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Apple's New iPhones and More!



Cyber-Drama: Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S are Letdowns; Silicon Valley Fights Back Against NSA Surveillance; Privacy Issues: Facebook to Health Insurance Questionnaires; Do You Really Want to Know How Much Big Data Knows About You?; Cyber Security Booming; Aging Tech Companies: Market Leaders and Hipper Offices; Is the Middle Class Bleeding Jobs and Money?; The Middle Class: Capitalism and Innovation; Anticipated Future Technology—GPS on the Personal Scale.

Magazine Summary

[List of ComputerEdge Sponsors](#)

[Digital Dave](#)

by Digital Dave

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

Adobe Flash Player Install Problem; E-mail Address Change; VoIP Telephone Service.

Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S an Other Little Known High Tech Stories

by Marilyn K. Martin

Apple's New iPhones, NSA Fight Back, Privacy and Your Big Data, Cyber Security, and Aging High Tech

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How to Cheat at Computer Games and Restart Learning AutoHotkey with Action Recorders

by Jack Dunning

AutoHotkey Is Great for Empowering Your Avatar, Plus Automatic Script Creators for Beginners

One of the most popular uses for AutoHotkey is automating computer games. Plus, did you get bogged down in learning AutoHotkey? Actions recorders such as AutoScriptWriter can give you a fresh start.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

by Wally Wang

The iPhone 5S and 5C Go on Sale

The iPhone 5S and 5C Go on Sale; Waiting in Line; Aiming Mortars with an iPad; Blackberry and Nokia; IBM vs. Microsoft; The Lack of Logic; Staying Organized; iOS 7.

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

by Charles Carr

The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.

iPhone Fingerprint Scanner Hacked—Should You Care?; Will PC Gamers Ever Get to Play Grand Theft Auto V?; Green Protection for Notebook Computers; Samsung Mega Smartphone (AT&T)—One Phabulous Phablet.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Cable TV," "Memory Cards," "Thank You"

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Digital Dave

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

Adobe Flash Player Install Problem; E-mail Address Change; VoIP Telephone Service.

Adobe Flash Player Problem

Dear Digital Dave,

I received an e-mail which directs me to YouTube. I click on YouTube where I'm told that I cannot view the video unless I download Adobe Flash Player. I download AFP. I again go to the YouTube where I'm told that I cannot view the video unless I download AFP. What am I missing as I seem to be going in circles?

*Thanks,
David Niles
Phoenix, AZ*

Dear David,

The problem is caused by Web sites which use the word download when they should be saying install or enable. The most common solution to your problems is enabling the Adobe Flash Player plug-in (may also be called an add-on depending upon your Web browser). Flash is installed in the browser and most commonly is enabled, but occasionally gets disabled by other mysterious events. The YouTube Web site only recognizes that Flash is not working and tells you to download it again.

To enable Flash in Internet Explorer go to Tools => Manage add-ons. Either hit the ALT key to expose the Tools in the menu bar or click the gear icon in the upper right-hand corner of the browser and select Manage add-ons.

In Google Chrome, click the three bar icon in the upper right-hand corner and select Settings. Type *Flash* in the Search Settings field then select "Content settings..." under the Privacy heading. Or click "Show advanced settings..." and find "Content settings..." under Privacy. Scroll down to Plug-ins in the next windows and click "Disable individual plug-ins..." at the bottom of the category. The plug-ins listing will open allowing disabling and enabling of

installed plug-ins.

For Mozilla Firefox, go to Tools => Add-ons => Plugins to enable/disable.

If you don't find Adobe Flash Player at the specified plug-ins or add-ons location (it may also be listed as Shockwave Flash), then you may need to install or update it. My guess is that all you will need to do is enable it in the browser you're currently using.

Check this link for more information on the latest version of [Adobe Flash Player](#).

Digital Dave

E-mail Address Change

Dear Digital Dave,

*Love your column. I'm using Outlook on a Windows 7 machine for e-mail. I currently have Time Warner service and I'm using a *.san.rr.com e-mail address. I'm contemplating a move to a place which only has Comcast, not Time Warner. According to TW there is no way I can continue using "their" address without their service. I will only wish to give an address change to selected contacts but don't want to miss an important one. Is there some way to save my addresses and selectively send a change notice or some program which would do it for me? Where are those addresses anyway? Thanks for any suggestions.*

Peg

Coronado, CA

Dear Peg,

I'm assuming that you will be using the same computer after your move. If that is the case, then all you will need to do is add the new e-mail address as a separate account and delete the old account. All the contact information will still be available.

If you are moving to a new computer, then you will want to Export your addresses to a CSV (Comma Separated Values) file for importing into Outlook on the new computer. Generally, you can find the Export feature through the Files menu, either directly (or through Options => Advanced in Outlook 2010).

If you don't already have an [Outlook.com](#) account, then you can create one and upload your addresses to the Web. You will still need to create a CSV file first. (Be sure to note where you save the exported CSV file.)

I don't use Outlook, but I assume that it has a way to create a Group (family, customers, etc.) for sending e-mail to a collection of addresses. Create a group for those people that you want

to know your new address and send an e-mail to that group using BCC (Blind Carbon Copy)—so they don't see each other's addresses. The alternative is to go through your address book and send the change of address to the qualified people one at a time. This is more personal, but much more time consuming.

Digital Dave

VoIP Telephone Service

Dear Digital Dave,

I was considering going to VoIP for my home phone, but I'm kind of leery about it. What's your take on this Basic system sold by Walmart?

*P.S. I've been reading your stuff since for about 25+ years. You're great, thanks,
James Wing
San Diego, CA*

Dear James,

I'm a big fan of Voice over IP (VoIP) phone service. I use it extensively. At a time when people are dumping land lines and just using their cell phones, VoIP is a good alternative. The quality of Internet calls has improved enough that it is almost impossible for people to know that you're using the Internet. The quality is generally better than cell phones which depend upon a wireless signal. One of the best features of VoIP is that you can take the phone with you—as long as you have an Internet connection. It's like taking your office with you, although some hotels may block VoIP calls over their Internet service.

The BasicTalk box sold at Walmart for \$9.88 also requires a monthly fee of \$9.99 (plus taxes and fees). This includes unlimited domestic calling, but international calls are extra.

The Ooma Telo VOIP Phone System is \$135.99 at Walmart, but there is no monthly charge other than taxes and fees—about \$3 per month. Ooma includes domestic calling. If you plan to stick with VoIP for more than a year, then the Ooma box will be a better value than BasicTalk in the long run.

Vonage will provide the box free with most plans and charges from about \$10 to \$30 per month (plus taxes and fees) depending upon the package, but their standard rate of \$27.00 includes unlimited calling to 60 countries around the world. If you make a lot of calls to Europe than it may be worth considering a package such as Vonage.

Some services include voice mail answering service or call forwarding to another phone. Vonage will deliver your voicemail to an e-mail address transcribed to text. Vonage also allows

you to add your mobile phone as an extension to your Vonage plan at no extra charge—allowing you to make international calls without the additional cell charges. Be sure to check which features are included and which are additional with the different services and plans before you make a decision.

You can generally keep your current phone number, but there may be an extra charge with the cheaper plans. Be sure to keep your old phone service until the number is ported over. Otherwise you may lose the number.

I can't speak to the quality of every system. Before buying any particular system, I would check the reviews from actual users. I know people who use Vonage and Ooma and they seem happy with the systems for their purposes.

There are a number of other VoIP services. Maybe readers would like to share their experiences.

Digital Dave



Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S an Other Little Known High Tech Stories

“Apple's New iPhones, NSA Fight Back, Privacy and Your Big Data, Cyber Security, and Aging High Tech” by Marilyn K. Martin

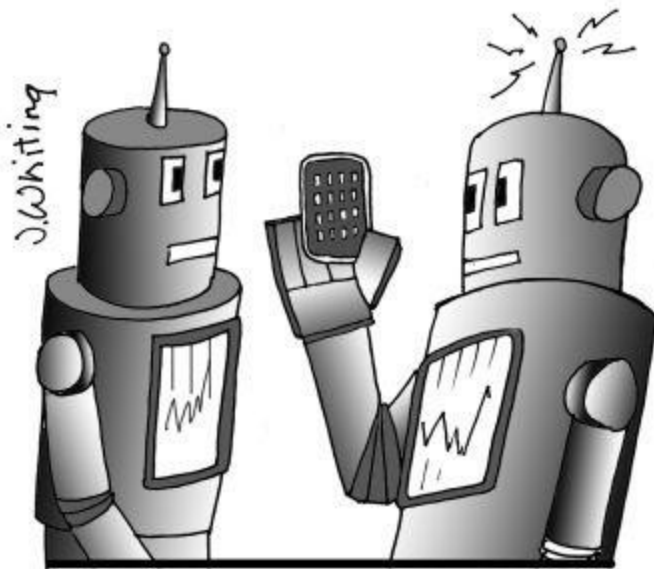
Cyber-Drama: Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S are Letdowns; Silicon Valley Fights Back Against NSA Surveillance; Privacy Issues: Facebook to Health Insurance Questionnaires; Do You Really Want to Know How Much Big Data Knows About You?; Cyber Security Booming; Aging Tech Companies: Market Leaders and Hipper Offices; Is the Middle Class Bleeding Jobs and Money?; The Middle Class: Capitalism and Innovation; Anticipated Future Technology—GPS on the Personal Scale.

Twelve months (July 2012 through June 2013) of Marilyn's [Little Known High Tech](#) series has been compiled into an almanac (with a complete index) available exclusively at Amazon. If you want a quick reference for the obscure or unusual in computers, technology, and the Internet over the past year, then [check it out](#).

Cyber-Drama: Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S are Letdowns

Troubled Apple released their newest iPhones, 5C (in five different colors) and 5S on

September 10, 2013, and according to a review by Troy Wolverton in the *San Jose Mercury News* (through the *Denver Post*), there's a lot to be [critical of](#). The most serious charges are that Apple didn't correct long-standing iPhone complaints, from short battery life and limited memory, to still-tiny screens, and the inability to talk and surf simultaneously on Verizon or Sprint. And then there's the price of \$550 if the new iPhone is unsubsidized by a carrier, when unsubsidized Android phones cost hundreds of dollars less.



"I can't get into my new iPhone 5S with the fingerprint sensor because I don't have any fingerprints!"

Most controversial is the new iPhone5S' fingerprint sensor, Touch ID. Wolverton thinks it fails as a security feature, since it will recognize up to five different fingerprints. And since iPhone doesn't support multi-user personalization, any one of four other people can get into your iPhone and access all your apps and data. Also, Apple hasn't opened up the sensor to outside programmers, so don't hold your breath for Touch ID to let you log into your bank or Facebook account anytime soon. And according to *TechCrunch* in September 2013, apparently a [cat paw](#) can unlock the fingerprint sensor too.

By September 16, 2013, *The Mercury News* reported that—just a week after the unveiling of the new iPhone duo—Apple's stock had dropped 11.1% since the new iPhones were announced, to its [lowest closing price](#) since July 29. About the same time, Larry Magid reported in *The Mercury News* that even the iPhone5S' improved camera is still [below the quality](#) of a Sony or Nokia camera-phone. And Apple probably blew the increasingly-important Chinese market, since the least expensive iPhone5C sells there for the equivalent of \$733—in a country where the average family income is only \$2,100.

Apple reacted quickly after the bad reception of their new iPhones, either refusing to take pre-orders or refusing to release pre-order figures—general confusion over which. But *The Verge* revealed that launch inventory of the new iPhones [is very low](#), possibly to create a scarcity on launch day (the 20th), which may jolt stock prices higher.

According to the *CSMonitor* on September 17, 2013, Walmart announced an [iPhone5S discount](#) to only \$189 just a couple days after the new iPhone unveilings, just as it had done last year. Sprint quickly followed, announcing it will sell the iPhone5S for \$99.99—but only for new customers who port their number from another carrier. Can a low inventory and a 350% price cut on iPhone5C and 5S jolt Apple out of its doldrums? Stay tuned...

Silicon Valley Fights Back Against NSA Surveillance

In early September 2013, the *Washington Post* (through *SiliconValley*) reported how Google is rushing to [improve its encryption](#), to keep out government spies after the leaks about the National Security Agency's over-reaching surveillance of law-abiding US citizens. Google's encryption initiative, approved last year, was accelerated in June as the tech giant struggled to safe-guard its reputation for protecting user information. While encrypting information flowing through Google's global data centers won't make it impossible for intelligence agencies to snoop on individual users, the technology will at least make mass surveillance more difficult—by anyone, governments or hackers.

BGR in September 2013 reported on a new mobile app for Android that promises ["NSA-proof" messaging](#). [Wickr](#) promises "military-grade encryption of text, picture, audio and video messages" as well as "sender-based control" for self-destructing messages, and "best available privacy, anonymity and secure file shredding features." It's available on [Google Play](#) and 56 reviewers have rated it 4.2 out of 5 stars.

Despite fears to the contrary, Reuters reported in September 2013 that the [NSA snooping revelations](#) have actually helped the US tech industry. Big Internet companies that were closely aligned with NSA, like Google and Facebook, are saying privately that they have seen little or no impact on their businesses. Nor have companies that offer remote cloud computing services, like Amazon and Microsoft, been hurt. While smaller US companies offering encryption and related security services are seeing a jump in business, both foreign and domestic. Also, in more than three months since Edward Snowden's revelations, no publicly traded US company has cited him in a securities filing, where they are required to report events that have negatively impacted their business.

Privacy Issues: Facebook to Health Insurance Questionnaires

The New York Times in September 2013 announced that the Federal Trade Commission was looking into Facebook's [new privacy practices](#). The FTC wanted to know if the privacy changes violated a 2011 agreement with the regulators, whereby Facebook needs to get "explicit consent of its users" before exposing their private information to new audiences. Facebook's new privacy policy demands that users have to grant the company broad permission to use their personal information in advertising as a condition of belonging to Facebook.

With Obamacare on the horizon, the *New York Times* reported in September 2013 that one group of university faculty members are [up in arms](#). The faculty at Pennsylvania State University objects to the "employee wellness plan," that requires non-union employees (like professors and clerical staff) to visit their doctors for a checkup and undergo several biometric tests. They also have to answer an extensive online "health risk" questionnaire, with questions about how they get along with coworkers and supervisors, and whether they've ever been divorced. The faculty and clerical staff object to their intimate information being collected by an outside company, [WebMD Health Services](#). While Penn State, which has adopted a wellness-program to keep healthcare costs down, says \$100 a month will be deducted from an employee's pay for non-compliance in filling out the questionnaire.

Do You Really Want to Know How Much Big Data Knows About You?

The San Jose Mercury News (through the *Denver Post*) ran a story in early September 2013 about the surprising amount of information online brokers [know about everyone](#). A company called [Acxiom](#) calls itself a "market leader (in) enterprise data, analytics and software ... to fuel data-driven results." It also runs a curious site called [AboutTheData](#), where people can check out what information is available about them in cyber-space.

The author found his online personal information ranged from the "mundane to slightly startling insights." Understandably, both Acxiom and its AboutTheData Web site are controversial. Many contend that the Data Web site is mainly to gather new and updated information on users. Both Congress and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have launched inquiries into Acxiom.

Cyber Security Booming

The San Jose Mercury News (through *SiliconValley*) reported in September 2013 that [cyber-](#)

[security is booming](#) in Silicon Valley. Tech giants including Apple, Google, Intel and Cisco, have been snapping up security companies in recent years to get a toehold in the burgeoning industry. And with PC sales slowing, even Hewlett-Packard is grabbing for a piece of the cyber security explosion, mainly to help turn around the struggling hardware company.

Annual global sales of cyber security systems are already more than \$67 Billion, according to [research firm Gartner](#). It is expected to reach \$94 Billion by 2017, since computer hacking is now a global menace with both state-sponsored and freelance hackers aiming to steal crucial government and corporate secrets—and then sell them to the highest bidder. Even Silicon Valley secure-your-data start-ups like [HyTrust](#) have seen their sales quadruple this year, as compared to 2012.

With deep-pocket governments and corporations able to afford the most expensive computer security available, individuals need to do their research. In June 2013, *PC Magazine* rated the [Best 2013 Security Suites](#) for personal use. Norman Security Suite 10 Pro did poorly on most tests, but has a terrific anti-spam component. ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013 has the bare minimum of suite components, but its firewall protection is top-notch. And McAfee Internet Security 2013 has an anti-phishing detector that beat out Norton, its primary rival. Listed alphabetically, *PC Mag* advises picking the best security suite to match your needs, rather than just buying the most expensive and assuming it will answer all your computer security concerns.

Aging Tech Companies: Market Leaders and Hipper Offices

With all the focus on the newer tech start-ups, Yahoo Finance ran an article in September 2013 that identified seven [older tech giants](#) who have not been undermined by newer tech companies, and are still considered leaders in their field. Top of the list is [EMC Corp](#) with a 31.3% market share of data storage systems. Founded in 1979, their revenue in the last fiscal year was \$21.7 Billion. And all the burgeoning Big Data offers EMC room to grow. It recently restructured into three main business areas to stay competitive in the wake of rapid data developments. Hewlett-Packard (printers), Intel (semiconductors) and Cisco (Ethernet switches) round out the top four, followed by Microsoft, IBM and Qualcomm.

The Bay Area News Group ran an interesting story in September 2013 on how old-school tech companies are [changing with the times](#). Microsoft started the trend of cool offices, with free food and other employee perks, to create an "open" but productive atmosphere where employees love coming to work. And now older tech companies are also evolving in that direction, as they compete with hipper companies for talent.

After Conan O'Brien did a comedy jab at Intel in 2007 for its "grey cubes and grey walls," Intel got rid of the cubicles and infused color into their workplace. Some departments at Cisco

are getting rid of assigned workspaces, and using its own networking technology to let employees be more mobile and work where ever they want in their office buildings. Some of Cisco's 56 buildings at their San Jose headquarters are being remodeled, with new features like lounges, comfy couches, pool tables and cocoon-shaped chairs. Companies like Adobe and newer start-ups don't have cubicles or offices at all, and some executives, like at [Square](#), work at stand-up tables.

The "open floor" configuration is a hit, to encourage a more "open and collaborative" work environment. And even the perks can be selling points, with Adobe's global employees enjoying everything from gyms, oil changes on site, to game rooms and even a rock-climbing wall. According to a companion article from the Bay Area News Group (through *SiliconValley*), [other perks](#) now being offered by older tech companies include "collaborative spaces," like countertop workspaces and "mobile workspaces" at Cisco and Intel. Yahoo seems to be aiming for "family friendly," with longer new-child leave, adoption assistance, and reimbursement of up to \$500 for daily habits when taking home a new child. Plus eight-weeks leave for every five years worked.

Can open-floor offices, free food and more collaborative work environments inspire not just happier employees but more "passionate" workers? *Businessweek* in September 2013 ran a story about how [unhappy US employees](#) are in all kinds of companies. Only 30% of the US workforce feels "inspired" by their work, and only 11% feels truly "passionate" about it. Perhaps the friendlier and more-open offices being pioneered by the tech companies are the place to start. Then hire Bill Gates to chop down your rigid corporate structure.

Is the Middle Class Bleeding Jobs and Money?

An editorial/essay in the *New York Times* in August 2013 claims that technology [is wrecking](#) the middle class. It offers a history of the oft-heard lament that robots and automation have stolen too many good jobs, and that all the gains in productivity mean those jobs will never come back. I've written about this before, and this editorial comes to the same conclusion: computers and automation only excel at routine and repetitive tasks. We still need "thinking" people to perform the non-routine tasks to complement the automated services, which currently lie on opposite ends of the job spectrum.

We still need educated people to perform abstract tasks like problem-solving and creativity, as well as semi-skilled people to perform manual tasks that require "situational adaptability." Thus computerization has created a "polarization of employment," with job growth in only the highest and lowest paid occupations. Job demand for workers in the middle of the labor market, where routine task-intensive jobs lie, is sagging, and thus affecting the employment of the middle class. But these mid-level jobs (called "new artisans") are changing rapidly, creating a need for workers who can "combine technical skills with interpersonal interaction, flexibility and adaptability to offer services that are uniquely human."

An Associated Press (through *SiliconValley*) article in September 2013 announced that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has voted to propose a rule that would force companies to disclose the [difference in pay](#) between CEOs and the median pay of their ordinary employees. Besides public criticism of outrageous CEO compensation packages in bad economic times, monstrous CEO pay is also blamed for encouraging disastrous risk-taking for just short-term gains at companies, instead of focusing on long-term performance. The SEC has also voted to require registration for municipal advisers, after scandals in several municipalities that ended in bankruptcy, and brought to light conflicts of interest and abuses by some municipal advisers.

The Middle Class: Capitalism and Innovation

Another article in the *New York Times* in August 2013 has a slightly different take on how capitalism and employment work in the US, and how a lot of growth is now from the [grassroots up](#)—versus "corporatism." Matching the "new artisans" of the middle class in the previous article, "grassroots innovation" is what's driving the new form of capitalism in the US, since an entrepreneurial culture will always outlast a corporatist culture.

Even Obama is pushing for "innovation institutes" in nearly every state, to create high-tech hubs combining businesses, universities and communities. But the author is more excited by the [crowdfunding initiative](#) started by the Jobs Act last year, since most venture capitalists won't fund abstract or hard-to-explain ideas. Thus successful capitalism depends more on "subtle cultural factors" and grassroots entrepreneurs, rather than direct government involvement.

One sign of a healthy "innovative culture" is the growing Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement in the US. There are now multiple DIY Web sites (like [doityourself.com](#) and [do-it-yourself.us](#)). And even sites like [Entrepreneur](#) offers [DIY articles](#) like "7 Ways To Stop Wasting Everyone's Time and Get the Press Coverage You Want." There are also DIY sites for everything from [home improvement](#), to [self-sufficient living](#).

A September 2013 article in *Main Street* even explains how to create your own [DIY home security system](#) by just repurposing your unused or discarded smart devices and adding some apps. [PeoplePower'sPresence](#) is a free app from Apple to turn your spare devices into a free Wi-Fi, or cellular video camera as a motion sensor.

Anticipated Future Technology—GPS on the Personal Scale

One of the most anticipated upcoming gadgets is a little plastic square with rounded corners and a hole in one corner, called [The Tile](#). It is a [GPS tracking device](#) that can be attached,

dropped into or stuck on anything you don't want to lose, from your keys to your bicycle. By downloading the accompanying app, you can locate each of your "tiled" items through GPS, and track them down with your smartphone acting like old school radar, with more green bars the closer you get to the item. You can also trigger an audio alert, for faster retrieval. The start-up went through crowdfunding asking for \$20,000—and got \$2.6 Million. They can be pre-ordered for \$18.95 (for one), with delivery anticipated for winter of 2013/2014.

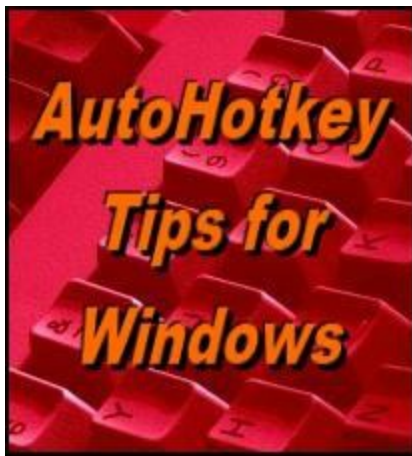
Are high quality motion sensors the next must-have gadgets? In September 2013, the *Los Angeles Times* (through *SiliconValley*) profiled Anatole Lokshin, the former chief technology officer for Magellan Navigation, which pioneered the use of Global Positioning System for everyday life in the 1990s. Lokshin is now running a start-up with his son in Huntington Beach, California, to attach small but sophisticated [motion sensors](#) to everything from surfboards to skis. The idea is to collect precise data that can then be uploaded through GPS, to "make action sports shareable and comparable."

Their start-up, [AlpineRelay](#), just completed a successful [Kickstarter campaign](#), and is ready to manufacture. Their actual Trace device is a "shockproof, waterproof and durable" rubber-covered pod that looks like a hockey-puck, and functions like a hand-held GPS. Inside each Trace are "sensors, a computer processor and a micro-USB-charged, seven hour battery." They plan to start shipping out Trace pods by Spring 2014, for an expected price of \$149.

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](#) 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](#) is a collection of humor essays chronicling her adventures in her new home-state.

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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](#). 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!



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

How to Cheat at Computer Games and Restart Learning

AutoHotkey with Action Recorders

“AutoHotkey Is Great for Empowering Your Avatar, Plus Automatic Script Creators for Beginners” by Jack Dunning

One of the most popular uses for AutoHotkey is automating computer games. Plus, did you get bogged down in learning AutoHotkey? Actions recorders such as AutoScriptWriter can give you a fresh start.

I'm not a gamer. Early in the life of the PC I played a couple of games only to find that they tended to consume too much of my life. I gave them up completely and never looked back. A couple of my kids are gamers, but they seem to keep it in perspective and limit how much time they devote to the entertainment. Their television watching time has suffered, but that's no loss. They do put a high priority on time with their families, so I would be hard pressed to say that the games are a problem—although there are people out there who do have problems with games.

As it turns out, AutoHotkey is one of the best tools for automating functions in computer games. The games scripts can make a player much more formidable while lessening the likelihood of carpal tunnel syndrome. Not everyone approves of automating actions in games. As one Web site put it: "Caution: This tool [AutoHotkey] can be used to automate tasks in gaming, some online games may consider this cheating and if caught it may result in a ban." However, there is an active forum at the AutoHotkey Web site [devoted to gaming](#).

If you've never heard of AutoHotkey, but would like a brief introduction, the see the ComputerEdge Web page "[A Review and Guide for Beginners](#)."

The Send Command for Gamers

The [Send command](#) and its variations (*SendInput*, *SendPlay*, and *SendEvent*) are at the center of automating games. The idea is to put all of the necessary keyboard strokes and mouse clicks for virtual greatness into one script initiated by a single hotkey combination.

From AutoHotkey [SendInput documentation](#): "SendInput is generally the preferred method to send keystrokes and mouse clicks because of its superior speed and reliability." Even better *SendInput* forces other input during the send operation to be buffered, preventing the string from being interrupted before it's done.

The [SendPlay command](#) is designed specifically for use with games—many of which "may accept hotstrings only when they have the *SendPlay* option." Keystrokes and mouse clicks applied with *SendPlay* work in a broader variety of games than the other variations of the *Send* command.

While perusing the AutoHotkey Games forum, I found numerous scripts similar to the following:

```
#UseHook
XButton1::
SendInput, {Space Down}
SendInput, {XButton1 Down}
KeyWait, XButton1
SendInput, {Space Up}
SendInput, {XButton1 Up}
Return
```

It is almost self-explanatory. Almost.

The hook ([#UseHook](#)) is a feature that increases the responsiveness and reliability of certain hotkeys actions. It also prevents the *Send* command from triggering itself with the same hotkey when used in a script. *#UseHook* serves the same function as placing the \$ in front of a hotkey combination. Without using the hook the line of code containing *XButton1* (*SendInput, {XButton1 Down}*) could trigger that same hotkey causing an infinite loop.

XButton1 is one of the extra buttons (often forward and back) found on a multi-button mouse.

[KeyWait command](#) waits for action from the designated key—in this case the release of *XButton1*. Without any options added, *KeyWait* stops the script execution until the designated key (or mouse button) is released. In this script, it has the effect of holding down the SPACEBAR (which probably blasts aliens) until the particular mouse button is released.

Of course you still need to know all the exact syntax for each key and mouse button names to write the AutoHotkey scripts. You could look them up at the [Send command](#) Web page, but wouldn't it be easier if could record your actions automatically while playing a game (or operating any other program) and directly produce the AutoHotkey code you need?

The Easy Way to Learn AutoHotkey with Script Recorders

If you're having trouble getting a grasp of how AutoHotkey does things, then there is an easy way to learn by recording your actions and producing scripts which show you the commands needed to repeat those actions. You can do this with an AutoHotkey macro recorder which copies all of your input (keyboard, mouse, joystick) whenever it's in the record mode.

There are a number of AutoHotkey recorders available. Some of the best known are [Pulover's Macro Creator](#), AutoScriptWriter, and [Recorder by Titan](#). Pulover's Macro Creator looks like the most powerful tool, but on the downside for beginners it has a bit of a learning curve. For newbies, I would recommend starting with either (or both) AutoScriptWriter or Recorder by Titan. These are both simple tools for recording your actions and writing AutoHotkey code while you use your Windows computer.

AutoScriptWriter is a tool that at one time was included in the download package from AutoHotkey. The most recent download (AutoHotkey_L) does not include the tool—probably because it doesn't support some of the latest features. Yet, for people just learning AutoHotkey or gamers looking for the correct names for keys and mouse buttons, it is still useful for understanding how AutoHotkey works.

Finding the AutoScriptWriter download can be a bit tricky. It is still available in the [original download package](#) at the AutoHotkey Web site (we've also been added to the *ComputerEdge AutoHotkey Dropbox download Web site* as *AutoHotkey Orig.zip*). But, when you open the ZIP folder, do not install the AutoHotkey program from it. That version is the older basic version and does not have all the capabilities of AutoHotkey_L, the current default download from AutoHotkey. You can extract AutoScriptWriter ZIP file and copy it to the main AutoHotkey folder for easy access.



The advantage to AutoScriptWriter is its simplicity. Click the Record button and it starts writing all of your actions as AutoHotkey code. While recording, the main windows closes and a record Stop icon appears in the upper left-hand corner, as shown by the image on the left. When the actions are completed, click the Stop icon. For the example in Figure 1, I emulated the procedure for opening an e-mail window with an attachment in Windows Explorer. (See "[How to Automate Your New E-mail Messages](#).") The generated code is loaded with commands that I may want to use in a final script.

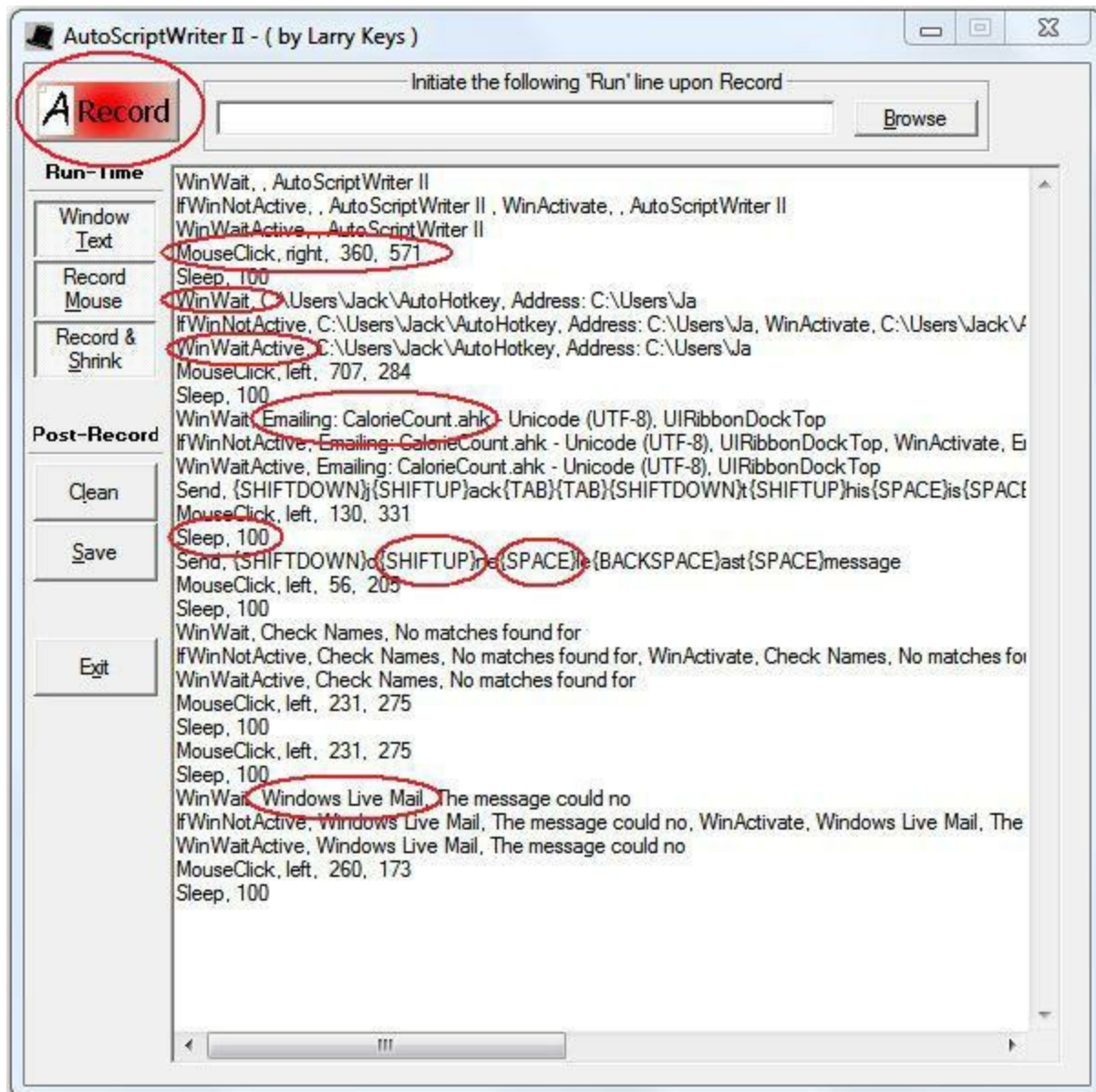


Figure 1. The code generated by AutoScriptWriter is packed with commands, titles and window names that may be needed in a final input controlling script.

This is a form of reverse engineering for AutoHotkey scripts. By learning what each step does you get tremendous insight into how AutoHotkey works. However, I do caution that although the script replicates the exact actions taken during the record session, using an exact copy of the code may not be the best way to write the final script. For example, I made a typo which caused me to BACKSPACE. (I invariably make typos.) That should not appear in the final script. Plus, if you review the column linked above about automating e-mail, you'll see that there are alternative methods for doing the same thing which likely will never appear in a script writing app. Code generated from a recorder is only a starting point.

The Recorder by Titan is as simple as AutoScriptWriter, but may use slightly different AutoHotkey commands and syntax in the generated code (see Figure 2). It could be worthwhile to use both tools, investigating the command variations and selecting those that

work best for your situation.

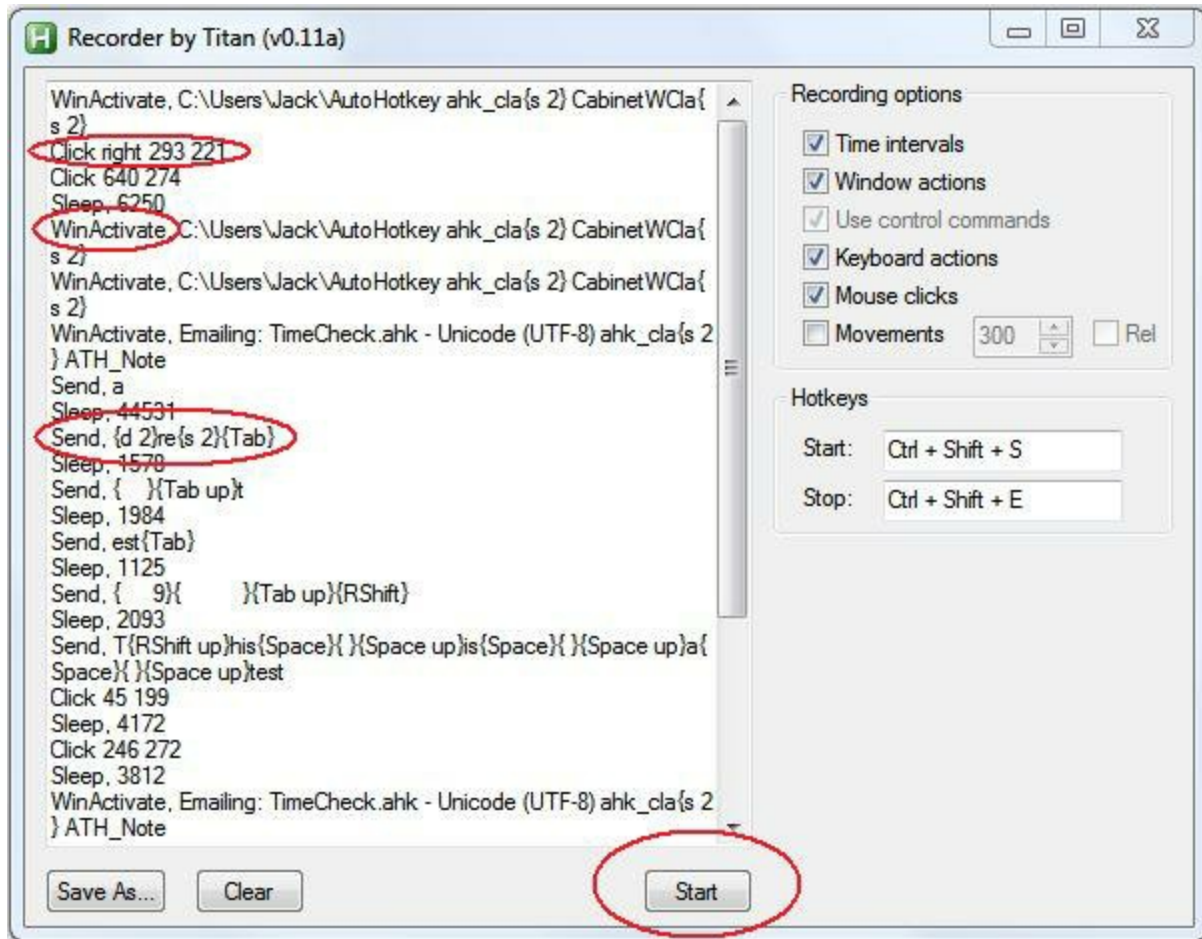


Figure 2. The code generated by Record by Titan may differ from AutoScriptWriter. It could be worthwhile to try more than one script recorder for comparison.

While these two simple tools may a tremendous aid with the problem of using AutoHotkey for sending input to programs, there are many other applications where the recorders likely won't help as much, such as writing scripts which use the *GUI* command to make pop-up windows. If you're looking for a recorder that will dig deeper into AutoHotkey capabilities, then take a closer look at Pulover's Macro Creator.

Advanced Reverse Engineering of AutoHotkey

While I've only taken a cursory look at [Pulover's Macro Creator](#), I can see that it has much more power than the other recorders mentioned. It includes support for an extensive (although still limited) set of AutoHotkey commands (see Figure 3). However, if you're new to AutoHotkey, you may find the detailed features overwhelming.

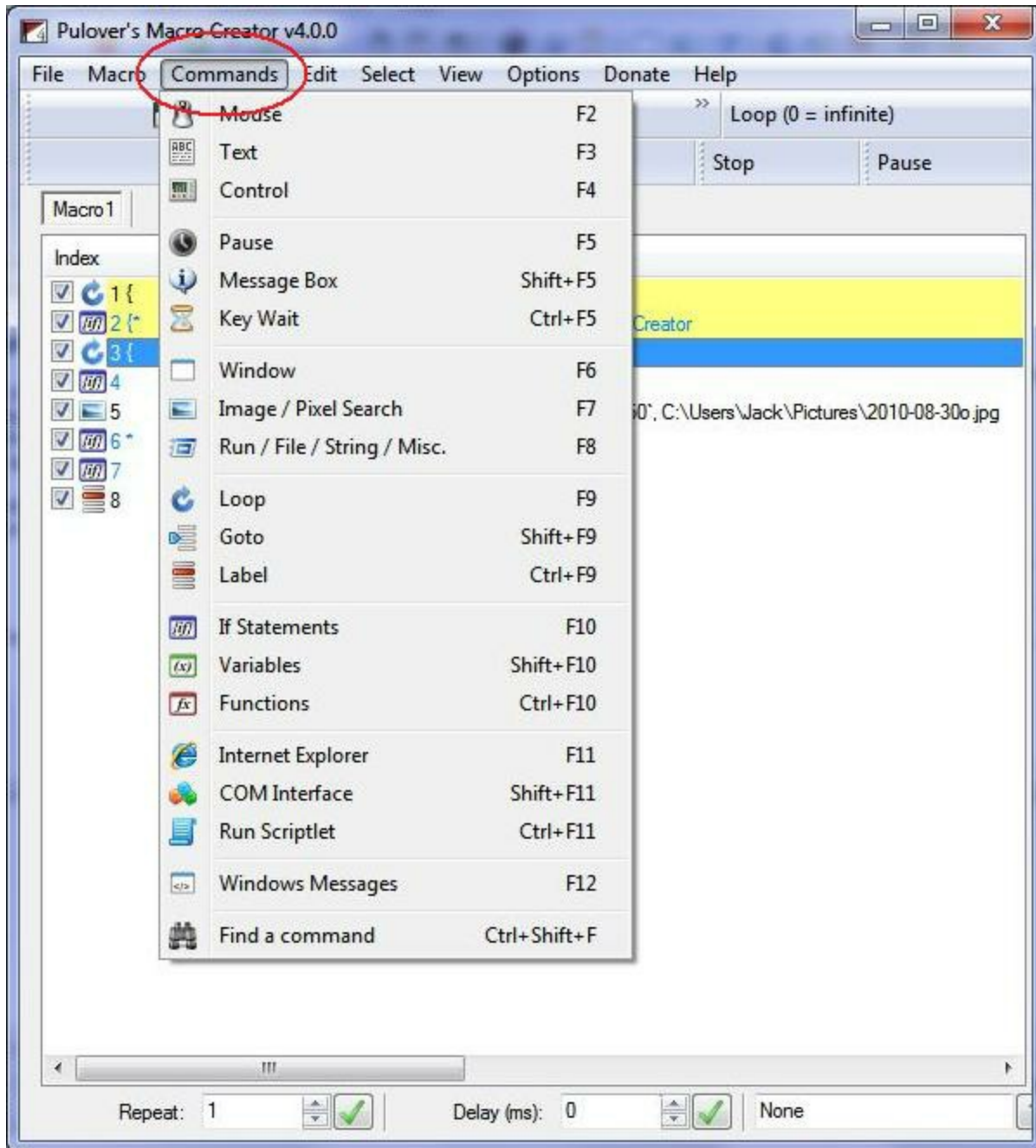


Figure 3. Pulover's Macro Creator has direct support for creating snippets of code for certain AutoHotkey commands.

It looks like once you learn how to use it, Macro Creator could be a very valuable tool for building certain types of applications. Part of the problem is taking the time to understand how the tool works. My guess is that learning it could be well worth the effort and would teach a lot about the included commands. It could be useful for generating snippets of code for specific actions, such as the Windows COM interface or Internet Explorer action. I noticed that there is even support for [ImageSearch](#) and [PixelSearch](#) which may be useful for finding that pot of gold or secret potions on a game screen.

If you want to see what the AutoHotkey code looks like, you can Export it in Macro Creator to an AHK file (File => Export to AHK). After exporting, edit the new AHK file to review how

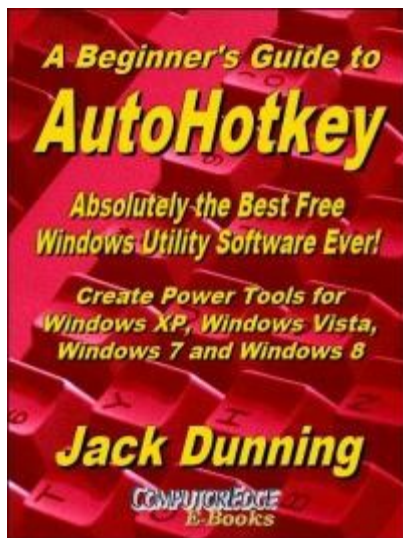
the command works. If you're having trouble getting a command to work (and it is one of those included in Macro Creator), then using the code generator to create an AutoHotkey snippet might give you some insight.

Varied Uses of Gamers' AutoHotkey Techniques

While the AutoHotkey techniques for sending input are ideal for gamers, they are not limited to games. I recently had an e-mail discussion with a software engineer from Germany about using AutoHotkey to test industrial control programs. The problem is not unlike that of automating games with AutoHotkey and will relieve a great deal of repetitive manual testing. Of course, these same commands apply equally as well to other applications, but often speed keys within certain programs that quickly navigate through menus offer a better solution than recording click coordinates and replaying them. As demonstrated in "[How to Automate Your New E-mail Messages](#)," there are usually a number of alternative ways to get the job done.

Want to learn more about what AutoHotkey can do? See "[AutoHotkey Scripts and Apps for Learning Script Writing and Generating Ideas](#)" which discusses the free AutoHotkey scripts available at the ComputerEdge [AutoHotkey Dropbox download Web site](#).

* * *



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](#).

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.

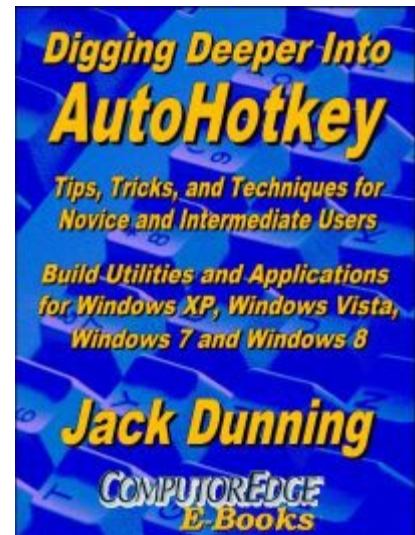
[For an EPUB \(iPad, NOOK, etc.\) version of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of A](#)

[Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

* * *

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](#) (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](#). 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!](#)

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here!](#)

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

Just Released! [Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers.](#)

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](#) and [Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey](#).

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?"](#)

Currently only at Amazon.com, [*Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Get Started!*](#).

Available from Amazon, [*Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8!*](#) Also available at [Barnes and Noble](#) and [ComputerEdge E-Books](#).

Available exclusively from Amazon, [*Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle, Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7, Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7, and That Does Not Compute!*](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The iPhone 5S and 5C Go on Sale” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The iPhone 5S and 5C Go on Sale; Waiting in Line; Aiming Mortars with an iPad; Blackberry and Nokia; IBM vs. Microsoft; The Lack of Logic; Staying Organized; iOS 7.

When Apple first introduced the new iPhone 5S and 5C, critics complained that Apple wasn't innovating any more, as if any other company can introduce a revolutionary product like the iPhone or iPad every year. (Then again, such critics conveniently ignore their own criticism of the iPhone and iPad as failures when those products first appeared.)

Critics initially complained that Apple would only sell 5 million new iPhones. This past weekend, Apple wound up selling [9 million iPhones](#) with the iPhone 5S selling approximately 3.5 times more units than the iPhone 5C. On the first weekend of the iPhone 5's introduction, Apple only sold 5 million iPhone 5 units. Last year, 100 million people upgraded to iOS 6. This year, 200 million people upgraded to iOS 7.

Now with the iPhone 5S and 5C in stores, people lined up all over the world to get one. This [YouTube video](#) shows the line of people waiting at the New York City Apple Store. Even Samsung sent representatives to [study the line](#) at the Apple Store to figure out why people line up for Apple products but don't line up for Samsung or other company's products with the same fervor.

While some people simply embrace blind allegiance to a brand name for illogical and irrational reasons (including both Apple and Microsoft fanatics), most people have valid reasons. Back when Microsoft introduced Windows 95, people did line up to get the first copies of Windows 95 at midnight. The reason had less to do with blind allegiance to Microsoft and more because they wanted to be the first to use the latest technology that excited them. Microsoft enthusiasts didn't criticize people lining up to buy Windows 95, yet they have no problems criticizing people lining up to buy the latest iPhone.

Today, no one lines up to get the latest copy of Windows. That's because Windows no longer excites most people. When Microsoft introduced Windows 95, it was an interesting product that promised to make people more productive. With each new version of Windows, the

excitement grew less as Windows slowly evolved while alternatives like OS X and Linux slowly improved along with the rapid growth of Android and iOS. When Microsoft introduces Windows 8.1, how many people will line up to buy it so they can be first?

When Windows 95 came out, it was the best and practically only choice for computers. When Windows 8.1 comes out, it will no longer be the best or only choice for computers.

So many people wait to get an iPhone because the new iPhone excites people. People want the latest iPhone because they either liked the earlier iPhone models or because they're unhappy with their current mobile phone.

When people lined up to buy Windows 95, people were generally happy with Windows 3.1 and wanted the latest version. Those few people using alternative operating systems like the Macintosh often switched to a Windows 95 PC because that's where the excitement was. With so many people writing programs for Windows 95 and so many people using Windows 95, it only made sense to use Windows 95 too. The alternative was to use an operating system with far less support (Macintosh) or some operating system like FreeBSD that required more technical expertise to install and use.

In the old days, just installing Linux on a PC required the help of experts who cheerfully ran installfests specifically to help people install Linux. Now that Linux is as easy to install as Windows, that huge barrier to using Linux has mostly disappeared.

Just as people once lined up for Windows 95, so people are now lining up for the iPhone. Tomorrow, people might stop lining up for the iPhone and start lining up for the next version of Apple's rumored iWatch or Google's already announced Google Glass. Follow the excitement and you can see where the current trend in computing is heading.

For Windows enthusiasts, the trend is simply moving away from PCs. Whether you like it or not, the lines at the Apple Stores for the iPhone shows what people want today. If you think people are foolish for waiting in line just to buy an iPhone, you can start criticizing all those people who waited in line to get Windows 95 too.

People like the iPhone because it's far easier to use than previous smartphones that ran Palm OS, Windows Mobile, Blackberry OS, or Symbian. While previous smartphones were mobile phones with additional features poorly tacked on, the iPhone is basically a portable computer that happens to let you make phone calls. Even when hobbled by AT&T's lousy service, people still bought the iPhone. When other carriers offered the iPhone, the market for iPhones simply continued to grow.

The iPhone and iPad ushered in the mobile computing market. Eventually, people won't bother lining up for any Apple products, just like people are no longer lining up for the latest version of Windows. Hopefully by that time, there will be more interesting and exciting technology to follow. Then people can criticize these new products using the same arguments they're currently using against Apple.

Waiting in Line

For some people, waiting in line can be a social event. People want to be first to see the latest movie, buy the latest video game, or get tickets to concerts or sporting events like the Super Bowl. For many people, waiting in line is half the fun.

If you have better things to do than wait in line like trying to buy a loaf of bread in the old days of Communist Russia, the easiest solution is just to order the iPhone online. Wait a week or two and your phone will arrive at your front door. All it takes is a little bit of patience. Within a month, nobody will care whether you got the iPhone 5S two weeks before everyone else or not.

Still, if you want to cherish the memories of camping out overnight with strangers just to buy a product, you can keep waiting in line in front of the Apple Stores every year. Just be aware that waiting in line won't guarantee that you'll be able to buy the exact model you want as supplies of different iPhone models varies. You can either settle for what they have or just order online and get exactly what you want.

Oddly enough, the gold iPhone 5S seems to be the most popular color over the white and grey models. If you're going to wait for an iPhone 5S, you should probably get the gold one for the same price as a white or grey one since the gold one will have a higher resale value later.

If you enjoy waiting in line, then it doesn't matter what you buy. For most other people, a little patience can save you a lot of time so decide whether you want the fun of a social event by waiting in line, or you want the free time to do something more interesting. Remember, if you miss out waiting in line for the iPhone 5S or 5C, there's always next year for the iPhone 6. You can also wait in line this October when Apple releases new iPad models too.

Aiming Mortars with an iPad

One reason why the iPad has become so popular is its versatility. Depending on what you need, you can hold the iPad in portrait or landscape mode. The iPad's small size makes it easy to take and use practically anywhere.

Now in Syria, rebels are apparently using an iPad to help them [aim mortars](#). By lining the iPad up along the mortar tube, rebels can define the precise angle to aim. While aiming mortars likely isn't something Apple wants people to know about, it demonstrates the versatility of the iPad nonetheless.



Figure 1. Syrian rebels use an iPad to aim a mortar.

Try aiming a mortar using a netbook and the clamshell design of the screen and keyboard would make this impractical. Yet the simple design of the iPad makes this feasible.

What makes any technology useful isn't the brand name on the product, but how easy it helps people solve different types of problems. Once you can get past any prejudice over the company that makes a product, you can objectively see how that product might help you in your own life, even if you're using it to aim a mortar in Syria.

Blackberry and Nokia

At one time, Blackberry and Nokia ruled the smartphone market. Now Nokia is selling their mobile phone division to Microsoft and Nokia's CEO, Stephen Elop, will get \$25 million as his reward for trying to keep Nokia's smartphone business from completely going [down the drain](#).

Why will Stephen Elop get \$25 million for basically doing a lousy job? Will Nokia's other employees get any additional compensation when Microsoft buys Nokia? Probably not, which explains why so many people dislike rich people, not because they're rich, but because they make the rules so they always benefit while nobody else can benefit from those same rules.

At one time, Nokia defined the smartphone market. Now they're as irrelevant as Blackberry, which will [lay off thousands](#) of workers as sales and profits continue to plummet. How could

the two leaders in the smartphone market wind up close to failing like Palm Computing?

Every leader in any market can eventually fail, and Nokia and Blackberry are stark reminders that even the strongest leaders can fail if they fail to innovate. If you think that the future will always be exactly like the past, feel free to ignore the evidence of Nokia and Blackberry's fall from grace. Then try to get a job as CEO of a failing company so you can get a huge payoff when that company goes down the drain due to your lack of vision and commitment to the past.

IBM vs. Microsoft

In the old days, nobody got fired for recommending IBM. Then nobody got fired for recommending Microsoft. So if anyone has a chance to unseat Microsoft in the enterprise market, it's IBM.

IBM now plans to invest \$1 billion dollars to [boost Linux usage](#) in the enterprise market. Linux is free so there's a huge cost savings that Microsoft can't match, and Linux is completely customizable right down to the source code, which Microsoft also can't match. The London Stock Exchange tried using Windows servers but after numerous problems and \$65 million dollars later, they [switched to Linux](#) for its lower cost and faster response time.

While Microsoft defends its enterprise market against IBM, they also have to defend their Office market against Google and Apple. With the release of new iPhone models, Apple has made their iWork suite on iOS free. Google has also announced that their mobile office suite, [QuickOffice](#), will also [be free](#) for Android and iOS users.

With more people relying on mobile devices and free office suites available from Google and Apple, will people still want to buy Microsoft Office to run on PCs or Windows RT devices? Apple's iWork can import and export Office files while Google's QuickOffice creates and opens Office files so there's no conversion process necessary.

Eventually people will realize that sticking to Microsoft solutions all the time won't always make sense. Sometimes Microsoft may offer the best solution, but sometimes other companies may offer a better one. As soon as people realize they have valid alternatives, that immediately means less revenue and power for Microsoft.

With IBM attacking Microsoft's strength in the enterprise market, Apple and Google attacking Microsoft in the Office market, and Apple and Google attacking Microsoft in the operating system market, Microsoft needs to start innovating in a hurry. With products like the Kinect, they might have a chance. With products like Windows 8, their future looks a lot less promising.

The Lack of Logic

Criticizing anything is fine as long as you use logic. Unfortunately, far too many people don't. *The Toronto Star* recently published an article explaining why the iPhone 5S fingerprint [sensor is a failure](#). Yet if you read the author's arguments, they either don't make any sense or they could apply to any technology.

Two arguments against the fingerprint sensor are: "Anytime you get complex software, it can lead to problems" and "Expect technical difficulties with a new product." To avoid this criticism, we should all stop using anything new that involves more than ten lines of code.

Other arguments include "Apple is using fear to sell this product" as if other industries (think insurance) don't use fear to sell products? Look at [Apple's ads](#) promoting the iPhone 5S and see if you can find where they're using fear to promote the fingerprint sensor. Now examine the *Toronto Star* criticism of the fingerprint sensor and see if the author is using fear instead of logic to influence readers, such as claiming that "If Apple gets it wrong, it will set back the biometrics industry years."

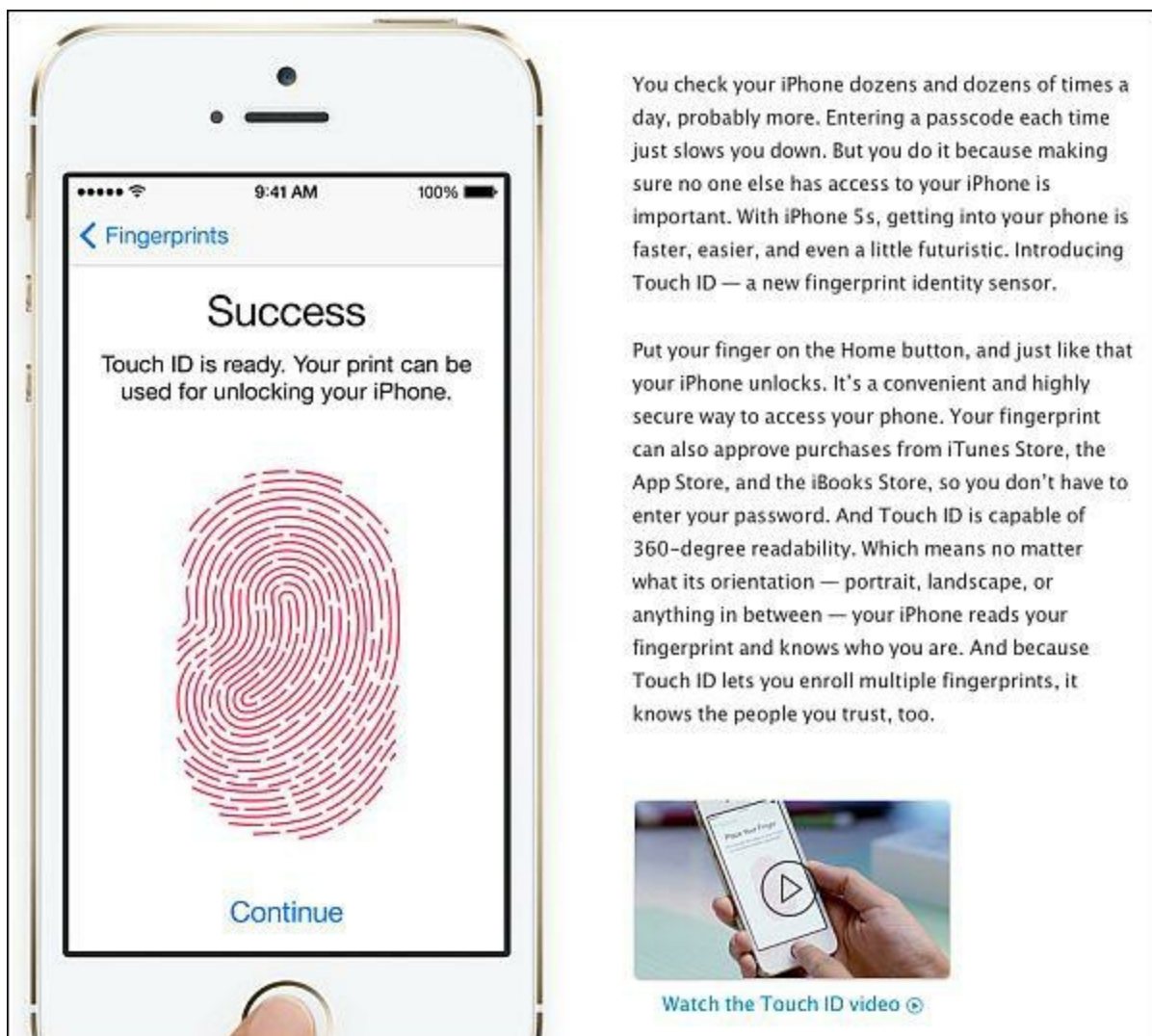


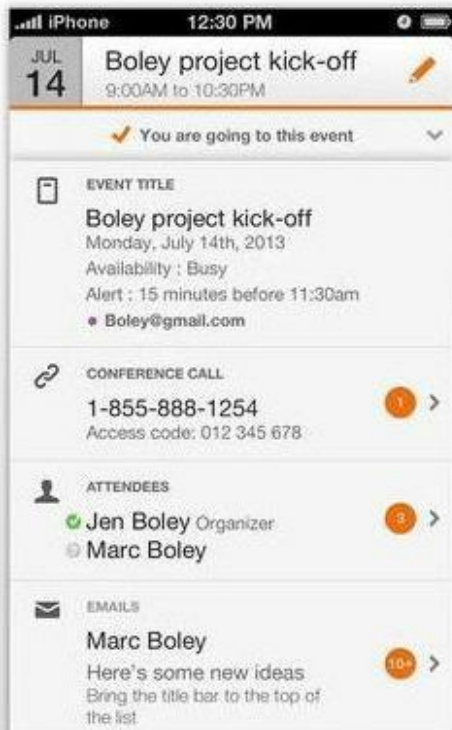
Figure 2. Apple's ad promoting the fingerprint sensor.

To read more about this illogical criticism of the fingerprint sensor in the iPhone 5S, you can read [this article](#) on the TUAW site. When people have to go through outrageous twists of logic to criticize a product (think of Bill Gates claiming that nobody can type or create documents on an iPad), you know they can't use actual facts to support their beliefs. While such people rally against products they don't like for no good reason, the rest of us can get on with our lives and actually be productive with whatever we choose to buy and use.

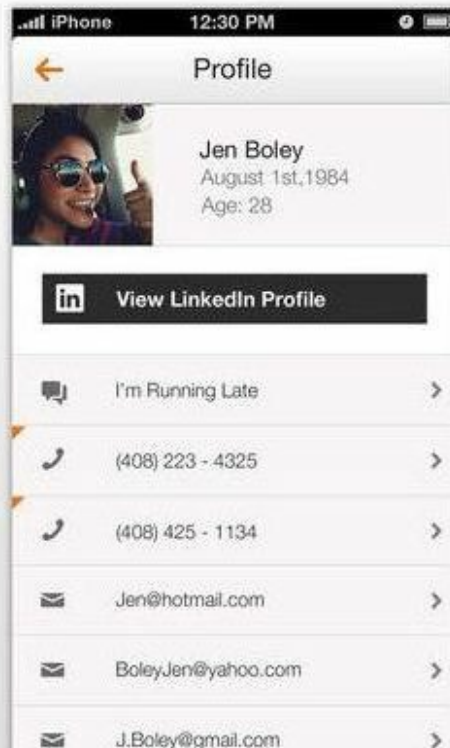
Staying Organized

When you need information, it's likely scattered between different files, e-mail messages, and contact information. If you're an organized person, you can keep track of this information yourself, but if you need help, use the [Tempo Smart Calendar](#) for the iPhone.

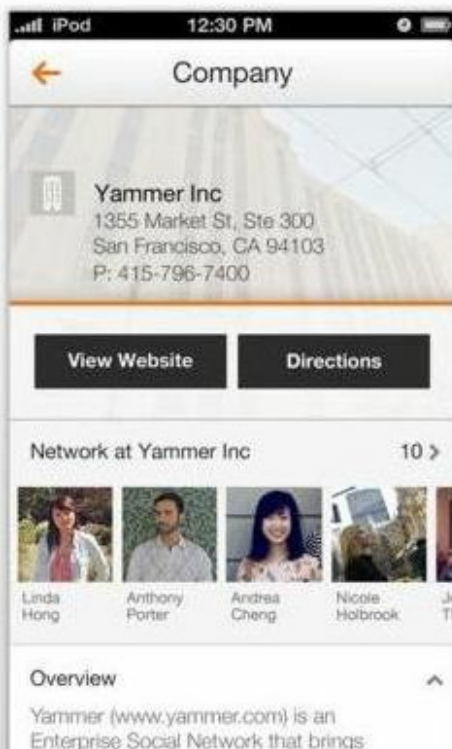
Everything you need for each event



Quickly text, email, or call in one tap



Lets you see your network



List, Day, Week, Month, and Agenda Views



Figure 3. Tempo Calendar automatically links related information.

Now instead of opening and searching for information stored in different locations, you can just keep track of everything from the Tempo Smart Calendar app. Of course, staying organized will help, but you still need to be doing something useful with this information afterwards, so don't expect a single app to magically make you more productive.

Ultimately, you can stay organized with or without technology, but technology can help if you use it properly. If you need tips for staying organized regardless of what products you may own, you can read David Allen's book [*Getting Things Done*](#).

* * *

If you're familiar with other operating systems, each new version often gobbles up more system resources while running slower. Fortunately if you install iOS 7 on an older iPhone 4 or higher, or an iPad 2 or higher, you'll be pleasantly surprised to find that iOS 7 actually makes your iPhone or iPad run faster than before.

Internet traffic [even doubled](#) when so many people around the world downloaded iOS 7 to run on their older iPhones and iPads. Despite minor bugs that accompany every new operating system release, iOS 7 shows that people want the new version of iOS. In comparison, the lack of sales and excitement around other operating systems show what people don't want.

Besides the speed improvement, iOS 7 also changes certain features. In iOS 6, you could view the search screen by swiping to the left. With iOS 7, you now have to swipe down. Some people dislike the thinner and sparser look of iOS 7, so if you find the font too thin, tap the Settings icon, tap General, and tap Accessibility. Now you can choose options to make text bold, increase contrast, or display larger type.



Figure 4. Changing the appearance of iOS 7.

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:

[Microsoft Office 2013 For Dummies](#)

[Beginning Programming for Dummies](#)

[Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies](#)

[Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison](#)

[Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher](#)

[How to Live with a Cat \(When You Really Don't Want To\)](#)

[The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders](#)

[Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners](#)

[Republican Fairy Tales \(Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us\)](#)

[The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou](#)

[The 15-Minute Movie Method](#)

[Erotophobia \(A novel\)](#)

[Math for the Zombie Apocalypse](#)

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "[The 15 Minute Movie Method](#)," finding interesting news stories about cats at his site "[Cat Daily News](#)," and providing the type of advice he wishes someone would have told him when he was much younger at his [personal Web site](#). Wally can be reached at wally@computoredge.com.



Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

iPhone Fingerprint Scanner Hacked—Should You Care?; Will PC Gamers Ever Get to Play Grand Theft Auto V?; Green Protection for Notebook Computers; Samsung Mega Smartphone (AT&T)—One Phabulous Phablet.

iPhone Fingerprint Scanner Hacked—Should You Care?

Forbes.com notes:

A group called the Chaos Computer Club has posted a video in which they demonstrate what appears to be the ability to fool the fingerprint sensor in Apple's AAPL +3.57% new iPhone 5S. While the method is a bit convoluted, the fact is that it doesn't involve any special technology. You just need a high-resolution picture of the fingerprint, a laser printer and some glue. Given that most of us leave our fingerprints around pretty much everywhere—including on the very phone a would-be hacker might be trying to break into—it seems like the very security the new technology is designed to provide isn't so secure after all. But how much does that matter?

TouchID, Apple's name for the fingerprint sensor, is really competing with a few alternatives that have existed this far. The most common is a completely unprotected phone whose only security is that so long as it's in your possession, a hacker doesn't have access. For quite a while now, Apple has even gone one better with that by allowing you to remotely "wipe" the contents of your phone using the Find My iPhone function built into iOS...



A substantial number of people, of course, use the four-digit passcode function to "lock" their phone from prying eyes. This makes it harder to access the phone for a casual thief, but given how many people use codes like 1-2-3-4 or 2-5-8-0 (straight down the middle, vertically), the passcode isn't especially secure...

On a day-to-day basis, though, Touch ID is more secure than a short code in most cases and obviously infinitely more protective than having no passcode at all. The hackers think they've proved the technology is more or less useless. "We hope that this finally puts to rest the illusions people have about fingerprint biometrics. It is plain stupid to use something that you can't change and that you leave everywhere every day as a security token", said Frank Rieger, spokesperson of the CCC. "The public should no longer be fooled by the biometrics industry with false security claims."



But the public should take advantage of additional security wherever it can get it. And if your phone is lost or stolen, you should be aware that folks like the CCC might be able to get into your phone within an hour or so if they've got a nice, clean copy of your fingerprint. You've been warned.

Read the entire article [here](#).

Will PC Gamers Ever Get to Play Grand Theft Auto V?

There's a fascinating piece by Tim McDonald over at [incgamers.com](#), titled "Seriously Though, How Likely is GTA V on PC?" that explores when—or if—Rockstar's smash-hit console game will show up on PCs:

We've had our fun, but it's perhaps time we address this seriously. Is GTA5 going to come out on PC? Why? When? How? Who? Where? I'm pretty convinced it'll make an appearance for a wide variety of reasons...



I think there's a GTA5 on the way for PC, so let's expand on that a bit. Prior to release day, there were the usual rumors relating to retailers (on and offline) listing the game for PC. This doesn't tell us much either way, as it could be down to placeholders or retailer error, but it's something to add to the big bag of PC GTA5 circumstantial evidence.

In July, Rockstar themselves came out with a typically vague statement in an FAQ, saying "We don't have anything to share about the possibility of a next-gen or a PC platform release at this time." That was a classic piece of PR misdirection; neither a denial, nor a confirmation. Nobody gets excited and nobody gets too pissed off.



About a week later, there was the slightly more concrete news that the developer was hiring for a "talented graphics programmer to help bring our latest titles to the PC platform." It's probably safe to say they weren't talking about Rockstar Table Tennis, there. Max Payne 3 is already on PC, and Red Dead Redemption is probably a lost cause at this point. So that leaves...yep, GTA5.

Then, in August, an Nvidia executive casually mentioned the title when he was reeling off a list

of games PC players would be keenly building new PCs for. This is perhaps a weaker clue than the job posting, because this guy also thought PC players would be super excited for Call of Duty: Ghosts and Assassins Creed IV rather than some platform-exclusive stuff like Rome 2. Mind you, it may be telling that he selected other multi-platform games alongside GTA5.



That brings us up to September's release, which gave people the chance to start delving around inside the guts of the actual game itself. The Xbox 360 files contained various references to a PC build, as do the bits and bobs inside the free iFruit companion app. Of all the evidence, I'd say these two are the most immediately compelling. At the very least, they point to a PC version being in the works at some point, even if the reality turns out to be that Rockstar decided they hate money and abandoned it.

The average difference in release date [between console and PC versions] works out to, ooh, 212 days. If we now apply more math and add that average to the console release of 17 Sep 2013, we get...17 Apr 2014. Which is a Thursday, so let's move that to a Tuesday and guess at either 15 or 22 Apr 2014.

There's a lot more to read about GTAV and the future of PC gaming in general at www.incgamers.com.

Green Protection for Notebook Computers

Product name: Addax (notebook computer carrying case)

Manufacturer: GreenSmart

Web site: store.greensmart.biz

Price: \$79.95

Four years have passed since we reviewed [GreenSmart's All Around Laptop Jacket](#), a carrying case for notebook computers that was made from recycled plastic bottles. The company's current lineup of cases that keep TPE plastics out of the landfill is highlighted by the Addax for 13.3" or 15.4" notebooks.

[Addax](#)? Isn't that a critically endangered antelope with long twisted horns found in Saharan Africa? One and the same. GreenSmart names some of its products after endangered species to raise awareness, and donates 10% of profits to NPOs working on preserving Mother Earth. More information about this company's socially responsible philosophy is available at www.greensmart.biz.

The Addax, like its predecessor All Around Laptop Jacket, is sturdy and sufficiently padded to protect a portable computer against dings and scratches. It weighs about 22 oz. including a shoulder strap. Only one color scheme is available—black exterior and neon green fleece lining (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The Addax carrying case has a black exterior, padded (green circle) shoulder strap that is detachable (blue circle), hand straps (orange circle), zippered main compartment (red circle) for the owner's notebook computer, and neon green interior.

This carrying case has several noteworthy features—in addition to its construction from recycled plastic containers—that distinguish it from competitors. For instance, the adjustable length shoulder strap is adequately padded for comfort and readily detachable thanks to a

metal clip at either end of the strap that hooks onto a metal ring at either end of the main compartment's zippered opening (Figure 1). In case you prefer hand straps, those are included too (Figure 1). Next are the two full-width pouches, one on either side of the Addax's outer fabric (Figure 2), both of which are kept closed by facing pairs of small circular magnets. These pouches easily can hold your computer's power adapter, cell phone, USB thumb drive, earphones, tablet, keys, and even a bottle of mouthwash. Lastly, the Addax includes five pockets of various sizes and locations for toting your accessories, gadgets, and paraphernalia (Figure 3).



Figure 2. In addition to the main compartment for carrying the owner's notebook computer, the Addax includes two full width pouches within the fabric of the case's two sides. On one side (top portion of this figure), the pouch has a flap that is kept closed by three pairs of facing circular magnets (their locations are shown by the orange circles). On the bottom, the pouch is flapless and kept closed by one pair.



Figure 3. The pouch that has a flap also contains three of the Addax's five pockets (each of which has a neon green interior) of varying sizes. The right-most one in this figure is zippered, the other two stay open. One of the remaining two pockets is in outer fabric of the flap shown in Figure 3, the fifth pocket is within the other pouch.

Several unique and noteworthy features of the All Around Laptop Jacket are missing from the Addax. First, the zippered panel at the jacket's bottom that provided handy access to a Windows notebook's ports is gone. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the All Around Laptop Jacket was designed to double as a case for carrying a notebook computer and as a sleeve for protecting a notebook computer while in use (Figure 4). The Addax does not share this design; it can be used only as a carrying case.



Figure 4. The All Around Laptop Jacket could be unzipped and function as a protective sleeve for a notebook computer while in use on the road; it even had elastic straps at the inner fabric's top corners (inset) which slipped over the

notebook's screen to hold it upright. Sadly, the Addax does not share this design.

In summary, the Addax is an exceptionally environmentally [friendly and safe](#) accessory for protecting and transporting a notebook computer plus a veritable ton of related accessories. Highly recommended.



Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

Samsung Mega Smartphone (AT&T)—One Phabulous Phablet

Manufacturer: Samsung

Model: Mega

Carrier: AT&T

Web site: www.att.com

Price: \$149.99 (2-year contract), \$399.99 (1-year contract), \$479.99 (month-to-month)

Samsung bills the Galaxy Mega as "The Next Big Thing" and they're not far off the mark in more ways than one. While I was using the 6.3" device I certainly turned a lot of heads. I had *many* people come up and ask me why I was holding my tablet up to my ear and, assuming I wasn't crazy, if they could do the same with theirs, and would I please show them how. Sadly, I told them, I could not because the Mega is an actual cell phone—one that is so large it is easy to confuse with tablet. Which is why they had to come up with a whole new term for these behemoths: phablets. They're definitely catching on: Apple itself is reportedly testing iPhones with screens as large as 6 inches.



The way to think of the Galaxy Mega is as (nearly) a Galaxy S 4 with a very large screen. The processor isn't quite as fast as the S 4's—a 1.7GHz dual-core Snapdragon 400 compared to the S 4's 1.9GHz quad-core Snapdragon 600—but I only really noticed a performance hitch playing graphics-intensive games, not for normal Web browsing and basic utilities.

Also not quite on a par with the S 4 is the Mega's 1,280 x 720 screen compared to the S 4's crazy-high-res 1,920 x 1,080 display. Still, to my eyes, text and pics looked extremely sharp and detailed.



One great way to make use of all that screen space is by splitting two completely distinct apps across the screen, either in portrait or landscape mode. Even better, you can size each window and copy and paste from one to the other, just like you've been doing for years with your PC.

Like other Samsung phones, the Mega has a feature called AirView which allows you to do most things by simply holding your finger over the screen and waving it to browse photos, calendar pages, and lots of other functions.

A recent arrival to the whole smartphone revolution? Start using the Mega in non-intimidating Easy Mode. When you're ready, switch to Standard Mode so you can really dig into all of the phone's features.



In conclusion, if you don't mind attracting lots of stares for lots of reasons: confusion, curiosity, amusement—maybe even a little envy—check out the Samsung Galaxy Mega (of course, you can always mitigate much of that attention by simply using a Bluetooth earpiece for phone calls). Depending on your needs, the Mega is easily large enough and powerful enough that it could, all by itself, become the *only* way you interact with the digital world. No tablet, no laptop, no desktop PC—and that's the subject of an entire future article!



Specifications (from Samsung/AT&T)

Operating System
Android™
v4.2 (Jelly Bean)

Display size (inches)
6.3

Resolution (pixels)
1280x720 HD PLS TFT 720p; 233.11ppi

16 million colors

Processor

Qualcomm MSM8930™ Pro

1.7GHz dual core

Internal memory storage

Up to 16GB

Expandable memory storage

Up to 64GB

Memory format

microSD™

RAM

1.5GB

Rear-facing camera

8MP autofocus with LED flash

4X zoom

Live video capture and playback

1080p video capture; 720p video playback on device

Front-facing camera

1.9MP

Music Player

Supported music formats

MP3, AAC, FLAC, M4A/3GA, OGG, WAV, WMA

Create music playlists

External music play controls

Volume up and down controls available on lock screen

Text messaging

Insert pictures, video clips, and sound clips easily (messaging charges apply)

Instant Messaging (IM)

Ch@tON

Mobile email

POP3/IMAP, Yahoo!®, Gmail™, Microsoft® Exchange ActiveSync®

Web browser

Google Chrome™ and native Android™

World phone

Quad-band

USB connectivity - transfer data through a USB cable

Hands-free speakerphone

Voice dialing and voice commands

Hearing Aid (HAC) rating M3

TTY/TTD compatible

earSmart™ Advanced Voice processor improves call clarity & sound quality.

Battery capacity

3200mAh

Talk time (hours)

Up to 18

Standby time (days)

Up to 19

Wireless Technology

4G-LTE

Band 2, 4, 5 & 17

4G

HSPA+ with enhanced backhaul

3G - UMTS

850/1900/2100MHz

GSM/GPRS/EDGE

850/900/1800/1900MHz

Wi-Fi® connectivity

802.11 a/b/g/n/ac

5GHz Wi-Fi-capable

802.11n

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FOTA-capable  upgrade Firmware Over The Air

Available in black and frost white

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.



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Cable TV," "Memory Cards," "Thank You"

Cable TV

[Regarding Marilyn K. Martin's September 13 [article](#), "Television Alternatives, and More Little Known High Tech Stories":]

Yes!!!!!! It's about time someone took on the cable companies. Now if they will just come to California I am here and waiting *not* so patiently.

I dumped Cox early this year and I am *not* sorry that I did.

-Glenda, San Marcos, California

The author of this timely piece has delivered vital information to the many of us readers who are far more than weary of putting up with cable providers and other such rip offs. Thank you! Hope remains...

-Cicero Walker, Colorado Springs, CO

Thanks for the comments! There's a lot more anger out there at the TV cable companies than I had thought.

Personally, I hate to watch cable shows because of all the insipid commercials. Now the commercials are "bundled" too—six minutes of a show, then six minutes of commercials. We haven't "unplugged" because my husband watches a lot of daytime TV while I work on the computer. But I'm stocking up our DVD library, and usually end up watching DVDs in the evenings.

-Marilyn K. Martin, Texas

Memory Cards

[Regarding the September 13 [Digital Dave column](#):]

Digital Dave,

Another thing to watch for when using memory cards purchased from China, Chinese and some US vendors is the modification of the memory cards. If you buy a memory card of a certain advertised size it might have had the metadata, FAT, or whatever the file is on the memory card that tells the OS what the size actually is, altered. The memory card may indicate that it is 8GB, but may only be 4GB in actuality, but when you try to copy 8GB of files to the card you only get the last 4GB recorded; after the card records the first 4GB of files it copies the second 4GB of files over the first 4GB. Been there and done that. I now buy only from local stores or online stores that I really trust!

-Richard, Oceanside, CA

I forgot to mention in my earlier e-mail is that I use a program called "[h2testw.exe](#)" to test the size of memory cards that I purchase. It takes a long time since it copies the files that you select to the memory and then reads the memory to determine what is on the card. Since it is programmed from someone in Germany I checked my copy with NOD32, Malwarebytes, CCleaner, Super anti-spyware and others. It does a very good job as far as I have found, but you might want to check it if you want to use it.

-Richard, Oceanside, CA

Thank You

[Regarding the September 13 [Digital Dave column](#).]

Thank you for the time and effort you spend answering our questions. You are the first place I go for information and help. You are much appreciated.

-Lynne, Magnolia, Texas

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](#). Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceeditor@computoredge.com. If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit [ComputerEdge E-Books](#).

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Table of Contents

List of ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
San Diego ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
Colorado ComputerEdge Sponsors	3
ComputerEdge™ Online — 09/27/13	4
Apple's New iPhones and More!	4
Magazine Summary	4
Digital Dave	6
Adobe Flash Player Problem	6
E-mail Address Change	7
VoIP Telephone Service	8
Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S an Other Little Known High Tech Stories	10
Cyber-Drama: Apple's New iPhone 5C and 5S are Letdowns	10
Silicon Valley Fights Back Against NSA Surveillance	12
Privacy Issues: Facebook to Health Insurance Questionnaires	13
Do You Really Want to Know How Much Big Data Knows About You?	13
Cyber Security Booming	13
Aging Tech Companies: Market Leaders and Hipper Offices	14
Is the Middle Class Bleeding Jobs and Money?	15
The Middle Class: Capitalism and Innovation	16
Anticipated Future Technology—GPS on the Personal Scale	16
How to Cheat at Computer Games and Restart Learning AutoHotkey with Action Recorders	18
The Send Command for Gamers	18
The Easy Way to Learn AutoHotkey with Script Recorders	19
Advanced Reverse Engineering of AutoHotkey	22
Varied Uses of Gamers' AutoHotkey Techniques	24
Wally Wang's Apple Farm	27
Waiting in Line	29
Aiming Mortars with an iPad	29
Blackberry and Nokia	30
IBM vs. Microsoft	31
The Lack of Logic	31

Staying Organized	33
Worldwide News & Product Reviews	38
iPhone Fingerprint Scanner Hacked—Should You Care?	38
Will PC Gamers Ever Get to Play Grand Theft Auto V?	40
Green Protection for Notebook Computers	43
Samsung Mega Smartphone (AT&T)—One Phabulous Phablet	47
Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers	54
Cable TV	54
Memory Cards	54
Thank You	55