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***Windows 8.1
and the Surface 2
Are Almost Here!***

October 4, 2013

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Windows 8.1 and the Surface 2 Are Almost Here!

This month Microsoft releases Windows 8.1, the upgrade for Windows 8, and the Surface 2 tablet in an effort to fix its mistakes.

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

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Digital Dave

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

Double-spaced E-mail; Skype for Phone Calls?; No Sound on the Web.

Double-spaced E-mail

Dear Digital Dave,

When using e-mail (Web mail) and sending out text messages, the sent data is always double line spaced. Especially irksome when sending a notepad-saved article that is copied into the outgoing e-mail.

I have looked for answers on the Internet with searches, but the supposed fixes don't fix the problem.

I don't use Outlook at all.

*Thanks,
Orville Lynner*

Dear Orville,

The most likely reason you are getting double-spaced lines is because you have extra carriage return (CR)/line feed (LF) combinations at the end of each line of text.

Carriage return and line feed combinations come from the old typewriter procedure of hitting the return level that moved the carriage to the right and rolled the platen up one line. This terminology continued with computers with a special hidden character for each action. However, normally the CR/LF combination is only placed at the end of the paragraph rather than each line. That way the paragraph width is adjustable with the word wrap feature depending upon the program and formatting. Otherwise, a new line is forced whenever the combination is encountered. This is the case in the question you submitted to *ComputerEdge* (see Figure 1).

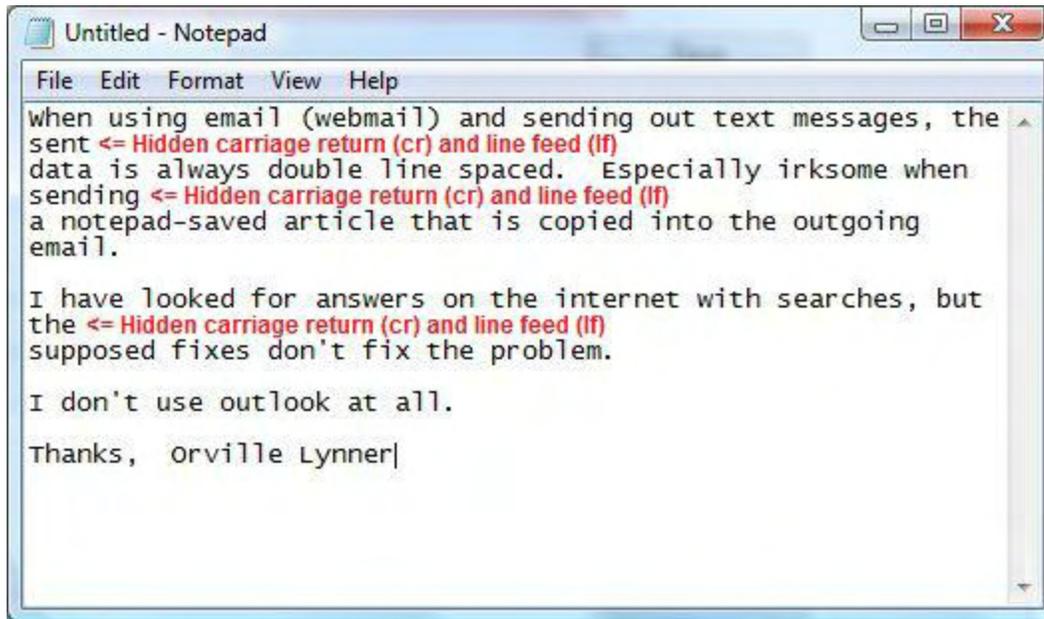


Figure 1. Since you can't see the CR/LF characters, changing the width of the window can often show the hidden locations of the CR/LF combinations by exposing widow lines when the window width is shorter than the length of the line.

When you entered your question, you either used software that automatically added hard returns at the end of each line or you hit the RETURN (or ENTER) key. That shows up in the shortened lines when the width of the window is less than the line length. To remove the special characters, place the cursor at the end of the line, then hit SPACE followed by DELETE (deletes the CR/LF combination). The two lines will merge, only leaving those hidden characters at the end of the each paragraph.

In Notepad, once you remove all the extra returns, you should be able to uncheck Word Wrap, then see that each paragraph runs off the screen (see Figure 2). If not, then you still have extra carriage returns.

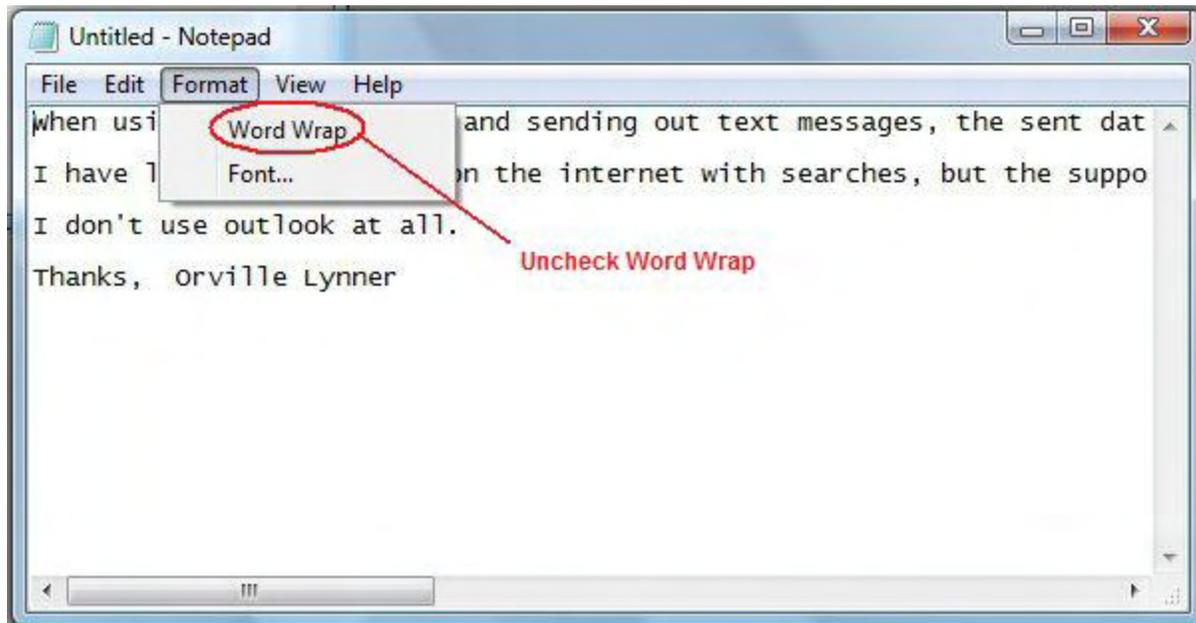


Figure 2. Uncheck Word Wrap to check for hidden carriage returns.

When you copy articles from the Web or use text formatted for printing, it is not uncommon to find the CR/LF combination at the end of each line. This is most likely the problem since many programs (including Web mail) will add extra space between paragraphs (whenever a CR/LF is encountered) making the entire text look double-spaced.

To complicate things even further, Linux (Unix) and the Mac only use the line feed (new line) to mark the end of a line (or paragraph).

It can be pretty tedious to remove extra returns in Notepad one at a time. Some programs have options for removing them or you may be able to use Search and Replace to remove the extra returns and replace them with a space. (This does not work in Notepad, but does in Wordpad). You could use AutoHotkey to write a short script for removing extra carriage returns similar to the techniques in "[Using StringReplace to Search and Replace Any Text, Anywhere, Anytime](#)" by Jack Dunning. However, you will temporarily need a special character to mark the end of each paragraph. Otherwise, the entire article will become one paragraph with no returns.

I've asked Jack to write an example script for his [AutoHotkey column](#) this week (which he has done). You can download his app for stripping returns from documents and text editing fields (*StripReturns.exe*) in the ZIP file (*StripReturns.zip*) at the *ComputerEdge* [Dropbox AutoHotkey download site](#). If you extract the *StripReturns.exe* file from the ZIP file and double-click on the filename *StripReturns.exe*, the app will load. To strip the returns from a document, select the problem text, then use the hotkey combination CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+S. See [Jack's column](#) for more details.

Digital Dave

Skype for Phone Calls?

Dear Digital Dave,

I have heard good reports for Skype. What do you think about this service for calls within the US?

Alex

San Diego, CA

Dear Alex,

Skype (now owned by Microsoft) is certainly one of the most important Internet communication services, but it doesn't exactly fit into the same category as the other VoIP services discussed [last week](#) which are solely based upon Internet boxes plugged into a router.

Skype is best known for its worldwide free video calls. People commonly use Skype to track their friends and family, especially grandchildren, with on-camera video chats. As long as there is a Webcam on each end, Skype makes it easy to connect. VoIP calls are also free as long as there is a Skype registered computer on each end. In fact, the major difference with Skype is that a computer or other handheld computing device is normally on one end of the connection.

As far as I know there is no Skype box similar to Vonage or Ooma, but you can get a [Skype phone](#) which will bypass the computer. Most people initiate everything from their computer.

While Skype to Skype calls are free, you can call land lines and cell phones over Skype for a fee. One of the advantages to Skype is that if you only have one foreign country that you call regularly, then you can get a low monthly rate for just that country (probably a better deal than most other VoIP services which often require a multi-country package).

You can also get a Skype phone number for your computer (or Skype phone) for about \$5 a month which will follow you around the world with your laptop or tablet as long as you have an Internet connection. Another paid service available over Skype is for group video calls which allows you to connect to multiple people at different locations. I tested a free trial of the service, but I couldn't stand watching other people arguing with each other. It might be good for business video conferencing.

Skype is certainly a viable alternative to the other VoIP services and has the added advantage of video calls. Since many of the services are free (Skype to Skype video and VoIP calls), there is no reason not to use it from time to time. Whether you sign up for any paid services depends upon your personal needs.

I would be interested in hearing from Skype users, especially those with paid services.

Digital Dave

Sound and YouTube

Dear Digital Dave,

I wrote to you a couple of weeks ago about not having sound on YouTube and now no sound on all Internet Web sites. I thought it was my sound card, but I have sound on music. I called Dell and they told me it was a software issue, but would not go into detail as I do not have an open contract to fix this problem with them. I followed last week's information you gave about Flash. I went into my system and Flash is enabled.

What does Dell mean by a software problem? I have gone on the Internet for answers to my problem and have tried most of them, but I still have no sound on Internet Web sites or YouTube. What do you suggest?

Thank you so much for all your help.

Lynne

Magnolia, Texas

Dear Lynne,

Since you have sound working on your computer, I must agree with Dell that it is probably not a hardware problem. That only leaves the software. For some reason your Web browser is not letting you hear sound.

(I know that this is probably not an issue, but most Web pages that play sound also have a Mute button. Make sure it is turned off and the volume level is up.)

Open Volume Mixer by right-clicking on the speaker icon in the System Tray Notification area (see Figure 3 for Windows Vista example). Ensure the volume levels are up for applications.

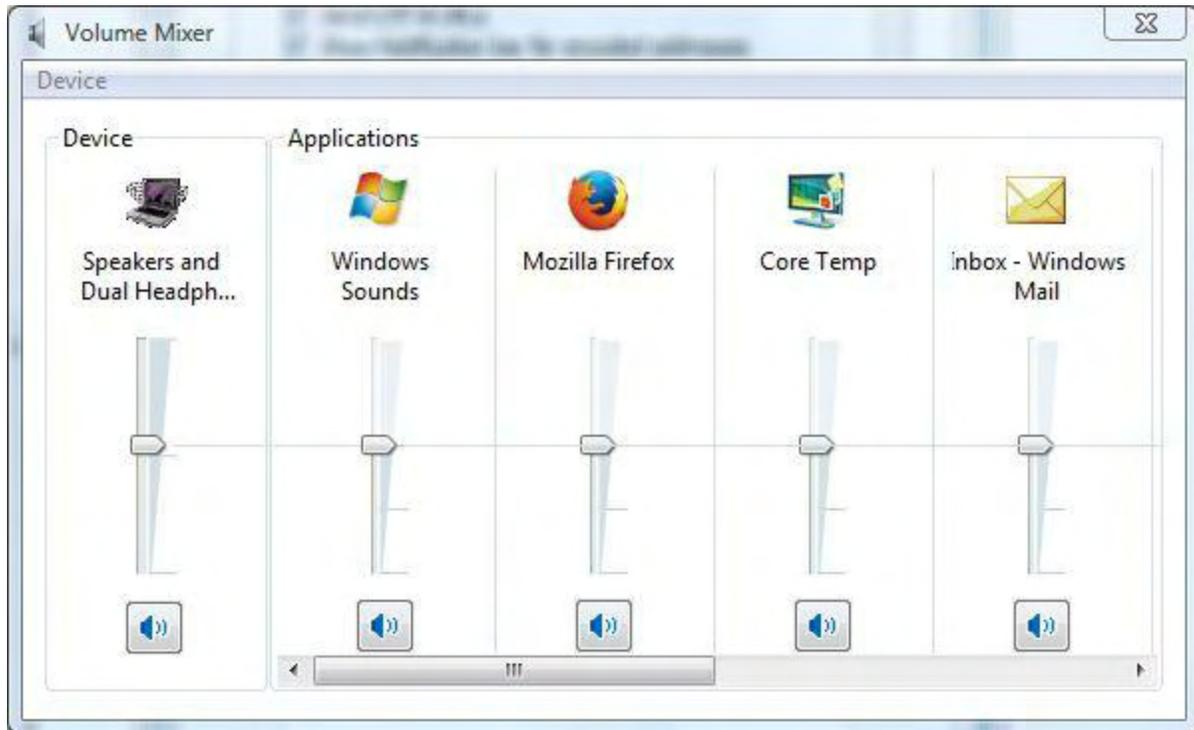


Figure 3. Make sure the volume levels are turned up for applications.

If that isn't the problem, then if you're using Internet Explorer, open Tools => Internet Options => Advanced tab (see Figure 4). Make sure "Play sound in webpages" is checked. If that doesn't fix the problem, try "Restore advance settings" or "Reset..." in the same tab.

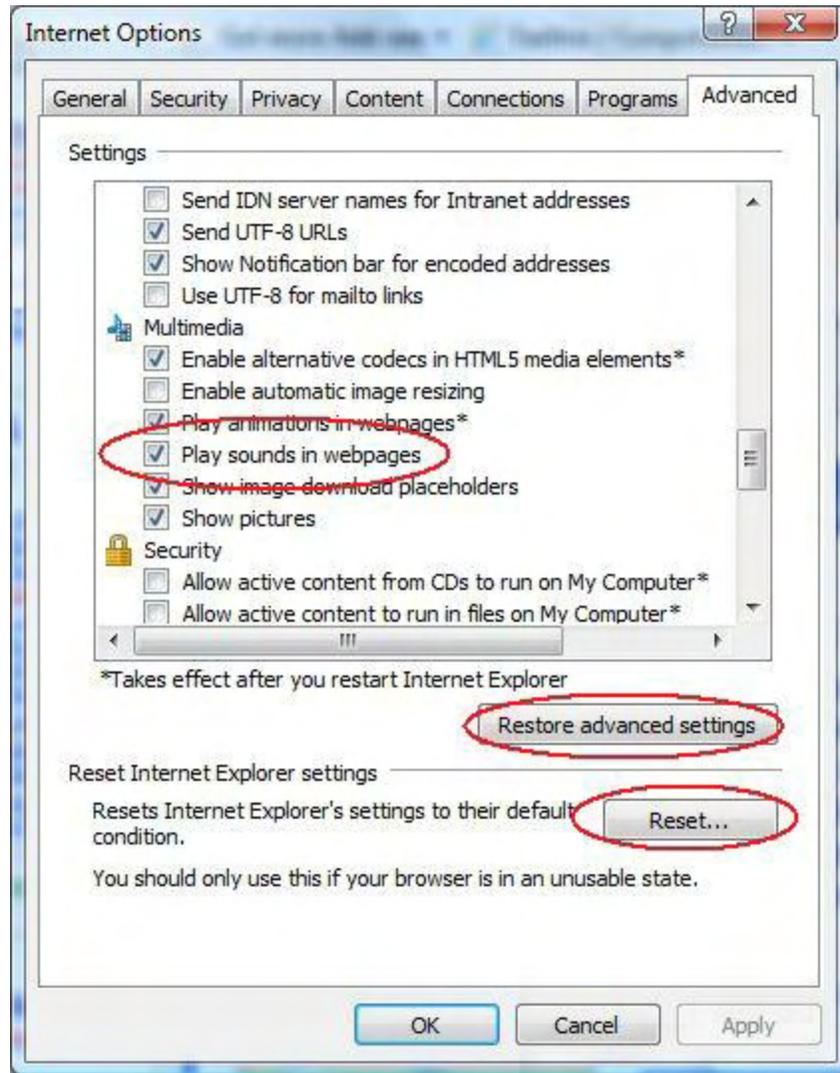


Figure 4. If "Play sound in webpages" is on, try "Restore advance settings" or "Reset..."

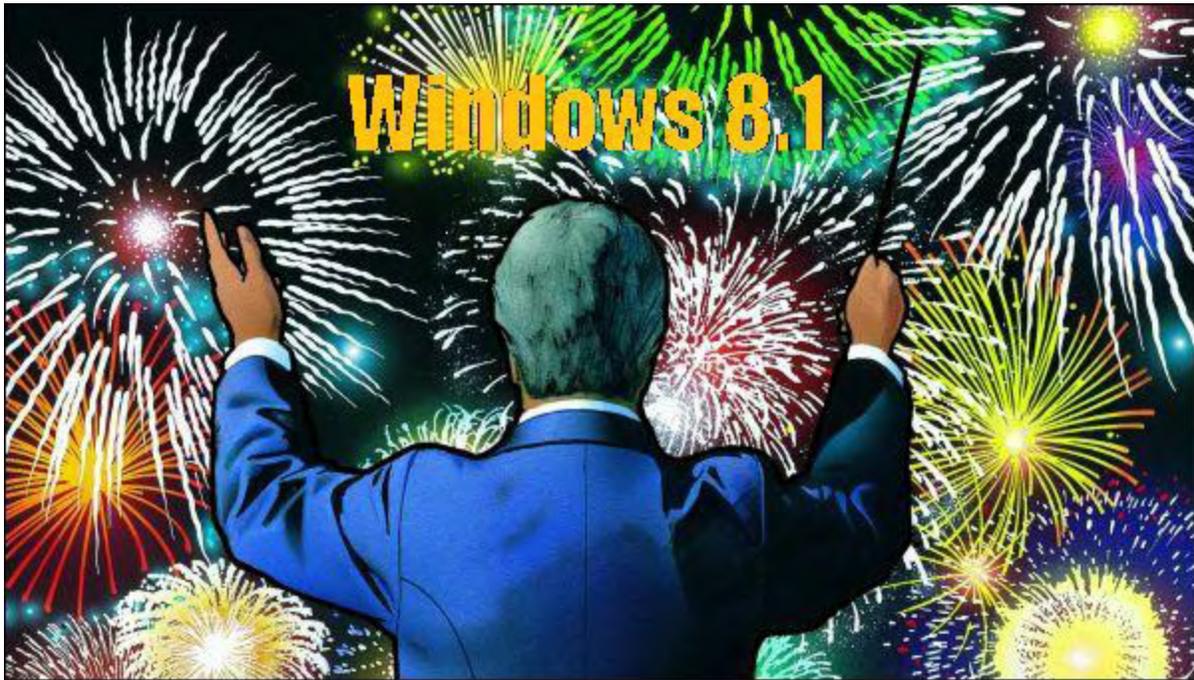
If none of that has resolved the problem, the next thing I would do is test a number of other browsers. This is one of the reasons that I keep Internet Explorer, Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox all installed on my computers. If sound plays for other Web browsers, then the problem is with the original non-playing browser. If you don't get any Web page sound from any of them, then we will need to look elsewhere, possibly a recently install program or a virus.

If the other browsers work, then there is likely a browser add-on or extension which is interfering in the original browser (or sound is activated as described above). Disable extensions, add-ons, or plug-ins while testing and looking for the culprit. It is also possible that something installed in Programs and Features is causing the problem, but this is more likely if none of the browsers work. You may have one of those annoying toolbars which attaches itself during other installations.

Since the problem seems to be getting worse it wouldn't hurt to check for updates to the audio drivers through Device Manager.

Hopefully, one of these suggestions will get you on the right track.

Digital Dave

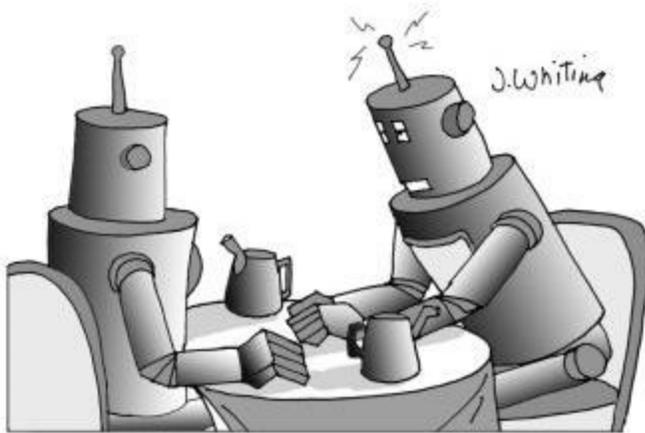


Will Windows 8.1 and the Surface 2 Tablet Give Momentum to Microsoft

“Windows 8.1 Will Be Available October 18 and the Surface 2 Tablet Shortly Thereafter” by Jack Dunning

Windows 8 and the Surface tablet has been struggling since their release. Will the new Windows 8.1 (with a Start button) and the Surface 2 tablet revitalize the product line?

Microsoft Windows 8.1 is scheduled for release on October 18, 2013. If you already own Windows 8, you should be able to download the update free of charge. Since it is considered a major change to Windows 8, it is a new version (8.1) rather than merely a Service Pack update. There have been a number of changes to that address the flood of complaints from long-time Windows users. (These changes were reviewed in the article "[Windows 8.1 Preview](#)" dated July 26, 2013.)



“I’m serious! This is an existential question for me! What came first? The operating system or CPU?”

While a number of the changes are aimed at improving the user experience, the most notable are the addition of a Start button and the inclusion of a new boot to "real" Windows mode. The reviews suggest that Windows 8.1 is certainly an improvement—although not a radical change. It still suffers from the two-operating-systems-in-one syndrome. The changes may make Windows 8.1 more acceptable to old Windows users, but it's not likely to rapidly alter the current trends in computers. Remember, most people are happy with their computer whether Windows 7, Windows XP, or one of the other systems.

Operating systems don't cause excitement anymore.

It's just been noted that Windows 8.1 will include a feature that allows the [searching of text in a photo](#) through SkyDrive. This new information causes one to wonder if there are not other features in Windows 8.1 which have gone unnoticed—yet may add significant value.

Possible Windows 8.1 Confusion

If you don't already have Windows, then there will be packages available on [CD-ROM sold in boxes](#). This is not an upgrade, but targeted at people who are building their own computer. It is priced at \$120 for Windows 8.1 RT (not real Windows) and \$200 for Windows 8.1 Pro (includes real Windows).

I caution anyone who is thinking about upgrading an old Windows XP or Vista computer that it may not work regardless of whether it is a download or CD-ROM. As discussed last year in "[Stop! Before You Download Windows 8 Upgrade for that Old PC!](#)" there could be problems with some older processors.

I still have a problem with the fact the Microsoft uses the name (Windows) for both the stripped down tablet version (Windows 8.1 RT) and the "real" Windows version (Windows Pro 8.1). I have no doubt that there are a couple of people who bought a tablet thinking that they could run all their Windows software only to find that they had Windows RT—which fakes you out with a phony desktop. I have no problem with people who are only looking for tablet-like features buying Windows RT. RT probably is just as good a tablet operating system as iPad's iOS or any of the Androids. It just seems that Microsoft should have been a little more careful about distinguishing the two versions of the operating system. These are not minor differences—which is why I always add "(without real Windows)" every time I discuss Windows RT.

Microsoft Pushes SkyDrive

Windows 8.1 is more closely integrated with [SkyDrive](#) and Microsoft plans to use that capability to [help market the lagging Surface tablets](#) (both the Surface RT without real Windows and the Surface Pro with real windows). Anyone buying either the Surface 2 or Surface Pro 2 will get 200GB of SkyDrive storage for two years free of charge. Plus, access to Skype Wi-Fi and free Skype calling to land lines in more than 60 countries for one year. The regular price of SkyDrive is \$100 per year for 200GB storage and the Skype credit is worth about \$14 per month.

This offer is a two-part strategy. Most of the tablets have limited storage. By offering 200GB of Cloud storage, value is added to the tablet—albeit for only two years. But, by the time the Cloud storage expires, users may be hooked and see the annual fee as cheap. This may work for the Surface RT (no real Windows), but the new Surface Pro 2 (with real Windows) is starting to look more like a laptop replacement and can be purchased with much higher storage capacity (up to 512 GB)—not needing as much online.

The Surface 2 Tablet Computer

Microsoft's Surface tablet computer has not taken the world by storm. For me the Surface RT is just another tablet—although if I were in the market for another tablet, I might consider a Surface RT (without real Windows) just as much as I would an iPad or Android tablet. The price is competitive and much of the software available for the others is available for Windows 8. While off to a slow start, this part of the Windows 8 strategy might work in the long run.

As Windows users slowly relent and move to Windows 8, it increases the possible market for software which runs in the Modern tablet interface—which is available in all Windows 8 computers, but it is all you get in a Windows RT tablet. Even if Windows 8 tablets only represent a small part of the tablet market, all the apps developed should run on the new Windows 8 PCs without a problem. As much as many people hate the Windows 8 Modern screen on PCs, they may find themselves sneaking over to it for the occasional app. Like a slow infection, the Modern interface rooted in the PC could help with the tablet choice.

I personally don't think that the type of tablet computer someone owns, whether iPad, Android, or Windows 8, really matters. They are all relatively easy to use and learn. Many homes may have an iPad as well as a Kindle Fire or other Android device. Unless they have a very specific need, People are as likely to pick one as the other. If a Windows 8 RT tablet (without real Windows) is the right price, then many people may be just as likely to buy it as any other tablet.

Right now, I'm annoyed with Apple. I have one of the original iPads which I use regularly for fairly trivial tasks. Also, since I leave it conveniently laying about the house, visitors use

it for quick Internet checks. However, even though it is only a few years old, Apple has effectively dumped support for it. I cannot load any of the current versions of iOS onto it. I often try to download a new (free) app only to be told that I need at least iOS 6 to run it. I can't get beyond iOS 5. Maybe Apple thinks I'll buy a new iPad. I don't think so. I'm more likely to buy one of those Android tablets which have made great strides in the last couple of years or even the Surface Pro (with real Windows), which I could also use as a laptop.



Along with Windows 8.1 the [Microsoft Surface Tablet 2](#) is coming out this month. The most significant changes are faster processors and chips with reduced power requirements which greatly extend the time on one battery charge. It offers better front and back cameras and improved keyboards. There is also a higher resolution screen and more storage capacity options for the Surface Pro. See [this comparison](#) for differences between Surface Pro 2 (with real Windows) and Surface RT 2 (without real Windows).

	Surface Pro 2	Surface 2
Size	274.5 x 173 x 13.5 (mm)	274 x 171 x 8.9 (mm)
Weight	907g	680g
Screen	10.6-inch ClearType HD	10.6-inch ClearType Full HD
Resolution	1920×1080 pixels	1920×1080 pixels
OS	Windows 8.1 Pro	Windows RT 8.1
Storage	64, 128, 256, or 512GB	32 or 64GB
SD Card Slot	Yes	Yes
Other Ports	USB 3.0, mini DisplayPort	USB 3.0, HD video out
Processor	Intel Core i5 (Haswell)	Quad-core Nvidia Tegra 4
RAM	4 or 8GB	2GB
Connectivity	Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)	Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
Camera	Front 1.2MP, Rear 1.2MP	Front 3.5MP, Rear 5MP
Bluetooth	Yes, version 4.0	Yes, version 4.0
Battery	7-8 hours of use	10 hours of use
Charger	Micro USB	Micro USB
Marketplace	Windows Store	Windows Store
Price	\$900+	\$450+

Figure 1. Comparison of Surface Pro 2 and Surface 2 RT Tablet Computers. (Digital Trends).

The general opinion is that the Surface RT 2 has the features and is competitively priced enough to take on iPad and the Android tablet, but it may be too late to the show. When people are in the habit of buying something else, it can be hard to change their minds.

As for the Surface Pro 2, while you can use it as a tablet, it is really positioned to compete with laptop computers. Even though it functions well as a tablet, the price makes it unattractive as a tablet unless you need to run real Windows programs. As for me, I don't really need another tablet, so if I were to look at the Surface at all, I would want the Surface Pro—although I'm not sure the small size of the screen would be adequate for my purposes.

The Double-Edged Sword

Microsoft has been accused of trying to be all things to all people. By combining two operating systems (tablet and PC) into one, people are now getting confused about the Microsoft brand. Many people say that this spells the doom of Microsoft. I'm not so quick to join the chorus. Admittedly Microsoft is off to a slow start with both Windows 8 and the Surface tablet. However, Windows 8 as an operating system isn't all that bad. I notice that it boots up much quicker than Windows 7 on the same computer.

As for tablets, who knows? At times the Windows 8 dual approach seems silly, but I note that it has me talking about both PCs and tablets in the same article. It's impossible to even complain about Microsoft and Windows 8 without mentioning both desktop computers and handheld devices. People may get used to the idea of running the Modern apps and Windows software on the same computer or device. They may even like it. That is Microsoft's gamble and they are still going all in.

I will be upgrading my Windows 8 to Windows 8.1 and of course will pass along any trials or tribulations. I know that there are a number of *ComputerEdge* readers who have been using Windows 8 for a while. I would like to hear your opinions about Windows 8. Is Windows 8 the worst mistake you ever made, the best you've ever used, or somewhere in between?

In a time when the release of new operating systems has become boring, Microsoft at least has us looking—even if it's like driving by an automobile accident.

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

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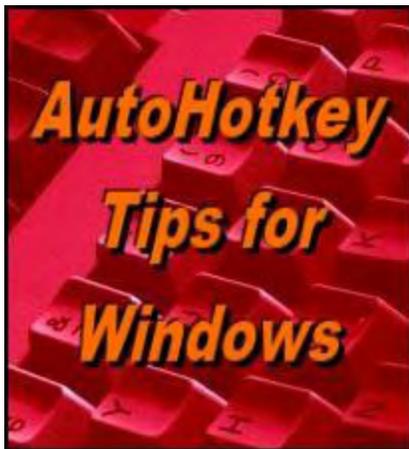
What They Do, and How to Get Started!

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.



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

Fixing Broken Word Wraps

**“A Short Script for
Removing Embedded
Misplaced New Line
Characters”** by Jack Dunning

Carriage returns and line feeds are a problem when they appear in the wrong place causing formatting issues and broken word wrap. Here is an easy AutoHotkey script that fixes the problem.

It's annoying to copy some text from a Web page or document to paste into another window (e-mail, Blog, word processor) only to have the formatting look funky. Sometimes there are a couple of words hanging there on their own on every other line like the example in [Digital Dave's answer to Orville Lynner](#) this week. Other times all the lines are too short and won't wrap to fill the space. The problem is that Web pages and some programs may add carriage returns and line feeds (new line) at the end of each line which forces the text to stay at a fixed length ignoring any word wrap. This is the way things worked for typewriters, but with computers, unless something is being formatted for printing, adding returns to the end of each line usually just causes problems.

Since most word processors and Web pages use word wrap techniques which automatically adjust the length of each line of text it's not necessary to add any returns unless you need to force a new line or paragraph. In typing, a new paragraph was generally noted by the indentation of the first line. However, since multiple spaces and tabs are generally ignored by the Web language HTML, it is now more common to mark a new paragraph with two hard returns by pressing the ENTER key twice which leaves one blank line between the two. In many programs, one hard return will leave additional space between the two paragraphs, however it is very common, especially in plain text, to have two hard returns embedded to leave one line between the paragraphs. (In programs that automatically add space between paragraphs, a soft return can be added by holding down the SHIFT key while hitting ENTER. This will start a new line without adding any extra space between the lines.)

The problem comes when copied text or text from files with these returns at the end of each line causes strange formatting problems—especially when we paste the text into other programs or Web editing fields. It may look like every line is double spaced or cause long lines to leak over to the next line as a shortened widow before jumping to the next line. Generally, the best solution is to remove all the extra returns and place two returns between the paragraphs. This format works in almost all programs.

Stripping those excess returns is the challenge that Dave gave me.

How StripReturns Works

To deal with this situation I wrote a short AutoHotkey script I call StripReturns. I've provided the *StripReturns.ahk* file for those who like to tinker with AutoHotkey and a compiled version *StripReturns.exe* for those who want to run it on any Windows computers without AutoHotkey.

For those people who want to use the compiled version of StripReturns (*StripReturns.exe*) which will run on any Windows computer without needing to install AutoHotkey, here is how StripReturns works. There's no need to learn all the inner workings discussed later in this column. After you download the ZIP file (*StripReturns.zip*) from the *ComputerEdge* [Dropbox AutoHotkey download site](#) and extract *StripReturns.exe*, double-click *StripReturns.exe* to load the app. That's all there is to it. There is no installation and it can even run from a thumb drive.

Once loaded if you find that you have that strange formatting caused by excess returns, then select (click and drag) the target text (it should work in most programs and editing fields) and hit the hotkey combination CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+S. In most cases, this will remove returns at the end of lines within paragraphs (restoring word wrap, if available) while preserving the space between paragraphs. That's it! If something odd happens, then using Undo (or CTRL+Z) within the Edit menu or right-click menu of the program should restore the original. (As a precaution, be sure to backup the original.)

Note: StripReturns uses the vertical line character (¶) to mark paragraphs. If the selected text happens to contain the vertical line character, then the app will place a new paragraph at that location.

If you find that the entire selected text turns into one huge paragraph (no separation between paragraphs), then you will need to Undo and mark the paragraphs by hand with either the vertical line (¶) before each paragraph or by adding an extra return with the ENTER key at the end of each paragraph before using StripReturns again.

If this is the first time you've heard of AutoHotkey and would like to learn more, see our [Beginner's AutoHotkey Introduction page](#).

Stripping Carriage Returns and Line Feeds from Text

The problem with removing returns is that they come in different formats and you can't usually see them. In Windows a hard return is generally represented by both a carriage return (`\r` in AutoHotkey language) and a line feed (`\n` in AutoHotkey language—also called a *new line*). But in Linux (Unix-like operating systems) and the Mac, a return is represented by only the new line or line feed. We need to account for both formats. Another problem is that

sometimes, there may be a space between the two returns at the end of a paragraph which can make recognizing a double return more difficult. If you have text that you think has hidden characters, you can expose them by copying the text into a LibreOffice or OpenOffice text document with View => Non-printing Characters menu item set on. Then you will see a format similar to that in Figure 1.

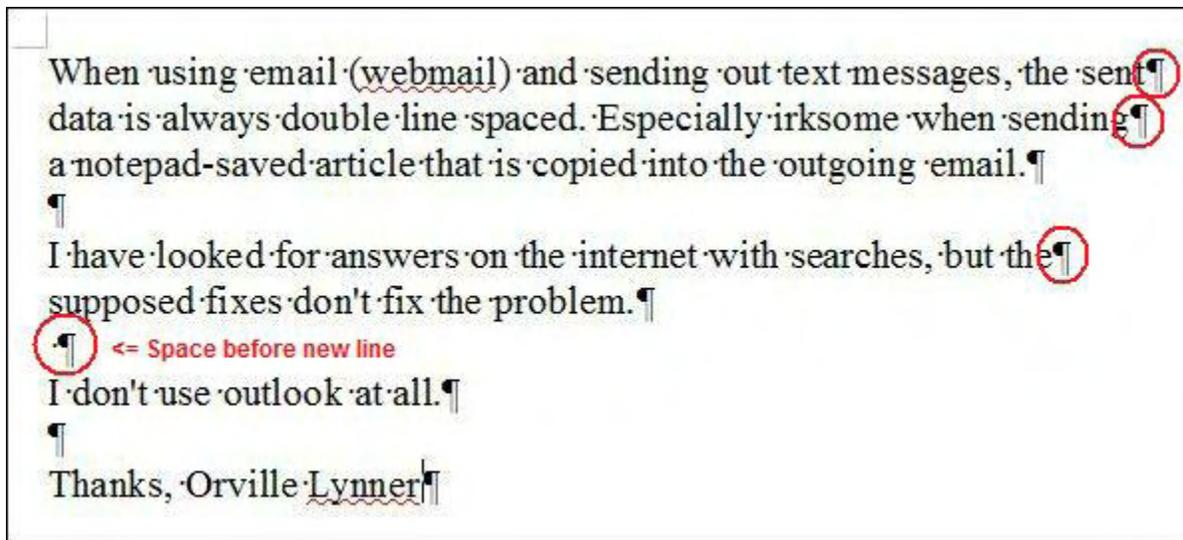


Figure 1. Notice that at the end of each line is the paragraph symbol (hard return) which forces a new line and blocks proper word wrap. One blank line shows a space between the two paragraph marks.

The hidden hard return (`\r\n`) now appears as the paragraph mark. (The soft return (`\n`) would appear as the return arrow symbol often seen on the ENTER key.) There is a space which appears as a dot before the paragraph mark on one of the blank lines. If you're not sure what you're dealing with, pasting the text into a word processor capable of showing hidden characters is an excellent technique.

StripReturn.ahk for Removing Excess Returns

The object was to write an AutoHotkey script which would strip all the excess returns from text. Since virtually all systems use the line feed (`\n`), but many use both the carriage return and the line feed (`\r\n`), the first step is to remove the inconsistency by eliminating all of the carriage returns—leaving only line feeds. Next the end of each paragraph (double line feeds and line feeds with a space between them) must be marked with a special character so they are not lost when the excess line feeds are stripped out. In this case the vertical line (`|`) is used. Then, all line feeds are removed. Finally, the special character marking the paragraphs is replaced with a double carriage return/line feed combination (`\r\n\r\n`).

The hotkey combination CTRL+SHIFT+ALT+S (`^+!S`) was set to initiate the reformatting of any selected text as follows:

```
^+!S::
```

```

Previous := % ClipboardAll
Sleep 200
Clipboard := ""
;SendInput ^a
;Sleep 200
SendInput ^c
Sleep 500

StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, `r, , all
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, `n `n, |, all
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, `n`n, |, all
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, `n, %A_Space%, all
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, |, `r`n`r`n, all

SendInput ^v
Sleep 500
Clipboard := % Previous
Return

```

The *StripReturns.ahk* script is a short routine which will reformat any selected text by removing the excess returns (restoring word wrap) while preserving the paragraphs with double returns. If no text is selected, then it will do nothing. (Note that there are two lines commented out with the semicolon (;) which would have selected the entire text (*SendInput ^a*). However, I realized that there are many sections for text, such as computer code or other listings where it would not be desirable to strip the returns. Therefore, by making the Select All (CTRL+A) non-function by placing the semicolon in at the beginning of the line, it is now necessary to pre-select the target section of the text.)

The first step is to save the current contents of the Clipboard to the variable *Previous* (*Previous := % ClipboardAll*). This makes the routine transparent to other Clipboard activity. The original Clipboard contents are restored at the end of the routine. Note that the [ClipboardAll variable](#) is used rather than Clipboard. *ClipboardAll* allows any type of data, including images, to be saved for later restoration to Clipboard.

At various places in the routine the [Sleep command](#) is used to allow the previous line time to complete its work before moving on. Otherwise the results tend to be inconsistent.

The Clipboard is emptied (*Clipboard := ""*) before any other activity. This ensures that the previous contents of the Clipboard are not pasted into your document when you have not selected any text.

The selected text is copied to the Clipboard (*SendInput ^c*).

Once the text is in the Clipboard, there is a series of [StringReplace commands](#) which reformat the text inside the Clipboard. The first line (*StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, `r, , all*) removes all of the carriage returns. Remember that each new line will either be a combination carriage return/line feed or just a line feed. By removing all the carriage returns, each new line

will be consistently represented by only a line feed (`\n`).

The next two *StringReplace* lines are aimed at marking the ends of paragraphs:

```
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, \n \n, |, all
StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, \n\n, |, all
```

I've used the vertical line (`|`) as the marker, but it can be any character which doesn't appear in the selected text. In fact, if the paragraph marker does appear in the selected text, then this routine will ultimately replace it with a double return. The first line replaces double returns with a space between them with the vertical line. The second line replaces double returns (no space) with a vertical line.

Now we're ready to remove all the remainder of the line feeds. The paragraphs will be unaffected. Since the returns are usually butted up against the end of the line, a space must replace each return (*StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, \n, %A_Space%, all*).

At this point, there will be no returns of any type in the text in the Clipboard. The double returns for the paragraphs must replace the vertical line characters (*StringReplace, clipboard, clipboard, |, \r\n\r\n, all*). This places double hard returns at the end of each paragraph.

Finally, the selected text is replaced with the reformatted contents of the Clipboard (*SendInput ^v*) (see Figure 2).

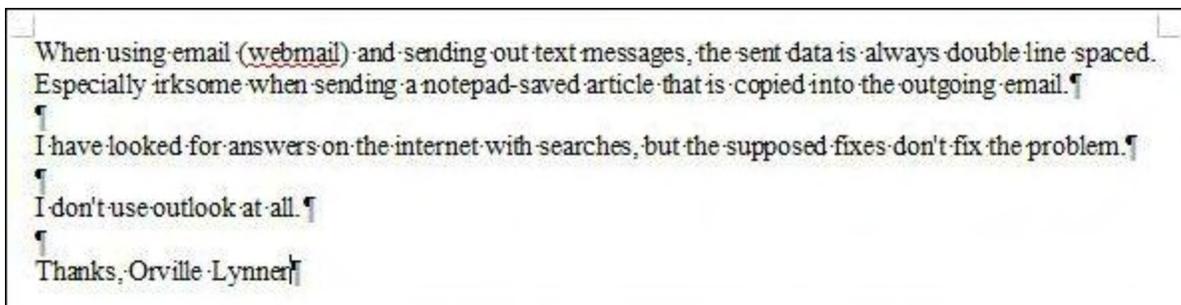


Figure 2. The text seen in Figure 1 is reformatted to remove the excess returns.

The last step is restoring the original contents back to the Clipboard (*Clipboard := %Previous*).

The *StripReturns.ahk* script can be found in the ZIP file (*StripReturns.zip*) at the [ComputerEdge Dropbox AutoHotkey download site](#). It can be easily modified for other formats if the text does not conform to the assumptions made in this script.

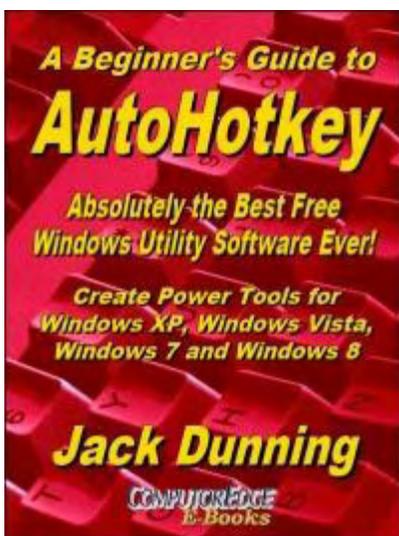
Confusion at the AutoHotkey Forum

If you've been using the AutoHotkey forum, you may have noticed that the formatting seems

to have problems. I don't know whether it's politics or what, but there seems to be a mass exodus of users to a [new forum location](#). (The new URL for the host site is www.auto-hotkey.com.) If you have questions, then this may be the place to go. Many of the experts have already become members. I notice that this alternative site seems to have the same documentation as the old AutoHotkey Web site (www.autohotkey.com), but more up-to-date with the commands and documentation for AutoHotkey_L.

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.

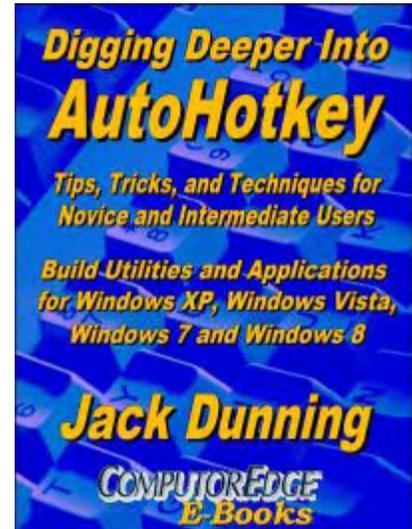
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of 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

“Record iPhone 5 Sales Mean Apple is Doomed” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Record iPhone 5 Sales Mean Apple is Doomed; Apple's Next Revolutionary Product; Another Revolutionary Idea Critics Have Overlooked; Another Hidden Feature of iOS 7; The Rise and Fall of Blackberry; A Three Horse Race; Autographing E-Books; Choosing Backup in Time Machine.

The analysts thought that Apple would only sell 5 million iPhone 5S/5C units just like they sold 5 million iPhone 5 units last year. Then Apple announced that they actually sold 9 million iPhone 5S/5C units, which represented an 80 percent increase. If any other company announced an 80 percent increase in sales, everyone would rejoice, but when Apple does it, you get strange criticism such as Sandy Cannold's belief that breaking sales records is actually a sign that Apple [could be in trouble](#).

Sandy says that the iPhone 5S/5C are just evolutionary products and not revolutionary products. Yet such criticism could apply to every company and every industry. What's Sandy's definition of "revolutionary"? General Motors and Toyota basically release evolutionary car models every year, Coca-Cola simply sells the same formula decade after decade, and Home Depot and Walmart only sell the same types of products over and over again with minor, evolutionary differences. Even the iPhone could be considered just an evolutionary improvement over existing smartphones if you examine the touch screen interface of the [LG Prada smartphone](#) that arrived on the market before the iPhone. When the iPad first came out, critics even claimed it was nothing more than a giant iPod touch.

Why is it that if Apple doesn't introduce a revolutionary new product every year, people get disappointed, yet when other companies fail to introduce revolutionary new products even once in a decade, nobody cares? Also why do so many people fail to see Apple's revolutionary products when they do come out, but only recognize them in hindsight?

Basically, far too many people are irrational but believe they're rational and logical, much like crazy people who think they're sane. The simplest solution to dispelling delusions is to just look at all the facts, not just the facts that support your particular belief. Yet many people refuse to do this because they know if they looked at all the facts, they couldn't cling to their beliefs any more. This is why you still have people who believe in a flat Earth or that only

their religion is the true faith so everyone outside of their religion deserves to die.

Looking at the facts objectively, you can see that people lined up to buy the latest iPhone 5S/5C models. If you believe Apple's report, the company sold 9 million units in the first weekend while they only sold 5 million units of the iPhone 5 last year. You can also see that other smartphone manufacturers never sell 9 million units in a weekend (or even 5 million units) after introducing a new model, nor do they see massive lines of people waiting to buy their new smartphone models either.

Just looking at those facts, it's easy to see that perhaps Apple is doing something right by selling products that people want to buy. Does anyone have other facts that prove that Apple isn't selling iPhone 5S/5C units or that Apple may be lying about their sales numbers? Does anyone have proof that those lines to get the latest iPhone never really existed or that people were really lining up to get free concert tickets instead?

If the name of Apple bothers you (and you should ask yourself why), just replace "Apple" with "Company X" and ask yourself if Company X sells a product that people rush out to buy, maybe there's a valid reason why people want that product. Although you may not personally want a Company X product, how can you deny that other people do? The easy answer is that Company X's marketing has managed to fool so many people year after year, and that each time people buy a Company X product, they're too dense to realize they actually bought a worthless piece of garbage, yet they rush out and buy from Company X all over again.

There's a principle called [Occam's Razor](#) that states the hypothesis with the fewest assumptions is probably the correct explanation. To assume that Apple's marketing tricks people into buying inferior products assumes that only Apple's marketing can do this consistently. If you assume that Apple's marketing works so well selling products people don't need, why don't other companies simply copy it? If Apple products are so inferior, why does Apple have so many loyal customers?

When you apply the principle of Occam's Razor to any idea, it's easy to strip away the assumptions and get closer to the truth. Take any conspiracy theory, use Occam's Razor, and you'll soon see the irrationality of so many assumptions that become difficult to believe.

There's a conspiracy theory that NASA never landed a man on the moon but staged the whole thing in a Hollywood studio. Assuming this is true, how could so many people keep silent on this matter? Also with Russia and China monitoring NASA's moon missions, how come both Russia and China intercepted radio transmissions that came from the moon if nobody landed on the moon in the first place? If Russia and China could prove the NASA moon landing transmissions were faked, do you think they would have stayed silent back in 1969 or do you think they would have relished the chance to provide evidence to discredit the United States government in front of the world?

When you apply logic to any situation, you can quickly spot flaws in different beliefs and get closer to what is likely the actual truth. The hard part is simply accepting the idea that your

beliefs may not be accurate so you need to examine evidence that might contradict your current beliefs. If you can get beyond this initial hurdle, you'll find it easy to think rationally. If you refuse to consider anything that threatens your beliefs, you probably stopped reading this column a long time ago and will never want to read anything like this ever again. That way you can maintain your beliefs by ignoring contradictory evidence right before your eyes.

When given a choice to think logically and possibly change your mind, or not think at all so you can cling to your beliefs as if they were fact, can you guess which choice too many people will eagerly embrace? If you think the iPhone 5S/5C are completely worthless products that only sell because of Apple's marketing and the mass gullibility of people, then you can read these [iPhone 5 reviews](#) that probably won't change your mind if you refuse to acknowledge their existence in the first place.

Apple's Next Revolutionary Product

When Apple introduces the next revolutionary product, you can be certain critics will proclaim it's worthless. Yet it's no big secret that wearable computing is the next growing market after mobile computing. To give you clues that Apple is planning their own wearable computing device, Apple recently hired away Nike's Ben Shaffer, who was the Studio Director of Innovation Kitchen, Nike's research and development lab. Under Shaffer's lead, Nike was named the most innovative company in 2013 by Fast Company. Nike's Innovation Kitchen has helped create products like the [Flyknit shoe](#).

Apple likely wouldn't hire such a designer unless they had plans to create their own wearable devices. Whatever form these wearable devices take on (computers in shoes?), you can bet they'll offer unique advantages that today's mobile computing devices (smartphones and tablets) and PCs (desktop and laptops) can't offer.

The wearable computing revolution is about to arrive. Start exercising your imagination now for what kind of apps such a wearable computer might need. With a little bit of creativity, you can put yourself on the cutting edge of technology. With a little bit of ignorance and irrationality, you can lock yourself in the past and avoid seeing anything new.

Another Revolutionary Idea Critics Have Overlooked

When Apple released iOS 7, they also released something called iBeacon. The idea behind iBeacon is to use bluetooth technology to identify your location within buildings. GPS can help you find your way around a city by showing you a map of your current location, but GPS can't determine your location in more precise detail, such as your location inside a structure.

By using iBeacon, people can use their iPhone to help them navigate inside large buildings. The New York Mets are [using iBeacon](#) to help fans find their way to their seats in the

stadium.



Figure 1. The New York Mets app helps iPhone users locate seats in the stadium.

With iBeacon, the New York Mets can determine your location within the stadium and point out highlights such as the history of the stadium or even offer you a coupon to buy something from a nearby vendor. Once other baseball stadiums start offering iBeacon technology, you'll be able to use the same Major League Baseball app to navigate your way around the stadiums in other cities as well. So walking into a stadium to watch a Los Angeles Dodgers game will only show you information specific to Dodgers stadium.

If iBeacon can provide useful information based on a person's location within a building, you can already see how shopping malls could use iBeacon to offer special discounts to people

walking by their stores. Museums could display text and audio (in that person's native language) on an iPhone to explain what visitors are seeing right in front of them. By offering micro-location tracking that GPS can't do, iBeacon could change the way we use smartphones in public places.

If you can't live without a smartphone using GPS to guide you around a strange neighborhood, just wait to see what iBeacon can do for you to help you navigate around an unfamiliar public area like an airport, museum, shopping mall, or train station. You may be surprised at how useful and "revolutionary" technology like iBeacon can suddenly become once people start recognizing how to use it in their own lives.

Another Hidden Feature of iOS 7

While everyone focuses on the appearance of iOS 7, they've overlooked the importance of technology such as iBeacon and now multi-path TCP. The biggest problem with most devices is that they only connect to the Internet using one method such as Wi-Fi or through a cellular network. What [multi-path TCP](#) does is connect to the Internet using multiple sources such as both Wi-Fi and a cellular network.

Besides speeding up Internet connections, multi-path TCP also prevents dropped connections. If you're downloading data over Wi-Fi and suddenly lose your Wi-Fi connection, the cellular network connection to the Internet can take over without breaking your connection. From a user's point of view, Internet connection will become faster and more reliable.

The latest features of iOS 7 go far beyond the visual changes and colors, which anyone can easily mimic. What's important about iOS 7 are the underlying technologies hidden in plain sight. With features like 64-bit processing, iBeacon, and multi-path TCP, iOS 7 makes the user's experience seamless without forcing anyone to understand the technical details that make it all work.

The Rise and Fall of Blackberry

It's no secret that Blackberry is dying. T-Mobile recently stopped selling Blackberry phones in their stores although customers can still order one online if they wish. If T-Mobile doesn't think that many customers want a Blackberry, how many other carriers will start dropping Blackberries from their retail stores too?

The Globe and Mail has an interesting article about Blackberry that basically details how [Blackberry failed](#) despite leading the smartphone market for years. First, Blackberry failed to react fast enough when Apple introduced the iPhone. Second, Blackberry executives fought among themselves on the best strategy to pursue, which resulted in a divided company that wound up spending most of its time fighting itself rather than beating back rivals.

Some executives wanted to pursue the touchscreen smartphone market defined by the iPhone, yet others wanted to cling to physical keyboards. Either path represented failure since chasing after the iPhone meant becoming a follower while clinging to physical keyboards meant holding on to a past that was rapidly disappearing. Instead of reacting quickly to the iPhone, Blackberry reacted slowly, and that contributed to its eventual decline.

Naturally, these warring factions of Blackberry executives likely got paid extremely well for their bone-headed decisions, which pretty much shoots apart the theory that companies need to pay executives well for their talent. (Just ask companies like General Motors if they got their money's worth paying their executives huge salaries right before the company almost went bankrupt.) While Blackberry goes down the drain, the iPhone and Android phones (led mostly by Samsung) continue to dominate.

It's amazing how quickly change can take place in the technology market, yet still many people insist that it can't happen again. Just read about Blackberry's failings and you can see that it can happen again in every company. Most likely it's happening right now in today's leading companies and we won't know the truth until they've lost their lead due to reacting slowly to rivals and infighting amongst themselves.

A Three Horse Race

While Blackberry struggles, Android and iOS dominate the smartphone market. In Europe, Windows Phone has steadily been [making gains](#) on the strength of Nokia.

Although Android leads the smartphone market, iOS and Windows Phone seem to be growing faster. The three major smartphone operating systems look like they'll be Android and iOS followed by Windows Phone. In the tablet market, IDC Research reports that Android tablets are [now selling](#) nearly as much as iPads.

Android has greatly improved as a tablet operating system from its early days with the Motorola Xoom tablet flop. For many people, an Android tablet is cheaper than an iPad and good enough for casual use. In the airline industry, pilots have stopped lugging around heavy flight bags stuffed with paper manuals and turned to lighter tablets instead.

Alaskan Airlines [relies on the iPad](#) while Delta Airlines has opted for [Surface 2 tablets](#) running Windows RT. Strangely, [one of the reasons](#) given for choosing the Surface 2 tablet (running Windows RT) over the iPad was "that Delta's training software also runs on the same Windows operating system as the tablets, reducing the need to redo that software for another device." That claim seems odd unless Delta's training software also runs on Windows RT and not on Windows 8.

Delta Airlines flight attendants will use Nokia smartphones to record passenger order preferences. Instead of smartphones, American Airlines flight attendants will [use Android](#)

[tablets](#) to record passenger order preferences.

With iOS, Android, and Windows RT/Windows Phone carving up the mobile computing market, there's little room for companies like Blackberry to survive. Despite any technical advantages, Blackberry OS is likely as dead as webOS. For many people, the choices for mobile computing boil down to iOS or Android, with Windows RT/Windows Phone still growing gradually.

Autographing E-Books

One advantage that printed books have is that authors can autograph books. Now Apple has filed a patent allowing [e-book autographs](#).

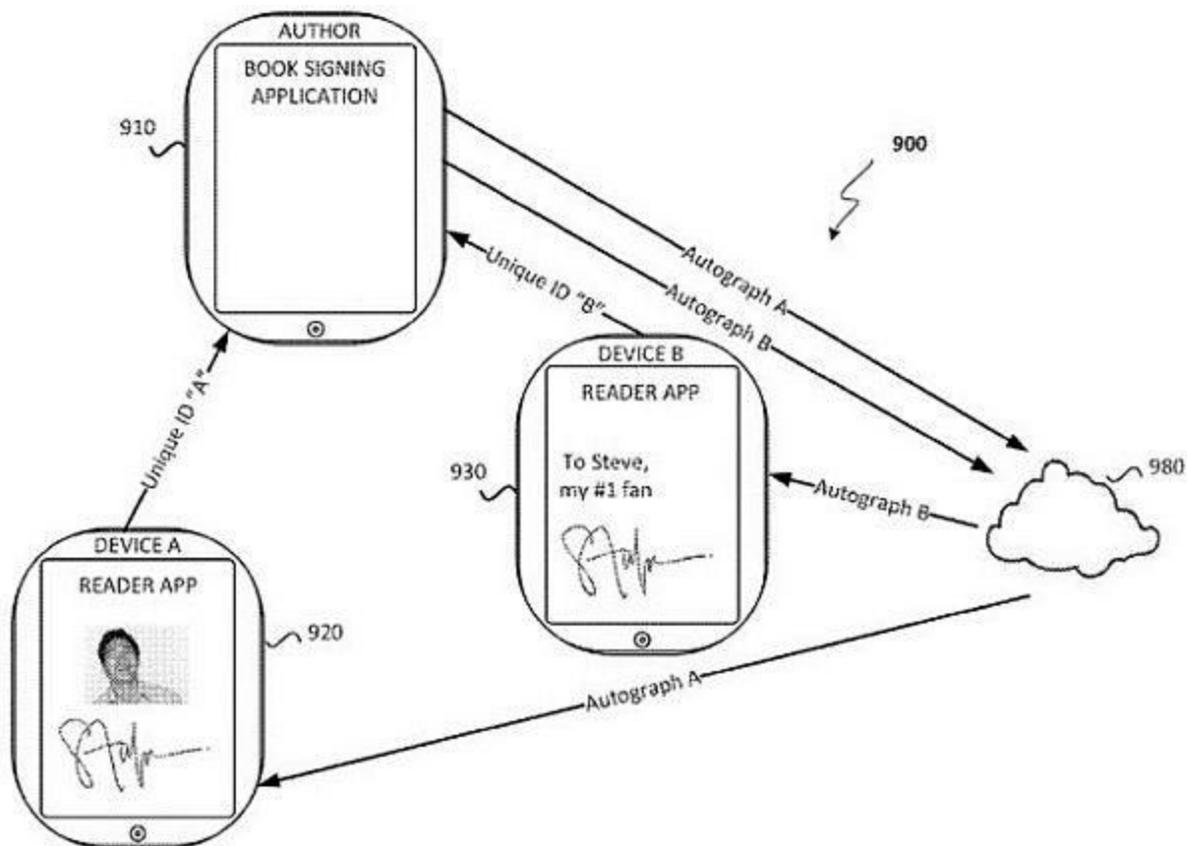


Figure 2. How an e-book autograph works.

While e-book autographs essentially just display a graphic image inside of an e-book, it's better than having someone sign their autograph in ink across the front of your Kindle or iPad screen. Personal autographs in a printed book will always hold more value, but e-book autographs provide one more way to make e-books more appealing.

Combine the ability to cram thousands of books into a single device like a Kindle or iPad, and you can already see the huge advantage of e-books. As the cost of printing books continues to

rise, e-books will become more cost-effective. Trying to fight for printed books is like trying to fight for horse and buggies. E-books will gradually take over and then kids one day will laugh at old pictures of Borders Bookstores and wonder how people tolerated such a huge waste of space to store so many books that their Kindle or iPad can store just as easily in a device the size of a notebook.

* * *

Upgrading a hard disk in a Macintosh is rarely as easy as opening up a traditional PC case and popping in a new hard disk. The easiest way to add more hard disk space to a Macintosh is by plugging in an external hard disk. If you add more storage space through an external hard disk, make sure you also back up your external hard disk through Time Machine.

Normally Time Machine ignores external hard disks, so to include them, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. When a System Preferences window appears, click the Time Machine icon. Then click the Options button.

Now you can see which disks Time Machine might currently be ignoring. Click on the external hard disk you want to back up in Time Machine, click the minus button, and then click Save.

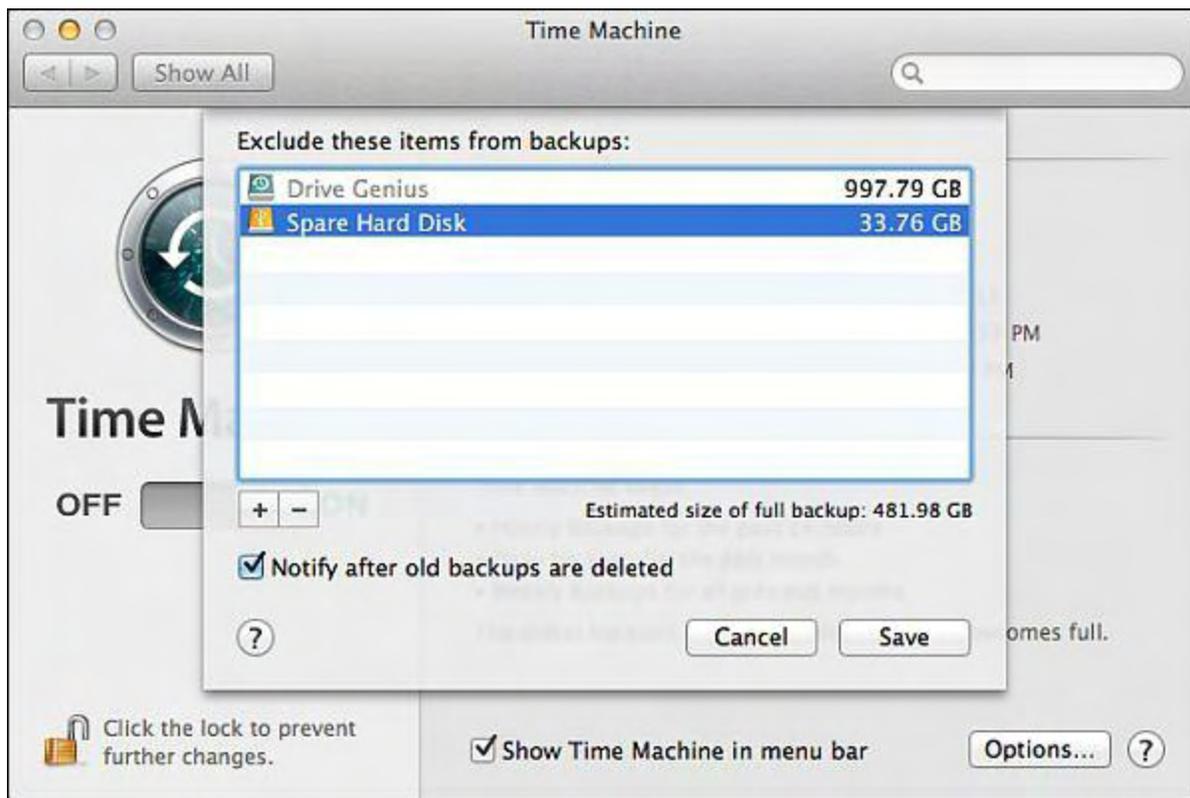


Figure 3. Choosing which drives to back up in Time Machine.

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

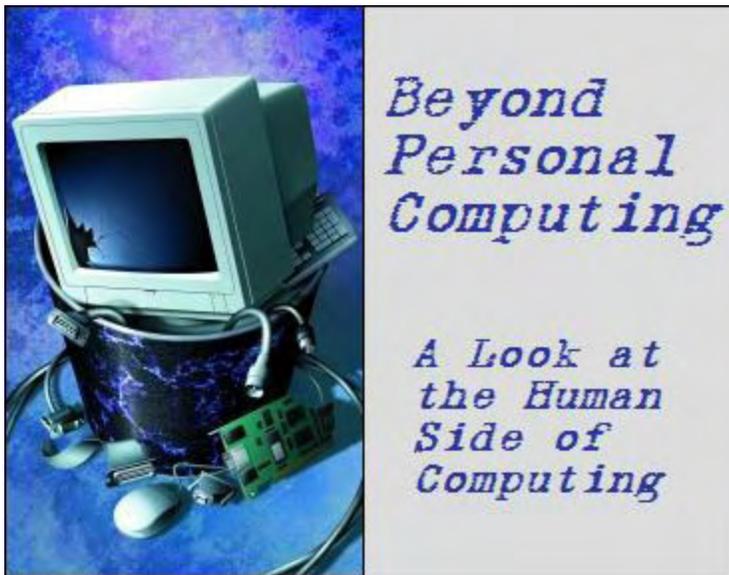
[The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou](#)

[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@computoregde.com.



Part B: The Ups and Downs of Corporate Mascots

“The What-are-They Tradition of Olympic Mascots” by Marilyn K. Martin

Everything from controversial corporate mascots to bizarre Olympic mascots.

For the non-sporting part of our Global Culture, mascots still play a role in everything from "brand identification" to being actual salesmen for consumer products. Depending on the product, a corporate mascot can be anything from a cartoon character to an animal to someone in a costume. Corporate mascots may not even be required to "look" the part to match a name or slogan, nor are they expected to participate in mock fights or gymnastic routines like they do for sports teams.

"Cute" cartoon characters pushing unhealthy products (usually food) at children are very controversial today. While semi-human mascots designed for some Olympic, Paralympic and Youth Olympic Games can be so strange as to create their own what-is-it side-story.

Corporate Mascots as Advertising Characters

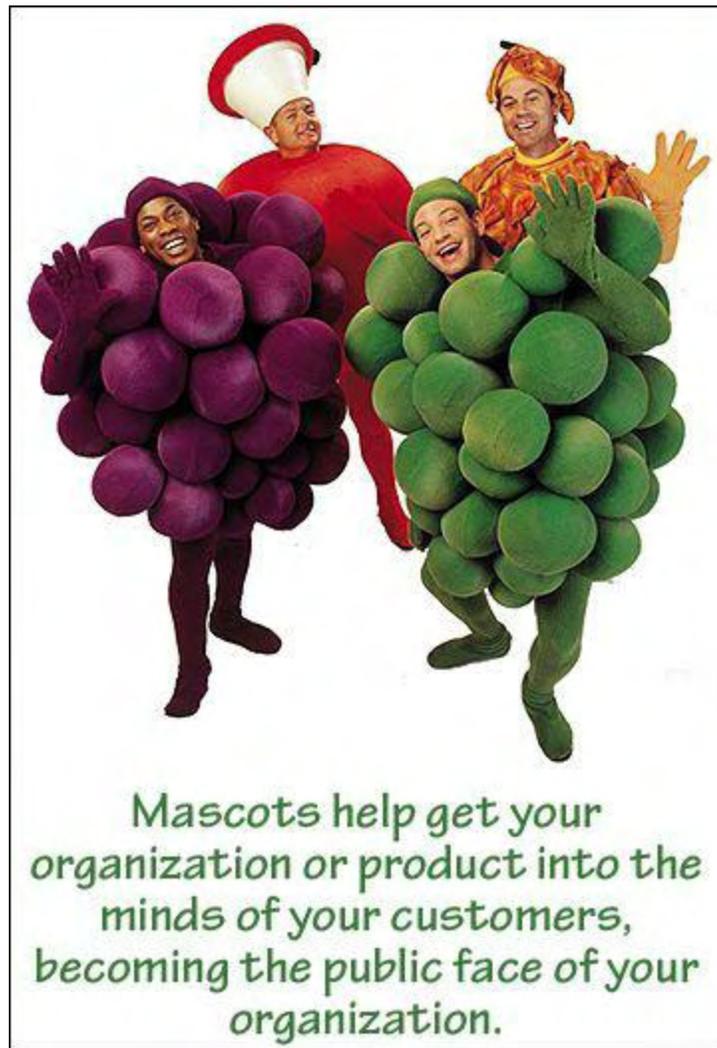
In the corporate world, mascots are used mainly as recognizable brands for a company, and can appear in a variety of advertisement roles, direct or indirect. Mascots can even act as brand ambassadors where advertising is not allowed, such as non-profit or sporting events. Most of these mascots are designed to "represent a company and product" with just a glance, and some have been around for over a hundred years. Many mascots are openly aimed at generating children's interest in events or products, but the products they push are coming under increasing scrutiny.

Advertising character mascots and their slogans or jingles (short songs) were used a lot in early TV commercials. Such as the child-like Speedy for the adult indigestion product, Alka-Seltzer, and its jingle: "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz - Oh, what a relief it is!", in the '50s and '60s. Even today, eBay has around 50 "Speedy" vintage figurines and banks for sale, aimed at nostalgic adults or collectors of vintage advertising characters. Although TV commercials today favor real people in clever special-effects scenarios to sell products, some advertising character mascots still exist.

The puffy white [Michelin Man](#), representing Michelin tires, started out at the Lyon (France) Exhibition of 1894. His correct name is Bibendum or Bibelobis, taken from his original slogan, "Nunc est bibendum." This is from Horace's Odes, Book 1, and translates as "Now is the time to drink." Hardly socially correct today, with drunk driver issues, but Bibendum continues to be one of the most recognized product mascots in over 150 countries.

Another recognizable brand mascot today are the [Fruit of the Loom](#) guys, created by Pierre's Costumes. (Oh—and the little orange pieces represent "currants," which are berries, although it's been dropped from "current" advertising.) If you thought that the Fruit of the Loom mascots were started as just a fresh and colorful reference for unmentionables (underwear), you'd be wrong.

A textile mill owner visited a small shop selling his bolts of cloth in 1851, and saw the store owner's daughter painting apples on the cloth—which were a best seller. The textile mill owner, Robert Knight, thought the fruit imagery would be the perfect symbol for his trade name, especially since Fruit of the Loom is also close to the Biblical reference for children as "fruit of the womb."



Social Pressure on Mascots Pushing "Unhealthy" Products"

Tobacco company R.J. Reynolds officially "retired" cartoon mascot [Joe Camel](#) (for Camel

cigarettes) in 1997. Joe Camel had been the target of anti-smoking activists and public health officials for years, who were trying to discourage "cute tobacco advertising" from enticing young people to start smoking. Even the Federal Trade Commission and American Medical Association had joined the push to ban Joe Camel.

Mascots linked to unhealthy food for children are also under [constant attack](#). McDonald's Ronald McDonald has faced child-luring charges for fatty fast food. While Chuck E Cheese' pudgy animatronic mouse was slimmed down and reintroduced in 2013. Both companies have also redone their menus, more to address falling profits than introduce healthier choices. Even Quaker Oats pudgy Larry the Quaker has lost a few chins to better help consumers associate the product with "energy and healthier choices."

Candy and Cavities

Candy and candy bars are mostly sugar, and everyone knows it. By the 1950s, too many kids' tooth cavities were being [blamed on candy](#), and there were the first rumblings of "too much sugar" in kids' diets. By 1960, the Mars Company introduced "Starburst Fruit Chews" (later fortified with Vitamin C), and Amurol Confections introduced the first sugar-free bubble gum. By 1997, Hershey was the first candy company to offer ingredients and nutritional information on wrappers. Candy companies also started advertising to adults as well as kids, and in 1990 Hershey sent 144,000 heat-resistant candy bars to soldiers in the Gulf War—the formula identical to what they sent to soldiers in WWII.

The major candy advertising on TV today with mascots are M&Ms. They now use six "spokescandies" in their TV ads, which are animated M&M candies with different colors and personalities. The ads are especially visible around the major holidays, with bags of all red and green M&Ms for Christmas, for example, and are marketed to adults as well as children as a party candy.



Cartoon Characters and Sugary Cereal

But no product mascot comes under more fire than the cartoon characters "selling" sugary breakfast cereals to kids. Anti-obesity campaigns now rage all over the world, and too much sugar has been linked to behavioral problems. According to a [2006 study](#), "cartoon characters that represent a particular food actually make that food taste better to children." Tony the Tiger cartoon character still represents Kellogg's Frosties (frosted flakes), but a recent UK ban on advertising high fat, salt and sugary foods and drink in kids' television ads, has caused the value of Frosties to plummet.

The US, meanwhile, is trying to avoid any outright advertising bans. The Walt Disney Company voluntarily unveiled strict new nutritional standards for food ads on all its children's channels in 2012. Pressure is now being applied to the less wealthy Nickelodeon (Disney's arch-rival) to do the same, but the Viacom-owned network is so far resisting the call to [ban sugary cereal ads](#).

Let's Hear It. Who Wants to be a Mascot?

Ever thought of delaying your stand-up comedy career by spending some steamy but productive time inside a furry costume as a team or corporate mascot? A site called You-can-be-funny.com thinks it's worth considering, if you can answer the following question in the affirmative: "Could you ride your Harley (or a toy version) onto a basketball court?"

This could be great training to get your physical comedy chops, since most mascot costumes won't let you talk (or be understood). As a sports mascot, you get to dress up as a ridiculous character, enjoy mock fights and even (jokingly) punch the umpire/referee. You can promote team-spirit on the sidelines or in the stands during the game with outrageous gestures or even dance routines. Or as a corporate mascot, you get to show up at variety of events to pass out mini-products or coupons. And whatever the role, you are a magnet for kids who want their pictures taken beside you.

[Street Characters, Inc.](#) ("Made by Mascots for Mascots for 25 Years!") is a costume and performer company run by ex-mascot Glenn Street. The company not only designs mascot costumes, but also auditions and trains the performers to go inside the costumes.

Olympic Mascots: Starting out Cartoon-Cute

The idea of having a mascot for the Olympics started out along the same lines as choosing mascots for sports teams: pick a native animal or other local attribute of the region where the Olympics was being held, then make it "cute" in a cartoony way, mainly to help interest kids in the Olympics. Sounds perfectly reasonable. So by 1968, the Olympic Games in Mexico City used a red jaguar and stylized white dove as mascots.

The 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck (Austria) used a cartoon snowman as a mascot, and

the Summer Olympics in Montreal (Canada) had a black beaver with rainbow stripes as the mascot. For the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles (US) there was a cartoon bald eagle (symbol of the US) in top hat and bow tie, created by Robert Moore from the Walt Disney Company.

Olympic Mascots: From Artsy to Izzy

But by the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona (Spain) a more "artsy" mascot of an [anthropomorphic dog](#) was chosen, both to get away from the "Walt Disney school of cartoons," and allow artists to compete for the design of the mascot. The sorta-dog mascot chosen was named CoBi as both an allusion to the initials of COOB'92, and because it was easy to remember in most languages. Suddenly, the race for Strangest Olympic Mascot was on.

By the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta (Georgia), they had a weird [blue composite creature](#) for a mascot. It had blue fur with a large open mouth, plus huge eyeballs with double hats and topped with little lightning bolts. It had been created as "Whatizit?", a computer-generated mascot from a local design firm, and was chosen "because of its ability to change in appearance to represent different athletes and sports." Adults were not thrilled, since the mascot appeared to be the nightmare version of Atlanta's Olympic slogan, "Come Celebrate Our Dream." But kids liked the blue whatever, so its name was changed to "Izzy" and it was marketed to the younger set.

So now we had the idea that Olympic mascots needed to be "something" that mashed together all the sports and athletes, and ending up with a composite "WhatIzIt?" to be marketed to children. Although it's hard to imagine how blue, double-hatted Izzy could "change in appearance" to look like different sports and athletes. But there was a terrorist bombing (with one death and over a hundred wounded) at that Olympics in Atlanta, so maybe the "composite" idea was closer to the mark than expected.



Olympic Mascots: Native Animals and Dolls

By the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney (Australia) they had three cartoon animal mascots that represented the wildlife in Australia: Olly the kookaburra, Syd the platypus and Millie the echidna. The 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City (Utah) also stuck with the idea of a trio of cute native animal mascots: a rabbit named Powder, a fox named Copper and a Bear in boxing gloves named Coal. Then the Three-Animal mascot phase was over.

The 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens (Greece) featured a pair of maybe-people in tunics named Athena and Phevos, brother and sister dolls from ancient Greece, with names from Olympic gods. The 2006 Winter Olympic Games were held in Torino (Italy), and the mascots were an anthropomorphic female snowball named Neve, and a male ice cube named Gliz. The official motto was "Passion Lives Here," although it was somewhat confusing representing "passion" with icy-doll mascots.



The Beijing Summer Olympics in 2008 also featured five colorful "personified dolls" called Fuwa as a group mascot. They represented China's landscape and animals, the five elements of nature as well as the five Olympic rings. Their individual names put together translated at "Beijing Welcomes You." Cute as little dolls, the human-sized costumes were more like Anime-Teletubbies. And that ended the Cute Doll mascot phase.

Paralympic and Youth Olympic Mascots: Back to Cutsy, Colorful Animals

The Paralympic Games for people with disabilities, originally called the World Disabled Games, started out as a small gathering of British WWII wounded veterans in 1948. Despite a having a mere pittance of the funding spent on the Olympics, the Paralympic Games today is also an international, multi-sport event, with Summer and Winter Games now held immediately following the respective Olympic Games. And since 1980, they have had their own mascots too.

The Paralympics too initially started out with mascots that represented animals or features that were native to the region where the Games were held. As expected, the Paralympic mascots also had some hits and misses. The 1992 Winter Paralympics featured the mascot "Alpy," as a mountain on a mono-ski. And the 1994 Winter Paralympics had "Sondre," a troll with an amputation. The 1998 Winter Paralympics mascot was "Parbbit," or a white rabbit with one red ear and one green ear. The idea of multi-colored animals for Paralympic mascots caught on, and by the 2008 Summer Paralympics in Beijing (China), the mascot was a multi-colored cow named Fu Niu LeLe.



Starting with the 2010 Vancouver Games, the Olympic and Paralympic mascots have been presented together as a (somewhat) matching pair. Also starting in 2010, the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) also started holding Winter and Summer Games for athletes aged 14 to 18, and they too had mascots. The mascots for the first YOG events in Singapore in 2010 were predictably cartoon-cute: Lyo and Merly, "a fire-themed lion and a water-themed female mer-lion."

But the overall prize for Olympic Mascot Strangeness goes to England, for the 2012 Summer Olympics mascots with deformed heads, no nose or mouth, and one-eye-in-a-monitor apiece: Wenlock and Mandeville. The Olympics and Paralympics mascots were combined by now, and Mandeville represented the British birthplace of the Paralympic Games, the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire. He was described in Wikipedia as "A drop of steel, painted blue by the rainbow."

Paralympic and Youth Olympic Mascots: Back to Cutesy, Colorful Animals

Wenlock was named after "the village of Much Wenlock in Shropshire, which hosted a precursor to the modern Olympic Games in the 19th Century." It too was described as "drops of steel with a camera for an eye," to represent the UK's start of the Industrial Revolution.

However noble their history, Wenlock and Mandeville were described as everything from "creepy" to "inexplicable one-eyed monsters." But the kids still liked these cartoony mascot-creatures, with the BBC reporting 40 minute lines of kids waiting to get into Mascot House to have their pictures taken with [Mandeville and Wenlock](#).

No one seems sure how or why the Industrial Revolution ended up represented in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and those one-eye faces and "steel-drop" bodies looked more like a poster for Alien Species Goes Slumming 101. I mean, this was London (England) after all. Land of royalty, knighthood and Shakespeare. Couldn't they have come up with something snazzier than interchangeable, dripping-metal mascots with TV-set faces and glinting-mono-eyes?

(Most of these jokes and anecdotes can be found at multiple Internet sites. But special thanks to [Wikipedia.com](#), [Jest.com](#) and [SBnation.com](#).)

Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. Besides short stories published in various magazines, she also has some new e-books available on Amazon Kindle: [Hunting Monster Aliens](#) 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.

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 and the Internet over the last year, then [check it out](#).

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!



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Mailto Protocol in Command Line," "E-Mail Attachments," "E-mail Programs," "Soviet Propaganda Posters"

Mailto Protocol in Command Line

[Regarding the September 13 [How to Automate Your New E-mail Messages column](#):]

Jack said "The mailto protocol is a method for initiating a new e-mail using the default e-mail client from a command line (or AutoHotkey script)." But on the [Microsoft Web page](#), the examples tell you to use an IE address bar, not the command line. When I copied the example given on the Microsoft page I found it does work in an address bar but not in a command window. If I type "mailto /?" into a command window, it says that there is no such command.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego

Saying command line is not the same as saying Command Prompt, which is the DOS-like window which can be opened in Windows for running programs and commands. The Command Prompt requires an e-mail program to be initiated, however you can use the Run dialog with Mailto. The following works with Run (Win+R):

`mailto:johndoe@domain.com?subject=Hello%20World%21&body=How%20are%20you%2C%20John%3F`

The following is from one of the [Microsoft Support pages](#):

"Uses of the Command line String

This command line string may be used in the following implementations:

- *In the Open box of Run command line.*
- *In Properties of your desktop shortcut*
- *In the Address Bar of Internet Explorer 4.0.*
- *In the Subject line of an Outlook e-mail message.*
- *In the body of an Outlook or Outlook Express e-mail message.*
- *In the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) code of a Web page."*

I would also add the Run command in AutoHotkey.

-Jack, ComputerEdge

E-Mail Attachments

[Regarding the September 20 [Digital Dave column](#).:]

I sometimes get an attachment I cannot open so I save it to "desktop" and then right-click on it and select "open with." Then I select the program to open the message. It may take a couple of tries until I select the right one. Many times this happens with a PowerPoint or Adobe attachment.

You have helped me so many times in the past that I thought it only right to share something I solved. Many thanks.

-CAS, El Cajon, CA

E-mail Programs...

[Regarding the September 13 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#).:]

Just want to caution anyone considering setting up an e-mail account using Outlook (formerly Hotmail). Since Hotmail was taken over by Outlook I have been getting messages telling me the program has been updated and I must close my browser and re-boot—usually when I'm in the middle of a long e-mail and also filling out a form of one kind or another on a different site. What an annoying pain in the ashcan! This never happened with good old Hotmail. Now, Outlook, is acting just like its daddy: Microsoft; and being a really annoyingly "helpful" program.

-Joe Piluso, San Diego

Soviet Propaganda Posters

[Regarding the September 20 [Wally Wang's Apple Farm column](#).:]

I don't see what was so "silly" about the propaganda posters regarding an American nuclear attack. During the Cold War, such an attack was a very distinct possibility and on people's minds no matter what side of the hemisphere they resided in; just look at the the Cuban Missile Crisis of October '62: a very tense and a very real situation.

How effective these steps showing how to protect oneself from a nuclear attack would be

proportionately successful or unsuccessful depending on how close one would be to the epicenter. Just ask any Hiroshima or Nagasaki survivors that just happened to be far enough away from the epicenter and just happened to be behind a wall, building, or on lower ground.

What's to keep a rogue nation or group from detonating these things in our own future? Possible? Yes! When the Soviet Union broke up, quite a few nukes went "missing."

-Andrew Kliss, San Marcos, CA.

What's silly is that nuclear war solves nothing but creates massive misery and suffering for millions over disputes between government officials. Surviving a nuclear attack by hiding behind a wall is just one step, but what will the government do for people after they survived the initial blast? The United States even had plans for forwarding mail to people after a nuclear attack so the whole idea that nuclear war can be a valid option, let alone "survivable" is blatantly silly. Anyone who thinks slaughtering tens of thousands of innocent people is a solution to anything is not only silly, but downright dangerous. Unfortunately, thinking logically often escapes far too many people, especially government officials or terrorists who eventually become government officials.

-Wally Wang*#I#

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ComputerEdge Magazine, P.O. Box 83086, San Diego, CA 92138. (858) 484-1998

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