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Thoughts On 2014

December 27, 2013

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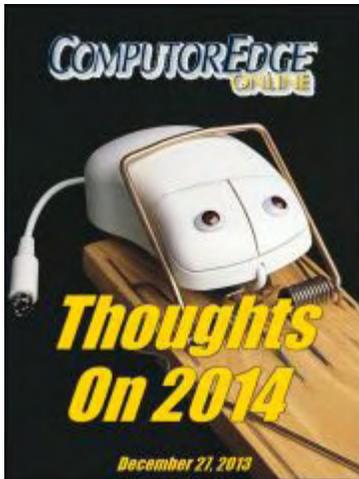
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Thoughts On 2014

Jack muses about the word "phablet", intimate smartphones, impersonal tablet computers, and keeping your brain alive.

Magazine Summary

[List of ComputerEdge Sponsors](#)

[Digital Dave](#)

by Digital Dave

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

Eliminate Dual Booting Windows; Outlook E-mail Stops Working; Windows 7 Slowdown.

[Miscellaneous Thoughts about 2014](#)

by Jack Dunning

Fed Up with Technology? How Many Tablets? Staving Off Mental Decline with AutoHotkey?

Jack reflects on the Joy of Missing Out, a tablet in every room, and making mental resolutions.

[Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part V](#)

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Adding Menus to the RecipeTree Script for Inserting and Deleting Recipes and Ingredients

While there is always more that can be done, including the features for adding and deleting recipes and ingredients finally makes the app fully functional.

[Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#)

by Wally Wang

Facing Reality

Facing Reality; Amateur Hour is Nearly Over; The Mac Pro; China Mobile Deal Official; The Future of the

Mobile Computing; The Future of Books; App Nap.

Beyond Personal Computing

by Marilyn K. Martin

Firepower in Photos, Movies and Games

Amusing anecdotes about gun firepower.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Windows 8 Fails," "Quick Launch Buttons for Joel," "Windows 8 Crippled If You Don't Have MS Login"

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Digital Dave

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

Eliminate Dual Booting Windows; Outlook E-mail Stops Working; Windows 7 Slowdown.

Eliminate Dual Booting Windows

Dear Digital Dave,

I'm running a trial copy of Windows 8, dual booted with Windows 7. The trial copy is about to expire, and Surprise! I decided to stay with Windows 7. I can remove the Win 8 partition, but what do I need to do to remove the dual boot?

Don Bishop

Golden, Colorado

Dear Don,

In the Boot tab of the System Configuration window (to open type "system" into the Windows 7 Start menu search field and select "System Configuration") select the Windows 8 boot option. See Figure 1. Be sure that Windows 7 is set to Default OS. Once Windows 8 is selected, click Delete.

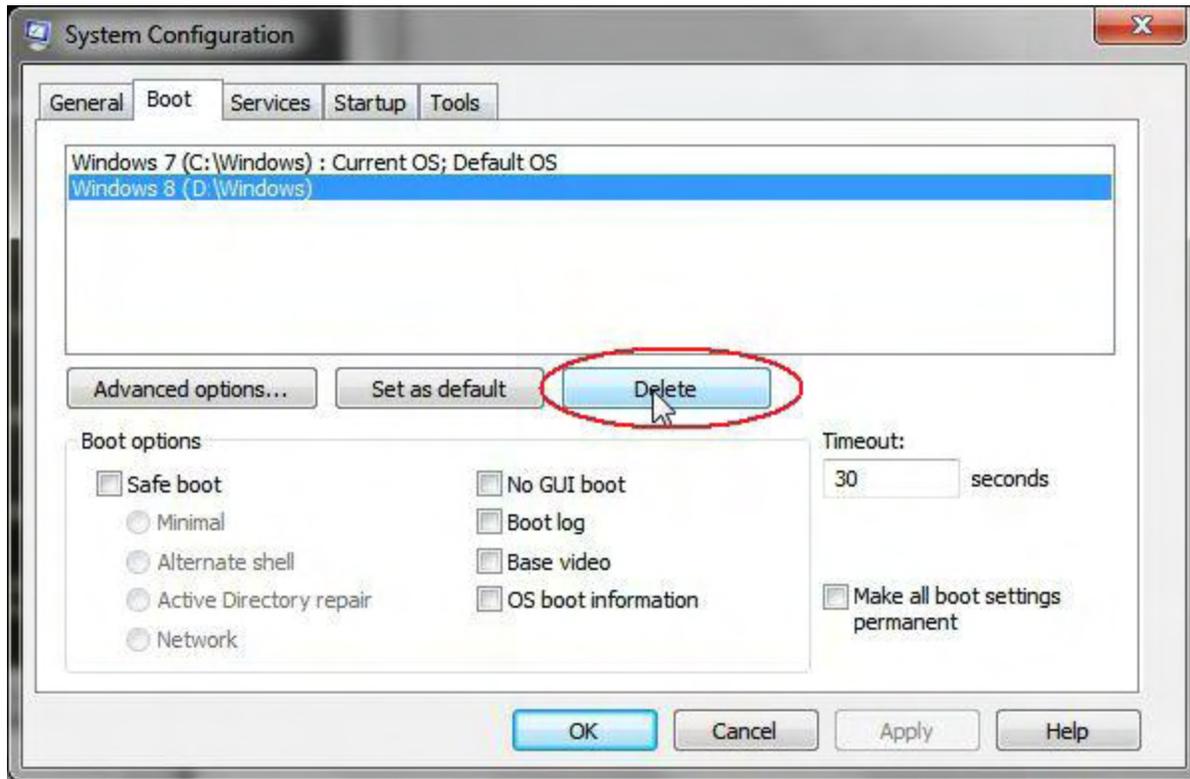


Figure 1. The Boot tab in System Configuration.

It should be that simple.

Digital Dave

Outlook E-mail Stops Working

Dear Digital Dave,

When going through the unread messages the program stops working. Click on the next message and nothing happens. The only way I have found to resume reading new mail is to close Outlook and reopen it. This happens often. I'm using Outlook with Windows 7 on a desktop with DSL Internet access. Any ideas?

*Larry Amsler
Centennial*

Dear Larry,

While I have noted that occasionally a program will appear to stop working when another process is hogging the CPU, I don't necessarily think that this is your problem. In those cases if you wait long enough, the program will eventually start responding again, but it's a long wait. Sometimes the wait can be minutes. If it happens regularly, then you need to be patient to

ensure that the program has actually crashed and not just gotten bogged down.

If it is actually crashing, then it's possible that Outlook has become corrupted. Depending upon which version you have there are ways to repair it.

In Outlook 2007, there should be an Office Diagnostics option in the Help menu. For Outlook 2010, enter Windows Programs and Features, select Office 2010 and Change, then Repair. If none of this helps then you may need to re-install Outlook.

I don't use Outlook so there may be another reader who has experienced the problem and will offer some more ideas.

Digital Dave

Windows 7 Slowdown

Dear Digital Dave,

I use Windows 7 Home Premium on my Lenovo T400 laptop. Something has slowed the way my Windows 7 loads and shuts down. On startup I get a message "preparing your desktop" and "Local session manager" that I don't recall seeing before. On shutdown I see "User Profile" before "stopping services" appears. Then at least 60 seconds or more elapse until power off. Could my Windows 7 somehow changed into a "group" or other new mode?

Mike

San Diego, CA

Dear Mike,

It does sound like Windows is trying to setup again as if it were running for the first time after a new installation. That initial load is supposed to be the only time that you would see "preparing your desktop." It is possible that there is a problem with your user profile. You might try creating an alternate user profile and see if the issue continues after that.

If you recently made other changes to the system, then you might try "Restoring your computer to an earlier time." (Type "restore" into the "Search programs and files" field in the Start Menu.)

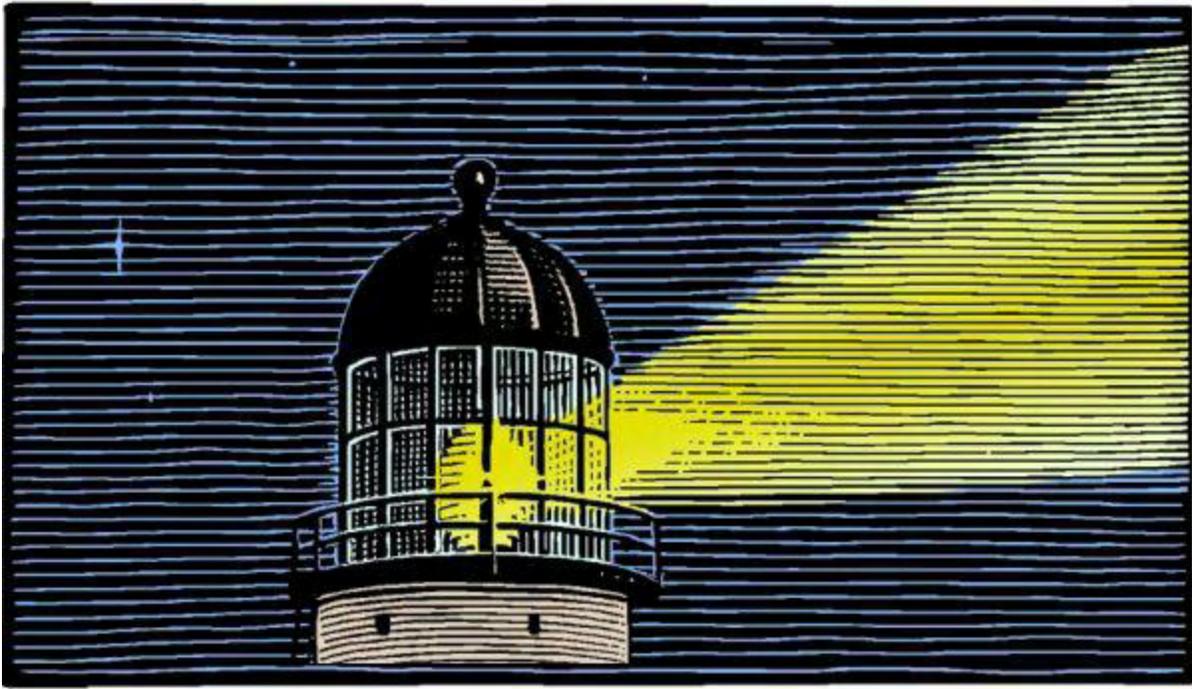
It could be a corruption of Windows files. Something else to try is opening the Command Prompt (as administrator) and running:

```
sfc /scannow
```

This will check and repair the system files.

Worst case, you may need to re-install Windows.

Digital Dave



Miscellaneous Thoughts about 2014

“Fed Up with Technology? How Many Tablets? Staving Off Mental Decline with AutoHotkey?” by Jack Dunning

Jack reflects on the Joy of Missing Out, a tablet in every room, and making mental resolutions.

It's fun to take a quick look into the future and what 2014 might bring—just for amusement, if nothing else. I'm notoriously bad at predicting the future, so I'll confine myself to a couple of observations and one resolution to keep my brain-pan active. I scanned the Web to see what others are predicting for technology in 2014, but much of it is so esoteric that I couldn't make heads or tails of it. Here are a few items that jumped out at me.

The Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)

As opposed to the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), next year will be consumed with the [Joy of Missing Out](#) (JOMO) when it comes to high tech. There is just too much of a "good thing."

People are not looking to unleash technology. While the FAA considers dropping the ban on using cell phones on planes, the airlines may be planning to keep the ban in place based upon consumer demands. People on cell phones are oblivious to the world and TALK TOO LOUD! (Sorry, was I shouting?) Who wants someone on a cell phone squished into the seat next to them?

Facebook has become littered. Not only with plethora of Pinterest postings of pizzas, pastries, puppies and propaganda, but also the boring things that people actually do. Wading through all of the minutia is like deleting Spam from your Inbox. Users are dropping out—especially the young who are tired of their parents watching them.

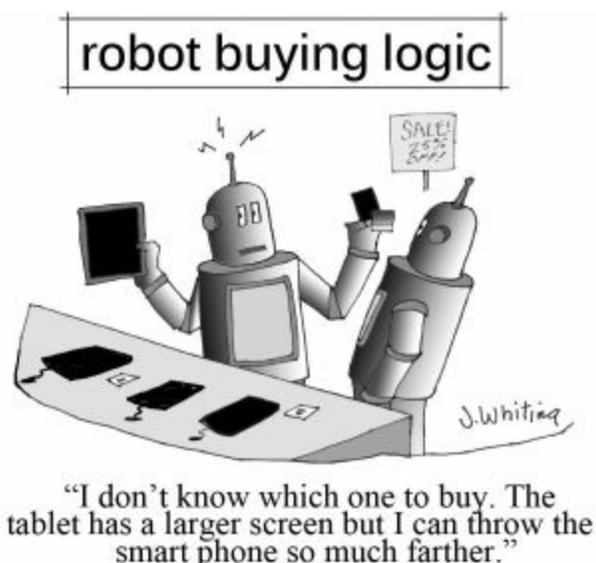
There will be a general revolt (or should I say revulsion?) to technology in 2014. The cool people will be saying things like, "I don't have a smartphone." "Can you give me directions to the post office?" "We spent the weekend in a no cell area." or "Look what I did with a pencil!"

Where Did I Put My Phablet?

Likely to be voted "The Most Annoying New Word of 2014" is "phablet." Not quite a tablet computer, but bigger than a smartphone, a phablet fills the market for those who can't use an iPhone (their fingers are too fat), yet they don't want to lug around a full-sized tablet. I don't mind the device. It's the word that bugs me. When someone says, "Your phablet is going off!" it sounds like a minor insult.

How Many Tablets Can You Fit on a Coffee Table?

There are tons of predictions about the continued explosion of tablet computer sales. My prediction is that the growth of the handheld devices will slow significantly. Not because there will be a decreased interest in using tablets, but because there is a limit on how many of these handheld devices you can have lying around the house or office. On a personal level tablets are distinctly different from smartphones.



Smartphones are a particularly intimate product that you must carry with you everywhere. Asking someone if you can use their smartphone is like eating food off their plate in a restaurant. You'd better know that person *very well* before you risk it. Even if you're allowed to use someone's smartphone for a call, the owner must dial the number. That's if he (or she) will let you use it at all. If we see someone in the movies or on television leave their smartphone unattended, we think, "Big mistake!"

Due to their larger size, tablets cannot be as personal as smartphones. They won't fit into pockets. Unless using a backpack or briefcase, it's a hassle to carry one around all day. Without the propinquity (first heard that word on "Dobie Gillis" when I was a kid) of a smartphone, it's impossible for the tablet to develop that

same intimate relationship with its user. It is quite reasonable, even courteous, to allow people to use your tablet computer. The appropriate answer to the question, "Do you mind if I use your iPad to look up how many times one of the Baldwin brothers lost their cool in public?" is almost always, "Certainly! The password is 1234."

Tablets are often left sitting on a bed stand, kitchen counter, coffee table, or other locations convenient to the television. It turns out that the most common usage of tablet computers is for searching the Web to settle arguments about ex-spouses of actors. How many tablet computers do you need? It seems that one per room is more than enough.

Who Needs a Cell Contract for a Tablet Computer?

Another reason tablet sales will slow this year is because, unlike smartphones, you don't need to replace them every two years. Since the cellular companies offer steep discounts on new phones whenever a contract expires, people feel obligated to get the latest version of their phone (which includes the Vulcan Mind-meld app), whether they really need a new one or not. This regular hardware turnover has always been the business model for cell phones—even before smartphones appeared on the market. However, a new tablet rarely comes with a cell plan discount because people don't want the cell plan. Few people actually carry a data plan for their tablet computer ([less than five percent](#)), therefore there's no unbelievable discount offer from a cellular company.

I'm still using an original iPad—which I purchased a few years ago. Even though there is no camera and Apple has dropped support, I see no reason to get another tablet. My house isn't that big. I use it regularly to cheat on crossword puzzles and look up trivia, but I'm not compelled to get a new tablet. If I'm not buying a new tablet, why would anyone else want a new tablet?

A New Year Resolution

I'm a baby boomer. I have six grandchildren with another one on the way. (Having grandchildren is much easier than having children.) At this time of life one becomes concerned about brain function. When you're younger, you don't think much about keeping the intellect stimulated, but as you mature, you realize that you must either "use it or lose it." That's why people start taking more interest in crossword puzzles and other activities that excite connections in the brain. This may also help explain my obsession with AutoHotkey—"Absolutely the best free Windows utility software ever!"

Since I started working with and writing about AutoHotkey over a year and a half ago, I've put together tons of little scripts that do a wide variety of things. It's a lot of fun and it "exercises the little gray cells." Working with AutoHotkey is similar to doing crossword puzzles, but a thousand times better. Not only do I solve puzzles, but I create those puzzles by challenging

myself to come up with yet another way to use the many AutoHotkey tools. There are two major benefits to learning and using AutoHotkey. First is the personal benefit it adds to my daily computing. The second is the exercise it gives to hidden mechanisms inside my skull.

It's difficult for me to calculate how much time I've saved. When I accidentally type "eht" and it instantly turns into "the" I no longer need to go back and correct typo. I regularly use my [QuikLinks](#) pop-up to instantly access programs—especially to load my most important Web pages. I've found that it's easier than using either the Start Menu or Favorites in Windows Explorer. I find that I'm always using [Robert Ryan's instant definitions](#) AutoHotkey app to check the meaning of some of the more ridiculous words I use. I'm not exaggerating when I say that there is no other utility software that someone can put on their Windows computer which will add such great utility and value—and it's so easy to do.

People have been slow to discover AutoHotkey because there is no huge corporation pushing the free software. But as long as there are Windows computers, it will continue to pick up steam. I often get comments such as, "I'm amazed that it took me so long to discover AutoHotkey!" I recommend AutoHotkey not only because writing little useful script is excellent stimulation for the brain, but primarily because it added so much to the computing experience in a flexible and powerful way. I have seen many free Windows utilities for special purposes, but nothing the compares to AutoHotkey.

If you're still in the workforce or just out of school and looking for a job, then AutoHotkey can become your most valuable friend. If you learn AutoHotkey scripting and incorporate in your computer literacy credentials, then you will have a leg up over any of your peers. You'll find that you can perform magic with AutoHotkey on Windows computers, whether in the office or at home. People will notice and value your computer skills. I expect that someday bosses will commonly ask in interviews, "Can you write simple AutoHotkey scripts?"

AutoHotkey is not difficult to learn and there are many [free resources](#) available. Plus, I have written numerous [articles and columns on AutoHotkey](#). (Start at the bottom of the linked list for the earliest beginning articles and work your way up. I have compiled the articles into [e-books](#), but that's mostly for people who like the convenience of working from a tablet.) In the new year, I intend to continue using and writing about AutoHotkey while encouraging others to do the same. I will do this as long as there are Windows computers and people who want to improve themselves.

I'm obsessed with AutoHotkey, but it's not without reason. Once you get started incrementally improving your Windows life, you won't want to stop. And it's so good for you. While going to the gym keeps your body in shape, AutoHotkey exercises your brain.

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:

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

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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?"](#)

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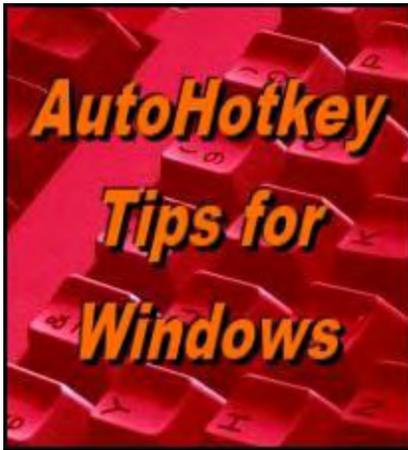
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and [That Does Not Compute!](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.



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

Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part V

“Adding Menus to the RecipeTree Script for Inserting and Deleting Recipes and Ingredients” by Jack Dunning

While there is always more that can be done, including the features for adding and deleting recipes and ingredients finally makes the app fully functional.

If you're new to AutoHotkey, the material in this column may seem a little obtuse. However, there are thousands of simple things that you can do on your Windows computer with AutoHotkey which will make your computing life so much better—and they're easy to do. For a quick look, check out this page: [Introduction to AutoHotkey: A Review and Guide for Beginners](#).

As of last week, the [RecipeTree](#) app can read data from a file and save changes made to the recipes and ingredients to the same file and move the ingredients up and down the list put them in order. The next problem is adding and deleting recipes and ingredients directly in the app without editing the data file. This is done with the same techniques used for adding right-click menus to row items in many of the *ListView* apps discussed in earlier columns.

There are two different menus to be added. The first pops up when a recipe is right-clicked (see Figure 1). There is an option to add a completely new recipe, add an ingredient to the current recipe, and delete the recipe.

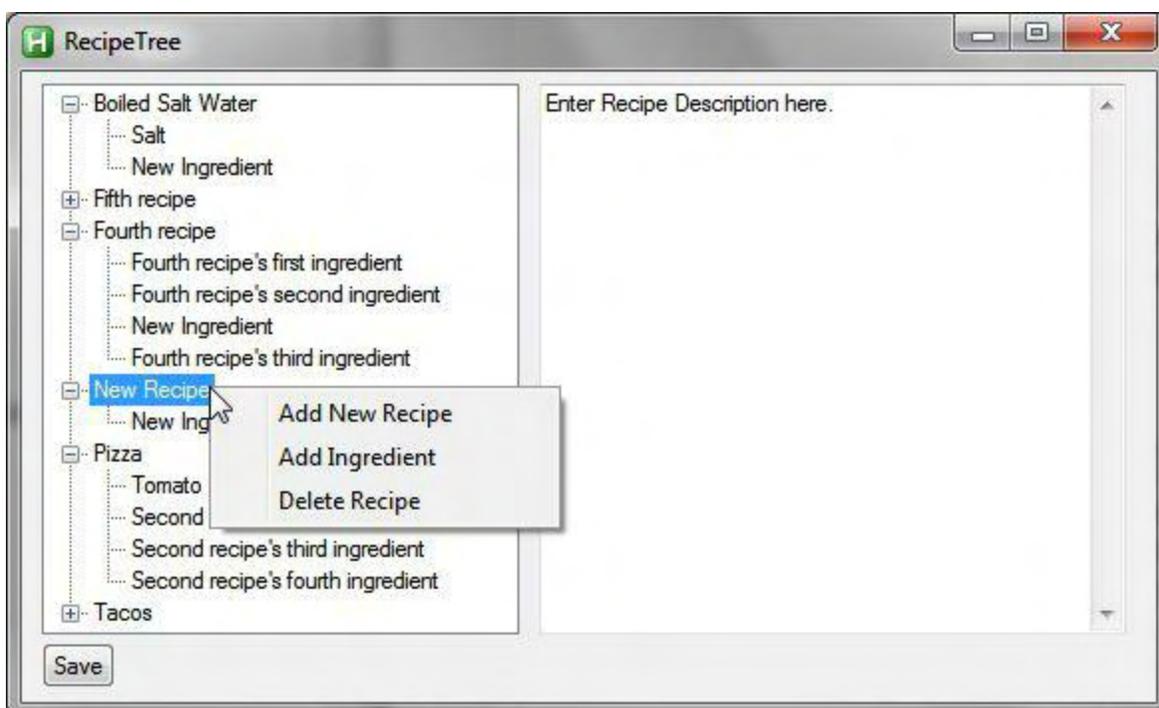


Figure 1. The recipe level right-click menu includes Add New Recipe, Add Ingredient (at end of ingredient list for the selected recipe), and Delete Recipe (deletes entire recipe including all ingredients).

The second right-click menu is for the ingredient branches (see Figure 2). The ingredient right-click menu adds as selectable menu items the Move Up (CTRL+UPARROW) and Move Down (CTRL+DOWNARROW) options which were implemented as hotkey combinations last week. Plus, there is another Add Ingredient option similar to the one found in the recipe right-click menu, although this one inserts the new ingredient immediately after the selected ingredient. When ingredients are added at the recipe level they are inserted at the end of the ingredient list. The Delete Ingredient option works in an identical fashion to the Delete Recipe option found in the recipe level right-click menu.

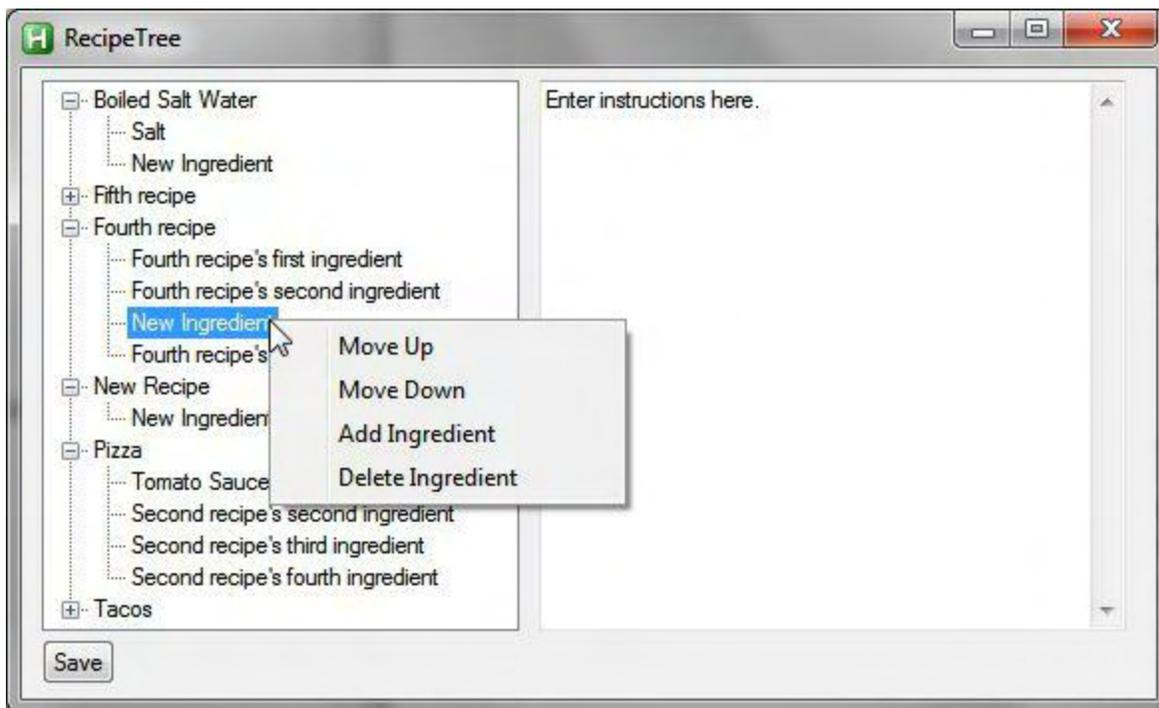


Figure 2. The ingredient level right-click menu includes Move Up and Move Down options, Add Ingredient (inserted after the selected ingredient) and Delete Ingredient.

Adding right-click menus to *TreeView* is a powerful way to include features and utilities in the GUI window. Many options and actions can be hidden in the right-click pop-up menus not requiring extra space and layout for buttons or other controls. The menus are relatively easy to set up.

TreeView Right-click Menus

Right-click menus are added to *TreeView* by including *AltSubmit* in the *TreeView* command line:

```
Gui, Add, TreeView, vMyTreeView gMyTreeView h400 AltSubmit -ReadOnly
```

then implementing the built-in [TreeView GuiContextMenu: label](#) found in the G-Label Notifications (Secondary) section of the online documentation.

When included, the *GuiContextMenu* subroutine is a special label which fires every time there is a right-click or the pressing of the Apps key (SHIFT+F10). The feature is virtually identical to the same feature found in *ListView* and discussed in earlier columns:

```
GuiContextMenu: ; Launched in response to a right-click or press of the Apps key.
If A_GuiControl <> MyTreeView ; Display the menu only for clicks inside the ListView.
    return

; Show the menu at the provided coordinates, A_GuiX and A_GuiY. These should be used
; because they provide correct coordinates even if the user pressed the Apps key
ItemId := A_EventInfo
TV_Modify(ItemID, "Select")
If TV_GetParent(A_EventInfo) = 0
    Menu, RecipeMenu, Show , %A_GuiX%, %A_GuiY%
Else
    Menu, IngredientMenu, Show , %A_GuiX%, %A_GuiY%
Return
```

When there is a right-click of a branch in the *TreeView*, the *ItemID* is captured in the built-in *A_EventInfo* variable. The *ItemID* tells us virtually everything we need to know to execute all of the planned actions.

The first step is to select the right-clicked branch with *TV_Modify(ItemID, "Select")* function. This is just in case the branch wasn't already selected before the right-click.

Since there are two menu options (one for the recipe level and one for the ingredient level), the branch type must be identified based on the *ItemID*. If the branch has no parent (*If TV_GetParent(A_EventInfo) = 0*), then it is a recipe branch. Otherwise (*Else*), it is an ingredient branch. The recipe branch displays the menu called *RecipeMenu*. The ingredient branch displays the menu called *IngredientMenu*.

When the script is first loaded, both of these menus are created with the [Menu command](#) which is placed in the auto-execute section of the *RecipeTree* script:

```
Menu, RecipeMenu, Add, Add New Recipe, AddRecipe
Menu, RecipeMenu, Add, Add Ingredient, AddIngredient
Menu, RecipeMenu, Add, Delete Recipe, DeleteBranch
```

Each of the labels (*AddRecipe*, *AddIngredient*, and *DeleteBranch*) must also be available since the script will look for them when loading—even if there is nothing but the label name and *Return* in the subroutine. If the labels are not found when loading an error will result.

The menu called *IngredientMenu* also includes the two hotkeys defined last week (*^Up* and *^Down*):

```
Menu, IngredientMenu, Add, Move Up, ^Up
Menu, IngredientMenu, Add, Move Down, ^Down
Menu, IngredientMenu, Add, Add Ingredient, AddIngredient
Menu, IngredientMenu, Add, Delete Ingredient, DeleteBranch
```

To call a hotkey subroutine in the script all that's required is the hotkey combination itself be added rather than a label name. Selecting the menu option has the same effect as using the hotkey combination. Note that both *RecipeMenu* and *IngredientMenu* use the same labels (subroutines) for adding ingredients and deleting branches.

Adding a New Recipe and New Ingredients

Adding a new recipe is similar to adding recipes from the saved CSV data file discussed in an earlier column:

```
AddRecipe:
    RecipeID := TV_Add("New Recipe",0,"Sort")
    %RecipeID%text := "Enter Recipe Description here."
    TV_Modify(RecipeID, "Select")
Return
```

The function for adding branches (*TV_Add("New Recipe",0,"Sort")*) is used to insert a new branch called "New Recipe" at the top level (0) in alphabetical order ("Sort"). Next the variable for the Edit field on the right is set up by concatenating (adding) the word "text" onto the *ItemID* (*%RecipeID%text*). This is how the text in the edit field is linked to the tree branch as discussed in previous columns. This must be done every time a new branch is added.

The subroutine for adding ingredients is a little more complicated:

```
AddIngredient:
    If TV_GetParent(ItemID) = 0
        NewAdd :=TV_Add("New Ingredient", ItemID)
    Else
        NewAdd :=TV_Add("New Ingredient", TV_GetParent(ItemID), ItemID)

    %NewAdd%text := "Enter instructions here."
    TV_Modify(NewAdd, "Select")
Return
```

Depending upon whether the ingredient is being added from the recipe level or ingredient level, a different version of the *TV_Add()* function is required. If it is a recipe branch (*If TV_GetParent(ItemID) = 0*, i.e. no parent), then it is assumed to be a new child of the currently selected recipe (*TV_Add("New Ingredient", ItemID)*). If not (*Else*), the parent recipe level must be identified using the *ItemID* (*TV_GetParent(ItemID)*) with the new ingredient inserted immediately after the current ingredient (*TV_Add("New Ingredient", TV_GetParent(ItemID), ItemID)*). Again the [Edit](#) field variable is created (*%NewAdd%text*).

The *TV_Modify()* function is used to select the newly created branch in both the *AddRecipe* label and the *AddIngredient* label (*TV_Modify(NewAdd, "Select")*).

Deleting Recipes or Ingredients

The code required for deleting either a recipe or ingredient is exactly the same:

```
DeleteBranch:
  MsgBox, 4100, Delete Item?, Delete Item? Click Yes or No?
  IfMsgBox No      ;Don't delete
    Return
  TV_Delete(ItemID)
Return
```

The only code actually required is the *TreeView* function for deleting branches (*TV_Delete(ItemID)*). The [MsgBox command](#) is added as a precaution against accidentally deleting items by select the wrong menu option.

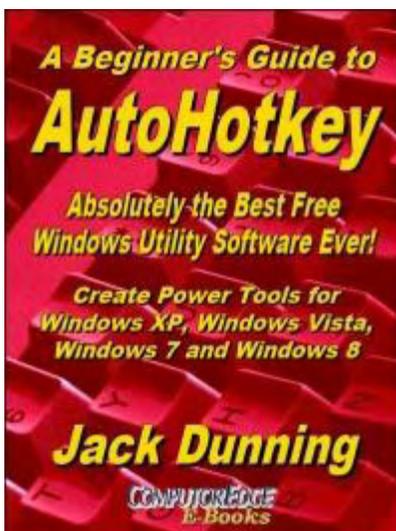
When a recipe is deleted, it also deletes all of the ingredients. To further protect against accidentally deleting an entire recipe (which could represent a great deal of work), the routine could be changed to not allow deletion while any child branches (ingredients) still exist:

```
If TV_GetChild(ItemID) != 0
  Return
```

Then all ingredients would need to be deleted before the recipe could be deleted.

The current AutoHotkey script for RecipeTree (*RecipeTree 1.5.ahk*) can be found in the ZIP file *RecipeTree.zip* found at *ComputerEdge* [AutoHotkey Dropbox download Web site](#).

* * *



The new second edition with more chapters and an index to the AutoHotkey commands found in the book is available in e-book format from Amazon (and other formats—EPUB and PDF— at the ComputerEdgeBooks Web site linked below). 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](#) offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey.

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.

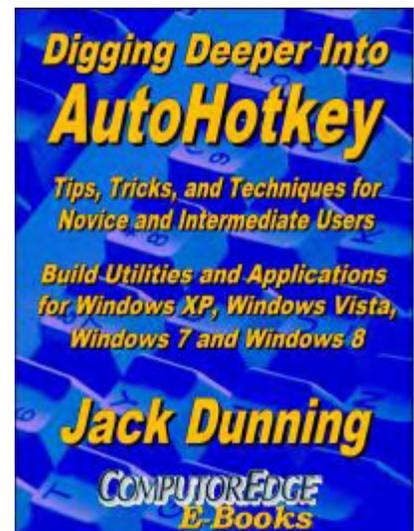
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of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

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* * *

Jack's latest AutoHotkey book which is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputerEdge* 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.



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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:

[*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?"*](#)

Special Free Offer at ComputerEdge E-Books! [*Jack's Favorite Free Windows Programs: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Get Started!*](#)

[*Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8 \(Seventh Edition\)!*](#)

[*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

“Facing Reality” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Facing Reality; Amateur Hour is Nearly Over; The Mac Pro; China Mobile Deal Official; The Future of the Mobile Computing; The Future of Books; App Nap.

InfoWorld's columnist, Galen Gruman, recently wrote [a column](#) titled "Edward Snowden has stripped us of all illusion about our digital world."

Of course, if Snowden's revelations revealed anything new to you about the lack of privacy through unlawful snooping by the government, you probably also still believe that the Tooth Fairy leaves money under your pillow at night and that a giant bunny rabbit brings chocolate eggs to you every Easter.

Did anyone but the most naive ever believe that their government (whichever country they live in) wouldn't abuse their powers? Did anyone really think that corporations don't cooperate with governments to perform morally questionable acts? If this is new to you, then you're either three days old or incredibly ignorant on the vast majority of history freely available to anyone with access to the Internet.

Corporations and governments frequently cooperate to benefit themselves at the expense of others. Reuters reported that a large reason for the success of the Chinese military is due to [technology purchased](#) from European countries, stating that "Most of China's advanced surface warships are powered by German and French-designed diesel engines. Chinese destroyers have French sonar, anti-submarine-warfare helicopters and surface-to-air missiles."

If Germany's Angela Merkel was really shocked that the NSA had tapped her cell phone, she probably has no idea what her own country's agencies are doing to their own citizens. In 2011, the Chaos Computer Club discovered that German officials had infected people's computers [with spyware](#) to snoop on their activities.

In 1993, French officials were accused of spying for [American corporate secrets](#). Way back during World War Two, IBM reportedly sold punch card technology to the Nazis to help them track Jews so they could more efficiently round them up and exterminate them, which is

documented in the book [IBM and the Holocaust](#) along with the [IBM and the Holocaust site](#).

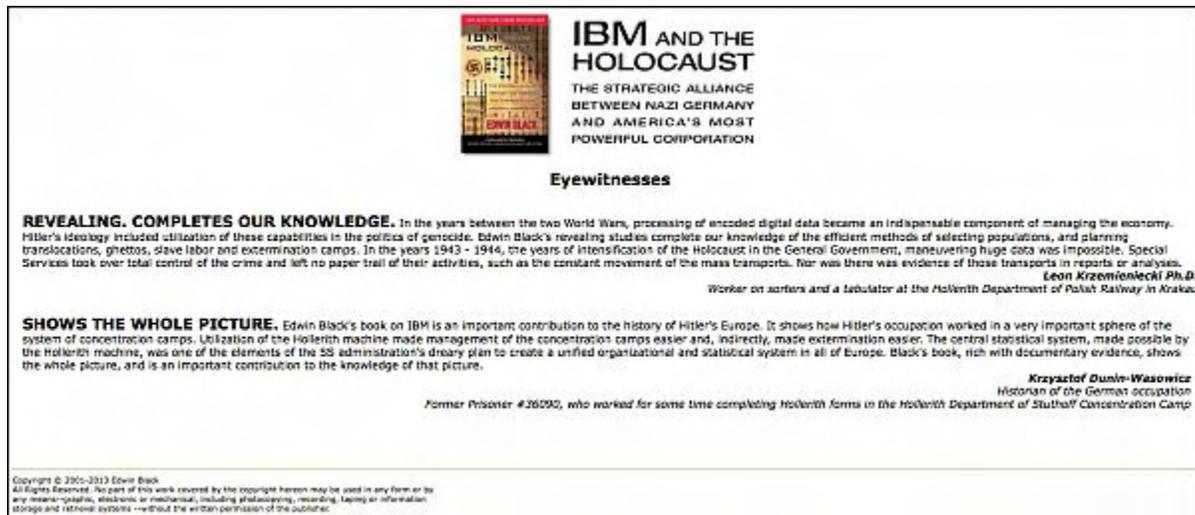


Figure 1. The IBM and the Holocaust site provides evidence that IBM technology helped the Nazis exterminate the Jews.

The latest "revelation" reveals that the NSA may have paid encryption developer, RSA, \$10 million dollars to [deliberately weaken](#) their encryption algorithm. Yet back in 1975, the NSA had been accused of [working with IBM](#) to weaken the Data Encryption Standard (DES) algorithm that became the standard encryption algorithm for decades.

For anyone to believe that Edward Snowden's revelations suddenly stripped away any illusions about digital privacy is more an indication of how ignorant most people can be in understanding how the world really works. If you believe in Santa Claus, you can rightfully claim that learning that Santa Claus doesn't really come down your chimney every Christmas Eve has stripped you of any illusions about how presents really wind up under your Christmas tree every year.

If you actually clung to the illusion that you had privacy online, it's time to wake up. With Target reporting that hackers stole over 40 million credit card numbers, it's easy to see that security relies less on technology and more on the honesty of people. Every time you hand a credit card to a waiter in a restaurant, that person could easily copy your credit card number. The greatest form of security is simply honesty that no amount of technology can ever replace. Unfortunately, honesty remains a rare commodity among too many people and far too many governments. When governments and corporate leaders routinely lie, can they really be shocked that other people will do the same thing to them?

Amateur Hour is Nearly Over

Back in 2011, Research in Motion (before changing their name to Blackberry) boldly announced that with their new Playbook tablet, "Amateur Hour is Over," implying that the iPad was an amateur tablet and the Blackberry Playbook represented a professional tablet.



Figure 2. In 2011, Blackberry declared "Amateur Hour is Over."

Now Blackberry has reported a \$4.4 billion dollar loss and a 56 percent [drop in revenue](#) over the last quarter. Although Blackberry sold 4.3 million BlackBerry phones during that quarter, 3.2 million were models using the obsolete BlackBerry 7 operating system. Blackberry long ago halted sales and further development of the Playbook tablet, which means if you want one, you'll need to buy a used one from eBay or Craigslist. Then again, why would you want one?

Blackberry's demise should come as no surprise except to anyone who still believes that leaders in any market can never fail just because they once had such a huge lead in the first place. As the list of failed companies continues to grow with names like Montgomery Wards, K-Mart, Sears, Blockbuster Video, Borders Books, and Warehouse Records, it should be abundantly clear by now that the world can change and wipe out any company's lead overnight. Yet many people still get caught by surprise by simply refusing to look at any warning signs before it's too late.

When confronted by evidence that disputes their beliefs, many people either refuse to acknowledge its veracity or they deliberately avoid looking at any such evidence so they can pretend it never existed in the first place. In both cases, those are recipes for failure, which is

the strategy that Blackberry followed.

Sadly, Blackberry won't be the only company to follow this path of deliberate deception and enforced ignorance. Just ask how many people still insist that everyone should be using Windows 8 PCs instead of anything else. These are probably the same people who once insisted that everyone should use Vista until finally pretending that they never promoted Vista as superior after all.

The Mac Pro

The minimum cost for the new Mac Pro is \$2,999, which makes it one of the most expensive personal computers on the market. Yet within days after going on sale, the Mac Pro sold out and Apple can't deliver new ones until February.

Select your Mac Pro

NEW	NEW
<p>Quad-Core and Dual GPU</p> <p>3.7GHz Quad-Core Intel Xeon E5 processor 12GB 1866MHz DDR3 ECC memory Dual AMD FirePro D300 with 2GB GDDR5 VRAM each 256GB PCIe-based flash storage¹</p> <p>\$2,999.00 Free Shipping 6, 12, or 18 month special financing</p> <p>Select</p> <p>Available to ship: February</p> <p>Available for pickup: Check availability</p>	<p>6-Core and Dual GPU</p> <p>3.5GHz 6-Core Intel Xeon E5 processor 16GB 1866MHz DDR3 ECC memory Dual AMD FirePro D500 with 3GB GDDR5 VRAM each 256GB PCIe-based flash storage¹</p> <p>\$3,999.00 Free Shipping 6, 12, or 18 month special financing</p> <p>Select</p> <p>Available to ship: February</p> <p>Available for pickup: Check availability</p>

Figure 3. The earliest you can receive a Mac Pro is February 2014.

If PC sales are going down, why is one of the most expensive PCs on the market back ordered? Certainly you can get a cheap Windows 8 PC for less than \$400 and then you can claim that you can do everything on a \$400 Windows 8 PC that a \$2,999 Mac Pro can do.

Of course, most Windows PCs aren't assembled in Austin, Texas by a [robotic assembly line](#) like the Mac Pro. Perhaps the reason people are buying Mac Pros and not Windows 8 PCs is because they see how a Mac Pro can make their work easier and faster as described by a [Final Cut Pro enthusiast site](#). If people are happy paying for a \$2,999 (or more) Mac Pro but

wouldn't be equally happy paying less for a \$400 Windows 8 PC, maybe there's more to buying products than just looking at the price tags.

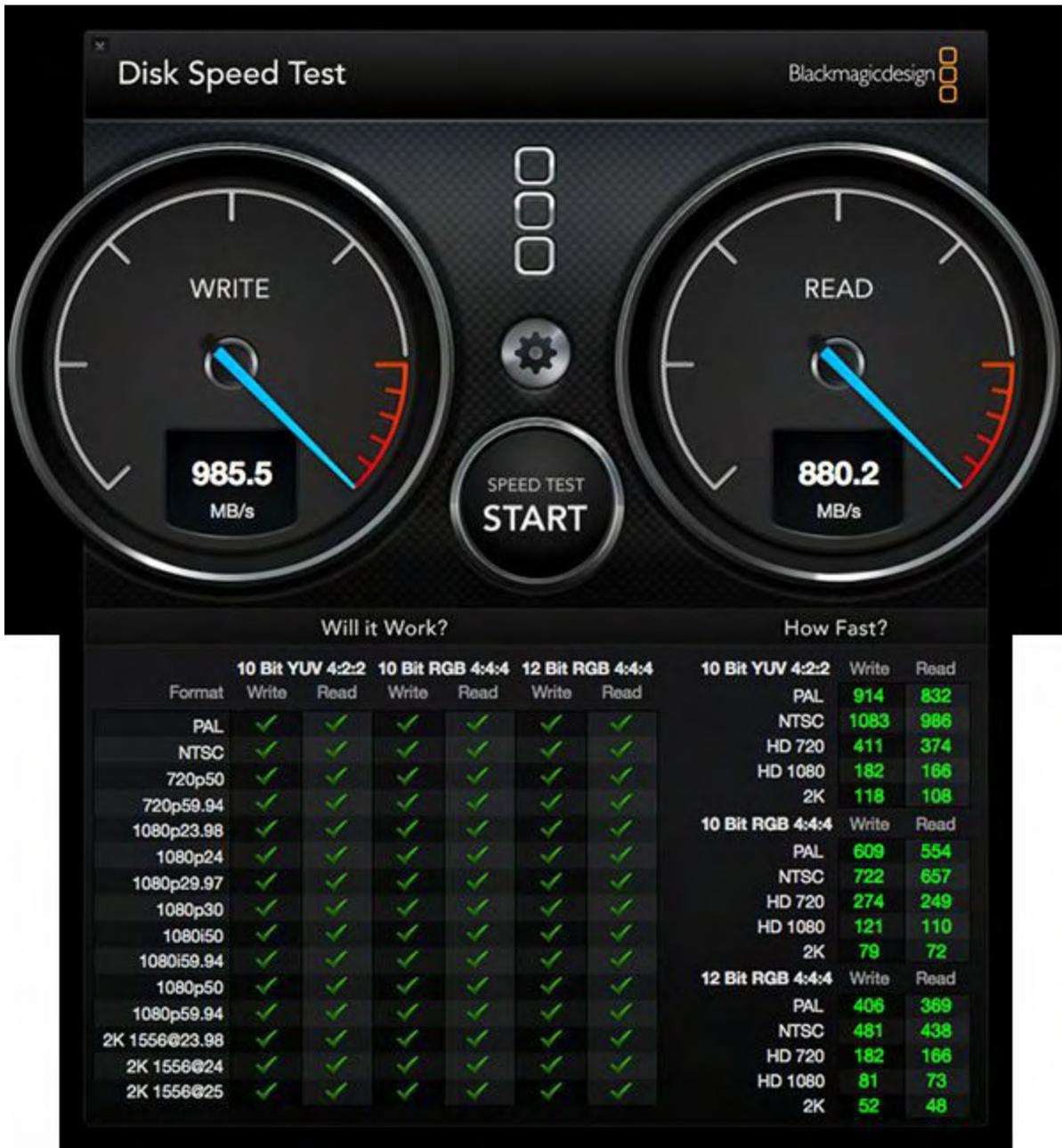


Figure 4. A disk speed test for the Mac Pro.

China Mobile Deal Official

Apple recently signed a deal with China Mobile, China's largest carrier with 760 million customers. To give you an idea how many potential iPhone customers that can be, the United States only has a total population of approximately 320 million.

Given the popularity of the iPhone and its touchscreen that allows drawing Chinese characters that's impossible to do on a physical keyboard, Apple could just reach a fraction of China Mobile's customers and still sell millions of iPhones. In the meantime, struggling Blackberry, still wedded to their physical keyboards, can't easily allow input of Chinese characters, which highlights the huge drawback of physical keyboards. (Anyone at Microsoft taking note on their dependence on physical keyboards for their Surface tablets?)

With Apple making deals with China Mobile (China's largest carrier) and DoCoMo (Japan's largest carrier), expect Apple to sell millions more iPhones to two of the largest markets in Asia. If the iPhone can grab more customers, that will fuel developer interest, which means developers need to buy a Macintosh. If developers are making iPhone apps, they might as well turn their iPhone apps into iPad apps as well, which will create more reasons for Chinese and Japanese customers to get an iPad. That means you can expect sales of iPhones to boost sales of the Macintosh and iPad, which brings most customers to iTunes and Apple's App Store.

In comparison, if someone wants to develop for Android, it doesn't matter if they get a Windows PC or a Macintosh since companies that profit from Android (Samsung, Google, HTC, etc.) won't profit no matter which computer you buy. If someone buys an Android phone from Samsung, they might buy an Android tablet from LG or Google, so Samsung won't profit from your loyalty to Android.

Can you see how Apple products support each other and funnel happy customers from one product to other Apple products, while rival products don't necessarily lead happy customers to other products from that same company? That means as long as people keep buying Apple products, they'll be more likely to keep giving their money to Apple. If people buy a Windows or Android product, they're less likely to buy a PC, smartphone, and tablet, let alone music, e-books, and apps, from the same company.

For anyone who still thinks the iPhone didn't change the smartphone market for good, they can use their Blackberry, Windows Mobile, or Nokia phone running the Symbian operating system and pretend that they're on the forefront of smartphone technology.

The Future of the Mobile Computing

Apple recently patented the idea of a [completely wireless computer](#) that uses a projector instead of a monitor. You leave a full size keyboard and mouse (or trackpad) on a desk while you take your mobile computer (such as an iPhone) in your pocket. When you get to your desk, your mobile computer projects an image on the wall, eliminating the need for a monitor. With a full size keyboard and a mouse, you can use your mobile device as a full-fledged computer.

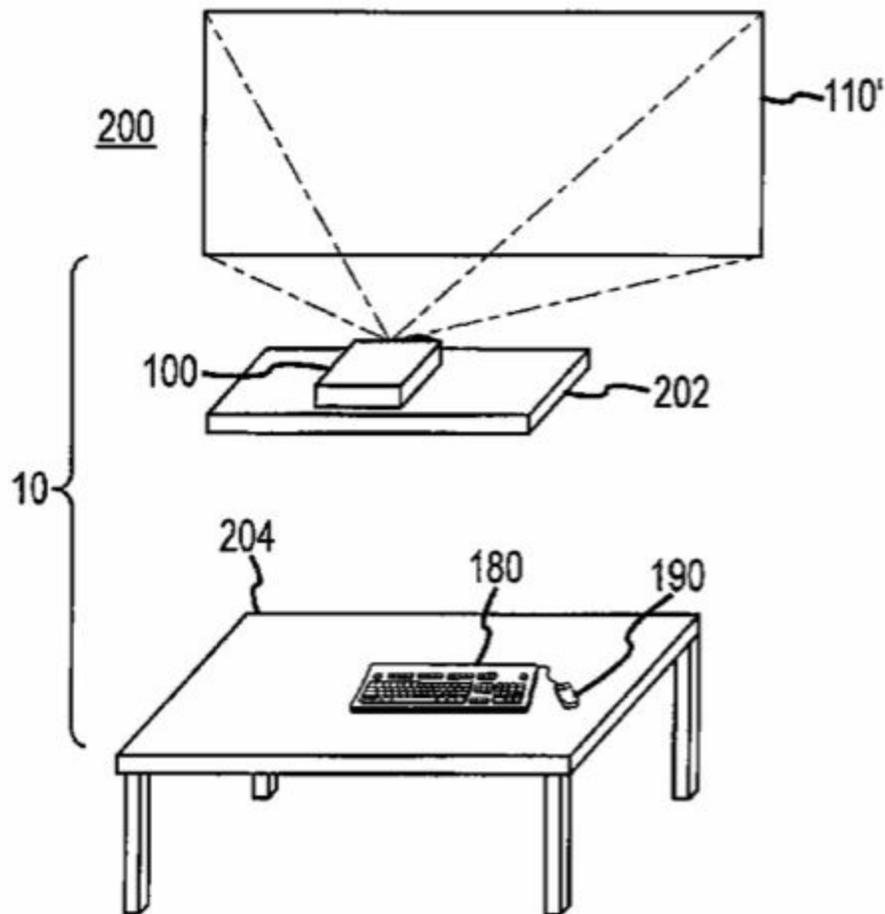


Figure 5. Apple's patented desk-free computer.

When you're done, grab the mobile device and use it on the move while leaving your keyboard and mouse behind. Now you basically have a mobile computer optimized for mobile uses, but capable of being used as a desktop computer when you're actually sitting at a desk.

In the future, you can expect your mobile computer (iPhone) to contain all the programs you typically use (such as iWork that includes Pages, Keynote, and Numbers) so you're always using the exact same programs whether at your desk or on the road, using an interface optimized for that purpose. Since you're always carrying your data with you or accessing it from the cloud, you're always using the same data with no hassle of transferring files or converting file formats.

Given a portable computer that can double up as a desktop PC replacement without the disadvantages of a smaller keyboard or tiny screen, you can see that the future will definitely not be buying bulky PCs and separate mobile computers that require syncing data between them all the time.

The idea of buying a single computer that functions perfectly well as a mobile device and a

desktop PC is what Microsoft is aiming for with their Surface tablets. The problem is that the Surface tablet isn't as capable as a mobile device and isn't as powerful as a desktop PC. For a device promised to have no compromises, it compromises as both a tablet and a PC, but you can already see the future.

Tomorrow's computers will be optimized for both mobile and desktop use. The first company that comes out with such a device will be the leader, and chances are good it's not going to be the current incarnation of Microsoft's Surface tablets.

The Future of Books

While many people love the feel of a physical book, many people probably also loved their horses that they believed could never be replaced by a car. At Archbishop Stepinac High School in White Plains, New York, students no longer have to lug around 30 pounds of heavy and bulky textbooks. Instead of spending \$600 for books that would rapidly go out of date, they now spend \$150 to rely on [digital textbooks](#) instead.

"We went to digital because it makes for better learning," says Frank Portanova, vice principal at Stepinac. The online history books include videos on subjects ranging from Woodrow Wilson to Malcolm X. The science books show scientific processes in motion. The English books grade an essay and offer a student a worksheet on the proper use of commas if it's needed. Students can highlight passages or leave notes in the margins, without ruining the book for anyone else.

Because the digital textbooks can be accessed by all students no matter what their level, sophomores can review their old freshmen textbooks to review past information. Freshman Michael Bilotta takes advantage of the feature that allows the digital books to read themselves out loud. "So when you're tired, on the bus or something, you can just put earphones on and hear the lesson."

Given the cost savings, widespread accessibility, and interactivity of digital textbooks, does anyone still value the feel and smell of a physical book over these massive advantages of digital textbooks?

When creating e-books, start thinking beyond the static limitations of text and pictures. Start looking for ways you can create interactive e-books that include audio, video, animation, and adaptability to the reader. The more you can think beyond the physical limitations of a printed book, the more versatile your e-books will be.

Remember in the old days, movies were often nothing more than stage plays that were filmed. Only when movie studios realized that film gave them greater freedom than the limitations of a physical stage did movies truly start to emerge as an art form in their own right. Today, most people create e-books that could easily be printed books. Tomorrow, that won't be acceptable

any more than filming a stage play will be acceptable to people who want to watch a movie. The future isn't just e-books, but interactive e-books, and the world of digital textbooks is just the beginning.

* * *

If you're using OS X Mavericks, there's a feature called App Nap, which powers down programs running in the background to conserve power. If you don't want a particular program to power down, you can turn off its App Nap capability.

Open the Finder window and right-click on the name of the program you want to modify. When a pop-up menu appears, choose Get Info. When an Info window appears, select the Prevent App Nap check box.

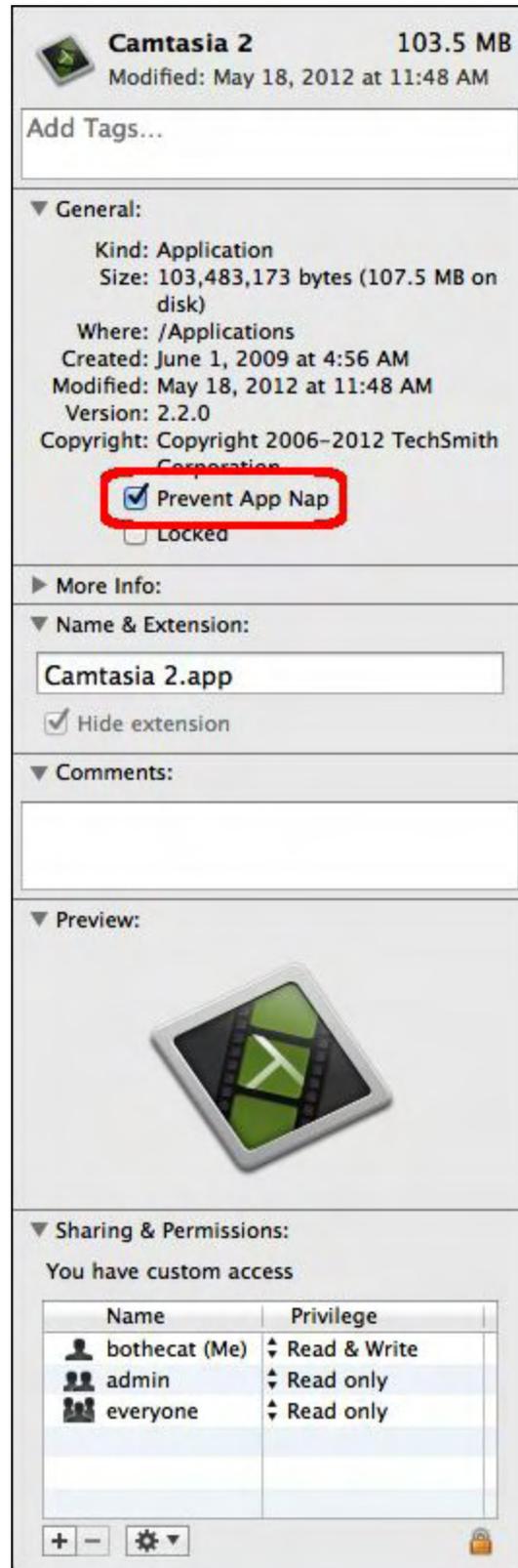


Figure 6. Turning off App Nap.

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

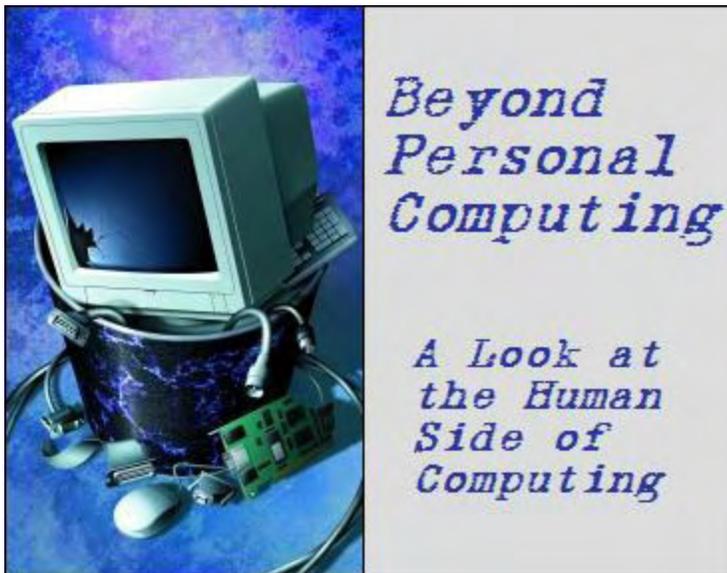
[The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou](#)

[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](#)," giving advice to authors who want to self-publish e-books at his site "[The Electronic Author](#)," 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 or you can follow him on Twitter [@wallacewang_com](#).



Beyond Personal Computing

“Firepower in Photos, Movies and Games” by Marilyn K. Martin

Amusing anecdotes about gun firepower.

Firepower: (fahyuh r-pou-er) Originated in 1910-15 (fire + power) as the capability, measurement or potential of what a military force or weapons system can deliver to a target. Usually refers to a weaponry system with both a speedy, blasting-outward launch—and an on-target delivery of bullets, rockets, grenades, paint-balls, etc.

Without Firepower, the fastest action you'd have in most movies would be the blur of nunchucks—instead of bullets flying. The gun control debate would instead be over the "lethality of edged weapons." There'd be no First Person Shooter video games, and we'd still be stuck in the carnival world of shooting air-blasts at rotating rubber ducks. And our military forces, according to MilitaryHumor.net, might be Patrolling more like this:



But thanks to all manner of explosive delivery systems and their projectiles, Firepower today allows for some distance between military combatants wielding metal swords. And action-adventure movies can have deafening Firepower while racking up fake-blood body counts. And FPS video games can switch among weapons to mow down anything from invading aliens to zombie hoards.

And Lo, in the Beginning, the Power and the Fire was Doth a Powder

According to Wikipedia, black powder was the first chemical explosive discovered, comprised of sulfur, charcoal and potassium nitrate. Most historians agree it was first invented in 9th century China, which led first to the invention of fireworks and then gunpowder weapons. (A trend alive and well today, where entertainment almost always wins out over actual combat.) Later on, gunpowder was also used as everything from a spice substitute for salt, to sterilizing when alcohol wasn't available, to ink-less "traumatic" tattoos.

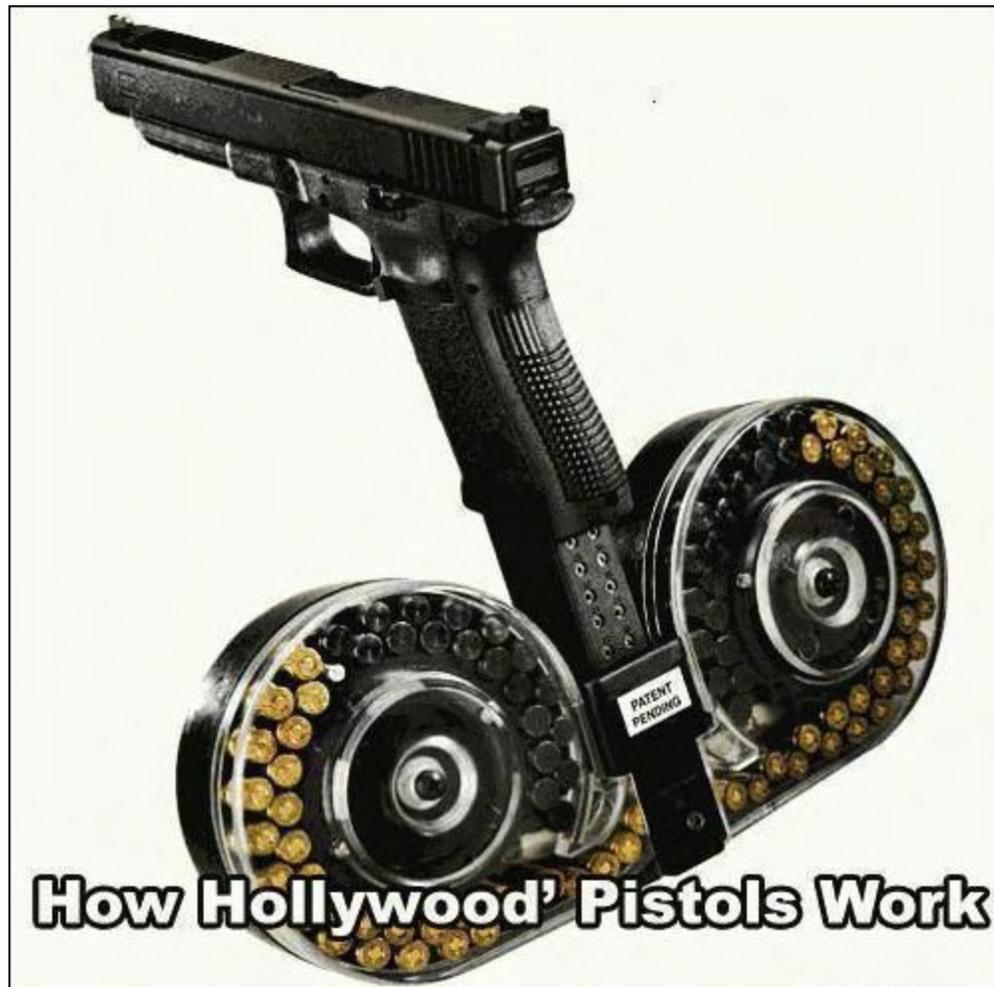
Gunpowder burns low-and-slow at subsonic speeds, compared to the detonation of high explosives at supersonic speeds. So gunpowder makes a good propellant, but doesn't have the energy to shatter or blast a target like nitro-explosives do. Today's weaponry also uses "smokeless powders", since smoke can give away the shooter's location and obscure their ability to sight on the next target.

Have you ever seen a battle reenactment using gun powder? The guns back then weren't that accurate to begin with, but with all the smoke and haze, it's a wonder both sides didn't call numerous Timeouts "for the smoke to clear in order to find a target."



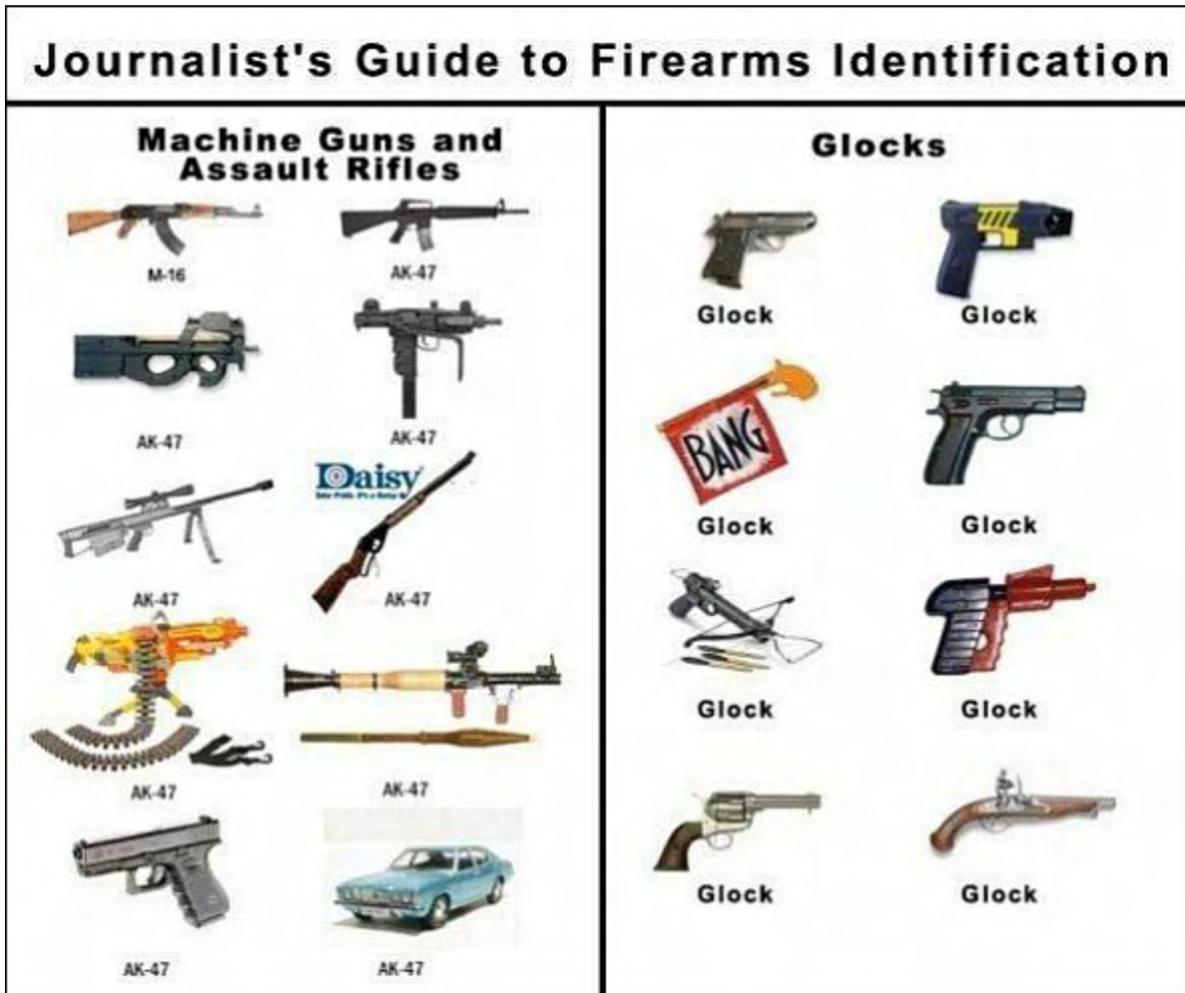
Firepower According to Hollywood Movies

Never mind that a barrage of bullets in a movie gunfight never seems to even nick the Hero or Villain. Or that bullets supposedly impacting buildings and furniture are actually small embedded charges that blow outward. No, the main complaint you hear from most action/adventure movie aficionados, is that guns fired in movies never seem to run out of bullets.



Identifying Firearms

OK, not everyone in the public has been in the military or participated in hunting season. So, to some journalists, every gun is either an AK-47 or a Glock.

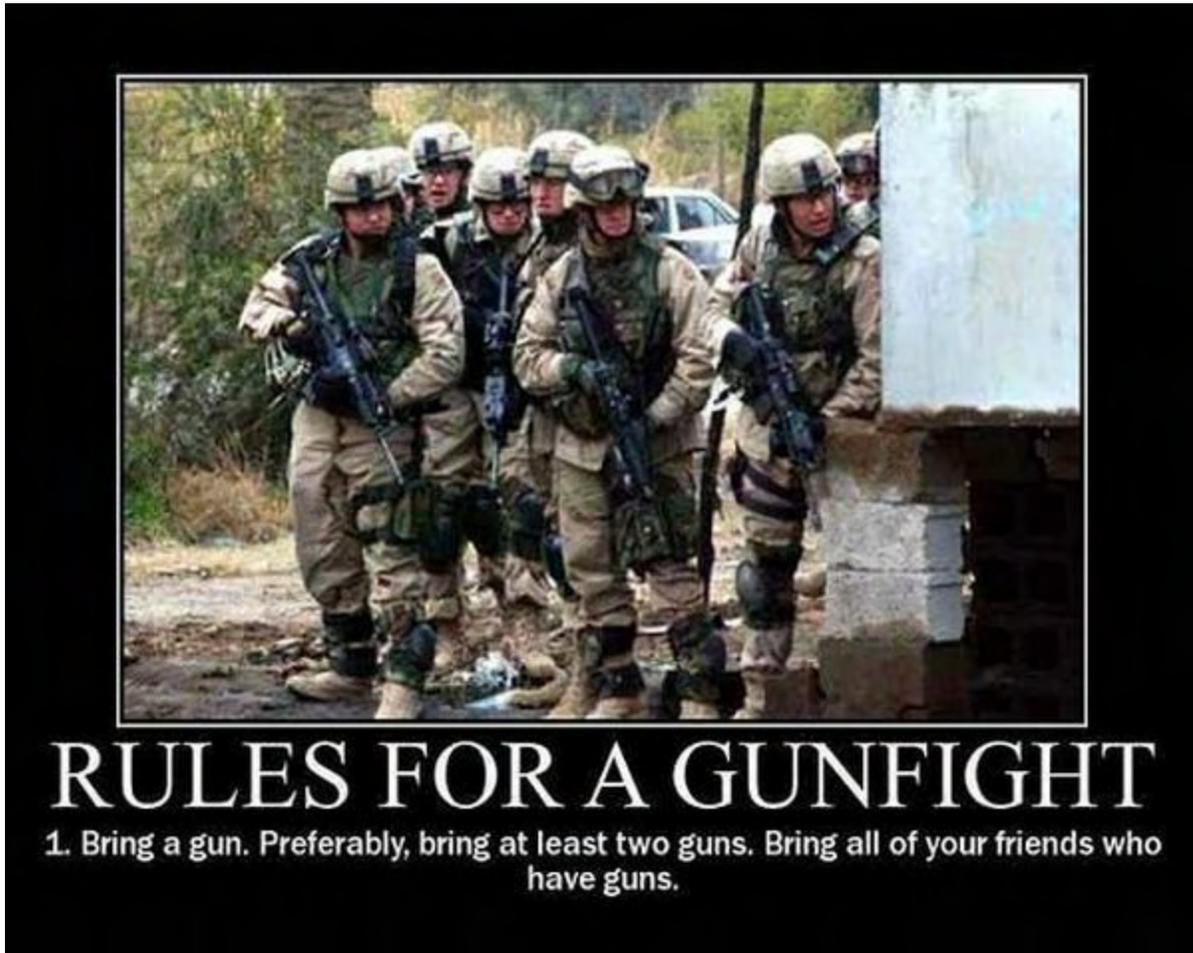


Then again, if you have a 3D printer hooked up to your trusty Design-A-Weapon computer program, you can lump all portable weapons together for a Sure FirePower Solution.



Basic Rules for a Gunfight

- 1) Bring a gun.
- 2) Preferably, bring at least 2 guns.
- 3) Bring all your friends who have guns.



Armed Animals (When You Need More Firing-fingers)

Let's say you are somewhere dangerous, in a bullet-lethality sense, and you are all by your lonesome with a pile of guns and ammo. Need some help? Never discount the willingness of random, nearby animals to help you out.



Multiple smaller animals in an "armed swarm" may seem like a good idea. But tiny toe/ankle shots may have little impact unless the enemy is barefoot.



Here in the US, "signage" is very important. If someone wanders onto your property and gets shot by, say, your German Shepherd with a machine gun, pointing to a sign you posted starting out "Beware Of ..." is really all you need for your standard "You were warned!" defense to have a lawsuit dismissed.



When Pentagon Budget Cuts and Recruiting Go Wrong...

The main thing you need to impress on military recruits being trained with weaponry is that all-important Main Lesson: Know which end the Firepower comes out of, and never point that end at your face.



The other idea to impress on soldiers and sailors is that necessity may be the mother of invention, but not all "innovative firing solutions" will successfully deliver the projectile to the enemy...



The Survivalist and Zombie-fighter Approach to "Firepower"

According to a few Survivalist forums I visited, Rugers, Marlins, Springfields and Winchesters are popular guns to have, as are foreign-made AKs, to stash in your doomsday bunker. But things get complicated when you get to weapons against zombies. Guns for Firepower are way down the recommendation list. Instead blunt, flexible, edged, throwing, cord, slings and melee weapons are recommended first, according to Zombiehub.com.

Mainly since guns have the same problem as chainsaws: limited supplies of bullets and gas which will undoubtedly run out before the unlimited supply of hungry undead who want your brains. But here's a helpful hint for all survivalists/apocalyptic: multiple loaded guns should be hidden where flesh-eating zombies will never look.



Firepower in Games

So what are the favorite Firepower solutions in the always-popular First Person Shooter (FPS) video games? Considering that you are dealing with "virtual weapons" limited only by the game designer's imagination, FPSGuru.com ran down the list of his favorite weapons. His #1 choice was a crowbar, chosen as a "melee weapon" that can also crack open doors, crates and heads. But sticking with the Firepower theme, his #2 choice was the always-popular rocket launcher. Although it's not the best for close-range fighting, not much can rival it "for stopping power from clear across the map."

His #3 choice was a shotgun, especially since that "cha-chunk" sound effect can strike fear in the heart of many an acid-drooling monster that has been around armed-mankind for any length of time. And his #4 was a sniper rifle, for the virtual joy of shooting at your enemies from a hiding place, or skillfully zeroing in on a monster's vulnerable spot—one giant eye, testicles under his chin—for that virtual shot that makes for legends in the FPS world. (The rest of the weapons' list was a little too "virtual"—Lightsaber, Starter Pistol, Remote Mine, Voodoo Doll and...a Snark?)

Then there are paintball games, which are now approaching realistic-combat tactics, judging by the products and videos at AirSoftMegastore.com. Which also brings up a good weaponry point: If the AK rifle-of-your-dreams seem unbelievably cheap, read the fine print: "Airsoft"

means it only fires paint-balls. And then, there's always that lingering question: How would gun-gamers do in real-life situations requiring reality-based Firepower? Perhaps, like this:



At Close Range, Redundancy (And a Motorcycle) Are Your Best Friends

Firepower can also be understood as "the more you have, the greater your effectiveness." Along with that great corollary, "triple firepower equals triple lethality."



And if your uncle owns a soccer stadium, why not convince him that you can put on a super-duper halftime show? You and your "armed patrol" just show up on one motorcycle to demonstrate Mobile Firepower—while your uncle explains your RentForFirefigts prices over the intercom.



Forget the Barrel, Now the Focus is on Super-Sights

Firepower is all well and good, but if you miss your target by a mile and blow up a cattle herd on a nearby hillside instead, you could end up stoned to death by the locals. So "improved sighting" can always help with targeting—and save your life.



Even in paintball games, sniper scopes with "red dot sights" are hot right now. While red-dot sighting may improve your marksmanship, it could also serve as a warning to the paintball-targetee, that perhaps he should be behind a tree about now. For real sniper rifles, OpticsPlanet.com lists sniper scopes that resemble lug-wrench tools if you could change a tire with a laser.



(Special thanks to MilitaryHumor.net for all the great photos, as well as GunsPics.com, Epsguru.com, ChoicePaintBallGuns.com, and Wikipedia.org.)

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 ongoing 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

"Windows 8 Fails," "Quick Launch Buttons for Joel," "Windows 8 Crippled If You Don't Have MS Login"

Windows 8 Fails

[Regarding Jack Dunning's December 13 [article](#), "Windows 8 Fails":]

Jack,

Thank you for an excellent summation of the latest follies at MS. Here was my experience...

I was ready to upgrade to a new laptop or tablet. I went to my favorite place to select one, Costco, because of their great selection, pricing, and return policy. I was able to narrow it down to the following three choices, 1) a laptop with touchscreen for around \$750, 2) same power laptop with no touchscreen for around \$400, and 3) a tablet that had a stand and remote keyboard (basically convertible laptop) less memory and weaker processor for around \$900.

I decided on the \$750 choice number one because of the extra power over the tablet, and the wow of the touchscreen.

I found that I made a mistake after around four hours of trying to work in Windows 8. It had too many dead ends, getting stuck, not being able to find things, having a hard time navigating. The login screen itself was ridiculous requiring an account setup with Microsoft. I honestly couldn't even figure out how to turn the damn thing off.

I won't be using Windows 8. But if I was, I would only have used it on the choice number three, as it would only make sense to use it on a tablet with touchscreen. A touchscreen is pretty much redundant on a laptop and counterproductive, so the extra money spent on the touchscreen was a waste, for a laptop forgo the touchscreen (and save a few hundred bucks), and use Windows 7 and save yourself the frustration of a susceptible to dead ends operating system).

-Paul Anthony, San Diego, CA

Your analysis is outstanding. Thanks!

-Cicero Walker, Colorado Springs, CO

Quick Launch Buttons for Joel

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

One of the great features, if you do allow stacking, is the ability to right click on the icon and get a thumbnail of all running instances and a list of recent items that can be pinned to the list. At the bottom of the list is the option to pin the icon to the taskbar when the program is running.

Also, you can open additional instances from the right-click menu. Pinning items to the quick start bar (right click and click on the pushpin to the right of the name when hovering over the name) keeps the icons on the quick start bar. For instance, I use remote desktop connections (RDP) to connect to servers at work. I pin the RDP icon and pin the servers I use frequently, but don't pin servers I rarely use which allows them to be rotated off the list when room is needed. Also I can right click on an item and remove it from the list or unpin an icon I no longer use.

-Marcus, Alabama

Windows 8 Crippled If You Don't Have MS Login

[Regarding the December 6 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]

The crippleware problem is not that apps require an Internet connection, but that to get *more* apps through the store (only way I know of to get an "app" (that runs in Modern interface, vs. desktop) is to have a Microsoft login. If you use just a local login, you *cannot* use the app store.

Period.

So you can't get all those apps that MS touts as being available for W8 without giving them your information (and yes, they *do* track all your app installs).

If someone knows how to get apps without a MS login, please post! Thanks!

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

That's true as far as the Modern (Metro) Apps are concerned. Microsoft is just copying from the model of the iTunes Store and the Google Play store in order to provide more secure apps. My point is that there are advantages to signing in with a Microsoft Account aside from being able to buy Modern apps. Keep in mind that you sign-in to an e-mail service to get your e-mail

from them. Personally, I don't use the Modern apps that came with Windows nor do I have any desire to get more of them from the store, yet I always sign-in with a MS Account to keep my Windows Live Mail contacts synced and my Favorite Web sites and other settings synced (and backed up) on Microsoft servers.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

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Table of Contents

List of ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
San Diego ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
Colorado ComputerEdge Sponsors	3
ComputerEdge™ Online — 12/27/13	4
Thoughts On 2014	4
Magazine Summary	4
Digital Dave	6
Eliminate Dual Booting Windows	6
Outlook E-mail Stops Working	7
Windows 7 Slowdown	8
Miscellaneous Thoughts about 2014	10
The Joy of Missing Out (JOMO)	10
Where Did I Put My Phablet?	11
How Many Tablets Can You Fit on a Coffee Table?	11
Who Needs a Cell Contract for a Tablet Computer?	12
A New Year Resolution	12
Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part V	15
TreeView Right-click Menus	17
Adding a New Recipe and New Ingredients	19
Wally Wang's Apple Farm	23
Amateur Hour is Nearly Over	24
The Mac Pro	26
China Mobile Deal Official	27
The Future of the Mobile Computing	28
The Future of Books	30
Beyond Personal Computing	34
And Lo, in the Beginning, the Power and the Fire was Doth a Powder	35
Firepower According to Hollywood Movies	36
Identifying Firearms	37
Basic Rules for a Gunfight	39
Armed Animals (When You Need More Firing-fingers)	40
When Pentagon Budget Cuts and Recruiting Go Wrong...	43

The Survivalist and Zombie-fighter Approach to "Firepower"	45
Firepower in Games	46
At Close Range, Redundancy (And a Motorcycle) Are Your Best Friends	47
Forget the Barrel, Now the Focus is on Super-Sights	49
Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers	52
Windows 8 Fails	52
Quick Launch Buttons for Joel	53
Windows 8 Crippled If You Don't Have MS Login	53