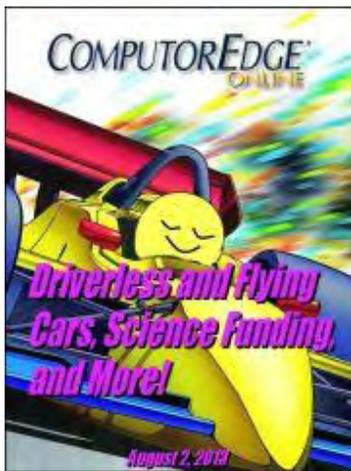


# ComputerEdge™ Online — 08/02/13

## This issue: Driverless and Flying Cars, Science Funding, and More!



Science Funding: Federal to Private; 2013 Shell Eco-Marathon in the Americas; Updates on Driverless Cars; Flying Cars; White Hat Civic Hacking; High Tech Autos: Cameras, Automatic Braking and Faster Hybrids; Vehicle Dashboards: Less Distraction, Boom in Map-apps; Wildlife Tech; Ocean Wildlife Tech; Using High Tech to Protect Wilderness; Mobile-Palooza; In-Flight Wi-Fi; Mobile Internet with Satellite Antennas; Our All-Connected World: Is True Privacy Obsolete?

### Table of Contents:

#### [Digital Dave](#) by *Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

Blank Photo Boxes with Little Red X; Mouse Movement Macro Recorder; Running Windows System File Checker.

#### [Driverless and Flying Cars, Science Funding, and More Little Known High Tech Stories](#) by Marilyn K. Martin

Driverless and Flying Cars, Wildlife Tech, Civic Hacking, Science Funding  
Science Funding: Federal to Private; 2013 Shell Eco-Marathon in the Americas; Updates on Driverless Cars; Flying Cars; White Hat Civic Hacking; High Tech Autos: Cameras, Automatic Braking and Faster Hybrids; Vehicle Dashboards: Less Distraction, Boom in Map-apps; Wildlife Tech; Ocean Wildlife Tech; Using High Tech to Protect Wilderness; Mobile-Palooza; In-Flight Wi-Fi; Mobile Internet with Satellite Antennas; Our All-Connected World: Is True Privacy Obsolete?

#### [Improvements on the To-Do List App](#) by Jack Dunning

Tips and Tricks for Making AutoHotkey Windows Easier to Resize, Position and Use

Prompted by a question, Jack makes improvements to his latest AutoHotkey To-Do List app. The columns read easier, the window resizes, and the app saves the window's last configuration, plus more.

#### [Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#) by Wally Wang

Apps vs. Web Sites

Apps vs. Web Sites; Starting a Web Site with Mobile in Mind; Drifting to the Cloud; 3D Printer Software; Waiting for the Fall; Define Tab Key Behavior.

#### [Worldwide News & Product Reviews](#) by Charles Carr

The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.

Social Media's Bubble Beginning to Burst; Poll: Facebook Users Would Pay \$10 to See No Ads at All; Ten Ways to Wow Friends and Family With Your Summer Videos; Renny Bluetooth Home Ringer; Aliens: Colonial Marines for PC.

### DEPARTMENTS:

(Click Banner)

(Click Banner)

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

Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns. "Kickstarter," "Dictionary and Scratchpad Apps," "Competitive Advantage"

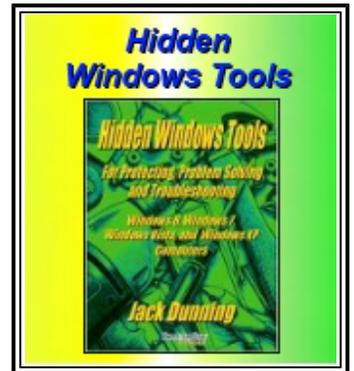
[\(Click Banner\)](#)



[\(Click Banner\)](#)



[\(Click Banner\)](#)



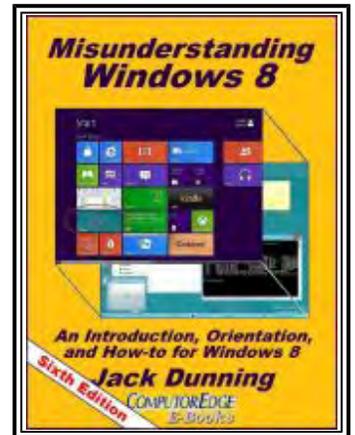
[\(Click Banner\)](#)



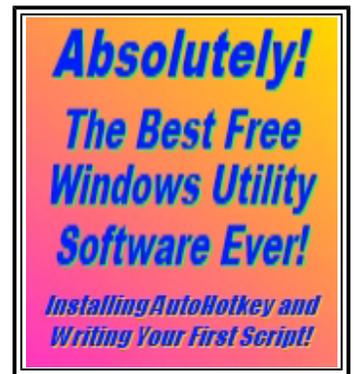
[\(Click Banner\)](#)



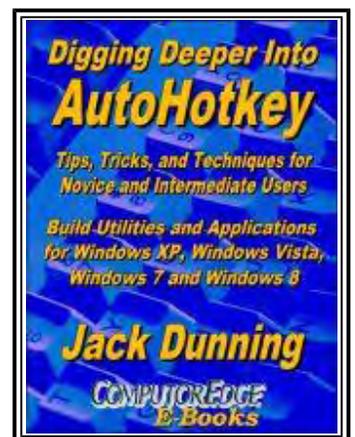
(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)



(Click Banner)

Send mail to [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com) with questions about editorial content.

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

Copyright © 1997-2013 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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

---

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Digital Dave

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

Blank Photo Boxes with Little Red X; Mouse Movement Macro Recorder; Running Windows System File Checker.

*Dear Digital Dave.*

*Occasionally when I forward an e-mail I've received with some interesting photos the recipient gets empty boxes with a little red x in the upper left corner and clickable icons at the top.*

*Is there some way to overcome this minor glitch?*

*Gene  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Gene,

I wish that there were one simple answer to your question, but there are a number of possible sources for the issue. Some could be on your end and others may be a problem on the computer receiving the e-mail.

There are different ways that images can be sent with an e-mail. The first is to embed the image in the e-mail. When this is done, the image file (and its bulk) becomes part of the e-mail, sometimes making the e-mail file huge. This has the same effect as adding the images as attachments and will occasionally make the e-mail so large that some mail servers reject them. Plus, many e-mail programs regard any embedded images or attachments as suspect and block them. When that happens, the "empty boxes with a little red x" will be put in their place.

If you have ad blocking or a setting on your security software set too high, it can stop you from forwarding or receiving certain types of files including images. Remember this could be on your end, the recipient's end, or one of the e-mail servers in between. Both you and the recipient should check the security settings in your e-mail program as well as any adware or anti-virus programs. Sometimes, rather than forwarding the e-mail, you can copy-and-paste the content into a new e-mail, bypassing forwarding protections.

Another way that images are sent in e-mail is via HTML links. Rather than adding the images to the file (making it unwieldy), links to images located on the Web are embedded. When the e-mail is opened, the image is downloaded to the e-mail for display just as happens in Web pages. This saves the sending of bulky e-mails with numerous images. But security settings have the same type of protections against automatic downloading and the image may be blocked. The same "empty boxes with a little red x" will appear. You may have to click through a warning to allow the images to download.

When you receive an e-mail with images, it may be either type (embedded images or linked images). How it looks when forwarded will vary depending upon the security settings on the recipient's computer. While you have control over how your computer is set up, you don't have control over the servers that get in the way (e. g. Gmail) or the computer on the other end.

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*Several versions ago, Windows had a Screen Macro Recorder for doing repetitive screen mouse moves. Is there anything similar for Windows XP SP3 and Windows 7?*

*James Taylor*

Dear James,

For those not familiar with macro recorders, they are programs which copy movements, keystrokes and other actions on your computer to a special file which can later be replayed to repeat the actions. One of the best known is found in Microsoft Word and other office programs such as the free OpenOffice. However, those macro recorders, while excellent for making repetitive tasks simple, only work within the host software.

As far as I know, Microsoft no longer includes a macro recorder for Windows, but there are many third-party free macro recorders ([download.cnet.com/1770-20\\_4-0.html?query=macro%20recorder&pp=10&searchtype=downloads&filter=licenseName%3D%22Free%22%7C&filterName=licenseName%3DFree%7C](http://download.cnet.com/1770-20_4-0.html?query=macro%20recorder&pp=10&searchtype=downloads&filter=licenseName%3D%22Free%22%7C&filterName=licenseName%3DFree%7C)) found on the Web. Although I am not familiar with most of them, they should work with most software on a particular operating system. These types of programs are popular with gamers because they can speed up their reaction time by automating the action—often annihilating the unaware enemy.

A macro recorder has two parts. The first is an application which copies the movements and keystrokes that you make on your computer in a special language or code. Then there is a software engine which, when it reads the macro file, repeats the recorded moves (code) as if you were making them yourself. Often, if you understand the language, you can edit the macro file to make adjustments.

AutoHotkey has become one of the most popular macro languages for gamers and others needing to speed up repetitive moves. It has a relatively simple text language which can control virtually every element of a Windows computer. However, writing a script from scratch of screen mouse moves can become tedious. That's where a screen macro recorder is needed.

There are a number of options for AutoHotkey recorders. The older basic version of AutoHotkey included a program called AutoScriptWriter II which would quickly record all of your screen movements (see Figure 1). (AutoScriptWriter II is no longer a part of the current AutoHotkey download, but a ZIP file which includes it can be found in an older AutoHotkey download ([www.autohotkey.com/download/AutoHotkey.zip](http://www.autohotkey.com/download/AutoHotkey.zip)). Do not use the AutoHotkey version that is included in this ZIP file. Download the latest the version (AutoHotkey\_L) found at [www.AutoHotkey.com](http://www.AutoHotkey.com).) Fortunately, any action recorded with AutoScriptWriter II should run fine with the current version of AutoHotkey\_L.

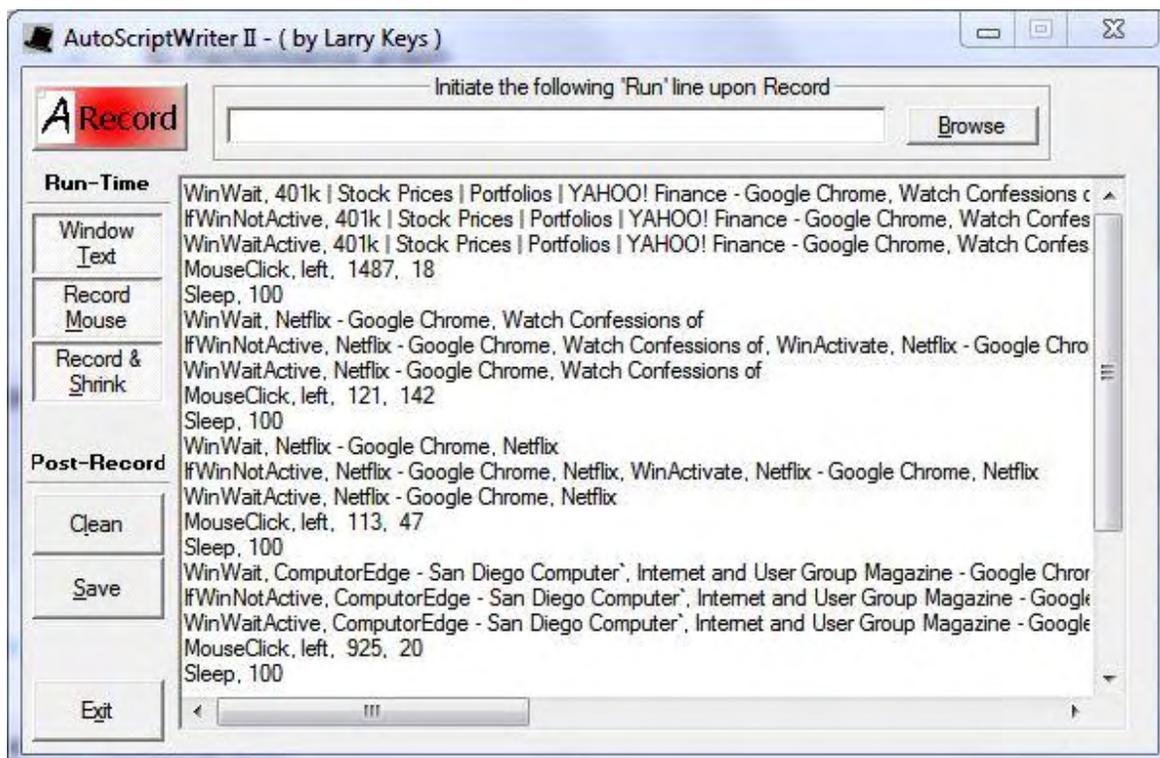


Figure 1. AutoScriptWriter II records your screen movements in AutoHotkey code.

I found the mouse action recording process simple and I didn't really need to know anything about AutoHotkey—although I did need to have AutoHotkey installed as the macro playback engine. (See the *ComputerEdge* Web page "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script ([www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing\\_AutoHotkey\\_and\\_writing\\_your\\_first\\_script.html](http://www.computoredge.com/misc/Installing_AutoHotkey_and_writing_your_first_script.html))" for software installation information.) After launching AutoScriptWriter, I clicked the Record button and performed a few mouse actions in Google Chrome. (It could have been any program.) After I stopped recording, I saved the code in a file. I then ran the file with the installed AutoHotkey program. It worked—copying all my previous moves! Although I do know a little about AutoHotkey, this is something that anyone can do with little or no understanding of AutoHotkey or its language. (I did need all three Run-Time buttons in AutoScriptWriter depressed as shown.)

There seems to be a number of other AutoHotkey macro recorders ([www.autohotkey.net/~faqbot/faq.htm#recorders](http://www.autohotkey.net/~faqbot/faq.htm#recorders)) available at the AutoHotkey Web site, but I didn't take the time to review them. Some looked a little complicated, while I look for simplicity. Besides, I'm not quite as obsessed with AutoHotkey as Jack Dunning is. If you want to do a little more than record screen macros with AutoHotkey, then you might want to check out Jack's AutoHotkey books ([www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey\\_Books\\_for\\_Beginners\\_and\\_Novices.html](http://www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey_Books_for_Beginners_and_Novices.html)).

Any number of the other screen macro recorders may be just as good as or better than using AutoScriptWriter with AutoHotkey, but I have to tell you that it was pretty simple.

Digital Dave

---

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*When I enter `sfc.exe /runnow` in the Run window, I get a flash of a pop-up window, but nothing else.*

*Larry Mclaughlin  
Aurora, CO*

Dear Larry,

It is not uncommon for the Command Prompt to only stay open for a second when using the Run dialog. When a program either doesn't run or is completed fast, the window will close. The problem may have been that you entered `sfc.exe /runnow` rather than `sfc.exe /scannow`. If you use the latter command, then the window should stay open while running, but it will close when it is done. That means you could miss reading any results.

To make sure you get the full experience and view any results, open the Command Prompt first (All Programs => Accessories => Command Prompt), then enter `sfc.exe /scannow` and press ENTER. (For Windows Vista and above, the easiest way to get the Command Prompt is typing "cmd" in the search box. Then again, I use the search box for everything.) The Command Prompt window will stay open until you close it. If you had opened the Prompt first and entered `sfc.exe /runnow` (the wrong command parameter), you would have been given a list of the correct commands.

Digital Dave

---

---

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



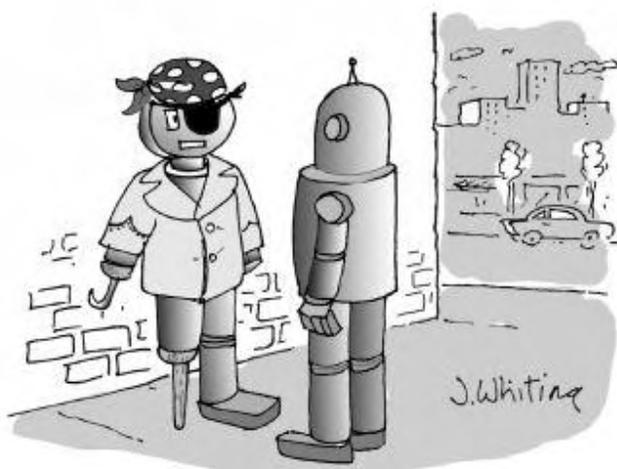
## [Driverless and Flying Cars, Science Funding, and More Little Known High Tech Stories](#)

“Driverless and Flying Cars, Wildlife Tech, Civic Hacking, Science Funding” by Marilyn K. Martin

Science Funding: Federal to Private; 2013 Shell Eco-Marathon in the Americas; Updates on Driverless Cars; Flying Cars; White Hat Civic Hacking; High Tech Autos: Cameras, Automatic Braking and Faster Hybrids; Vehicle Dashboards: Less Distraction, Boom in Map-apps; Wildlife Tech; Ocean Wildlife Tech; Using High Tech to Protect Wilderness; Mobile-Palooza; In-Flight Wi-Fi; Mobile Internet with Satellite Antennas; Our All-Connected World: Is True Privacy Obsolete?

### Science Funding: Federal to Private

USA Today ran a story in February 2013 on how the federal sequestration is affecting ([www.usatoday.com/story/tech/sciencefair/2013/02/25/budget-nih-collins/1947277/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/sciencefair/2013/02/25/budget-nih-collins/1947277/)) the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The \$1.6 Billion cut from NIH translates to a 5.1% cut to medical research and grants. The cuts will affect new research grants in particular, with most universities unable to make up for the funding shortfalls. So young scientists, in particular, will suffer.



**"I was going to be an accountant until my left eye, right arm, and a leg were defunded by the government."**

In July 2012, the *Seattle Times* ran an article about Microryza ([www.microryza.com/](http://www.microryza.com/)), one of the first crowd-funding sites for science, founded by frustrated University of Washington graduates. Only a year old, Microryza now has a backlog of 500 proposals ([seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2021351009\\_microryzascience.xml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2021351009_microryzascience.xml.html)), fueled by the recent cuts in federal science budgets. Initial projects were small, with 80 projects having raised a combined \$200,000 through Microryza. But now a couple proposals are asking for up to \$65,000 apiece to study how the brain controls the immune system, and how speed affects the bodies of race-car drivers.

Other sources of private medical research funding (besides the Gates Foundation) include the W. M. Keck Foundation ([www.wmkeck.org/grant-programs/medicalresearch.html](http://www.wmkeck.org/grant-programs/medicalresearch.html)), which supports basic life sciences research that is high-risk. And the

Feldstein Medical Foundation ([feldsteinmedicalfoundation.org/index.html](http://feldsteinmedicalfoundation.org/index.html)), which provides private funding

to "promote and advance previously neglected areas of medical research."

Several specialty medical institutes provide lists of federal and private funding sources. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases provides a list ([www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/ann/pages/found.aspx](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/ann/pages/found.aspx)) of international private foundations and other science funding sources. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association also provides a list ([www.asha.org/research/grants-funding/Funding-for-Researchers/](http://www.asha.org/research/grants-funding/Funding-for-Researchers/)) of federal and private funding agencies. The Coalition for Health Communication ([healthcommunication.net/CHC/research/pfunding.htm](http://healthcommunication.net/CHC/research/pfunding.htm)) also lists private funding sources. And the Dept. of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs ([cdmrp.army.mil/funding/default.shtml](http://cdmrp.army.mil/funding/default.shtml)) lists medical areas currently available for funding.

## 2013 Shell Eco-Marathon in the Americas

This unique competition brought together 131 teams of students to battle for ultra-energy efficiency ([www.shell.com/global/environment-society/ecomarathon/events/americas.html](http://www.shell.com/global/environment-society/ecomarathon/events/americas.html)) in their vehicles. Their odd vehicles battled on the streets of Houston, Texas, from April 5-7, 2013. There were two main categories, urban concept and prototype, the main difference being the number of wheels (four versus three). And then six categories within each of those based on fuel: gas, electric battery (including solar), gas alternative, diesel, alternative diesel and hydrogen.

The winning team in the prototype category came from Quebec's Universite Laval, which won by achieving 3,587 miles per gallon ([green.autoblog.com/2013/04/08/shell-eco-marathon-americas-2013-winners-3587-mpg/](http://green.autoblog.com/2013/04/08/shell-eco-marathon-americas-2013-winners-3587-mpg/)) of gasoline. The winning team in the urban concept category came from Purdue, achieving 78.1 mi/kWh in their tricky solar-powered electric vehicle (EV). There were also off-track awards for categories like eco-design, won by a bamboo car from Houston's West Side High School.

## Updates on Driverless Cars

In April 2013, *Silicon Valley* ran an article on how California's Department of Motor Vehicles had recently held a workshop in Sacramento seeking public input on possible regulations for self-driving vehicles ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_23065855/dmv-ponders-how-regulate-driverless-cars](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_23065855/dmv-ponders-how-regulate-driverless-cars)). A number of motorists are warming to the idea of automated travel, although Google and other autonomous automakers were quick to plead "don't stifle us with too many regulations." Once numerous issues and regulations have been settled, driverless vehicles could be available to the public by the end of the decade.

According to the *Wall Street Journal* in May 2013, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) thinks states should require drivers of self-driving cars to get extra training and special licenses ([blogs.wsj.com/drivers-seat/2013/05/30/nhtsa-recommends-special-licenses-for-self-driving-cars/?mod=google\\_news\\_blog](http://blogs.wsj.com/drivers-seat/2013/05/30/nhtsa-recommends-special-licenses-for-self-driving-cars/?mod=google_news_blog)). It is but a few of the ideas on the NHTSA's list of recommendations for how states should regulate autonomous cars.

At the end of May 2013, *Today's Machining World* ran an article about a driver's experience in an Audi A7 that drove itself at speeds of up to 65 mph on a freeway ([todaysmachiningworld.com/at-high-speed-on-the-road-to-a-driverless-future/](http://todaysmachiningworld.com/at-high-speed-on-the-road-to-a-driverless-future/)) near Jerusalem, Israel. Developed by Mobileye Vision Technologies ([www.mobileye.com/](http://www.mobileye.com/)), their autonomous car doesn't offer all the abilities of Google's driverless car. But Mobileye's vehicle is capable of driving in a single lane at freeway speeds, as well as identifying traffic lights and automatically slowing, stopping, and then returning to highway speeds.

## Flying Cars

Yahoo News reported in May 2013 that while several companies are working on flying cars, some are closer to reality than others. Terrafugia Inc. ([www.terrafugia.com/](http://www.terrafugia.com/)) reported that its prototype flying car (Transition) completed its first flight successfully ([news.yahoo.com/flying-car-gets-closer-reality-test-flight-211307961.html](http://news.yahoo.com/flying-car-gets-closer-reality-test-flight-211307961.html)) in April 2012, flying at 1,400 feet for eight minutes. Around 100 people have already put down a \$10,000 deposit to get a Transition when they go on sale, probably in 2014.

But another flying car, dubbed the Maverick LSA ([mavericklsa.com/index.html](http://mavericklsa.com/index.html)), crashed into a tree ([news.yahoo.com/blogs/sideshow/flying-car-crashes-outside-elementary-school-015247415.html](http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/sideshow/flying-car-crashes-outside-elementary-school-015247415.html)) on its latest flight in May, despite earlier successful flights. This flying car can travel 450 miles ([www.koaa.com/news/real-life-flying-car-makes-its-way-to-colorado-springs/#\\_](http://www.koaa.com/news/real-life-flying-car-makes-its-way-to-colorado-springs/#_)) on one tank of gas, and can fly for roughly 3 hours. They cost about \$100,000 and have already been certified by the FAA. Maverick's Raymond Siebring says the vehicle was designed to fly medical supplies and humanitarian aid into places that roads don't reach.

The third company making flying cars, Mollar Int'l ([moller.com/dev/index.php](http://moller.com/dev/index.php)) is working on a Skycar 400, which offers vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL). Their Neuera M200G, however, is saucer-shaped, and designed to operate up to ten feet above any surface (land, water, sand, snow, swamp or grassland).

### White Hat Civic Hacking

In June 2013, USA Today reported that there is a small but growing movement called "civic hacking" to help improve how governments use technology ([www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/2013/06/23/baverman-columnist-entrepreneurs-startups/2445807/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/2013/06/23/baverman-columnist-entrepreneurs-startups/2445807/)). A four-year-old start-up from California, Code for America ([codeforamerica.org](http://codeforamerica.org/)), sends young technologists to cities around the US to update and streamline the clunky and outdated information systems in municipalities. CFA hosts business accelerator programs annually, as well as coordinates 37 volunteer "hacker brigades" to help cities build mobile apps and technologies to both improve the lives of ordinary citizens, and make government information technology more accessible and useful.

*Silicon Valley* reported in June 2013, that "hacker teams" are even tackling food sustainability technology ([www.siliconvalley.com/ci\\_23523191/silicon-valley-code-hackers-team-up-promote-sustainable](http://www.siliconvalley.com/ci_23523191/silicon-valley-code-hackers-team-up-promote-sustainable)). A couple hundred techies recently squeezed into a building on the Stanford University campus for a weekend seminar on "reimagining the future of meat." The sponsors issued a set of six challenges to find ways to advance sustainable ranching, and then unleashed the 20 teams of hackers. They worked on everything from ways for farms to share underutilized land with other farmers, to a mobile app to "provide transparency between meat processors and consumers." It culminated in a three-minute pitch to judges Sunday night, winners receiving \$125,000 worth of cash prizes and in-kind services.

### High Tech Autos: Cameras, Automatic Braking and Faster Hybrids

Associated Press (through Yahoo News) in July 2013 reported on new life-saving technology ([news.yahoo.com/5-features-could-next-car-132622063.html](http://news.yahoo.com/5-features-could-next-car-132622063.html)) no longer reserved for just high-end vehicles. Soon, regular vehicles will have embedded cameras to check around a car for pedestrians, while radar will stop drivers from drifting out of their lanes. Also upcoming is an engine able to turn off automatically at traffic lights to conserve fuel, and even a collision warning system with automatic braking.

*Wall St. Cheat Sheet* reported in July 2013 that Ford hybrid vehicles are getting a free upgrade ([wallstcheatsheet.com/stocks/ford-say-hello-to-free-hybrid-upgrades.html/?ref=YF](http://wallstcheatsheet.com/stocks/ford-say-hello-to-free-hybrid-upgrades.html/?ref=YF)) (in the U.S. and Canada) due to a handful of lawsuits that charge that Ford's hybrids don't achieve the promised 47-mile-per-gallon guarantee. Affecting 77,000 Ford hybrids, starting in August these enhanced models will have their electric cruising speed raised from 62 mph to 85 mph.

### Vehicle Dashboards: Less Distraction, Boom in Map-Apps

Also in July 2013, the *New York Times* (through GlobalGoalsInc) ran an article on how to design vehicle dashboards with fewer distractions ([globalgoalsinc.com/designing-dashboards-with-fewer-distractions/](http://globalgoalsinc.com/designing-dashboards-with-fewer-distractions/)). Drivers want fewer buttons on their dash, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued voluntary guidelines for carmakers to limit the visual and mental distraction that new technology can create. Ford has had to continually revise its Sync system to mitigate distractions and make it more driver-friendly. And Honda's new MDX model will have 30 fewer buttons on its dashboard.

Bloomberg reported in July 2013 that young people are by-passing expensive dashboard navigation systems to stick their iPhones to the inside windshield for free navigation systems ([www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-11/iphones-stuck-to-windshields-threaten-dashboard-maps.html?cmpid=yahoo](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-11/iphones-stuck-to-windshields-threaten-dashboard-maps.html?cmpid=yahoo)). Tim Nixon, chief technology officer for General Motors OnStar service, was first dismayed at his sons' "suction-cup approach" to dash-maps. Then he decided to design a \$50 map application for iPhones that can play on the dashboard touchscreen of a Chevrolet Spark. Social networking map apps like Waze ([www.waze.com/](http://www.waze.com/)) allows touch-prompts on smartphones to report traffic jams, and then the app re-routes users onto a faster path.

### Wildlife Tech

According to *Wired UK* (through *ArsTechnica*) in April 2013, the United States Geological Society (USGS) has set up an online database and map ([arstechnica.com/science/2013/04/interactive-map-plots-locations-of-more-than-100-million-species/](http://arstechnica.com/science/2013/04/interactive-map-plots-locations-of-more-than-100-million-species/)) that keeps track of more than 100 Million different wildlife species (plant or animal), and where they live in the US. The huge program is called BISON (Biodiversity Serving Our Nation), and is

hosted on servers at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory ([www.ornl.gov](http://www.ornl.gov)) in Tennessee.

Also in April 2013, *Ars Technica* ran a story on how scientists are bar-coding every ant ([arstechnica.com/science/2013/04/barcodes-let-scientists-track-every-ant-in-a-colony/](http://arstechnica.com/science/2013/04/barcodes-let-scientists-track-every-ant-in-a-colony/)) in a colony, to track the workers as they change jobs with age. Ants build strikingly complex societies with thousands of individuals, but how they maintain order remains poorly understood until now. Researchers have already discovered that ants "divide and conquer," with three industrious groups (tending the young, foraging for food, and cleaning the nest). They've already discovered that younger ants tend to the young, while older and more experienced ants are the forgers for food, using chemical-coordination and sensory stimuli.

*The New York Times* ran a video in May 2013 on how drones are now helping scientists study the natural world ([www.nytimes.com/video/2013/05/06/science/10000002207384/ancient-and-modern-birds.html](http://www.nytimes.com/video/2013/05/06/science/10000002207384/ancient-and-modern-birds.html)). A small drone named Raven is helping count and evaluate the health of Sandhill Cranes in the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado. Launched by hand, other small drones like Raven are counting and monitoring wild animals elsewhere, which is safer than the usual method of naturalists flying in small planes.

## Ocean Wildlife Tech

In May 2013, Reuters reported that new wind farms off Germany's North Sea coast will provide an ideal habitat ([www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/02/us-germany-lobsters-idUSBRE9410KA20130502](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/02/us-germany-lobsters-idUSBRE9410KA20130502)) for their lobster population which crashed after WWII bombing. Biologists at the Alfred-Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research ([www.awi.de/en/home/](http://www.awi.de/en/home/)) are breeding 3,000 lobsters to be released next year in the waters below a wind farm off the German-Dutch coast. Germany's ambitious transition to renewable energy was the impetus, with the new wind parks providing stony foundations for the lobster population to hopefully bounce back.

*Futurity* reported in June 2012 that researchers are devising different methods (like species-specific robots) to lead live fish away ([www.futurity.org/science-technology/zebrafish-like-their-robots-striped-female-fertile/](http://www.futurity.org/science-technology/zebrafish-like-their-robots-striped-female-fertile/)) from oil spills and other aquatic dangers. Scientists and engineers at the Polytechnic Institute of New York University ([www.poly.edu/](http://www.poly.edu/)) are researching the visual responses of several ocean fish to be attracted to their robotic-equivalents enough that the live fish will follow them. Golden shiners will swim behind their robotic fish, since the wake provides as an energy-saving advantage. But while zebrafish were attracted to their species robot, its noisy tail-flapping drove the live fish away in the dark.

## Using High Tech to Protect Wilderness

In July 2013, the *New York Times* ran an article on the best ways to combat wildfires ([www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/science/getting-an-edge-on-wildfires.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/science/getting-an-edge-on-wildfires.html)), mainly to help prevent them from becoming catastrophic, like the fire that recently killed 19 firefighters in Arizona. The United States Forest Service (USFS) sets tens of thousands of virtual fires in computer simulations, using factors from weather to topography. This yields maps that depict the "likelihood of fire occurrence." Besides controlled burns, the USFS also uses weather satellites to watch thunderstorms form, and determine if fire-enhancing gusty winds are present. They also use drones to fly over blazes to take infrared photos that show the shifting edges of a fire, which can be beamed in real-time to the tablet computers being carried by firefighters.

*The New York Times* ran a story in June 2013 about the recent spike in graffiti ([www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/us/as-vandals-take-to-national-parks-some-point-to-social-media.html?partner=rss&emc=rss](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/us/as-vandals-take-to-national-parks-some-point-to-social-media.html?partner=rss&emc=rss)) on public lands and parks. Park Rangers, finding graffiti on even fragile plants and covering ancient petroglyphs, link the graffiti to social media, where taggers proudly take photos of their vandalism and post them online. Few vandals are caught, with clean up running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. And with tight budgets, cleaning up after the vandals means something else in the park doesn't get done.

## Mobile-Palooza

According to *USA Today* in June 2013, consumers today are playing a game of mobile-palooza ([www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2013/06/23/apple-samsung-rim-smartphones-tablets/2384305/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2013/06/23/apple-samsung-rim-smartphones-tablets/2384305/)), filling their hands, pockets and purses with an increasing array of electronic gadgets. Many people now carry a couple smartphones and/or tablets, one personal and one for business. And in families, 37% of teens now carry smartphones.

Restaurateurs watch patrons stack their phones and tablets on tables, or recharge them, while dining. Consumers also juggle between phones to conserve battery life, and are gravitating to Android phones with a

better variety of software and apps. There are even "multiple phone management apps" out now, like Divide ([www.divide.com/](http://www.divide.com/)) and Tangoe ([www.tangoe.com/Solutions/Rule-Mobility/MDM-Links/mobile-application-management.aspx](http://www.tangoe.com/Solutions/Rule-Mobility/MDM-Links/mobile-application-management.aspx)).

## In-Flight Wi-Fi

In June 2013, the FAA decided to ease gadget rules ([www.dailytech.com/FAA+Expected+to+Ease+Gadget+Rules+for+Takeoffs+Landings/article31811.htm](http://www.dailytech.com/FAA+Expected+to+Ease+Gadget+Rules+for+Takeoffs+Landings/article31811.htm)) for airliner takeoffs and landings. The FAA's rules were set in place in 1966, when it was believed that electromagnetic interference would cause problems with a plane's radios and navigation systems below 10,000 feet. However, with the flood of gadgets on planes now, it's impossible to make sure every one is turned off during takeoffs and landings. So the FAA is drafting recommendations for airlines to relax rules on electronic gadgets, since weak wireless signals and a tighter range of frequencies from electronic devices are not enough to interfere with plane systems.

*The AtlanticWire* reported in June 2013 that GoGo ([www.gogoair.com/gogo/splash.do](http://www.gogoair.com/gogo/splash.do)), which provides inflight Wi-Fi ([www.theatlanticwire.com/technology/2013/06/gogo-in-flight-wifi/66574/](http://www.theatlanticwire.com/technology/2013/06/gogo-in-flight-wifi/66574/)) on 6% of airliners, is a burgeoning company already contracted with several major airlines. Surveys find that flying passengers spend almost half of all flying time on in-flight Wi-Fi, which tops the list of passengers' desired amenities. Critics say that GoGo is expensive and slow. But the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has plans in the works to speed up the airwaves, and GoGo is working on satellite technology for overseas flights.

## Mobile Internet with Satellite Antennas

*The Seattle Times* ran an article in July 2013 about how one developer of satellite antennas, Kymeta ([www.kymetacorp.com/](http://www.kymetacorp.com/)), is a fast growing start-up providing simpler satellite connections ([seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2021362029\\_kymetafinancingxml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/business/technology/2021362029_kymetafinancingxml.html)) for faster broadband Internet around the globe. Replacing dishes, their patented synthetic materials are making antennas and receptors smaller, cheaper and more efficient. Its mTenna ([www.kymetacorp.com/products/mtenna-core-module/](http://www.kymetacorp.com/products/mtenna-core-module/)) product line aims to produce antennas/receivers for boats, trucks, trains, cars and airplanes. A portable unit on a laptop could even replace the truck-mounted systems now used by TV crews.

## Our All-Connected World: Is True Privacy Obsolete?

In June 2013, the *Associated Press* (through the *Denver Post*) reported that Google has been ordered to delete data gathered ([www.denverpost.com/technology/ci\\_23512629/google-ordered-delete-data-gathered-by-street-view](http://www.denverpost.com/technology/ci_23512629/google-ordered-delete-data-gathered-by-street-view)) by its Street View project in Britain. Google was served with an enforcement notice, giving it 35 days to delete the material captured in a project where Google's camera-toting vehicles shot images on Britain's streets, like they have done all over the world. Google used local Wi-Fi outlets to place the properties being photographed, and inadvertently collected snippets of data from those local Wi-Fi networks. Although Google claimed the data was never examined or disseminated, the discovery of discs with the British data alarmed British regulators, who want to make sure they are destroyed. France and other European watchdogs are also concerned.

Also in June 2013, just as the NSA eavesdropping scandal broke, the *San Jose Mercury News* (through the *Denver Post*) reported that privacy advocates were already concerned about the "increasing array of computerized gadgets that are turning the world into a giant surveillance society ([www.denverpost.com/business/ci\\_23514242/connected-smart-gadgets-follow-our-every-move](http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_23514242/connected-smart-gadgets-follow-our-every-move))." Everything from our TVs to cars are now "connected," and billions of gizmos routinely gather and share information on everyone, usually without their knowledge. We are now being watched all the time, and privacy advocates contend that data monitoring by smart gadgets is widespread and secret, as smart machines routinely exchange data with other smart machines. "Any illusion of privacy is based either on ignorance or on our unwillingness to accept what's really going on."

---

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](http://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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00CKXF8GQ/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CKXF8GQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00CKXF8GQ&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://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.

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

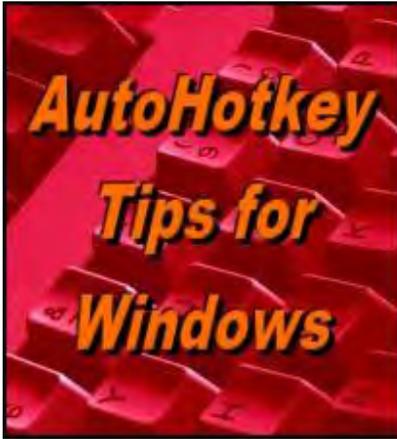
Now available in a four-book Kindle bundle from Amazon.com *The Best Computer and Internet Humor, Anecdotes, and Jokes Found on the Web* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)

[ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00ACVX2PC/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00ACVX2PC&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20)). Marilyn's collection of the funniest stories about our computing machines and how we use them at home, the office, and in cyber space. Save 25% off the individual book price!

---

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



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

### Improvements on the To-Do List App

“Tips and Tricks for Making AutoHotkey Windows Easier to Resize, Position and Use” by Jack Dunning

Prompted by a question, Jack makes improvements to his latest AutoHotkey To-Do List app. The columns read easier, the window resizes, and the app saves the window's last configuration, plus more.

*As I explore the power of the AutoHotkey ListView Graphic User Interface (GUI), which is similar in operation and function to the Windows Explorer file list window, I keep getting more ideas for possible applications. I'm already planning a functional address book of my favorite people that works with multiple programs capable of adding addresses to documents, sending e-mails, calculating ages, etc. I also have a concept for a barebones calorie counter and an AutoHotkey app control panel. In addition to the techniques applied in this column to the To-Do List app, there is plenty to learn in the next few weeks. (I may even integrate some subroutines from the Reminder script to make the To-Do List app yell at me at a designated time using the Windows voice. But that might be nagging.)*

*Unless readers have been following along from the beginning or they are already familiar with writing scripts of any type, I don't expect that everyone will understand what I address here. However, if you are motivated to get the most out of your Windows computer, ComputerEdge has some beginner's AutoHotkey Web pages ([www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/Introduction\\_AutoHotkey\\_Review\\_and\\_Guide\\_for\\_Beginners.html](http://www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/Introduction_AutoHotkey_Review_and_Guide_for_Beginners.html)) and I've written a couple of newbie AutoHotkey e-books ([www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey\\_Books\\_for\\_Beginners\\_and\\_Novices.html](http://www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey_Books_for_Beginners_and_Novices.html)) which start with simple, but immediately useful, AutoHotkey techniques building up your own knowledge base bit by bit.*

Last week's column introducing the To-Do List app ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk)) brought this question from Ron Cerrato:

*I noticed that the window is a fixed size and can't be maximized or changed, only minimized or closed. Also, the list can be very long vertically since vertical scrolling is unlimited but horizontal scrolling isn't helpful for viewing a very long item. You can type a long item in but must edit/copy/notepad-paste to see it. Obviously, I'm trying to extend its applicability beyond that of a to-do list.*

Ron, I glad to hear the you want to extend the little script "beyond that of a to-do list." That is the entire purpose of all the writing I do about AutoHotkey. The fact that one of the apps I talk about may be directly beneficial to someone is incidental to my goal of helping more people use AutoHotkey to enhance their Windows computing experience. Too many people are ready to accept the standard way of doing things, not realizing how many basic AutoHotkey tricks can simplify their computing life.

You bring up some good questions which are important for adding flexibility to the AutoHotkey GUI windows. (I've encountered some of these same issues in the address book app which I've just started.) The problem is that you don't always know in advance how big or what shape you want the window to be. That makes this an apt time to demonstrate how to add automatic resizing capabilities to your AutoHotkey windows, plus how to control column width in the *ListView* control.

#### Controlling ListView Column Widths

The To-Do List app from last week's column ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk)) doesn't handle the resizing of columns well. Although you can manually resize a column as shown in Figure 1, it's best if the column automatically resizes based upon its content. Otherwise, you might see truncated text as shown.

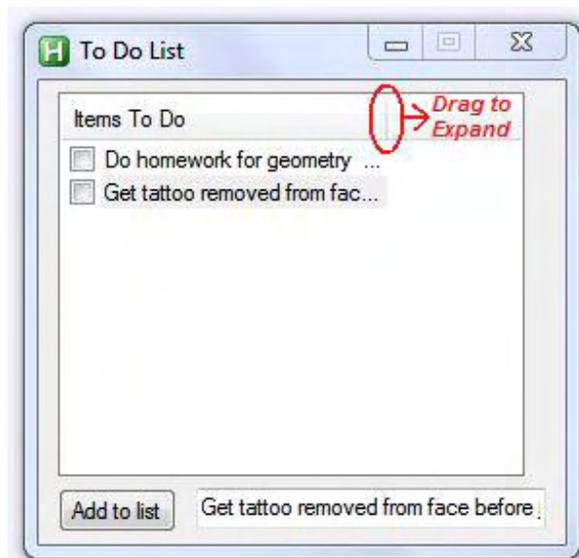


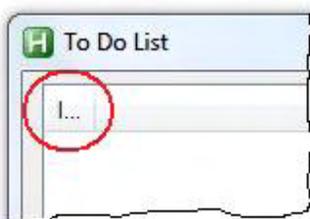
Figure 1. Columns can be manually resized in ListView by dragging (click, hold, and drag) the almost invisible vertical line in the heading to the left or right. If the text is longer than the column width, the view may be truncated.

If you drag the column resizing bar beyond the edge of the *ListView*, a horizontal scrollbar will appear. But this is not necessarily intuitive. It would be better to automatically change the column width (and add the horizontal scrollbar based upon the length of the line of text.

For this reason the *ListView* control ([l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ListView.htm](http://l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ListView.htm)) includes the `LV_ModifyCol()` function ([l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ListView.htm#bifCol](http://l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ListView.htm#bifCol)) for making changes to columns. Using the format `LV_ModifyCol([ColumnNumber, Options, ColumnTitle])`, the column number is specified, starting on the left end with the number 1. Then options are added (all enclosed in one set of quotes and separated by a space or tab) followed by the new column title (also enclosed in quotes), if needed. The basic form of the function:

```
LV_ModifyCol()
```

added to the appropriate routines in the script (before the first *Gui, Show* and after any changes) forces all column widths to conform to the length of the longest item in each column respectively. If the total column widths go beyond the edge of the *ListView*, then the horizontal scrollbar is added.



This form of the `LV_ModifyCol()` for automatically resizing column widths is great —unless there is no data in a column. Then, the column width is minimized leaving the column title unreadable as shown in the image at the left. While the title can be expanded by dragging it to the right, doing this becomes tedious —especially if there are numerous columns with no data. Leaving out the `LV_ModifyCol()` displays the column title properly, but then we're back to our original problem.

The solution is adding the *AutoHdr* option to the function:

```
LV_ModifyCol(1, "AutoHdr")
```

This make the designated column conform to either the title width or the data in the column, whichever is longer (see Figure 2). Note that the scrollbar is automatically added to the *ListView* when the column goes beyond the right edge.

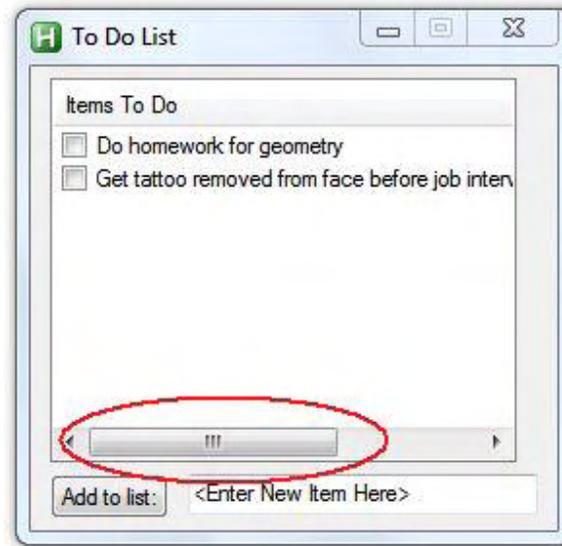


Figure 2. By adding the "AutoHdr" option to the LV\_ModifyCol() function, the designated column takes on the width of the title or data, whichever is wider. Scrollbars are added automatically, if needed.

### Making GUIs Resizable

Ron also noted that "that the window is a fixed size and can't be maximized or changed" in the *ToDoList.ahk* script. It's much easier if people can resize a GUI window to suit themselves. There is a simple way to make a GUI window resizable. Among the other GUI +/-options ([l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Options](http://l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Options)), such as *+AlwaysOnTop*, AutoHotkey has a *+Resize* option which makes any GUI window resizable by dragging (left-click and hold while moving the mouse) any corner or edge of the window. Simply add the *Resize* option to the *Gui +AlwaysOnTop* line of code already found in the script:

```
Gui +AlwaysOnTop +Resize
```

This makes any GUI window respond to the maximize and restore button, as well as, resizing by dragging an edge or corner. However, there is a problem. Even though the windows can be dragged to a new size and shape, the controls inside remain at the same size gaining us nothing (see Figure 3).

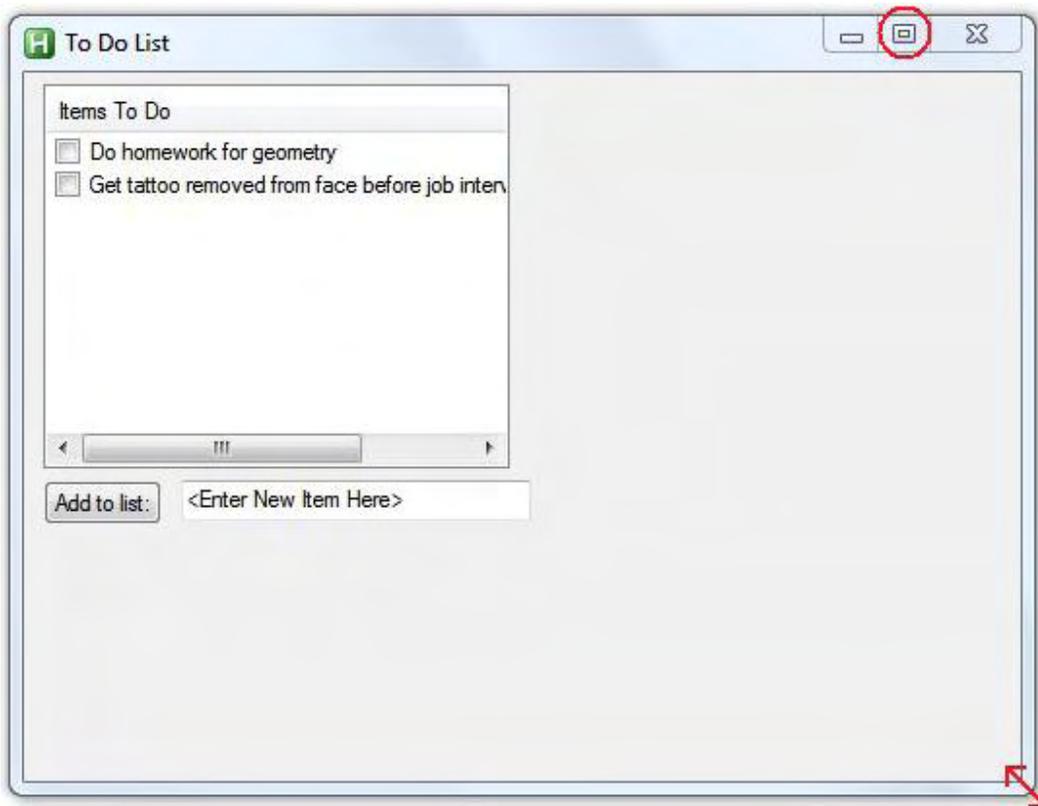


Figure 3. Add resize to the GUI options to add a maximize button at the top right and allow resizing by dragging. But, it only affects the main GUI window.

In order to resize GUI controls as the main GUI window is adjusted, the special GUI window event label ([i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Labels](http://i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#Labels)) (subroutine) *GuiSize* must be added to the script. As the main GUI is moved or resized, the *GuiSize* label is triggered. In this case, the *ListView*, the *Add to list* button and the *NewItem* edit field must be adjusted:

```
GuiSize: ; Expand or shrink the controls when resizing window.
if A_EventInfo = 1 ; No action when window is minimized.
    return
; Otherwise, the window has been resized or maximized. Resize the ListView to match.
GuiControl, Move, MyListView, % "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 20) . " H" . (A_GuiHeight - 40)
GuiControl, Move, Button1, % "y" . (A_GuiHeight - 30)
GuiControl, Move, Edit1, % "y" . (A_GuiHeight - 30) . "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 90)
Return
```

This is a powerful label since it ties changes in the size and position of GUI controls to the resizing of the main GUI window in real-time. It works with the *GuiControl, Move* command ([i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControl.htm](http://i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/GuiControl.htm)) by continually updating the width (w), height (h), and/or positional (x and y) parameters for each control as the window is dragged.

Note that the first line of the *GuiSize* label uses the built-in *A\_EventInfo* variable to determine if the window has been minimized. When *GuiSize* is triggered, an *A\_EventInfo* value of 1 means the window is minimized (0 = restored or resized; 2 = maximized).

In the following three lines of code the variables *A\_GuiHeight* and *A\_GuiWidth* ([i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#GuiSize](http://i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/Gui.htm#GuiSize)) (only available within the *GuiSize* label) are used to calculate the new sizes and locations for each control as the GUI window is resized. Note that only the width and height of the *ListView* control need adjustment ("*W*" . (*A\_GuiWidth* - 20) . " *H*" . (*A\_GuiHeight* - 40)), while the *Button* and *Edit* field both need the vertical location adjusted ("*y*" . (*A\_GuiHeight* - 30)). The *Edit* expands to the right as the GUI windows get wider ("*W*" . (*A\_GuiWidth* - 90)). The controls in the app now continuously adjust with the GUI window as it is resized by dragging an edge or corner with the mouse cursor (see Figure 4 and compare to Figure 3 above).

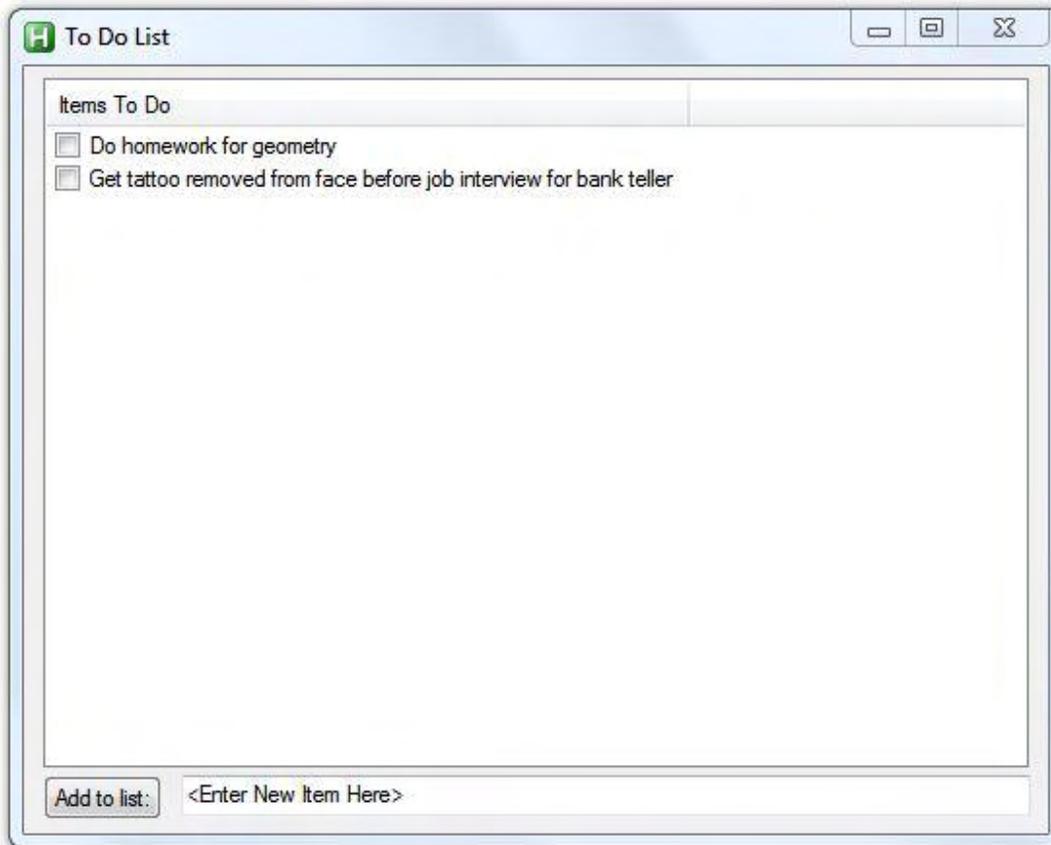


Figure 4. After the GuiSize subroutine is added to the script with the appropriate GuiControl, Move commands for each control, the controls adjust size and position to match the shape of the GUI window.

### Save Size and Position on the Screen

After resizing and/or moving the To-Do List windows to suit your needs, it would be nice to have those settings stay the same—even when the app is reloaded. As long as the app is running, the window will maintain its last configuration. Close the window and use either the hotkey combination (Win+ALT+T) or *Show To Do List* in the right-click menu from the System Tray icon and the window pops up at its last location with the same size. However, if you exit the app and start up again (or reload), the window returns to its default size and location. The only way to resolve the problem is to save the last set of parameters to a file somewhere.

We could use another file (such as an INI file ([i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm](http://i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/IniWrite.htm))) to save the data, but since there is already a data file that saves the To-Do List items, it's a natural place to save the window size and position. This can be done by capturing the current position and size of the window each time the data is updated then saving the it to the file. The following lines of code are added to the *UpdateFile()* function in the *ToDoList.ahk* script (see last week's column ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3130&article=ahk)) for an explanation of the complete function):

```
WinGetPos, X, Y, Width, Height, To Do List
Width -= 16
Height -= 38
FileAppend, %X% %Y% %Width% %Height% `n, ToDoList.txt
```

The *WinGetPos* command ([i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/WinGetPos.htm](http://i.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/WinGetPos.htm)) retrieves the needed position and size parameters from the To Do List window, makes a couple of adjustments, then writes the parameters in the first line of the *ToDoList.txt* data file (see Figure 5). However, there are a couple of quirks with using this command.

```
x1029 y395 w374 h209
Do homework for geometry class
Get tatto removed from face before job interview for bank teller
```

Figure 5. The parameters for the location and size of the To Do List window are saved in the first line of the `ToDoList.txt` data file.

First, as well as saving the file after any changes, the `UpdateFile()` function is set to run *OnExit*. However, if the window has been hidden (closed), then `WinGetPos` will not detect the window and the settings will be lost. This is resolved by adding `DetectHiddenWindows On` in the `UpdateFile` label (subroutine) called by *OnExit*:

```
UpdateFile:
  DetectHiddenWindows On
  UpdateFile()
  ExitApp
Return
```

Now the hidden To Do List window is detected and the size and screen position saved.

The second problem with using the `WinGetPos` command is that it captures the actual window dimensions while the `Gui, Show` command for displaying the window later uses only the dimensions for the active area inside the borders of the window. Without adjustments, the window will grow slightly larger (by the dimensions of the borders and title bar) each time the window is reloaded. This is resolved by adjusting the width and height by the frame dimensions in pixels (`Width -= 16` and `Height -= 38`) before saving. (The operation `-=` subtracts the value from the variable and saves the new value in the same variable. The operation `+=` adds the value to the same variable.)

The `FileAppend` command ([l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/FileAppend.htm](http://l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/FileAppend.htm)) is used to add the window dimensions in the format needed by the `Gui, Show` command to the first line of the previously deleted `ToDoList.txt` data file. The new `UpdateFile()` function is as follows:

```
UpdateFile()
{
  FileDelete, ToDoList.txt
  WinGetPos, X, Y, Width, Height, To Do List
  Width -= 16
  Height -= 38
  FileAppend, %X% Y% w%Width% h%Height% `n, ToDoList.txt
  Loop % LV_GetCount()
  {
    Gui +LastFound
    SendMessage, 4140, A_Index - 1, 0xF000, SysListView321
    IsChecked := (ErrorLevel >> 12) - 1
    If IsChecked
    {
      LV_GetText(Text, A_Index)
      FileAppend, *%Text% `n, ToDoList.txt
    }
    else
    {
      LV_GetText(Text, A_Index)
      FileAppend, %Text% `n, ToDoList.txt
    }
  }
}
```

As can be seen, the `Loop` that saves the To-Do List items begins immediately after the window's position data is saved. (See last week's column ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3131&article=ahk](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3131&article=ahk)) for more details of the `UpdateFile()` function.)

Now the positions data must be read when the app is first loaded in the auto-execute portion of the script:

```
IfExist, ToDoList.txt
```

```

{
Loop, Read, ToDoList.txt
{
If (A_index = 1 and SubStr(A_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "x")
{
WinPos := A_LoopReadLine
Continue
}
If SubStr(A_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "*"
{
StringTrimLeft, CheckedText, A_LoopReadLine, 1
LV_Add("Check", CheckedText)
}
Else
LV_Add("", A_LoopReadLine)
}
}

```

Note that a new *IF* condition has been added to the beginning of this loop in the auto-execute section of the script:

```

If (A_index = 1 and SubStr(A_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "x")
{
WinPos := A_LoopReadLine
Continue
}

```

Since the built-in loop variable *A\_Index* equals 1 for the first line of the file, this line is used for storing position data to the variable *WinPos*. Just in case an older data file exists without the position data (created by a previous version of *ToDoList.ahk*) the condition is skipped if the first line does not have the letter "x" in the first position (*SubStr(A\_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "x"*). The *Continue* command causes the loop to increment (skip) to the next value of *A\_Index* and restart the loop without executing any of the subsequent commands in the loop.

Now the saved dimensions (*WinPos*) must be added to the *Gui, Show* command:

```

IfExist, ToDoList.txt
{
Gui, Show, %WinPos% , To Do List
}
Else
{
WinGetPos, X1, Y1, W1, H1, Program Manager
X2 := W1-300
Gui, Show, x%x2% y50 , To Do List
}

```

Unless the *ToDoList.txt* file is deleted, the default (*Else*) will only run the first time the script runs.

### *Directly Editing inside the First Column of ListView*

One of the feature of *ListView* is that the first column (and only the first column) can be directly edited in the column if the default readonly option is turned off:

```
Gui, Add, ListView, sort r10 checked -readonly vMyListView gMyListView , Items To Do
```

The *-readonly* option is added to the *Gui, Add, ListView* command allowing editing in the first column (see Figure 6). To edit, select a row in the first column, then click again to edit. Use the ENTER key or deselect to exit editing. ESC to exit editing and revert to original text.

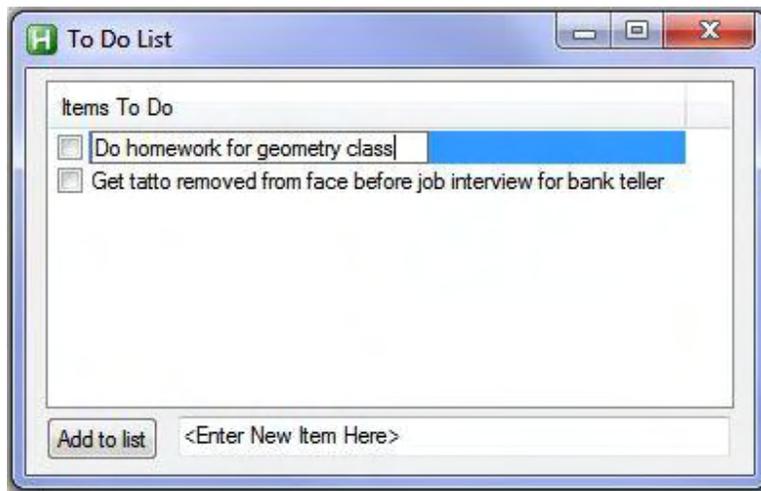


Figure 6. When the -readonly (minus readonly) is added as an option, the first column of the ListView can be directly edited with a second (slow) click of the first column of an item.

The only problem with this form of editing is that the script has not been set up to save this type of edit, although the data would be saved *OnExit*. To immediately save the edit, the following code is added to the *MyListView* label called out by the *ListView* command:

```
MyListView:
    If A_GuiEvent = e
        UpdateFile()
Return
```

The built-in variable *A\_GuiEvent* contains the G-Label Notifications (*l.autohotkey.net/docs/commands/ListView.htm#notify*) (triggers for the *MyListView* label) for events such as double-click, right-click, column-click, and exit editing. When exit editing (edit field deselected), "e" is stored to *A\_GuiEvent* and *MyListView* is triggered. In this case the *UpdateFile()* function runs saving the latest changes to the *ToDoList.txt* data file.

The Latest Version of *ToDoList.ahk*

Both the latest AHK (*ToDoList.ahk*) file and the EXE command file (*ToDoList.exe*) can be found at the *ComputerEdge* AutoHotkey Dropbox download site ([www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7](http://www.dropbox.com/sh/4qu48lyqtixdg7t/QdMY1dNuy7)) in the ZIP file *ToDoList.zip*. The complete AutoHotkey code for the To-Do List app follows for easy copy-and-paste into an AHK script:

```
OnExit, UpdateFile
Gui, default
Gui +AlwaysOnTop +Resize
Gui, Add, ListView, sort r10 checked -readonly vMyListView gMyListView , Items To Do
Gui, Add, Button, section gAddItem,Add to list
Gui, Add, Edit, ys vNewItem w180 , <Enter New Item Here>
SelectedRow := 0
IfExist, ToDoList.txt
{
Loop, Read, ToDoList.txt
{
    If (A_index = 1 and SubStr(A_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "x")
    {
        WinPos := A_LoopReadLine
        Continue
    }
}
If SubStr(A_LoopReadLine, 1, 1) = "*"
{
StringTrimLeft, CheckedText, A_LoopReadLine, 1
LV_Add("Check", CheckedText)
```

```

    }
Else
    LV_Add("", A_LoopReadLine)
}
}
LV_ModifyCol(1,"AutoHdr")
Menu, MyContextMenu, Add, Edit, EditItem
Menu, MyContextMenu, Add, Delete, DeleteItem
Menu, Tray, Add, Show To Do List, ShowTodo
IfExist, ToDoList.txt
{
    Gui, Show, %WinPos% , To Do List
}
Else
{
    WinGetPos,X1,Y1,W1,H1,Program Manager
    X2 := W1-300
    Gui, Show, x%x2% y50 , To Do List
}

Hotkey, ^!t, ShowTodo
Return
ShowTodo:
Gui, Show,, To Do List
Return
MyListView:
    If A_GuiEvent = e
        UpdateFile()
Return
GuiContextMenu: ; Launched in response to a right-click or press of the Apps key.
if A_GuiControl <> MyListView ; Display the menu only for clicks inside the ListView.
    return
    SelectedRow := LV_GetNext()
    LV_GetText(EditText, SelectedRow)
; Show the menu at the provided coordinates, A_GuiX and A_GuiY. These should be used
; because they provide correct coordinates even if the user pressed the Apps key:
Menu, MyContextMenu, Show , %A_GuiX%, %A_GuiY%
return
DeleteItem: ; The user selected "Clear" in the context menu.
RowNumber = 0 ; This causes the first iteration to start the search at the top.
Loop
{
    ; Since deleting a row reduces the RowNumber of all other rows beneath it,
    ; subtract 1 so that the search includes the same row number that was previously
    ; found (in case adjacent rows are selected):
    RowNumber := LV_GetNext(RowNumber - 1)
    if not RowNumber ; The above returned zero, so there are no more selected rows.
        break
    LV_Delete(RowNumber) ; Clear the row from the ListView.
}
UpdateFile()
return
AddItem:
    Gui, Submit, NoHide
    If SelectedRow = 0
    {
        LV_Add("", trim(NewItem))
    }
else
    {

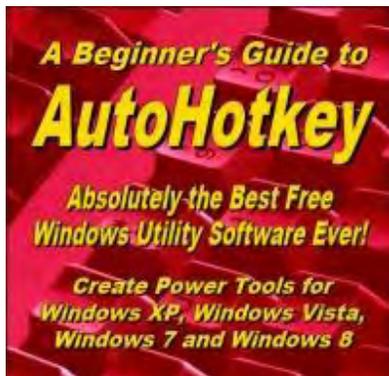
```

```

ComputerEdge
LV_Modify(SelectedRow,"",Trim(NewItem))
SelectedRow := 0
GuiControl, ,Button1, Add to list
}
UpdateFile()
LV_ModifyCol(1,"AutoHdr")
Return
EditItem:
GuiControl, ,Edit1, %EditText%
GuiControl, ,Button1, Update
Return
UpdateFile:
DetectHiddenWindows On
UpdateFile()
ExitApp
Return
GuiSize: ; Expand or shrink the ListView in response to the user's resizing of the window.
if A_EventInfo = 1 ; The window has been minimized. No action needed.
return
; Otherwise, the window has been resized or maximized. Resize the ListView to match.
GuiControl, Move, MyListView, % "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 20) . " H" . (A_GuiHeight - 40)
GuiControl, Move, Button1, % "Y" . (A_GuiHeight - 30)
GuiControl, Move, Edit1, % "Y" . (A_GuiHeight - 30) . "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 90)
Return
UpdateFile()
{
FileDelete, ToDoList.txt
WinGetPos, X, Y, Width, Height, To Do List
Width -= 16
Height -= 38
FileAppend, x%x% y%y% w%Width% h%Height% `n, ToDoList.txt
Loop % LV_GetCount()
{
Gui +LastFound
SendMessage, 4140, A_Index - 1, 0xF000, SysListView321
IsChecked := (ErrorLevel >> 12) - 1
If IsChecked
{
LV_GetText(Text, A_Index)
FileAppend, *%Text% `n, ToDoList.txt
}
else
{
LV_GetText(Text, A_Index)
FileAppend, %Text% `n, ToDoList.txt
}
}
}
}

```

\* \* \*



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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?))



ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20).

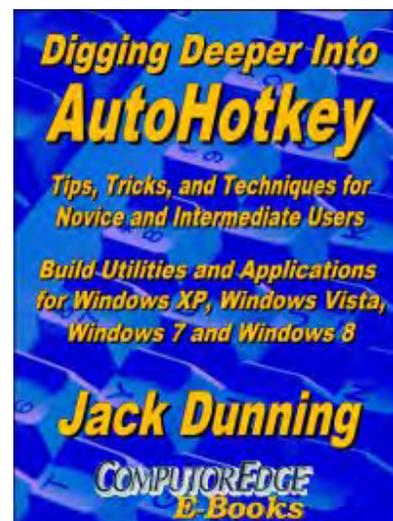
Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while 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](http://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?](http://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?](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009SI3F52/ref=as_li_ss_tl?))

ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B009SI3F52&linkCode=as2&tag=comput0b9-20). 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](http://computoredgebooks.com/Digging-Deeper-into-AutoHotkey-EPUB-format-iPad-Nook-etc-AUTOHOTKEY-2.htm))

---

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

at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

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

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.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey\\_Books\\_for\\_Beginners\\_and\\_Novices.html](http://www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey_Books_for_Beginners_and_Novices.html)) and *Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey* ([www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey\\_Books\\_for\\_Beginners\\_and\\_Novices.html](http://www.computoredge.com/AutoHotkey/AutoHotkey_Books_for_Beginners_and_Novices.html)).

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

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

Available from Amazon, *Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRRH8/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007RMCRRH8/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=comput0b9-20))! Also available at Barnes and Noble ([www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/misunderstanding-windows-8-jack-dunning/1109995715?ean=2940014229463)) and ComputerEdge E-Books ([www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks\\_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/Windows-Tips-and-Tricks_c4.htm?sourceCode=writer)).

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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Apps vs. Web Sites” by Wally Wang

Apps vs. Web Sites; Starting a Web Site with Mobile in Mind; Drifting to the Cloud; 3D Printer Software; Waiting for the Fall; Define Tab Key Behavior.

# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

At one time, no business could survive without listing their company in the Yellow Pages. When many people started getting Internet access, the Yellow Pages quickly faded in importance and having a Web site became the new way to advertise your business. While having a Web site is still important, businesses are finding it's even more important to have a social media presence (such as through Facebook).

With a Web site, you need to attract visitors through search engines using a variety of search engine optimization tactics. With a social media presence, you need to connect with others and contribute something useful to attract visitors. Now in addition to a Web site and a social media presence, companies may also need to produce and distribute their own apps.

At Comic-Con, Legendary Entertainment recently found a unique way to promote their upcoming *Godzilla* movie due for 2014. Besides offering an obligatory booth in the Comic-Con convention center, Legendary Entertainment also rented out a warehouse for an interactive exhibit they called the Godzilla Encounter. This exhibit contained props from the movie, toys sold from previous *Godzilla* movies, and a simulated Tokyo street containing *Godzilla* memorabilia such as the graphic comic novel *Godzilla: Half Century War* ([www.amazon.com/gp/product/1613775954/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1613775954&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1613775954/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1613775954&linkCode=as2&tag=the15minmovme-20)).



Figure 1. The Godzilla Encounter contained a simulated Tokyo street.

To promote their Godzilla Encounter, Legendary Entertainment created their own Godzilla Encounter Web site ([godzillaencounter.com](http://godzillaencounter.com)) that they announced through press releases at Comic-Con. Next, Legendary also created an iOS and Android app. Legendary encouraged visitors to the Godzilla Encounter exhibit to download and install the app before they entered the exhibit. By running the app, visitors could tell how close they were to the building containing the Godzilla Encounter exhibit.



Figure 2. The Godzilla Encounter app lets you know how close you are to the Godzilla Encounter exhibit.

Once inside, users of the Godzilla app could point their smartphone camera at various signs in Japanese and the app would translate the Japanese characters into English. Now instead of just passively browsing through the Godzilla exhibit, visitors could now actively participate in finding all five Japanese signs that the Godzilla Encounter app could translate to warn them about Godzilla.

After visitors spent time walking through a simulated Tokyo street, the exhibit guides rushed everyone into a simulated command control center where you could watch fake news broadcasts of unusual activities around the world, centering on a mysterious disturbance in the ocean, heading towards San Diego.

Once everyone got a chance to see fake news broadcasts and military footage of planes taking off to study the oncoming threat, the exhibit guides herded everyone into a simulated elevator to take everyone to the top of the skyscraper where a helicopter would evacuate them. Suddenly, the elevator shook and the lights blinked on and off as if something knocked out the city's electricity and shook the entire building. The elevator doors opened and the guides herded everyone into a simulated office where we could look out the skyscraper windows, which were actually video screens showing Godzilla approaching in the distance. Godzilla briefly walks past the skyscraper windows and then suddenly turns around and stares directly into the windows, letting out a tremendous roar. Then the guides herded everyone outside and passed out free movie posters as a souvenir.

What made the Godzilla Encounter interesting wasn't just the interactive exhibit, but the use of an app to make the exhibit more exciting. Legendary didn't just create a Web site and an interactive exhibit, but they added their own app that could only be useful during Comic-Con.

The idea of having a company app is slowly growing in the business community. Many newspapers now offer their own app to retrieve news rather than force people to visit the company's Web site, and many larger companies now offer their own iOS and Android apps as well. Pretty soon, small businesses will start offering their own apps. After all, why force your loyal customers to find information about your business through a Web site when they can just tap on a dedicated app instead?

Restaurants and hotels are now promoting special offers to users of their dedicated apps, since anyone willing to download and use a dedicated company app will likely be motivated to buy something from that company anyway. Even many of the larger Web sites are now offering their own apps so people don't have

to search for the company's Web site.

As more people start relying on dedicated company apps, they'll need to rely less on searching for a particular Web site, which means less dependence on search engines like Google and Bing. That also means that Web sites are becoming less important as dedicated apps start growing in popularity. In the near future, it's easy to imagine a time when people will get the information they want from their favorite dedicated apps and not bother directly searching the Internet for much of their online needs.

For technical people, the money lies in developing apps for iOS and Android since those are the two biggest mobile operating systems most people use. That also means that Blackberry and Windows Phone 7 users will be increasingly left out as app developers focus on the two largest markets and ignore the smaller markets.

For non-technical people, the money lies in knowing how to leverage dedicated apps to promote a product or company. Dedicated apps will soon become just as important as having a Web site and a social media presence. What's no longer important any more is having a listing in the Yellow Pages.

When was the last time anyone searched for the Yellow Pages Web site to look up anything? One day, people might wonder how people found anything on the Internet using primitive search engines. After all, former search engine giants like Alta Vista, Lycos, and Hotbot have long since faded from importance, so it's possible that the whole search engine market may soon lose their importance as dedicated apps take over.

If you think people will always take time to search the Internet through a search engine to find your Web site, just ask yourself how many companies are starting to offer their own apps for mobile computers. Then ask yourself if you still think search engines will be the primary source for information in the future. Chances are good you'll find more companies relying on dedicated apps to promote themselves.

### Starting a Web Site with Mobile in Mind

In the old days, people used to write HTML code to create Web sites. The problem with writing HTML code is that it makes changing content clumsy. How many times would someone need to modify the HTML code of a newspaper Web site to display the latest stories every hour?

To make creating and updating Web sites easy, most large sites rely on content management systems (CMS) such as WordPress. The idea behind a CMS is that you design the appearance of your site and the CMS takes care of formatting any new content you add at a later date. If you're going to create a Web site that needs to display changing information, it's easier to use a CMS.

Be careful though. Many CMS programs, like WordPress, offer themes to define the appearance of your content. Unfortunately, many such themes were originally designed for ordinary computer screens, but look horrible on the smaller screens of smartphones or even the slightly larger screens of tablets. If you're going to create a Web site, make sure you design it with both computer and mobile computing devices (smartphones and tablets) in mind.

If you view many Web sites through a smartphone, you may notice a different address appears such as m.domainname.com. Sites that display a special m prefix typically pay a monthly fee to a hosting service that specifically reformats their current Web site for mobile computing devices. While there's nothing wrong with paying extra for a separate mobile version of your site, there's no reason to pay for this if you just design your Web site with mobile devices in mind in the first place.

In the future, expect that more people will visit Web sites through smartphones and tablets, so make sure your Web site is smartphone-friendly. Then when the new batch of wearable computers arrives and people start browsing the Internet through these new computing devices, expect to redesign your Web site for this new form factor all over again.

### Drifting to the Cloud

Back in the early days of Web page designing, people wrote HTML code on their computers and uploaded their files to a Web server. Editing HTML files was so important that Adobe even acquired rival Macromedia for their Dreamweaver HTML editor and Flash animation programs.

Then the next step in Web page design occurred with cascading style sheets (CSS) that let you design the appearance of your Web page separate from the content. Apple tried to capitalize on this trend through

their iWeb program, which let you rapidly switch themes to give your Web pages a different look at the click of the mouse.

Apple soon killed iWeb when it became apparent that content management systems (CMS) like WordPress were more flexible options. Basically a CMS is a program that runs on a Web server so all of your content and Web site design resides on a server on the Internet.

Now as people start drifting towards cloud-based programs like Google Apps and Office 365, there's a hidden danger of relying on the Cloud. First, you need reliable Internet access to access any cloud-based program. Second, you still need to worry about making local backups of your crucial files.

Any hosting company will likely provide backups for their own protection, but what if you accidentally delete a file and don't realize it until several days later? Then your file will likely be lost for good. When you create files in the Cloud, make sure you keep backups of your critical files just in case. That way if you accidentally delete the file off the Cloud, or if you can't get Internet access for some reason, you'll still have a copy of your important files on your computer anyway. Use cloud-based apps for their convenience, but don't forget that backups are always necessary anyway.

### 3D Printer Software

In the old days, people often bought printers and then weren't able to use them without the proper drivers. One reason why WordPerfect became so dominant was because it worked with the widest variety of printers than any other word processor. Then Microsoft introduced Windows, which negated WordPerfect's advantage in printer driver support, and Microsoft Word became the dominant word processor instead.

Now with the growing popularity of 3D printers, you have to keep in mind that 3D printers need the right software to work properly with your computer. Windows 8.1 will be adding 3D printer support and many 3D printers include their own software. However, if you want software to better control your 3D printer, take a look at Simplify3D software ([www.simplify3d.com](http://www.simplify3d.com)).

Just like WordPerfect worked with multiple printers, Simplify 3D tries to work with the greatest variety of 3D printers possible while running on Windows, Linux, and OS X. More importantly, Simplify 3D gives you greater control over your 3D printer so you can use less material to create more sophisticated designs.

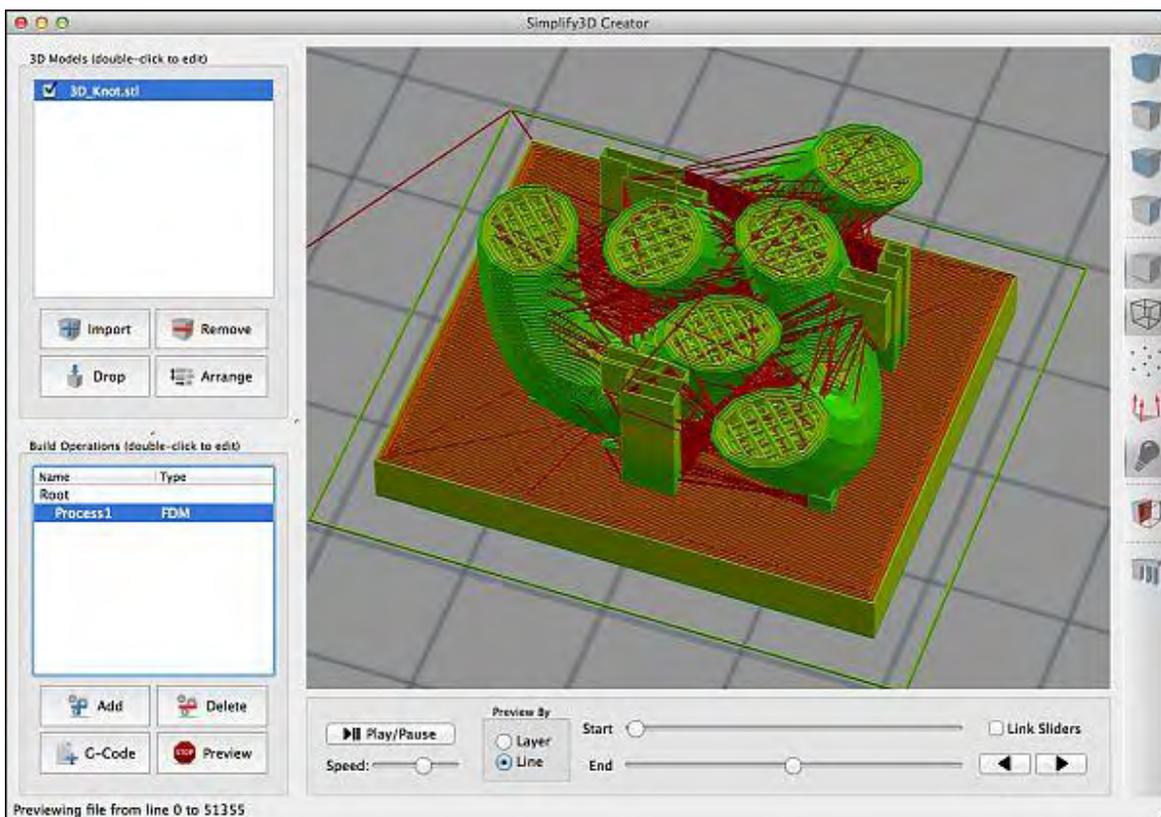


Figure 3. Simplify 3D gives you greater control over your 3D designs.

Expect more companies to offer specialized 3D printing software in the future, so focus on this software category to get the most out of your 3D printer. While the average cost of a 3D printer hovers around \$1,500, expect the price to continue dropping while capabilities keep improving. Just as nearly everyone has an inkjet or laser printer these days, in the future, nearly everyone will have a 3D printer as well.

Learn how to design three-dimensional objects using computer-aided design (CAD) and experiment by creating your designs on a 3D printer. With software like Simplify 3D, you can test your designs before printing them out so you can see mistakes ahead of time before wasting time and material printing out your designs.

3D printing is the future, so you can either prepare yourself to deal with it or you can hide your head in the sand and hope that it will go away without disrupting your life one bit. Guess which choice will prove more beneficial for you in the long run?

### Waiting for the Fall

If you can afford to wait, don't buy a new Macintosh, iPhone, or iPad until this fall. That's when Apple will release new iPhone and iPad models along with iMac, Mac mini, and Mac Pro versions. That's also the time when Apple will release new versions of OS X 10.9 and iOS 7, which will come loaded with lots of new features, so you might as well get a new device with the latest version of the operating system.

The latest rumors hint that Apple's new products will arrive between September and October. Most likely, Apple will stagger the launch of the new iPhone, iPad, and Macintosh models to keep the excitement up while giving people another reason to keep coming back to the Apple Stores.

The next iPhone is rumored to offer a fingerprint recognition scanner while Apple might offer a lower cost iPhone to go along with a high-end iPhone model at the same time. If you get a new Macintosh, forget about the standard 4GB of RAM. Boost your Macintosh to at least 8GB of RAM since with the iMac, you won't be able to upgrade the memory easily later, so make sure you get enough RAM to make your Macintosh run well now and in the future.

For anyone looking to upgrade their Apple products, the coming fall looks like an early Christmas. With a new version of the operating system combined with new hardware, you can get the latest technology until tomorrow rolls around.

\* \* \*

When you see an online form, you can press Tab to choose different text fields. However, if you want the Tab key to select pop-up menus or other items besides just text fields, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. Click the Keyboard icon and select the All Controls radio button under the Full Keyboard Access.

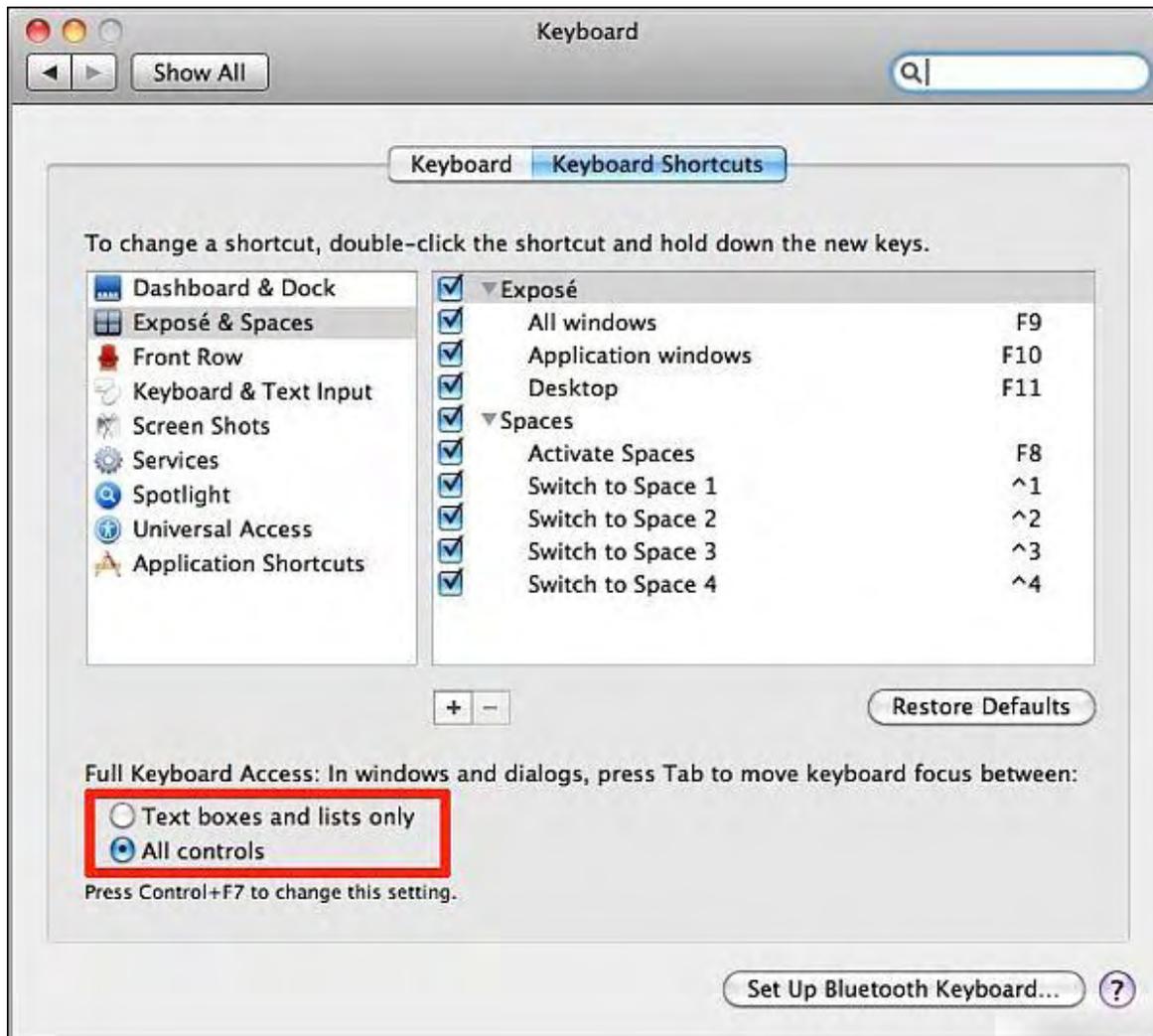


Figure 4. The System Preferences window lets you define how the Tab key behaves with an online form.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=159079189)  
*How to Live with a Cat (When You Really Don't Want To)* (www.amazon.com/gp/product/  
B006DJYL70/ref=as\_li\_tf\_tl?)

ie=UTF8&tag=the15minmovme-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=B006DJYL70)  
*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/](http://www.15minutemoviemethod.com/))" Wally can be reached at [wally@computoredge.com](mailto:wally@computoredge.com).

---

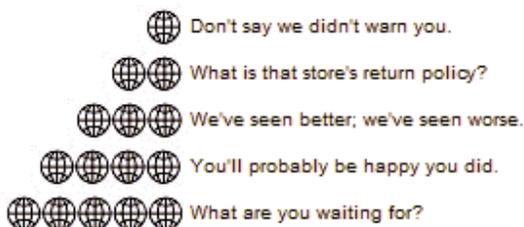
---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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



Social Media's Bubble Beginning to Burst; Poll: Facebook Users Would Pay \$10 to See No Ads at All; Ten Ways to Wow Friends and Family With Your Summer Videos; Renny Bluetooth Home Ringer; Aliens: Colonial Marines for PC.

### Social Media's Bubble Beginning to Burst...?

At least that's the opinion of social media expert and co-founder of OverNear, Bill Glaser:

"Falling from 21 percent of the venture capital headed to Internet-based enterprises to a mere two percent in the last two years, many have conceded that social media's growth is beginning to recede substantially and will continue over time. This gives some insight into the slowly shrinking realm of social media," said Glaser.



"Social networking has predominately been about showing where people are or have been and who they are connected with and you can only do this in so many ways and, as a result, social media has now hit the proverbial wall where the well for innovative ideas is slowly beginning to be depleted and the purpose of social media is changing. The social aspect of social media is going to largely be determined by reestablishing meaningful and personal connections between users as a way to connect within the real world and building the mobile experience around the user. But from what I see, social media is starting to move away from its initial use, which is socializing in a new way."

As social media begins to transition into the realm of big data and cloud computing, Glaser agrees that the next two years will see a drastic change.

### Poll: Facebook Users Would Pay \$10+ to See No Ads at All

According to the folks at the independent digital marketing agency, Greenlight, Facebook users would pay more to see less:

It has been reported that Twitter's Biz Stone has suggested Facebook could earn almost three times more revenue than it did from advertising last year (\$4.3bn), by offering users the option of an ads-free experience at a cost of \$10 per month. But would users really be willing to pay for this and if so, how much would they consider to be reasonable?



Speculating on exactly this at the turn of the year, Greenlight, polled 500 people globally to gauge just how much they would be prepared to pay not to see ads when using Facebook.

The data showed 15% of users would be prepared to pay Facebook to see no ads with the majority, 8%, indicating they would be willing to spend \$5 right up to \$10 and even over, per month.

In March, Facebook unveiled the redesign of its News Feed. Andreas Poulos, COO at Greenlight, noted then that Facebook had taken the success of advertising in peoples' newsfeeds on mobile and based its News Feed redesign on mirroring that format (or close to it) on all devices, which, in his view would help to boost revenues, results of which will be revealed, when Facebook reports its quarterly earnings later today. Poulos also commented then that:

-Whilst the move was shrewd, in that the redesigned News Feed mirrored that on mobile where it has proved successful from an advertising perspective, the conflict between user experience and driving more ad dollars loomed large. It did with AltaVista historically, who were then unseated in the search engine wars with a new upstart (Google), with a cleaner interface and better user experience

-Facebook may need to pace itself a little less aggressively when it comes to cashing in on its advertising sweet spot. Alongside showing that 15% of users would pay Facebook to see no ads at all, Greenlight's survey also showed that close to 70% say they "never" or "rarely" click on advertisements or sponsored listings in Facebook, indicative that consumer apathy is very real.

Poulos also noted that the challenge faced by Facebook is "reinventing" advertising so people don't feel they are being bombarded by ads. With the very recent addition of a video service to its photo-sharing app Instagram, video ads could perhaps be the next step, and some are in fact already betting on it.

All in all, early reports out today indicate analysts are optimistic about Facebook's results. JP Morgan expects Facebook's advertising revenue to rise 40% on the previous quarter to reach \$1.39bn, with mobile accounting for a third (\$446mn) of it, whilst those derived from desktop advertising are projected to fall 4% on the previous year as ad dollars continue to shift to mobile devices. Others have been cautionary, Cantor Fitzgerald for example, pointing to a weaker ad market in Europe, which it says could hurt Facebook's international revenue.

### Ten Ways to Wow Friends and Family With Your Summer Videos

Here are some useful tips and tricks from CyberLink to help make those summertime videos ones that people actually want to watch:

More than 3.5 billion consumers worldwide will take videos to capture their best moments this summer—whether it's footage of an elegant wedding, a peaceful day at the beach or an annual family barbecue. While an overwhelming majority of these consumers want to take higher quality, more captivating videos that truly represent their most memorable summer experiences, many feel that they lack the talent or experience to do so. That is where CyberLink comes in with 10 of the easiest and most effective ways to turn rough and

choppy video clips into bona fide cinema-quality experiences.



- Tip One: Tell a Story

Baby's first day at the beach is worth more than a one-minute video clip of him or her spitting out sand. Turn this into a real story that everyone will love with an intro (getting Baby ready for the beach), a core (Baby enjoying the sand and surf) and a conclusion (Baby sleeping safely in Mom's arms on the ride home). It only takes a few minutes to construct a complete story—simply plan ahead, brainstorm, get inspiration and write out your thoughts as they come together during the editing process.

- Tip Two: Add a Soundtrack

Every year has its "songs of the summer" that bring you back to those special moments—why not leverage those in your videos? Music and sound effects transform videos and also cover any imperfections in the video. Easy-to-use tools can also help you mask unwanted sounds like barking dogs, traffic and slamming doors with light music. It's easy to determine the right microphone setup for recording your own sound effects or you can simply download and share sound effects at [www.DirectorZone.com](http://www.DirectorZone.com) (*www.DirectorZone.com*). You can also obtain free music downloads for your videos at [MusOpen.org](http://MusOpen.org).

- Tip Three: Set the Pace

The key to successful video editing is creating a tempo that matches the tone and mood of your video project—rather than randomly cutting footage. Use a beat marker to help you determine if your edits are timed appropriately throughout the footage, whether it is fast or slow, so your final video is enjoyable for others to watch.

- Tip Four: Leverage Precision Editing Tools

If you are filming a wedding or a major event for loved ones, you want your video to be as perfect as it can be—so take the time to make precise edits using keyframe controls and trim tools. Keyframe control is a must-have tool to create visual effects which times and synchronizes along the timeline, such as a fade from full color to black & white, or movement of an object along a path. The trim tool allows you to select the exact sections of your clip on a frame-by-frame basis for precise accuracy throughout the entire editing process.

- Tip Five: Don't Be Afraid to Cut

If you're filming a video of a big family reunion cookout as a gift for your grandma, you might want to omit scenes of tipsy relatives and bratty teens that either detract from the video or don't fit in with the overall tone or story. Even if it happens to be your favorite scene, don't hesitate to cut it if it doesn't fit in. One option: you can keep

those scenes in a "Director's Cut Bonus" in your DVD, either as outtakes or worked into the extended version. That way, you can give grandma a lovely video keepsake but save extra footage that will entertain younger cousins.

- Tip Six: Keep It Simple

You don't want to over-edit your videos with star wipes or motion paths or else the video of your midsummer's night dream on the lake will turn into an overwrought nightmare. Instead, stick to simple cuts or dissolves that have a purpose that complements your overall production. Your final video will be more professional-looking and far more enjoyable for others to watch.

- Tip Seven: Get Social

Billions of videos are watched daily on social sites like YouTube, Vimeo and Facebook—why not see if yours is one of the most downloadable? Through social sharing, you will get instantaneous feedback on your video which may inspire you take on new projects.

- Tip Eight: Get Creative with Blue-ray and DVD Menus

Your video of the annual Labor Day bonfire beach party is spectacular and now you're burning a disk to share with others so they can watch it too. Make your fabulous DVD really stand out by adding a creative DVD menu, which will be the first thing people see when they fire up the DVD. Go to [www.DirectorZone.com](http://www.DirectorZone.com) ([www.DirectorZone.com](http://www.DirectorZone.com)) to find a huge library of free DVD menu downloads or customize your own with background graphics and fonts.

- Tip Nine: Save Your Progress

While editing videos, get in the habit of saving them every five minutes or so by keeping your hand on the Ctrl +S keys to save the latest status of your working projects. Another good idea is to save alternate versions from time to time as you progress through your video project—just in case you change your mind and want to revert to a previous save point.

- Tip Ten: Get Organized

If you have 30 hours of raw footage of your once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Grand Canyon, you don't want to spend hours of precious time searching for that one special scene of your husband white-water rafting on the Colorado River. So, take time at the beginning of your project to create a folder structure that is easy for you to understand, keep your files named for easy recognition and maintain a notebook to record time points in your footage where specific scenes are located that you would like to use later.

## Renny Bluetooth Home Ringer

Product: Renny Bluetooth Home Ringer

Manufacturer: Olens Technology

Web site: [www.rennyringer.com](http://www.rennyringer.com) ([www.rennyringer.com](http://www.rennyringer.com))

Price: \$99

Has this happened to you? You get an important cell phone call but it's either turned off or hidden away someplace like inside your car where you can't hear it.

Olens Tech has a solution for you with the Renny Bluetooth Home Ringer—a clever gadget that starts off making sure you know that call is coming in and then goes on to let you have an excellent hands-free conversation thanks to its quality built-in speaker and microphone.

Renny is significantly different from many of the other home ringers being offered on the market in that it's more than just a speaker and microphone. It connects wirelessly to any cell phone within a 200 ft. range, even if the phone is on silent or set to vibrate. Then, when it gets the call, it announces who is calling and allows you to select a custom ringtone. People I called told me I sounded great—although, not surprisingly—they could tell I was using a speakerphone.



You can even use Renny to stream music from the phone, tablet, or computer via Bluetooth with surprisingly good sound from such a small unit.

Renny has a rechargeable battery that is always on and ready for use and has a patented technology called AutoLinx that allows it to automatically connect and disconnect to your cell phone without making itself the default audio source which, under certain circumstances, can result in dropped calls. You don't have to think about it—Renny does it for you, even if you haven't used them together for a while; it's always ready to start taking phone calls.

I didn't try this out, but Renny also has a useful-sounding feature called DualSync that allows up to two mobile phones to be connected to the unit at once.



Renny feels very well-built and has a nice heft to it. It comes in four colors (metal, blue, white, or red). A demo video can be seen here ([www.rennyringer.com](http://www.rennyringer.com)). You can also go to [olenstechnology.com/rennycompare/](http://olenstechnology.com/rennycompare/) to see how Renny stacks up against other ringers. Pretty darn good, it turns out.

Note: An external antenna is available for about \$7 but, unless you have a lot of stuff (walls, primarily) between

Renny and your phone, you won't need it.

Includes: Renny with rechargeable Li battery, mini-USB AC adapter, and manual.



Review contributed by Jenny Paus-Minner

# GAMER'S EDGE

Aliens: Colonial Marines for PC

Developer: Gearbox

Publisher: Sega

Web site: [www.sega.com](http://www.sega.com) ([www.sega.com/aliens-colonial-marines/](http://www.sega.com/aliens-colonial-marines/))

Price: About \$50 (usually much cheaper when on sale through Steam, Amazon, GOG, or other digital download sites)

Also available on: PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360

Rating: M for Mature



You have to wonder what the folks at Gearbox were thinking. After the stunning success of last year's *Borderlands 2*, gamers rightly expected a similarly-amazing return to the world of wear-a-second-pair-of-underwear extraterrestrial bug hunting with their newest game, *Aliens: Colonial Marines*. The sneak peek video looked fantastic, but something went very wrong between all the pre-release hoopla and the game Gearbox ultimately released. What players got was, to be honest, a mess.

First off, the game looked terrible. Textures were blotchy, boring, and repetitive. Creatures looked almost comically primitive.



Then there was the problem that AI. Monsters would sometimes be completely unaware of your presence, much-less that you were shooting at them, or get stuck in corners or against objects and go into motion loops that looked utterly ridiculous.

Finally—and most importantly—the general atmosphere that made earlier Aliens games incredibly creepy (particularly the classic Aliens vs. Predator 2) was gone. Colonial Marines felt flat and unexciting. The tension and excitement were gone. The baddies just felt like endless waves of pixels being thrown at you.



No one's quite sure what happened. Lots of excuses and apologies have been flying around the Web. One rumor is that a large part of the work was outsourced to another developer while Gearbox focused its energy on its own projects. Sounds possible.

In the hopefully-better-late-than-never category, the game has had a series of updates including one just a week ago (v1.4.0 Update (July 22, 2013)). These patches have much better textures, AI, and atmosphere. Sadly, the below list of improvements serves as a tacit indictment of just how bad the original release was. And, sadly, despite the patches the game's problems with storytelling largely remain.

Patch v1.4.0 details (from Gearbox):

- 
- Adjusted "Recruit" difficulty to be easier. (Other difficulty options have not changed)
  - Adjusted melee encounter animations
  - Various AI improvements.
  - Adjusted Xeno behavior to only allow for tail attacks when they're on ceilings
  - Fixed an issue that could cause Xenos to walk upright on ceilings
  - Adjusted Lurker AI to retreat a bit after a close encounter
  - Fixed a bug where AI marines would occasionally default pose if incapacitated from a melee encounter
  - Fixed a bug where AI would still be targetable by Xenos while incapacitated
  - Changed the close encounter lighting to fade out instead of abruptly turning off
  - Addressed an issue where player weapons would possibly continue to fire during melee encounters
  - Adjusted the dissolve effect for Xeno head pieces and particles in Bug Hunt and multiplayer
  - Adjusted the attack angle for the Xeno tail stab to prevent stretching
  - Addressed an issue where Xeno gore effects would occasionally play twice
  - Addressed an issue with the 'Eat This!' achievement from not being unlocked when using the double-barreled flush gun
  - Addressed a rare crash bug when using interactive objects
  - Addressed an issue where the motion tracker ping would play when you didn't have a motion tracker available
  - Addressed an issue where some particles would not appear when the World Detail slider was set to the minimum. Note: This may require some users to re-configure the World Detail slider (under Settings -> Video) to ensure the setting is applied properly.
  - Adjusted a broken Extermination Point in Excavation
  - Addressed an issue in Extermination where the last two Extermination Points used would sometimes immediately reactivate

Addressed an issue that wouldn't let you select spectator cameras when joining games in progress

 for the original release

  for the patched version

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

---

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



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

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

"Kickstarter," "Dictionary and Scratchpad Apps," "Competitive Advantage"

### Kickstarter

[Regarding the June 28 Kickstarter: Power to the People column ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3126&article=beyond](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3126&article=beyond)):]

As the person portrayed as "the bad guy" for demanding answers from a Kickstarter creator who had gone into hiding, I was amused by the minority of vocal detractors angry about my pursuing refunds and transparency on behalf of all 440 backers, when the story hit the media. The project creator behind Hanfree improperly deposited over \$35,000 into his personal bank account, and then refused to tell us where he'd spent the money, and refused to issue us even partial refunds. Who would sympathize with such a reckless manager of large sums of money? My guess: people who have no qualms about ripping off consumers in exactly the same fashion, and people who fail to consult with competent business professionals prior to diving into entrepreneurial schemes.

-Neil Singh, Phoenix, Arizona

*Mr. Singh-*

*Thanks for your comments. I tried to portray your issues with Quest in the most balanced way possible. And I agreed with your assertions (as others have) that Kickstarter too often posts costly but ill-planned projects by amateurs who have no business plan or entrepreneurial experience.*

-Marilyn, Texas

### Dictionary and Scratchpad Apps

[Regarding Jack Dunning's July 12 article ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3128&article=cover](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3128&article=cover)), "Five Cool Little Windows Apps":]

Thanks for the Dictionary app, including the change to avoid the need for a Windows key. IE has an accelerator for a dictionary look-up that only applies to the browser, but this app works everywhere, even in the titles of desktop icons!

Re: Scratchpad, I have noticed some issues:

- 1) We still need to copy, show scratchpad, and paste instead of copy, open Notepad, and paste.
- 2) When you "show" it just shows the most recent document the last time it was closed (hidden). It's not clear if there is a way to start a new document unless you delete the previous INI and TXT files to force it to start over.
- 3) I can change the Windows hotkey but can't change to non-windows hot keys even if I edit the INI directly. The help file (?) calls it "toggle" which only disables the Windows hotkey.
- 4) There is no way to print the Scratchpad file; you must find the TXT file and use Notepad.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

### Competitive Advantage

[Regarding the July 12 Wally Wang's Apple Farm column ([webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3128&article=wallysaf](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?issue=3128&article=wallysaf)):]

"When price is the only advantage you have over competitors, you really don't have any advantage at all."

Sadly, I remember a time when providing good customer service was considered a competitive advantage.

-Carol Elkins, Pueblo, CO

---

*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](http://webserver.computoredge.com/online.mvc?src=ebook)). Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit ComputerEdge E-Books ([www.computoredgebooks.com/](http://www.computoredgebooks.com/)).

---

---

Send mail to [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com) with questions about editorial content.  
Send mail to [cwebmaster@computoredge.com](mailto:cwebmaster@computoredge.com) with questions or comments about this Web site.  
Copyright © 1997-2013 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

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