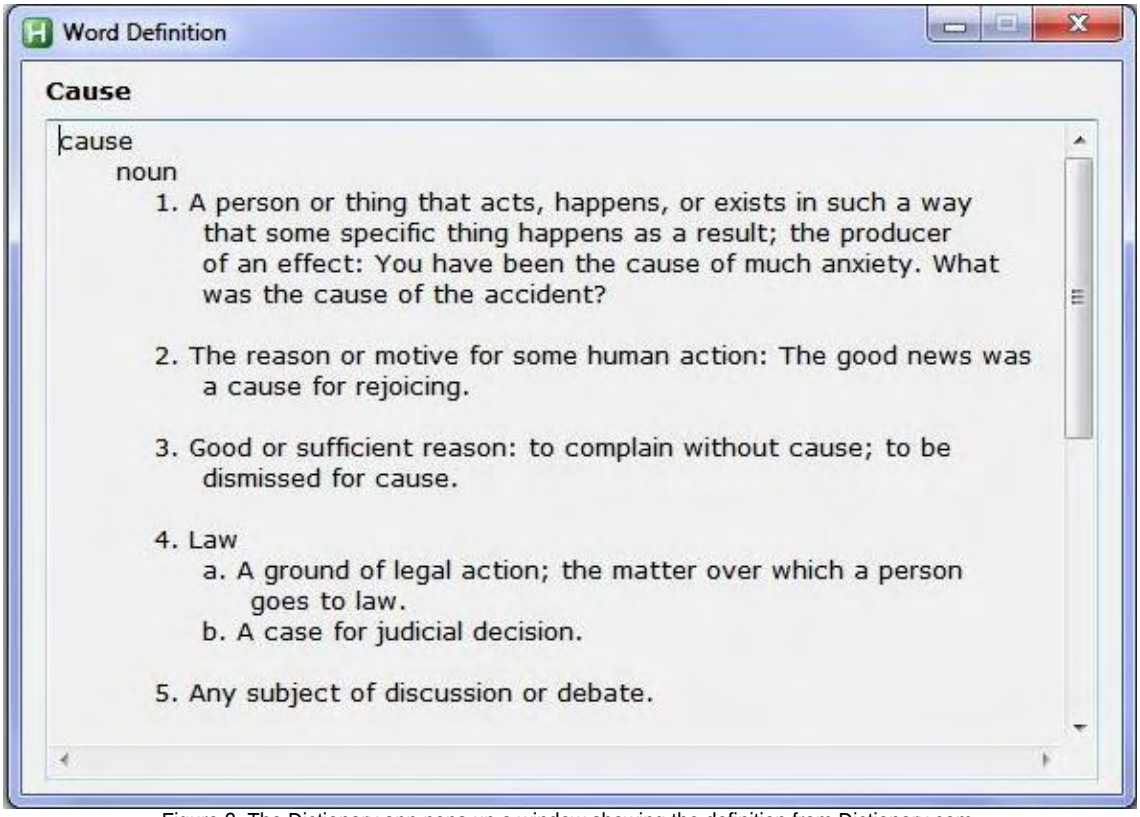


Figure 2. The Dictionary app pops up a window showing the definition from Dictionary.com.

If the word is not found at Dictionary.com, the app takes a stab at offering another word—although not a group of words. It is expected that you will know how to spell the word. This app is about finding the meaning, not correcting spelling.

The Dictionary app is limited in how much it will provide. If there are numerous definitions, it will start with the most common per Dictionary.com, but gives up after about 50 or so. If you need more definitions or synonyms then you will probably want to access the site directly.

I made a couple of adjustments to the current script which makes the window a little smaller and adjusts the word wrap to fit that smaller window size. However, Ryan's work is far beyond my coding skills. He uses a number of involved Regular Expressions to do the dirty work.

Note: For people not familiar with Regular Expressions (RegExp) in programming, they are powerful commands for altering text. (There is nothing "regular" about them.) For some, creating Regular Expressions is a work of art, but for most people they are totally befuddling. While I've used simple Regular Expressions in some applications, I tend to get lost if they are too complex. (If you want to impress a programmer with your knowledge, ask him or her if they use Regular Expressions much. Then just nod knowing—regardless of the answer.) As for the Dictionary script, I would like to see the Synonyms appear in the pop-up window, but that would require more work with the Regular Expressions in AutoHotkey. I'm not ready for that yet, but maybe someone out there would like to take on the task.

You can find Ryan's original dictionary script (*www.autohotkey.com/board/topic/92790-dictionary-get-all-definitions-of-an-entered-or-selected-word/*) on the AutoHotkey site. I've posted my slightly modified version, both *Dictionary.ahk* script and the compiled *Dictionary.exe* app in *Dictionary.zip*, at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download page (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*).

Scratchpad, the Rapid Note-taking Tool

I've previously discussed this cool little pop-up memo pad called Scratchpad (*www.desiquintans.com/articles.php?page=scratchpad*) in "Free Scratchpad App (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3106&article=vista*)." It's for jotting down (and saving) quick thoughts and copying those blurbs which don't warrant the loading of a word processor (or even Notepad). The script was written by Desi Quintans and is offered through his Web site in a ZIP file (*www.desiquintans.com/articles.php?page=scratchpad*) with both *Scratchpad.ahk* and *Scratchpad.exe*. (If you're concerned about using the EXE file, then you can compile the AHK file (*www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html*) yourself with the AutoHotkey main program.)

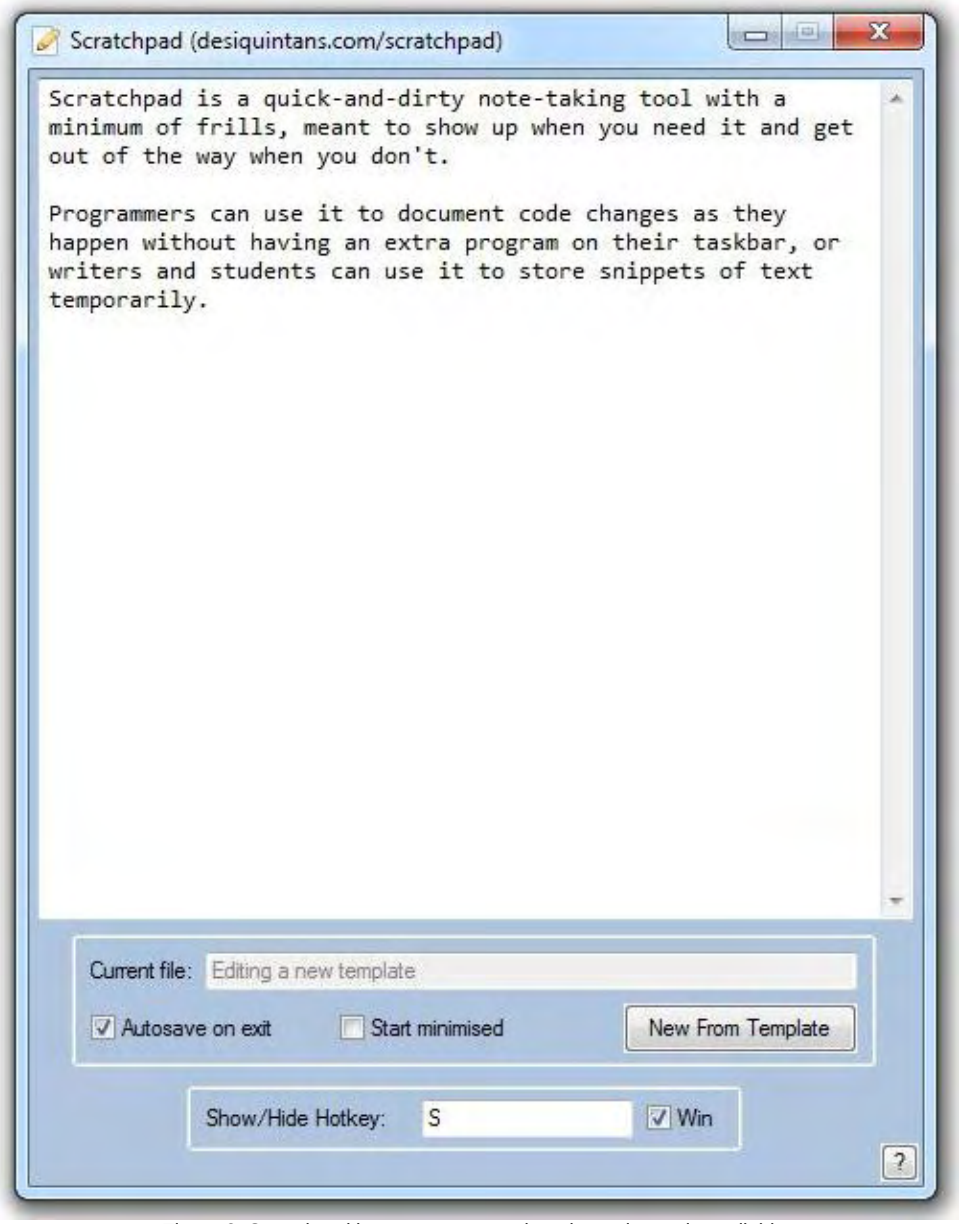


Figure 3. Scratchpad is a pop-up note taker always instantly available.

Initially, Scratchpad sets up WIN+S (+S) as the hotkey combination to bring up the editing screen. But as can be seen at the bottom in Figure 3 above, WIN () key can be deselected and other alternative keys (CTRL, ALT, and SHIFT) can be added.

The same week that I discussed Scratchpad I offered an AutoHotkey technique that would turn Scratchpad into a power note taker (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3106&article=ahk*). Rather than using copy-and-paste and hopping between Web pages and the Scratchpad, the short five-line script copies selected text from any document or Web page directly to the editing field of Scratchpad—without switching windows.

FavoriteFolders for Opening and Saving Files

This FavoriteFolders app solves a problem that I've had for quite a while, especially in Windows Vista and Windows 7. I use the Favorites list (not available in Windows XP) in Windows Explorer extensively. I put regularly used folders into the Favorites section as shortcuts. This makes it easy to jump between *ComputorEdge* issues, e-books, Dropbox, and various other file locations. I change these links

each week as the *ComputorEdge* issue changes. This is handy when opening and saving files in most Windows programs, but there are still quite a few applications, such as the graphics program IrfanView, which don't offer the Favorites list in the Open/Save dialogue boxes. That means I'm forced to navigate through the tree structure to find the target folder. Very annoying! FavoriteFolders solves the problem.

With FavoriteFolders (*www.autohotkey.com/docs/scripts/FavoriteFolders.htm*) (link to original script) I can use the hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+E to pop-up a menu of those same Favorite links in Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8 (see Figure 4). The location of that folder which contains the shortcuts is *C:*bckslsh*Users*bckslsh*%A_UserName% *bckslsh*Links*. (The original AHK script uses the middle mouse button for the hotkey which didn't work for me. I changed it to CTRL +ALT+E. Plus, the file could not be compiled since it referenced itself for the list of menu items. I modified this Easy Access Folders (*github.com/wyldphyre/AutoHotKey/blob/master/Deprecated/Easy%20Access%20Folders.ahk*) script to use the new key combination and the Favorites folder for the pop-up menu. My slightly modified version can be found at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download page (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) in *FavoritesFolder.zip*.)

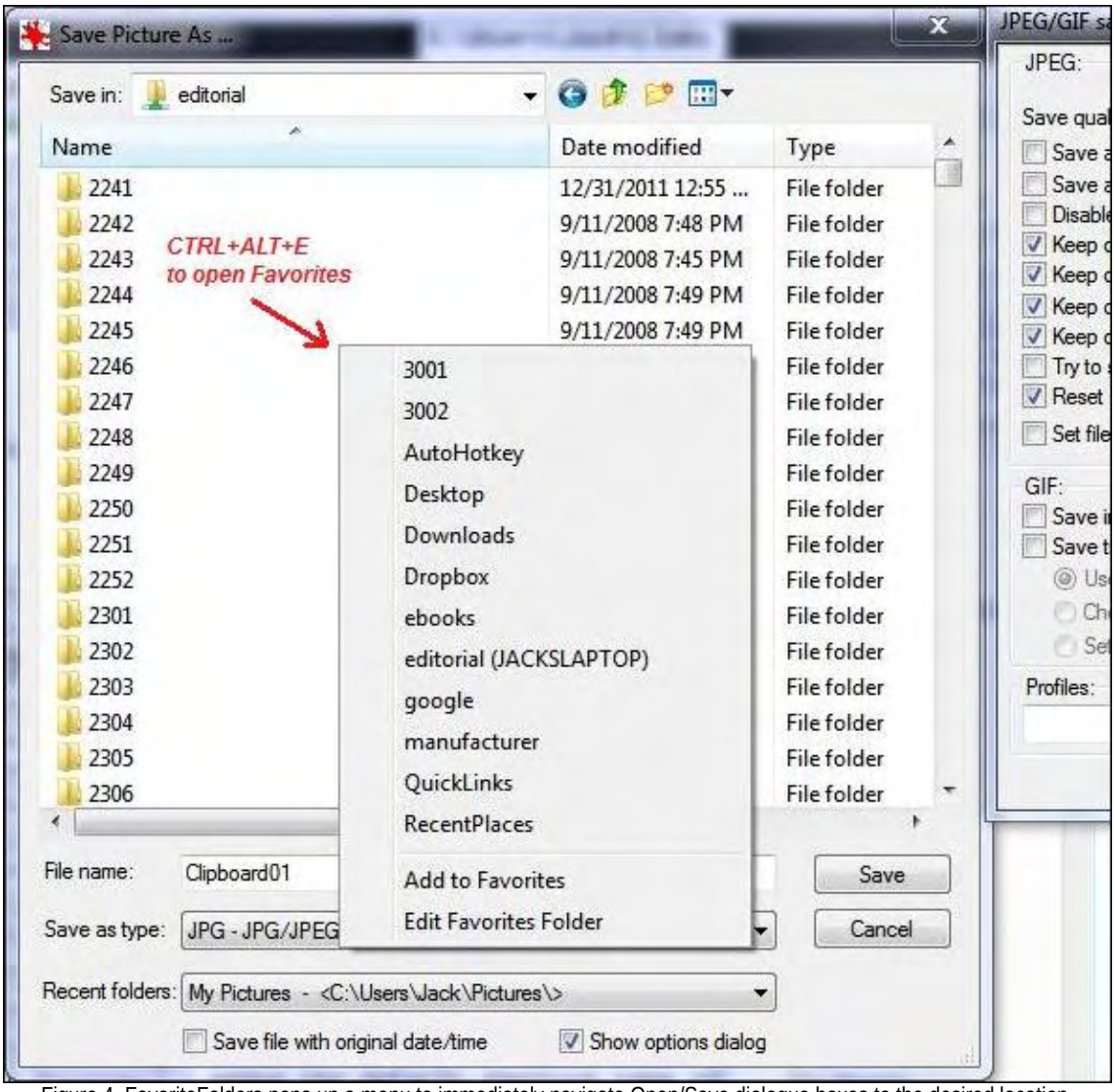


Figure 4. FavoriteFolders pops up a menu to immediately navigate Open/Save dialogue boxes to the desired location.

What's cool about FavoriteFolders is that if my most used folders are in the Links folder, then I no longer need to hassle with navigating through the Windows tree structure. After CTRL+ALT+E is pressed, the menu pops up, I select the location and the dialog immediately shifts to that folder. The hotkey combination only activates the menu if the proper type of window (Save as, Open, etc.) is active. This filtering is done by adding a tilde (~) to the hotkey combination in the AHK script. This limits the use of the two items on the bottom of the menu (Add to favorites and Edit Favorites Folder) because the menu won't open in other windows. If you wanted the menu to pop-up anytime, then delete the tilde found in the line "f_Hotkey = ~^!E" early in the AHK file.

If you're using Windows XP, then you can create your own Links folder at the location noted above. Then add shortcuts to your favorite folders and files. You will have a Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 feature without needing to upgrade. I've added this as a regular feature of my main AutoHotkey app which loads whenever I log on.

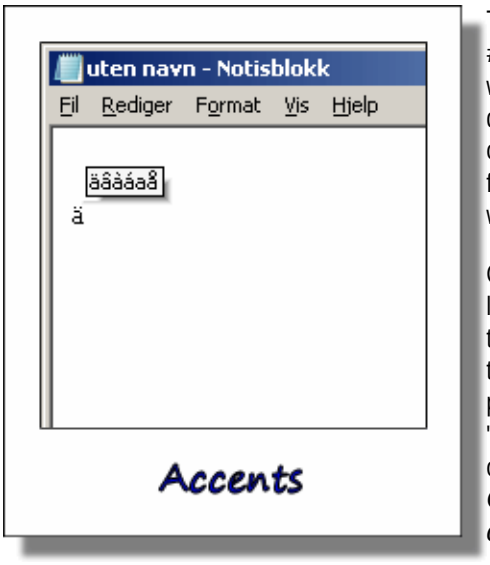
Screen Magnifier

I'm not sure how much people use screen magnifiers—Windows has one built in. What distinguish this cool magnifier (*www.autohotkey.com/board/topic/10660-screenmagnifier/*) are its features (See Figure 5). You can change the level of magnification by selecting the value in the upper left-hand corner menu. You can even reduce the size by half.

Figure 5. This screen magnifier has adjustments for magnification, anti-aliasing (smoothing), and time delay.

It's quick—load the script and it appears. The AHK script and compiled EXE file can be found in Magnifier.zip at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download page (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) in *FavoritesFolder.zip*.

Accented Characters



This little Accent app (*www.donationcoder.com/Software/Skrommel/#Accents*) from Skrommel will come in handy if you work with foreign languages or want them for the few English words that ask for them. Since these special characters don't appear on most keyboards Accents makes is much easier to add various types of squiggles to your documents. (See image at left. The image is an animated GIF file. Most media will show it in action, but some, such as the Amazon Kindle e-book, will not.)

Once loaded, the characters will start to cycle through the variations of the accented letters after the same vowel (a, e, i, o, u, or y) is entered three times in row—replacing the three with one. Keep typing and the characters continue to cycle, but if you pause, the last character becomes permanent—at least until you delete it. For example if I press the letter "e" three times, the character "æ" will be substituted. Next, "ë", "ê", "è", "é", and finally "e" will appear with each successive stroke, then start the rotation all over again. My slightly modified version of Accents can be found at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download page (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*) in *Accents.zip*.

There are a number of other apps at the Skrommel site. You may find some of them useful. I would stay away from ToddlerTrap for disabling your keyboard and mouse. I must have done something wrong, because it became a Jack-trap and I had to restart the computer. Besides, WIN+L (+L) locks the screen for protection from children. I've done it many times when grand kids are visiting.

I'll continue looking for apps that anyone can use on their Windows computer. Remember that it's probably safer to download the AutoHotkey script (AHK), then compile it into an EXE, but most of these sites have staked their reputation on providing clean files. If

you're concerned, then get the nerdy neighbor kid to compile the files for you. If he doesn't know about AutoHotkey, then you'll be doing him (or her) a favor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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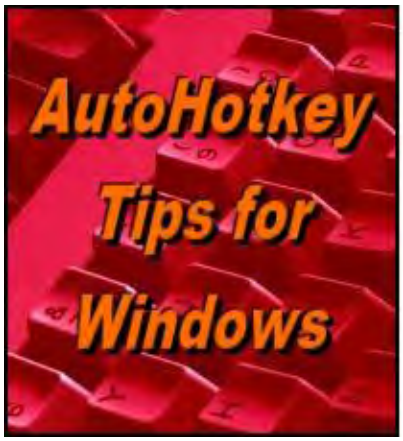


The Perfect Soft Boiled Egg

"The Immersible Egg Timer or a Recipe for a Barebones Windows Countdown Egg Timer**"** by Jack Dunning

> Jack offers an AutoHotkey app that counts down to zero before setting off three alarms.

Let's face it. Making a soft boiled egg can be an iffy proposition. Cook it too long and the yolk is too hard—no good for dipping little pieces of toast. If the egg comes out of the water too soon, it's a runny mess. To my taste, the perfect soft boiled egg has a solid white and a runny yolk, perfect for dipping "little soldiers (*amandascookin.com/2010/02/soft-boiled-eggs-toasted-soldiers.html*)", as my wife calls them.

The timing is always a little tricky when boiling an egg. Normally three minutes is considered the optimum time, but other variables such as the initial temperature of the egg and the altitude can affect the outcome. The best egg timer (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00004UE75/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00004UE75&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20*) I've found is not a timer at all, but a piece of plastic shaped like an egg (see image at left). Put the plastic egg in the water at the same time as the eggs and as the eggs cook the timer will turn color from the outside in. As the color change reaches different marks the doneness of the eggs is indicated. It works great while accounting for most other environmental variables.

However, since we are all to some degree nerds, we want to time our three minute eggs with our computer—maybe a Windows laptop located in the kitchen. Fortunately, there is no shortage of free computer egg timers available on the Web as small apps. But rather than introduce any of those clever gadgets, I'm going to give you a recipe for making your own egg timer with AutoHotkey.

(The problem with only using a submersible egg timer is that unless you're continually watching the plastic egg in the boiling water, you might miss when the eggs are done. If you're not there at it at the right time, you could blow it. So, set your computer egg timer to 2:30 minutes and stare into the boiling pot for the last 30 seconds.)

An AutoHotkey Barebones Egg Timer

This AutoHotkey *EggTimer.ahk* (clever file name) recipe offers a number of insights into both how to make a countdown timer of any kind and how to use a progress bar in an AutoHotkey app. It is a short script which demonstrates helpful techniques which can be used in other apps.

*If you've never heard of AutoHotkey and wonder what all the ado is about, then here is a short "Introduction to AutoHotkey (*www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/Introduction_AutoHotkey_Review_and_Guide_for_Beginners.html*)" for newcomers.*

The EggTimer app works by opening a window (after loading, press CTRL+F12) where you set the desired time interval, then click Start (see Figure 1). The time counts down to zero in the edit windows while a progress bar works it way from left to right.

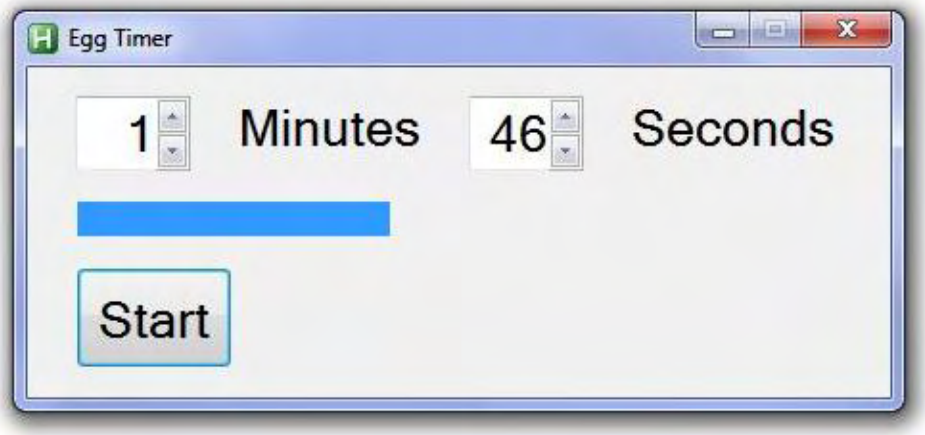


Figure 1. The EggTimer script opens a window to set the desired time and start the countdown. The progress bar moves to the right indicating how much time has passed.

The time initially defaults to three minutes since that is how long it takes to make the perfect egg. (Of course, you can change the default in the script to anything that you desire.) This is a barebones timer which once started does not allow you to pause the countdown. After all the eggs don't stop cooking once they are in the water. Interestingly you can pause (or suspend) the script through the icon right-click menu in System Tray, but that won't stop the process. On resume, the timer will pick up at the same place where it would have been as if never paused.

While the number pad cannot be used to enter or adjust the desired amount of time, either the little up/down arrows to the right of the minutes and seconds fields or scrolling the mouse wheel when a field is selected will increment the values between 0 and 59. The max time interval is 59 minutes and 59 seconds. The *EggTimer.ahk* script does not use any of the AutoHotkey time calculation commands such as *EnvSub* and *EnvAdd*. This is unnecessary and saves the complications that come with working with dates and times. It is a simple countdown to a specific point on the computer's clock.

Once the countdown increments to zero, a bell rings, the computer voice says "Your eggs are ready!", and a window pops up with the same message, see image at left. The three different methods of notification are used because it is desperately important that you take the eggs out of the water and run them under cold water. Otherwise, your soft boiled eggs will continue to cook and the yolk will be too hard to dip your "little soldiers." (The eggs will continue to cook in the shell if you don't run them under cold water. Don't worry. The cold water won't make the eggs cold—as long as you don't do it too long.)

How the EggTimer Script Works

The first step in the EggTimer app is to set up the pop-up window with the GUI command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm*). In this case the GUI, ADD (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Add*) subcommand is used to implement the *Edit*, *UpDown*, *Text*, *Progress*, and *Button* control types as follows:

```
Gui, Font, s20
Gui, Add, Edit, w60 number right ReadOnly
Gui, Add, UpDown, vMinutes Range0-59 wrap, 3
Gui, Add, Text, ys, Minutes
Gui, Add, Edit, w60  ys number right ReadOnly
Gui, Add, UpDown, vSeconds Range0-59 wrap, 0
Gui, Add, Text, ys, Seconds
Gui, Add, Progress, w400 h20 vMyProgress xs
Gui, Add, Button, section, Start
```

The first line of code (*Gui, Font, s20*) increases the font size to 20 point making it large and easy to read from across the kitchen.

In the second and third lines of code, the EDIT Gui control (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Edit*) is used in combination with the UPDOWN Gui control (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#UpDown*). The *UpDown* control is normally used in conjunction with a "buddy control" as seen with *Edit* in this example. That means the value in the preceding *Edit* field will increment as the *UpDown* control is clicked.

In the *Edit* line the *ReadOnly* option is used to prevent direct keyboard input into the edit field. This is necessary because even though the input is restricted to numbers by the *number* option, it would still be possible to enter numbers outside the desired ranges such as 68 minutes or seconds. The *Right* option right justifies the entry in the edit field as would be expected for numbers.

The third line of code (*Gui, Add, UpDown, vMinutes Range0-59 wrap, 3*) has become the primary control for both the *UpDown* control and the *Edit* control which precedes it. The variable *Minutes* (*vMinutes* in the options) will contain the value displayed in the edit field when the GUI is submitted (GUI, SUBMIT (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Submit*)). The *Range* option set the value of *Minutes* to between 0 and 59. The *Wrap* option causes the edit field to reset to 0 if the value passes 59 (or 59 if value decrease to less than 0). This contains all possible values to integers within the range of one hour.

The another feature of adding the *UpDown* control is that it makes the *Edit* field responsive to scrolling. The benefit is that when selected the minutes or seconds field will increment within range (0 to 59) when rotating the mouse wheel.

The fourth line of code is merely a text label (Minutes) set to the right (*ys*, section right or start a new column) of the *Edit/UpDown* control combination.

The next three lines of code are replicas of the previous lines except that the key variable is now *Seconds* rather than *Minutes*.

Added below the *Minutes* and *Seconds* is the Gui, Add, Progress command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Progress*) (*Gui, Add, Progress, w400 h20 vMyProgress xs*). This is a solid bar which grows from left to right as the clock counts down. The total width of the bar when complete will be 400 pixels (*w400*) with a height of 20 pixels (*h20*). The variable *MyProgress* (*vMyProgress*) is used to increment the bar. The *xs* option places the bar on the next row in the window.

The last line of code shown (*Gui, Add, Button, section, Start*) adds a Button control (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControls.htm#Button*) to begin the countdown. Since the Button is named Start, the subroutine (label) called when clicking the button is named *ButtonStart*. The *Section* option (start a new section) was used to place the button below and to the left, although the *xs* option (start a new row) could have just as easily been used. (For more information on formatting AutoHotkey GUIs, see the "Using GUI Control Positioning and Sizing Options" section of this previous AutoHotkey column (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3113&article=ahk*).)

The next step in building the EggTimer script is creating a hotkey combination to display the pop-up window:

```
^F12::
  Gui, Show, , Egg Timer
Return
```

When the script is first loaded the GUI window is set up, but it won't display until the hotkey combination CTRL+F12 (*^F12*) is used to activate the window (*Gui, Show, , Egg Timer*). It is important that the initial setup of the GUI window (the first eight lines of code) not be included inside the hotkey routine. Otherwise, the script will attempt to set up the variables again causing errors since they are already in use. The setup must only run once.

The final portion of the *EggTimer.ahk* script is the *ButtonStart:* subroutine which does all of the work:

```
ButtonStart:
  Gui, Submit, NoHide
; Setting the stop time
  TotalSec := (Minutes*60+Seconds)
  StopTime := A_TickCount + (TotalSec*1000)
; Counting down the time while incrementing the progress bar
  Loop
    {
      Sleep 1000
      TimeLeft := (StopTime - A_TickCount)/1000
      ProgressBar := 100-(TimeLeft/TotalSec*100)
      Minutes := Floor(TimeLeft/60)
      Seconds := Round(Mod(TimeLeft,60))
      If TimeLeft >= 0
        {
           GuiControl,, Edit1, %Minutes%
           GuiControl,, Edit2, %Seconds%
         }
```

```
      GuiControl,, MyProgress, %ProgressBar%
      If (A_TickCount >= Stoptime)
        {
           Break
        }
    }
; Setting off the alarms
  SoundBeep,,300
  ComObjCreate("SAPI.SpVoice").Speak("Your eggs are ready!")
   MsgBox, 4096, Egg Timer, Your eggs are ready!
Return
```

There are three portions to the subroutine: setting the stop time; counting down the time while incrementing the progress bar; and setting off the three alarms (bell, voice and message box).

Calculating the Stop Time

The first line of *ButtonStart* (*Gui, Submit, NoHide*) saves the current values of edit fields to the variables *Minutes* and *Seconds*. The *NoHide* option is used to leave the window open—just in case you want another egg.

The next line of code (*TotalSec := (Minutes*60+Seconds)*) stores the total number of seconds to the variable *TotalSec* by multiplying the number of *Minutes* by 60 and adding it to the number of *Seconds*.

Then, on the following line (*StopTime := A_TickCount + (TotalSec*1000)*), the *StopTime* is calculated by using the built in AutoHotkey variable A_TickCount (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/Variables.htm#date*). *A_TickCount* contains the number of microseconds since the computer was last booted. This built in variable is the key to making the timer work. A date or time is not needed for this app—just a starting point which is *A_TickCount*. By adding the number of microseconds we want to wait (*TotalSec*1000*) to the current *A_TickCount*, we get the future *A_Tickcount* (*StopTime*) at which the alarm must go off.

Counting Down

The bulk of the action is consumed within the Loop command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Loop.htm*) which counts down to zero while displaying an incrementing progress bar. This *Loop* continues until it encounters the Break command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Break.htm*) which terminates any *Loop* in which it is found. In this case, the Loop continues until:

```
If (A_TickCount >= StopTime)
    {
       Break
    }
```

That is *IF* the number of microseconds since the computer last booted (*A_TickCount*) is greater than (>) or equal to (=) the calculated *StopTime*, then stop (*Break*) the *Loop*. Prior to that *Break* point, the countdown and progress bar updates every second.

By using the Sleep command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Sleep.htm*) (*Sleep 1000*), the script waits one second (1000 microseconds) before continuing the *Loop*.

To count down the *Minutes* and *Seconds*, plus put the progress bar into action, a few calculations are necessary:

```
      TimeLeft := (StopTime - A_TickCount)/1000
      ProgressBar := 100-(TimeLeft/TotalSec*100)
      Minutes := Floor(TimeLeft/60)
      Seconds := Round(Mod(TimeLeft,60))
```

The remaining time in seconds (*TimeLeft*) is *StopTime* minus *A_TickCount* converted from microseconds to seconds by dividing by 1000.

The width of a progress bar is based upon its value as a portion of 100%. At zero there is no bar; at 100 the bar is complete. To calculate the proper status (bar width) the remaining time as a percent of the total initial time is subtracted from 100% (*ProgressBar := 100-(TimeLeft/TotalSec*100)*).

There are a series of built in math functions (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/Functions.htm#BuiltIn*) which help in the conversion from seconds into minutes and seconds. The first is *Floor(Number)* which returns the integer value by removing any decimal

remainder from the number. In this case by dividing the number of seconds remaining (*TimeLeft*) by 60 the *Floor(TimeLeft/60)* function calculates the number of full *Minutes*.

Next, to calculate the number of *Seconds* remaining after the *Minutes* are remove from *TimeLeft*, the modulo function (*Mod(Dividend, Divisor)*) provides the remainder from the division problem. The rounding function (*Round(Number [, N])*) is used to ensure that *Seconds* is an integer value (*Round(Mod(TimeLeft,60))*).

The GUICONTROL command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControl.htm*) is used to update both the *Minutes* control (*GuiControl,, Edit1, %Minutes%*) and *Seconds* control (*GuiControl,, Edit2, %Seconds%*), as well as the progress bar (*GuiControl,, MyProgress, %ProgressBar%*). The updates of *Minutes* and *Seconds* were placed inside a trap (*If TimeLeft >= 0*) to prevent negative numbers from being displayed when the countdown reaches zero.

Sounding the Alarm

The alarm consist of three different lines of code:

```
SoundBeep,,300
ComObjCreate("SAPI.SpVoice").Speak("Your eggs are ready!")
MsgBox, 4096, Egg Timer, Your eggs are ready!
```

The first uses the SoundBeep command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/SoundBeep.htm*) to produce an audible beep. Both the frequency and duration of the beep can be adjusted which means you can make music (soft of) with this command—if you know what you're doing.

The computer voice ComObjCreate() function (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ComObjCreate.htm*) has been previously discussed in this column (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3123&article=ahk*). The MsgBox command (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/MsgBox.htm*) adds the final alert.

The Complete EggTimer.ahk Script

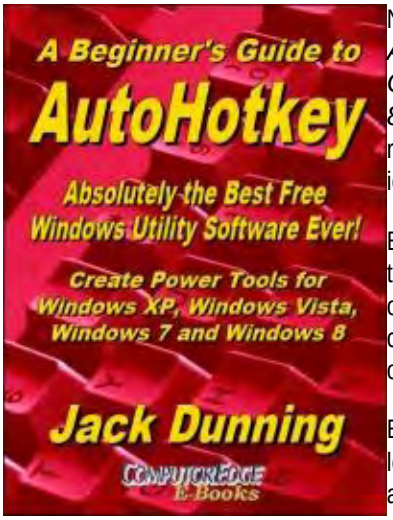
If you copy-and-paste the following script into a new AutoHotkey AHK file, then you will have your own barebones egg times:

```
Gui, Font, s20
Gui, Add, Edit, w60  number right ReadOnly
Gui, Add, UpDown, vMinutes Range0-59 wrap, 3
Gui, Add, Text, ys, Minutes
Gui, Add, Edit, w60  ys number right ReadOnly
Gui, Add, UpDown, vSeconds Range0-59 wrap, 0
Gui, Add, Text, ys, Seconds
Gui, Add, Progress, w400 h20 vMyProgress xs
Gui, Add, Button, section, Start
^F12::
  Gui, Show, , Egg Timer
Return
ButtonStart:
  Gui, Submit, NoHide
  TotalSec := (Minutes*60+Seconds)
  StopTime := A_TickCount + (TotalSec*1000)
  Loop
    {
      Sleep 1000
      TimeLeft := (StopTime - A_TickCount)/1000
      ProgressBar := 100-(TimeLeft/TotalSec*100)
      Minutes := Floor(TimeLeft/60)
      Seconds := Round(Mod(TimeLeft,60))
      If TimeLeft >= 0
        {
           GuiControl,, Edit1, %Minutes%
           GuiControl,, Edit2, %Seconds%
         }
      GuiControl,, MyProgress, %ProgressBar%
```

```
     If (A_TickCount >= Stoptime)
       {
          Break
       }
    }
  SoundBeep,,300
  ComObjCreate("SAPI.SpVoice").Speak("Your eggs are ready!")
  MsgBox, 4096, Egg Timer, Your eggs are ready!
Return
```

You can also download both the EggTimer.ahk and EggTimer.exe files in the ZIP file EggTimer.zip available at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download site (*www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7*).

* * *



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*).*

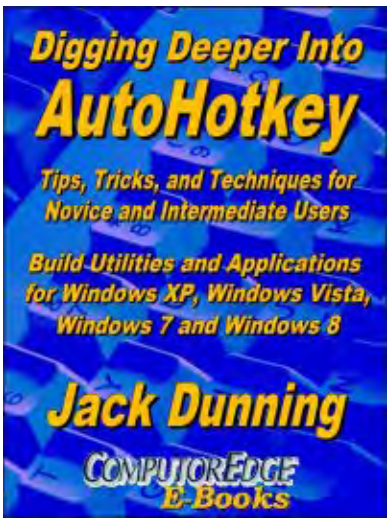
Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, ***free*** Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or 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 *ComputorEdge*, 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*)

* * *

Jack's latest 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.

For an EPUB (iPad, NOOK, etc.) version of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here! (*computoredgebooks.com/Digging-Deeper-into-AutoHotkey-EPUB-format-iPad-Nook-etc-AUTOHOTKEY-2.htm*)

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

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

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

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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

“iWork for Cloud” by Wally Wang

iWork for Cloud; Beware of the Cloud; Wearable Computers; Samsung and Apple; The Laws of Simplicity; The iPad Replaces Cash Registers; HyperCard History and LiveCode; The Path Bar.

The biggest problem with installing software on a computer is that software quickly goes out of date and needs constant patching and revising. To eliminate these problems, many companies are offering office suites in the cloud such as Microsoft Office 365 and Google Apps. Now Apple is offering their own cloud-based office suite called iWork for Cloud. The idea is that iWork stays on Apple's servers and everyone accesses it through a reliable Internet connection.

Now each time Apple needs to patch the program or add new features, they just do it once on their servers and everyone around the world automatically gets the latest, most stable (hopefully) version without having to update or download anything themselves.

While creating and editing files works identically to using a program on your computer, the biggest change is the lack of pull-down menus. Because you need to access iWork for Cloud through a browser, that browser's pull-down menus appear at the top of the screen. As a result, cloud-based programs can't rely on traditional pull-down menus. Instead, they have to rely on icons at the top of the window or on the side. In many ways, iWork for Cloud heavily borrows much of the user interface from the iOS version of iWork. Get rid of pull-down menus and you're left with creatively organizing commands in another way.

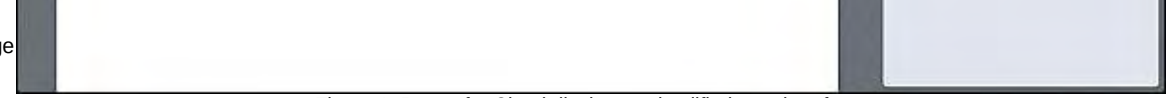

Figure 1. Pages for Cloud displays a simplified user interface.

The lack of pull-down menus means that iWork for Cloud can only display the most common commands that people can easily see and choose. While pull-down menus can store far more commands, they often bury commonly used commands to make everything harder to find.

Microsoft tried to rearrange commands through the Ribbon interface that displays commands as icons, organized in groups represented by tabs. Unfortunately, this approach can require users to hunt through tabs to find the command they want. In Word 2010, adding a watermark would seem to appear on the Insert tab, but it really appears on the Page Layout tab. Then in Word 2013, the watermark command now appears on a new tab called the Design tab. Tabs of icons may be one step better than layers of pull-down menus, but having commonly used commands visible and available at all times is far simpler to use and understand. The drawback is that more complicated commands are missing altogether.

If you need to do complicated formatting, iWork for Cloud probably isn't the best solution compared to a dedicated program running on your computer such as iWork for OS X. Yet if you need to create and edit documents on the go from multiple devices, and you don't need complicated formatting such as tables or footnotes, then a cloud-based office suite will probably meet most people's needs most of the time.

Cloud-based office suites will only get more powerful but until Internet access can be available at all times, don't rely on a cloud-based office suite for everything. Take a cross-country plane ride without any Internet access at all, and the best cloud-based office suite is worthless if you can't access it.

Compared to Google Apps, iWork for Cloud is more intuitive to use. Try adding a picture to a Google Docs file and you have to click an Insert command to open a dialog box, then choose the picture file you want to add. With iWork for Cloud, you just drag the picture you want to add and drop it directly into your iWork document.

Try a cloud-based office suite like iWork for Cloud and look for its benefits. Chances are good that if you keep an open mind, you'll see some advantages of a cloud-based office suite over a dedicated office suite running on your computer. You may not personally need a cloud-based office suite, but don't mistake your own preferences for what everyone else in the world needs either.

Beware of the Cloud

In the wake of Edward Snowden's disclosure of the obvious that the National Security Agency (NSA) was spying on people illegally, many countries are cautioning its citizens to avoid relying on cloud-based services (*www.infoworld.com/t/data-security/germany-joins-in-voicing-distrust-of-us-based-cloud-services-222094*) in the United States.

Of course, storing your data in any cloud-based service is inherently insecure since you never know who can access your data without your knowledge. Although Edward Snowden exposed the NSA's surveillance activities, government agencies in Germany (*www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2011-10/12/german-state-spying-software*), France (*www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/07/04/france-revealed-to-be-spying-on-its-citizens-phone-calls-email-and-social-media/*), Japan, China, Russia, and practically every major country also has the capability to spy on their own citizens. If you're shocked that your own government would spy on its citizens illegally, you may also be shocked to discover that fire is hot and that gravity makes things fall to the ground.

Any time you store anything on a computer that you can't personally control, you put your data at risk. Thieves won't bother trying to steal most people's credit card data when they can just break into Bank of America's computers and steal thousands of credit card numbers at once. Hand your credit card to a waitress at a restaurant and she can copy your credit card numbers and use them to purchase items off the Internet.

Cloud-based computing has its advantages, but security isn't one of them. While cloud-based computing will never be as secure as storing your own data, it can still be secure enough so its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Just be aware of both before committing yourself to computing in the cloud.

Wearable Computers

Just as even the staunchest critics are finally getting used to the idea that tablets can actually be useful, the next new technology wave will be wearable computers. Google Glass lets people wear a computer in a pair of eyeglasses while Apple is rumored to be developing an iWatch (*venturebeat.com/2013/05/29/apple-ceo-tim-cook-on-google-glass-and-apple-iwatch/*). Apple even recently patented the idea of a flexible battery pack (*www.patentlyapple.com/patently-apple/2013/07/apple-prepares-battery-designs-for-flexible-display-devices-while-their-maps-may-gain-a-few-minor-features.html*). Presumably such a flexible battery pack would be handy for powering an iWatch device worn on your wrist.

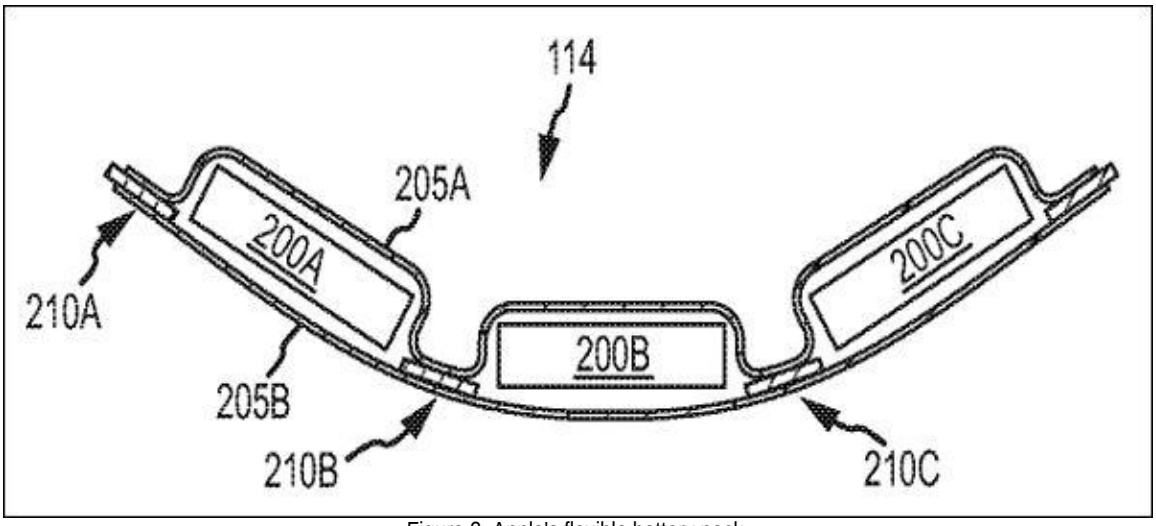

Figure 2. Apple's flexible battery pack.

While critics will still insist that computers can't be useful unless they have a physical keyboard, wearable computers promise to provide hands-free computing. One possible use could be monitoring your health, such as measuring your pulse or skin temperature. The moment the wearable computer detects something out of the ordinary, it could alert paramedics or other people who could help you before it's too late.

Beyond health uses, wearable computers could also be handy for times when you need to use your hands for other purposes, such as driving. Just talk to your wearable computer and it can tell you when to turn. Walk in a busy city and a wearable computer can tell you which street to go down to reach your destination.

In the military, pilots use a heads-up display that projects critical information on the cockpit glass so pilots can keep their eyes scanning the horizon instead of getting distracted looking down at their instrument panel. Wearable computers, such as Google Glass, will be able to provide similar heads-up displays for pedestrians and drivers.

Even Dell believes wearable computers represent a new market (*www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/jul/04/dell-wearable-computing-pc-business*). Unlike Google, Apple, and Microsoft, Dell has to rely on software from someone else, which will likely put a damper on what they can accomplish on their own. Can Dell depend on Microsoft to adapt Windows 8 for wearable computers? Or will Dell have to wait for Google to adapt Android for wearable computers? Unless Dell makes their own software, they're dependent on someone else for innovation, which gives them less control over their own wearable computing designs.

Sam Burd, Dell's global VP of personal computing, said, "I don't see any magic new form factor like the iPad—I don't think anybody saw how that was going to change devices."

Actually the only people who didn't see that the iPad was going to change the computing world were the critics who dismissed the iPad because it didn't exactly duplicate all the features of a laptop. These same critics also failed to see the demise of Adobe Flash, Blackberry smartphones, and Windows PCs. Plenty of people initially saw the advantage of the iPad because so many customers ran out and bought iPads the first day they appeared on the market. The only people who refused to see how the iPad would change the world were the people who refused to acknowledge facts right in front of their own eyes.

Think of a computer that doesn't need a keyboard or monitor at all, and that's the potential of a wearable computer. While the lack of a keyboard or monitor might seem like a handicap, it could actually be an advantage in situations where ordinary computers aren't practical. If you can think of possible benefits instead of comparing how wearable computing doesn't exactly equal all the features of a desktop PC, you won't miss out on the coming wearable computing revolution that will shake up the world just like tablets are doing today.

Samsung and Apple

Samsung recently recorded record profits, yet their stock dropped (*www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2013/jul/05/samsung-shares-fall-record-profits*) as a result. A while back, Apple also recorded the sixth most profitable quarter in corporate history, and their stock also dropped (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_corporate_profits_and_losses*).

What analysts fear is that the smartphone market is getting saturated. Instead of getting new customers, Samsung and Apple will need to make money off their existing customers.

When Apple sells an iPhone, they make money on the sale. Then they make additional revenue from anyone selling iPhone apps. With the iPhone topping customer satisfaction surveys (*www.inquisitr.com/828164/apple-iphone-tops-customer-*

satisfaction-survey-in-samsungs-home-country/) in America and around the world, there's a good chance that existing iPhone customers will eventually upgrade to a newer iPhone model in a few years.

Samsung only makes money when they sell a smartphone. When Samsung smartphone users buy apps, Samsung sees none of this money. With lower customer satisfaction than the iPhone, Samsung will likely see fewer of its existing customers upgrade to another Samsung smartphone when they can either defect to the iPhone or buy a different Android smartphone from another manufacturer.

If the smartphone market is getting saturated, Samsung will likely get hurt far worse than Apple. Apple can make money off its existing customers while Samsung cannot. That's why Samsung needs to keep releasing newer models rapidly to entice its customers to upgrade and convince new customers to buy the latest Samsung model.

While flooding the market with an endless stream of new smartphone models can work, it's not as profitable as raking in profits from app sales like Apple can do. Samsung has to work harder than Apple just to maintain their profits.

Perhaps the biggest danger is that Samsung needs to differentiate their Android smartphones from other Android smartphones. Just look at how the PC market became a commodity market with Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and other companies offering virtually identical products until the only selling point was a lower price. When price is the only advantage you have over competitors, you really don't have any advantage at all.

The Laws of Simplicity

One reason why tech-savvy people are often out of touch with the rest of the world is because they think everyone should become tech-savvy like them. The tech-savvy solution to every problem is to blame the user and force the user to spend years learning technology so they can use it just like they do. Tech-savvy people rarely consider that most people don't want to waste their time learning how to use technology when they could just use something much simpler instead.

To learn more about this battle between technology and simplicity, read *The Laws of Simplicity (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0262134721/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0262134721&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*)* by John Maeda. As the author puts it, "Finally, we are learning that simplicity equals sanity. We're rebelling against technology that's too complicated, DVD players with too many menus, and software accompanied by 75-megabyte 'read me' manuals. The iPod's clean gadgetry has made simplicity hip. But sometimes we find ourselves caught up in the simplicity paradox: we want something that's simple and easy to use, but also does all the complex things we might ever want it to do." Critics often complain that the iPad doesn't do everything that a laptop can do, and they're right. Then again, a car doesn't do everything a horse can do either, but that doesn't make cars inferior to horses. Rather than try to cram every possible feature into a product and hope that people will find a use for them, it's often better to design a product to solve one problem well.

Ever see a construction worker putting together a skyscraper using a Swiss Army knife? The Swiss Army knife has lots of features, but none of them are as good as using a dedicated tool for doing the job. *The Laws of Simplicity* emphasizes the appeal of simple solutions to complex problems rather than complex solutions to simple problems.

Tech-savvy people love complexity, but most other people don't. When tech-savvy people design products for themselves, it involves a lot of complexity. Instead of simplifying the solution, tech-savvy people prefer to add another layer of complexity to solve the initial problem. The result is an endless cascade of complexity built on top of more complexity, which drives most people away.

Technology should solve problems, not create more problems. By skimming through a book like *The Laws of Simplicity*, you can see how simplicity doesn't have to mean limitation. As the author states, "It's not necessarily beneficial to add technology features just because we can." The next time you see an ad for a product that parades a list of technical features without explaining what those features will even do for you, you'll know that the company doesn't understand the role of simplicity in the market.

The iPad Replaces Cash Registers

Walk into many stores and you'll see a Windows PC used as a cash register. However, there's a good chance that many stores might be using an iPad instead. Square, the company that brought a credit card reading device to the iPhone, has now introduced a terminal stand (*www.electronista.com/articles/13/07/05/system.is.ipad.based.offers.portable.and.modular.pos.system/*) so people can swipe a credit card with an iPad. Then customers can sign their signature with their finger on the iPad screen.

Figure 3. Square now offers an iPad terminal for accepting credit cards.

Without mobile devices like the iPhone and iPad, businesses had to lease a credit card machine that needed to be plugged in to a power outlet and a telephone line. With Square, anyone can now accept credit card payments without the hassle of opening a merchant account or leasing an expensive machine.

All those credit card processing companies are in trouble because Square is cheaper, easier to use, and mobile. Watch for newer stores to start using iPhones and iPads instead of PCs to ring up a sale. Then watch to see if older stores eventually replace their current point of sale PCs with a new PC or an iOS device. Some will choose a PC and some will choose an iOS device, but it's unlikely that businesses currently using Square with an iOS device will abandon the convenience to go back to a standard point of sale PC.

HyperCard History and LiveCode

Programming a computer is harder than it needs to be. That's why Apple's HyperCard program became so popular when it came free with every Macintosh computer. Although Apple foolishly let HyperCard die, a Scottish company called Runtime Revolution eventually created a cross-platform clone called LiveCode (*livecode.com*). To watch a 30 minute documentary about the history of HyperCard and LiveCode, you can view this YouTube video (*www.youtube.com/watch?v=NR5WKmMzuxY&feature=youtu.be&utm_campaign=kickstarter&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=9371432&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8rsBC6BHy4glgmB2R4fAc335APC2XVtRw0ug-bqmroDEE0KRapXlBi_Y6VoSVlP0rPcuHdoY8uZmFlkbSOYDZH8sFfEw&_hsmi=9371432*).

LiveCode has now gone open source so you can create programs using LiveCode absolutely free. If you want to sell your programs, you'll need to buy a $500 annual license though.

By watching the YouTube LiveCode documentary, you can learn about HyperCard and LiveCode to see how revolutionary HyperCard's design was and how influential it remains today. Then download a free copy of LiveCode and start experimenting with making your own programs to see how fun and simple programming should be.

LiveCode currently lets you create iOS and Android apps (along with Windows, OS X, and Linux programs), and future versions of LiveCode will let you create Windows 8/RT apps as well. Once you see how to create programs using LiveCode on Windows, OS X,

and Linux, you may never want to use another programming tool again.

* * *

Most computer novices have a hard time understanding how to find and navigate their way through the multitude of folders stored on their hard disk. If you dig through your folders within the Finder window, you can often find a file buried on your computer, but you may have no idea how you found that file.

If you click on the Finder icon on the Dock, and then click on the View > Show Path Bar option on the Finder menu bar, you'll see the Path Bar at the bottom of the Finder window. This Path Bar shows you how a file may be buried within multiple folders.

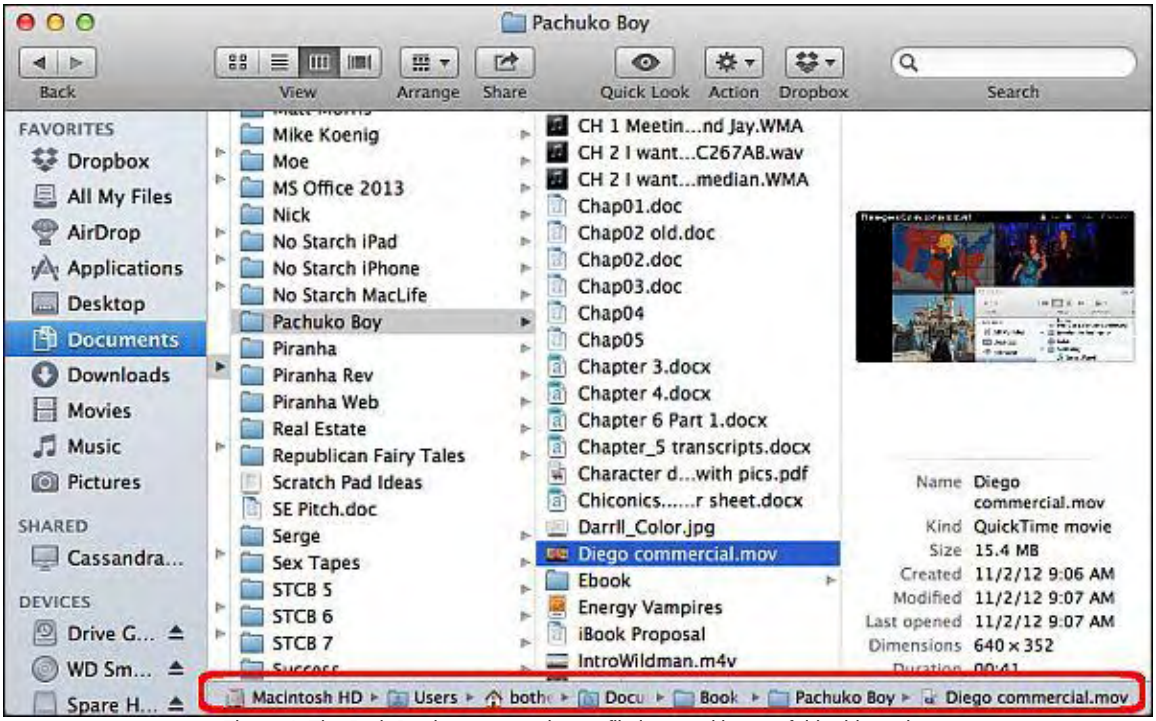

Figure 4. The Path Bar lets you see how a file is stored in your folder hierarchy.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

*My New Mac, Lion Edition (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593273908/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1593273908*)*
*My New iPad 2 (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/159327386X/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=159327386X*)*
*Steal This Computer Book (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1593271050?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1593271050*)*
*Microsoft Office 2010 For Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470489987?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470489987*)*
*Beginning Programming for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470088702?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470088702*)*
*Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0470108541?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0470108541*)*
*Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/0764554468?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0764554468*)*
*Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1590791894?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189*)*
*How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DJYL70/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70*)*
*The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006DGCH4M/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DGCH4M*)*
*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/1430233362?

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1430233362*)*
*Republican Fairy Tales (Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006QSKM3A/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006QSKM3A*)*
*The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B006PUFPGI/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B006PUFPGI*)*
*The 15-Minute Movie Method (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004TMD9K8/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B004TMD9K8*)*
*Erotophobia (A novel) (*www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009POEAJO/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B009POEAJO&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20*)*

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

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Beyond Personal Computing

"Prototypes: From the Sublime to the Hilarious" by Marilyn K. Martin

Amusing anecdotes about prototypes.

Every new gadget, game or otherworldly movie character has to start somewhere. Diskettes were initially sized according to a cocktail napkin. And retina-sized-pixel video games had to let the player "do something" engrossing enough to eat up those arcade coins.

Even with boffo computer design technology today, "something" still has to be slapped together to be seen, argued over, changed, re-presented, laughed at, re-evaluated, changed some more, and finally agreed upon before it heads to production. Then it's pizza for everyone, amid idle questions about the last time that expensive 3D printer made something that didn't collapse in four days.

Valuable Classifying Instructions for Beginning Designers

• If you can touch it and you can see it, it's *real*.

• If you can touch it but you can't see it, it's *transparent*.

• If you can't touch it but you can see it, it's *virtual*.

• If it's made out of cardboard and duct-tape, it's a *prototype*.

• If it's falling-apart plastic, it's a *3D printed prototype*.

Iconic Tech Prototypes

Wired ran an article in 2010 that featured a half-dozen prototypes (*www.wired.com/magazine/2010/08/ff_prototypes/*) for what were to become highly-desired products. Some were accidental inventions, others were initially total failures until better electronic technology emerged, while others were created in secret to avoid patent settlements. Here's a sampling of the first three:

• In 1943, the first Push-Button Phone was created by Bell Labs engineers, with push buttons on stalks where the dial used to be. But it was a bust because of noise interference. It was tried again in 1963, after the development of solid-state electronics. And foolproof digital tone Push-Button Phones became all the rage in the era of pagers.

• In 1976, Atari wanted to work on a revolutionary new gaming console—but wanted to avoid a patent settlement granting Magnovox the right to any new hardware invented before 1977. So head engineering Al Alcorn took the project code-named Stella (after another engineer's bicycle) to a remote mountaintop lab. The final prototype came together in three months with less than $500 in parts. Atari sat on it until unveiling it at the 1977 Consumer Electronics Show.

• A NASA Engineer started out on a garage-project in 1989 to reinvent the refrigerator. He soon realized that he had invented something much more fun, "a shotgun-style air pump and a series of check valves" for a toy gun prototype made of PVC pipe, rope, acrylic and a soda jug. Meet the first Super Soaker water-gun.

• In June 2012, Microsoft Surface designer Ralf Groene made a prototype for the first Surface tablet. "When we first came across the idea of Surface, we made it from cardboard and duct tape. Prototyping is such a powerful tool, and the faster and (worse) the thing looks, the better."

Military Prototypes

According to MilitaryHumor.net (*MilitaryHumor.net*), even Big Ticket military hardware starts out in prototype, as this picture of a "bouncy castle" tank demonstrates:

Joke Prototypes

A site called Colonial Serf Log lists a half dozen Joke Prototypes, which can be filled in and made industry/job specific:

1) Two men approach heaven, but are delayed from entering. One of them goes to hell.

2) Why did the inanimate object do something anthropomorphic? Because no one objected!

3) How many people of a certain classification does it take to screw in a light bulb? More than one, and don't forget the lawyers and CPAs.

4) A woman does an unexpected thing, and the bartender tells a male patron, "I'd like to see her try that with a _____."

5) A traveling salesman comes to a farmhouse and talks to the farmer. He is then told that he is either not allowed to have sex with the Farmer's daughter, or that he must. He does.

6) Three high-tech specialists in different sub-fields are in a car that breaks down. Each offers suggestions for repair based solely on their sub-field.

Movie Character Prototypes

Bringing a fantasy or science fiction movie to fruition requires that "the look" of key otherworldly characters be strange but not frightening (especially if you are doing a kids' movie). With at least something in a non-villain's "look" that the audience can bond with (cue big innocent eyes and a goofy grin). Plus, if you don't have unlimited dollars for CGI, it also helps if the make-up and costume fit the hired actor, and don't take 12 hours to assemble. JoyReactor (*joyreactor.com/tag/prototypes*) ran a side-by-side comparison of some iconic movie characters from first prototype artwork to their final form.

Apple's Missing Prototype iPhones

How about accidentally "losing" not one but two hot-tech phone prototypes in bars, a year apart? In 2010, an Apple engineer named Gray Powell (27) left an iPhone4G prototype (*www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/apple/7611045/Engineer-leaves-new-generation-Apple-iPhone-on-bar-stool.html*) in a bar in Redwood City, California.

Gizmodo, a high tech Web site, claims they paid $5,000 to buy the lost-phone. Which they promptly disassembled, hailed as "the real thing," and then posted every-angle photos on their Web site. Apple, who guards its prototypes behind reinforced doors and code-rotating security locks, was less amused. Apple sent Gizmodo a letter from their legal department demanding the return of the prototype, terming it "stolen" instead of "lost."

According to TechTosh, Apple's jokester co-founder, Steve Wozniak, immediately posted prank photos (*www.techtosh.com/steve-wozniak-jokes-on-gray-powell-and-lost-iphone-prototype/*) of himself drinking beer and staring at an iPhone, with a t-shirt that said "I went drinking with Gray Powell and all I got was a lousy iPhone prototype."

A year later, in 2011—Surprise! An Apple employee supposedly lost an iPhone5 prototype (*www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/apple/8734925/Apple-employee-loses-prototype-iPhone-in-bar.html*), this time leaving it in a "tequila lounge" in San Francisco's Mission District. Cnet reported it may have been sold on Craigslist for $200. This time, Apple traced the prototype electronically, and got the police involved. A search of the site that the prototype-phone was traced to turned up absolutely nothing, despite a monetary "bounty" offered for its return by Apple. A San Francisco police spokesman said Apple never filed an official report on this lost/stolen iPhone prototype.

Quotes about Prototypes

"God created a number of possibilities in case some of his prototypes failed—that is the meaning of evolution." Graham Greene

"There's a tremendous number of Daytona prototypes." Bobby Rahal

"There he goes. One of God's own prototypes. Some kind of high powered mutant never even considered for mass production. Too weird to live, and too rare to die." Hunter S. Thompson

Collecting Prototypes

There is suddenly a hot market for toy/comic "prototypes." eBay even has a separate category for superhero prototypes (*www.ebay.com/sch/i.html?_odkw=prototypes&_osacat=0&_from=R40&_trksid=p2045573.m570.l1313.TR0.TRC0.Xsuperhero+prototypes&_nkw=superhero+prototypes&_sacat=0*), which includes not-ready-for-primetime action figures with no paint, comic books, and even clothing. Although most of the prototype action figures seem to come from Hong Kong, so maybe "pro-to-type" means "one-color-monkey-boy" in Chinese. (And, to confuse things further, there is also a comic/game franchise named "Prototype.")

Video Game Prototypes

Video games are one of the Top Three most funded categories on Kickstarter. And most game developers seeking financial backing promise to reward their contributors with a copy of the game when it's completed and released. But if everything falls apart in production, or the video game emerges far different than the description the gamer-backers read, no amount of magical dust will protect the developer from the million-daggers of optimized death and virtual destruction heaped on them by irate gamers.

So it's probably a good thing that before crowdfunding, popular video games could prototype in one direction, then morph into something entirely different by production time, with no crowdfund gamer-revenge hanging over the developers' heads. Our slacker sages at *Cracked* magazine took on a half dozen Early Prototypes Of Your Favorite Video Games (*www.cracked.com/article_19457_6-baffling-early-prototypes-your-favorite-video-games.html*). Here is a sample to highlight how now-iconic game prototypes evolved:

• "Super Mario Brothers" was originally going to be a shooting game. That's right, the little blocky plumber was going to be packing heat, and capable of kicking and punching when all his guns were empty. Nintendo decided to focus instead on jumping and stomping, turning the guns into fire-flowers, although kicking and punching were later revived. Hey, if it happens in kindergarten, it can happen to the Mario Brothers.

• "Mortal Combat" started out as a game vehicle for action star Jean-Claude Van Damme, in which he would fight a selection of digitized opponents like "Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu." But the license to use Van Damme's name and likeness was too expensive for Midway Games at the time, so MC's hero turned out as Johnny Cage. Midway's inexpensive route might also explain how they reused the exact same character model for Sub-Zero and Scorpion, but in different colors.

• "Halo"—"The reason you own an Xbox!"—is today a mega-franchise shooter game with competitive multiplayers. But the original prototype was called "Halo: Combat Evolved," and was a real-time strategy game. It was originally developed for Apple, not Microsoft, as a third-person action/tactical 3D game. It included such military prototype tactics as catching and taming dinosaurs. But when Microsoft bought game developer Bungie, Halo became Xbox's flagship title, and it evolved into a first-person shooter. FPS games are wildly popular today, and just think: Halo very nearly ended up as just a bunch of guys with the Apple logos for heads riding around on dinos.

(Many of these jokes and anecdotes are available on multiple Internet sites. But special thanks to Funny-quotes-life.com (*Funny-quotes-life.com*), FreakingNews.com (*FreakingNews.com*), Brainyquote.com (*Brainyquote.com*), and Cracked.com (*Cracked.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_tl?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.

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

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

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Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"CCleaner"

CCleaner

[Regarding the June 21 Digital Dave column (*webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3125&article=dave*):]

CCleaner is great! We run it every day as we finish with the computer. I am always amazed at how much it cleans even though both FF and Chrome are supposed to remove data when they are shut down (the option I have chosen in their settings). I have used it to wipe a "give away" computer also. Hope it's as good as I think it is!

Always love your column, Dave! First thing I read.

-Sandy, San Diego, CA

Dave, thanks so much for a prompt response to my inquiry about wiping drives. Great advice, of course. I'm now using CCleaner, as we speak, uh, write, to wipe out my discarded computer…and I'll keep it on hand for the next one to go.

From the days of the paper *ComputorEdge* to the monthly online, I've never missed an issue, especially Computer Focus, and always find good fun and valuable advice.

-Dana Moran, Saratoga, CA

Your recent column mentioned CCleaner which does a good job cleaning up and wiping a hard drive. I would caution readers to avoid an unrelated product with similar name "PC Cleaner" which infected my son's computer. It took me over an hour in safe mode to get rid of it. I'm not a techie so I don't remember all the steps, but Google was a help.

-Steven Rosen

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

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