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January 10, 2014

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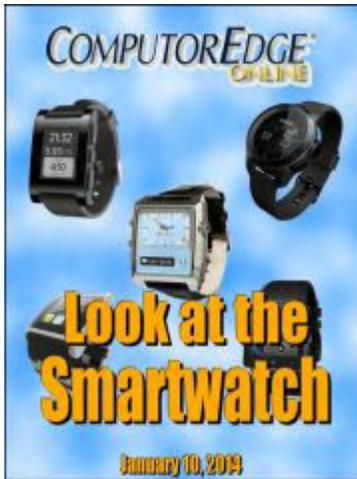
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Look at the Smartwatch

Smartwatches are starting to flood the market. What you need to know!

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by Digital Dave

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

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Is a Smartwatch Right for You?

Numerous smartwatches with various features are now available for sale. Here's a look at how they stack up. Are they ready for primetime?

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by Jack Dunning

Make Searching Your Favorite Web Site Easy

Anyone can put this simple AutoHotkey script to good use for quickly searching their favorite Web site.

[Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#)

by Wally Wang

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by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"More Dangerous Place," "Quick Launch vs. Pinned Icons," "Using Numbers to Open Quick Launch Items"

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Digital Dave

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

Can't Install Fedora on Second Drive; ComputerEdge Web Site Issue for Internet Explorer; Checking for Overheating Problems.

Can't Install Fedora on Second Drive

Dear Digital Dave,

I replaced my motherboard with a new Gigabyte unit. I am running Win7-32 and would like to run Linux Fedora. I have two HDD, one 80GB that came with an HP unit years ago and a new WD 500GB. When I try to install Fedora (18, 19, or 20) I get the displayed complaint that all of my space is locked up with "preserve." This is after I try to install Linux Fedora by loading an .iso DVD. My old Fedora departed with a defective 250GB HDD. I have tried to get an answer from Gigabyte and some users, without any success. Can you help or suggest a possible place for help.

*Thanks,
Bonnell
Loveland, CO*

Dear Bonnell,

I'm assuming that you're using the [Fedora Installation Guide](#) as a reference. I haven't worked specifically with Fedora, but perhaps another reader can shed some light on your problem.

As a practical matter, I usually install operating systems when only one hard drive is installed (either by swapping out the drive or disconnecting one of them). I don't know your configuration, but if the wrong drive is detected as having an operating system already installed, it is quite possible that there is write protection to prevent overwriting the wrong drive ("preserve"). I'm guessing that the installation may be detecting the wrong drive (Win 7 32-bit) and not allowing an overwrite. That's why disconnecting that drive may help.

If there was something else previously installed on the Fedora target drive, then that could be the cause of the problem. The HP drive may have a small partition used to restore it back to

the HP factory spec for the PC it came in. Maybe this is causing problems. It's best to start with a clean drive and set up your partitions how you want them for the new install. In this case you may need to reformat the target drive before making it the sole drive in the computer for Fedora installation.

This is purely a guess on my part and I could be completely off base, but it is how I would approach the problem. If anyone has a better answer, please straighten me out.

Digital Dave

ComputerEdge Web Site Issue

Dear Digital Dave,

I recently installed Win 7 on my desktop. The problem is that when I open ComputerEdge it only brings up the sponsor advertising column on the left side of the page. The rest of the page is blank. I have found no way to display the rest of the page.

Milt

Denver

Dear Milt,

While my usual answer is to try another browser (Google Chrome or Firefox), Internet Explorer 11 has had numerous problems when running in Windows 7. As pointed out [last week](#) by comments from other readers, if you have IE 11 installed, that could cause problems with Web sites. The answer is to uninstall the upgrade and return to Internet Explorer 10. I don't know why Microsoft can't get it right.

If IE 11 is not your problem, then I recommend switching to another browser. It's also possible that some ad blocking settings in IE are causing the difficulty.

Digital Dave

Checking for Overheating Problems

One of the major causes of random crashes is overheating. This may be in the CPU, the graphics processor (GPU), or power supply. While these problems may be the result of faulty devices, it is often the fallout from inadequate cooling—especially if a processor has been overclocked. Since most of the time everything may appear normal temperature-wise, the best way to track down overheating problems is to do a computer stress test. The utility program

[OCCT \(OverClock Checking Tool\)](#) is designed for exactly that purpose (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. OCCT shows test selection on the left (Figure 2) and monitoring on the right (Figure 3).

OCCT runs stress tests which generate heat on your CPU, GPU, or power supply while checking for errors (see Figure 2). If an error occurs the test stops.

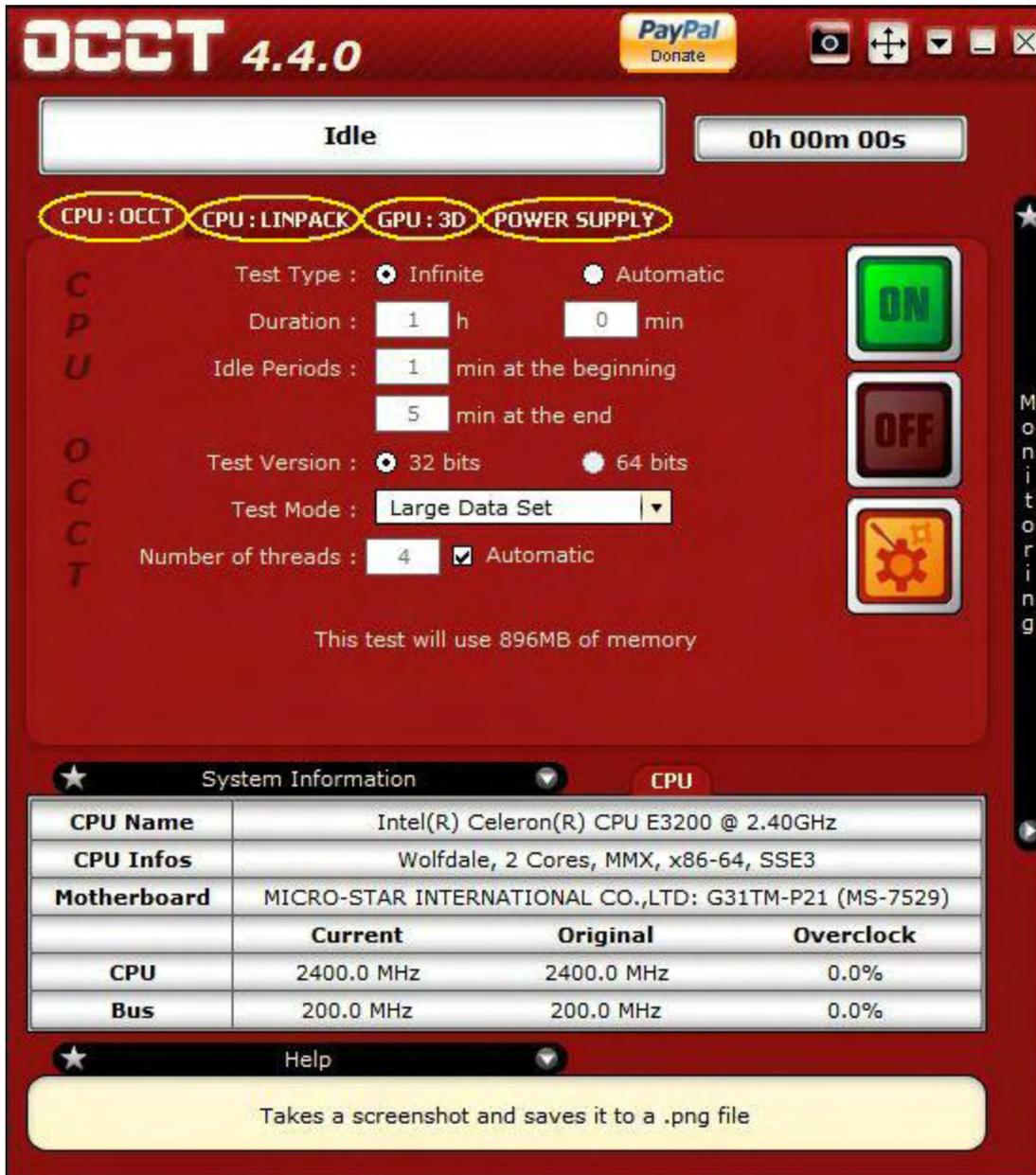


Figure 2. OCCT shows test selections for OCCT, LINPACK (more intensive CPU test, GPU, and Power Supply).

The results are displayed in both tabular and graphic form on the right side of the main windows (see Figure 3).

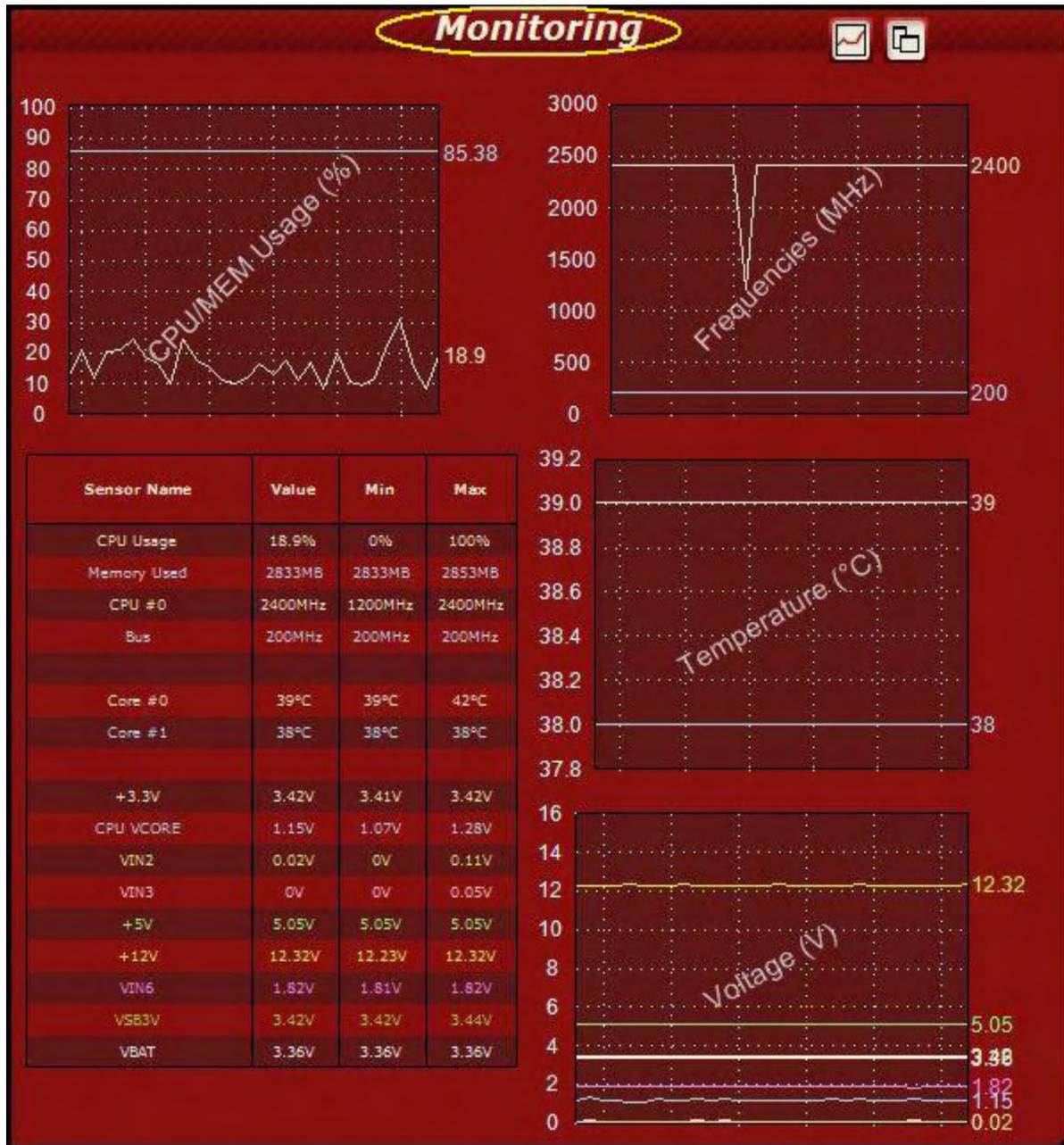


Figure 3. The results are displayed in both tabular and graphic form on the right side of the main windows.

I've used OCCT to determine whether my CPU, video card or power supply was overheating. (I wasn't overclocking.) The different tests stress the key components. In the computer I was working on the problem and it turned out to be the CPU. I put a bigger heatsink on it and the temperature dropped 20°C.

Just running the regular OCCT will help you see if there is a bad core issue, because it will get hotter than the rest of the cores.

The OCCT utility will do the more intensive LINPACK test, as well as GPU and power supply. The test labeled OCCT is more about detecting errors than straight up generating heat which comes from the LINPACK. When the temperature hits 85°C or so, most PCs will just

crash and reboot instead of melting. People often misdiagnose heat issues as a software problem.

Some people have expressed concern about the test doing damage through the heat generated. Unless there's already something wrong with your PC, it won't damage it. As I mentioned, mine would hit 85°C and shut down on its own. Although, I'm sure you don't want to just leave the test running all the time.

Digital Dave

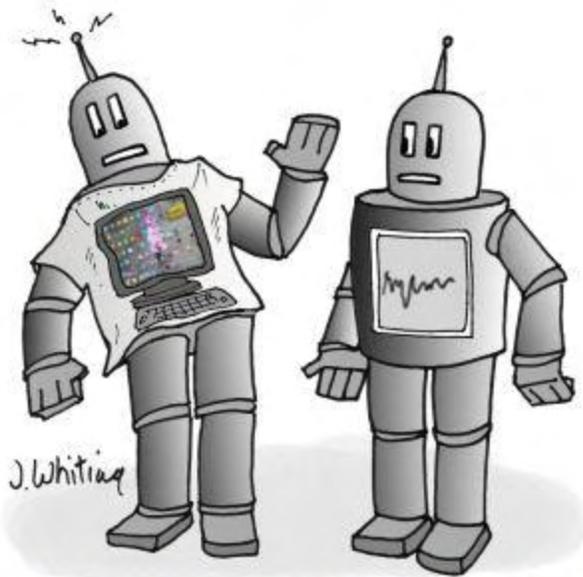


Wear Your Computer on Your Wrist

“Is a Smartwatch Right for You?” by Jack Dunning

Numerous smartwatches with various features are now available for sale. Here's a look at how they stack up. Are they ready for primetime?

When the iPhone was first introduced people were already accustomed to carrying around cell phones. It was common to see people talking away with a Bluetooth attachment clipped to their ear like a huge hearing aid. The new smartphone fit in naturally with a culture already fixated on their handheld communication devices. While the smartphone brought many new capabilities to the cell phone, it did not require us to change the way we dressed. Whether any of the new wearable smart devices are successful or not in the marketplace may depend upon how easily they integrate with our current way of life. If based upon this theory alone, the smartwatch is likely to have a bright future.



"I love my T-shirt PC, but I find it difficult to see the screen and use the keyboard."

People have been wearing watches much longer than they've been using cell phones. Many people feel naked if they can't look down at their wrist to get the time. It is unusual to find someone who does not wear a watch—and he or she is usually thought to be rebelling against society. If people start using smartwatches, it will hardly be noticed by most of us.

What is a Smartwatch?

The term smartwatch is almost self-explanatory. It's a computer that is attached to your arm like a wristwatch. There are a number of new watches that add many computer-like features ([measure heart rate](#), [offer GPS](#), etc.), but these are generally one-way devices which provide information to the user. To be a smartwatch some type of two-way communication is required—usually between the smartwatch and a smartphone. Plus, a smartwatch should run apps in some form which means that the features on the watch can be changed. The vast majority of today's smartwatches are actually wireless (Bluetooth) appendages to smartphones. While many smartwatches can operate on their own (mostly as a clock), currently their primary use is as a tether to a smartphone for relaying notices. If you don't own a smartphone, you are not likely to be interested in the smartwatches available today.

Eventually, the smartwatch could evolve into an independent device, possibly eliminating the need for the Bluetooth attached smartphone, but (with a couple of exceptions) that is not the target of this generation of wrist devices. For now we look at some of the current products available on the market for eliminating the need to take our smartphone out of our pocket to look at it.

Evaluating Smartwatches

There is a fairly long list of smartwatches on the market. In fact the list is too long to cover all of them in this article, so I started with the "[Top Five Smartwatches](#)" according to Smart Watch News. I investigated each as if I were in the market for a wrist device to hook up to my smartphone. (Full Disclosure: I don't even own a smartphone, although some of my best friends own them.) I asked myself what would be important to me and what would be trivial. First, here are some general observations.

Smartwatches are all about notification of activity on your smartphone. New e-mail has

arrived. Reading text messages. Something was posted on Facebook. Your smartphone is ringing. There are some watches that allow you to hold a phone conversation or remotely take pictures with your smartphone, but the primary purpose of the current crop of smartwatches is to act as an appendage and alarm for your smartphone.

Smartwatches need to be recharged. Depending upon the size of the batteries, the features of the watch, and how you use it, there can be tremendous variance in the time between charges. That means you will occasionally need to remove the device from your arm and plug it in. (You might be able to plug it into the USB port of your computer while it's still on your wrist, but don't walk away while you're still connected.)

Most of the smartwatches look clunky and nerdy. While there are a couple of exceptions (and I expect this geeky look will be less of a problem in many future models), you will be immediately labeled as a technofreak. This is not a problem if all of your friends are nerds.

Pebble Smartwatch

The [Pebble Smartwatch](#) is the darling of the market mostly because it raised over ten million dollars on [Kickstarter](#). Yet as I reviewed its features and compared it to the other smartwatches, I felt it was slightly lacking.

The Pebble has a boring black and white screen because it uses an e-paper display (see Figure 1). This is great for battery life, but since it doesn't have any touch capability, the buttons on the side must be used to navigate the menus.



Figure 1. The Pebble Smartwatch has an e-paper display with no touch capability and no microphone or speaker.

The Pebble [operates in a manner similar to other smartwatches](#) where you download an app on your smartphone to set up the watch. The watch connects to the smartphone through a Bluetooth wireless pairing. The Pebble works with both iPhones and Android smartphones. This smartwatch is operated with the buttons on the side.

Priced at about \$150 the [Pebble Smartwatch for iPhone and Android](#) has adequate capabilities, but I'm hard pressed to understand why it is rated so high.

Martian Watches Passport Smartwatch

While most of the face of the [Martian Watches Passport Smartwatch](#) is a real analog watch, it seems to have more of the functions you might actually want in a smartwatch (see Figure 2). For one you can control it using [Siri voice commands](#).



Figure 2. The Martian Watches Passport Smartwatch responds to voice commands and allows phone calls to be taken directly through the watch, although the information portion of the face is relatively small at the bottom left.

As it has both a speaker and microphone, you can use it to receive and make calls, although some of the reviews indicate that the quality is questionable. Since it has more features than the Pebble, it's not unexpected that it would be a little more expensive at \$249 to \$299.

There is no room for any sort of a touchscreen on the small 96-by-16 pixel OLED display (even if you have skinny fingers), so the only option for control other than voices commands, are the buttons on the side.

Like many of the smartwatches, the camera on your smartphone can be activated remotely from the device. This comes in handy when you want to fit more people into a [selfie](#). To see how the Martian Passport works check out this [video](#).

This smartwatch is theoretically compatible with both iPhone and Androids, but I would check my specific model smartphone (or tablet) for compatibility before buying—especially if you own an Android or early iPhone.

i'm Watch Bluetooth Smartwatch

Costing a little bit more (starting at \$349) the [i'm IMWALB02C03 Bluetooth Smartwatch](#)

includes touchscreen technology, a microphone and speaker (see Figure 3). This smartwatch actually uses the Android operating system making it potentially one of the more flexible devices for running apps.



Figure 3. The i'm Watch Bluetooth Smartwatch has a touchscreen for controlling the watch.

Of the smartwatches for sale today, the i'm Watch Smartwatch is probably the most similar to what future smartwatches will look like. They will operate more and more like a smartphone with a color touchscreen and evolve toward being independent devices. After all, if you can make a smartwatch do most of the functions of a smartphone, why not get rid of the phone?

Like a number of other smartwatches, i'm Watch has a 3.5 mm headphone jack. This connection will provide cleaner audio for placing and receiving calls. It should work with both iPhone and Android, but, again, check out your phone for compatibility first.

Here is a [video](#) that demonstrates and evaluates the i'm Watch. (If you let this video Web page run, it demonstrates a few other smartwatches and wrist devices not mentioned here.)

Sony Smartwatch

While the [Sony Smartwatch SW2 for Android Phones](#) includes a color multi-touch screen it only works with Android phones and has no microphone or speaker for making calls (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. The Sony Smartwatch has a color multi-touch screen, but no speaker or microphone.

At \$198 the Sony Smartwatch has been criticized for its small screen. To see it in operation check out this [video review](#).

Cookoo Bluetooth 4.0 Watch

I'm not sure that I would actually call the [Cookoo Bluetooth 4.0 Watch](#) a smartwatch. It does provide notifications from your smartphone, but it merely displays an icon, beeps or vibrates (see Figure 5). I don't see running apps on it.



Figure 5. The Cookoo Watch receives notifications from an iPhone or iPad.

While the Cookoo is compatible with iPhone and iPad make sure you check the version number to ensure that your phone or tablet is listed. There is no screen per se and not much else. At \$129.99, it is less expensive than many watches. This definitely will not be on my list for adequate smartwatches.

After looking at all the other smartwatches with so much potential, the Cookoo is a bit of a letdown. See for yourself with this [review video](#).

Samsung, Too! But Only for Samsung

Samsung has released the [Galaxy Gear Smartwatch](#) (see Figure 6), but it only works with the Galaxy phones and Galaxy Note 3. Bummer because it has a number of cool features. The Gear was not on the list of top five smartwatches because of its limited compatibility. If it worked with iPhone and other Androids, then it would get more attention.



Figure 6. The Galaxy Gear Smartwatch includes a touchscreen, microphone, speaker, and camera.

Since we are putting cameras on everything else, why not on a smartwatch? The Galaxy Gear includes a touchscreen, built-in microphone and speaker, and a camera.

The Future of Smartwatches

The future of the smartwatch may almost be here with the [Omate TrueSmart smartwatch](#), another Kickstarter project. This smartwatch is actually an Android smartphone watch which doesn't require a smartphone nearby. It also includes a camera. Expect to hear more about this type of device. Why settle for something tethered to your smartphone when you can have it all on your wrist? You can even pair a Bluetooth keyboard with it and input text. While it is not currently available retail, you can pre-order it at the [Omate Web site](#) (\$249).

The smartwatch market is getting pretty crowded. It's believed that both Apple and Microsoft

have projects in the works. My guess is that the Apple smartwatch will only work with the iPhone and eventually the iPhone will be changed to lock out all other smartwatches. That's Apple's style. If Jobs were still around, then the Apple smartwatch would be a revolutionary stand-alone device. Alas, I no longer expect anything truly new from Apple. Maybe they will prove me wrong. Microsoft is most likely waiting to see what everyone else does before making any commitment. Or, they're trying to figure out how to cram Windows 8 into a watch.

My guess is that the current tethered smartwatches may survive if they can get the price down to about \$50—the price for gadgets that have minimal add-on value. But for me the Omate-like independent smartwatches are the real future—no smartphone required. If I could make a decent phone call without having to carry a phone in my pocket, then I would be extremely interested—even if it did include silly smartphone-like apps. Remember this is coming from a guy that once wore a watch with a calculator built-in (it broke). However, a smartwatch would look a little silly sitting on my arm next to my current self-winding analog watch—which I really like.

Unless you are the type of person who must have the very latest in technology, I advise you to wait before buying a smartwatch. Almost every smartwatch now available is really a beta test model and the apps are lacking. The Omate TrueSmart is a taste of what is yet to come. In a year or two the smartwatch may be ready for prime time—and your wrist.

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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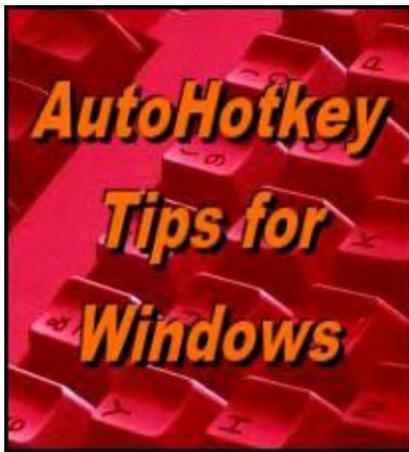
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[Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7](#),

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!**

Easy Beginner AutoHotkey Tricks You Should Use with Windows

“Make Searching Your Favorite Web Site Easy” by Jack Dunning

Anyone can put this simple AutoHotkey script to good use for quickly searching their favorite Web site.

Starting this week I'm returning to highlighting more beginner apps which can provide immediate results for AutoHotkey users. These short easy snippets are important because they dispel the notion that you need heavy-duty programming skills to make good use of AutoHotkey scripts. Just one of these little snippets can make your Windows life much easier—even if you never do another thing with AutoHotkey. I may spend a few weeks on each beginner script to add a couple of other easy features which make the script even better to use, but none of it will be complicated.

Of course to take advantage of the scripts offered here, you will need [AutoHotkey installed](#) on at least one Windows computer. (You can compile any AutoHotkey script into an executable (EXE) which will run on any Windows computer without AutoHotkey installed on it.)

* * *

Searching Your Favorite Web Sites

Often when researching a topic, we just open Google in our browser and do a keyword search. This is easy enough and yields a plethora of results—sometimes too many. If we are already in our browser, we can usually highlight text, right-click, and select search to find the selected text with our default search engine. But what if we are using an application that doesn't support a Web search or would like to find the selected text in a particular site such as Wikipedia? A simple AutoHotkey script can provide us with a hotkey combination that will directly execute the search function for a particular site. For example:

```
^#g::
```

```
Send, ^c
Sleep 200
Run, http://www.google.com/search?q=%Clipboard%
Return
```

This snippet of code when saved in a simple text file (use Notepad or any other text editor) with the AHK extension will (after loading on a Windows computer with AutoHotkey installed) initiate a Google search of any text highlighted in any Windows program whenever the key combination CTRL+WIN+G (Control++G) is pressed. If your default browser is not open, the script will open it.

The three characters (^#g) before the double colon set up the [hotkey combination](#) (Control++G) for initiating the routine. Once the script is loaded, the routine runs every time the Control key (^), the WIN key (#) and G are pressed simultaneously on the keyboard.

The AutoHotkey [Send command](#) executes the Windows key combination CTRL+C (the copy command) placing the selected text into the Windows Clipboard for later use.

Although omitted from many examples that you may find on the Web, the *Sleep 200* line of code is important. Without it, you may need to hit the hotkey combination twice. The reason is that the computer needs some time to copy (CTRL+C) anything into the Windows Clipboard—however small. Using the [Sleep command](#) allows time (200 microseconds) before moving on to the next step in the script. Otherwise, the script may be trying to run the search with the previous contents of the Clipboard.

The line of code with the [Run command](#) is the heart of the script. It opens Google and executes a search using the contents of the Windows Clipboard. Not coincidentally the word "Clipboard" is also a built-in AutoHotkey variable which always contains the contents of the Windows Clipboard. It can be evaluated and used in other commands by placing percent signs around it (*%Clipboard%*). When this is done, the selected text saved in the Windows Clipboard is actually substituted in the line of code for the term *%Clipboard%*.

The [Return command](#) at the end of the line merely tells AutoHotkey that this is the end of the routine. That's it!

If you wanted a similar hotkey combination for Wikipedia then it might look like this:

```
^#w::
Send, ^c
Sleep 200
Run, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Search?search=%Clipboard%
Return
```

I've seen similar examples of this script on the Web which place all of the commands on one line. Be warned that this will not work since multiple commands must appear on separate lines and be enclosed with a *Return*. However, a single command appearing immediately after the double colon (such as the *Run* command) will execute and no *Return* command is required as

long as it is the only command.

Setting Up Your Own Favorite Web Site Search

The hardest part of setting up your own specialized Web site search is determining the URL (Web address plus search parameters) that you should use. Suppose you want to set up a hotkey combination to search your favorite recipe site—in this case Food.com. Open your browser, navigate to your favorite site and do a search using their built-in search tool. After the search, the URL with the included search parameters will show up in the navigation field (see Figure 1).

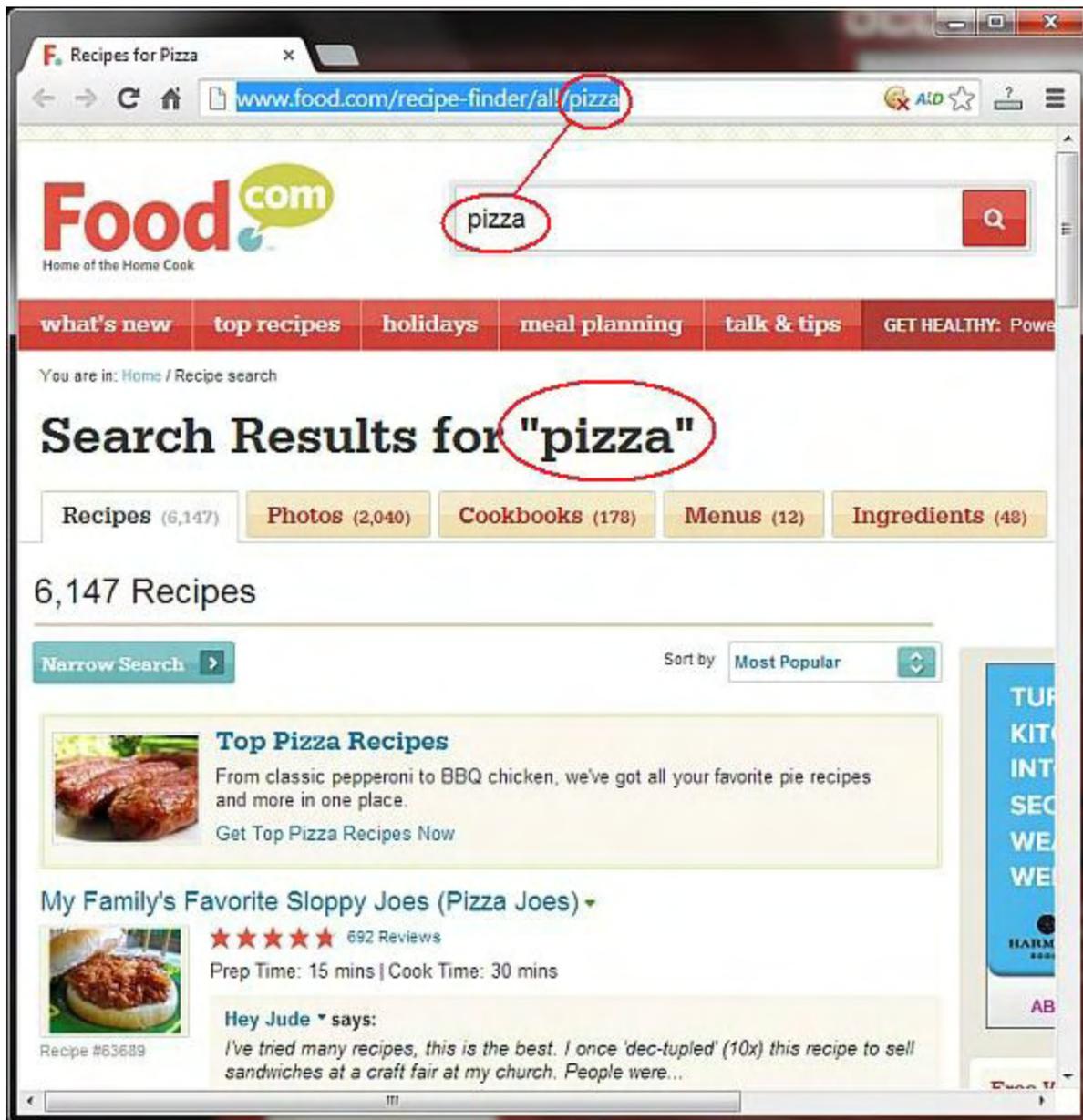
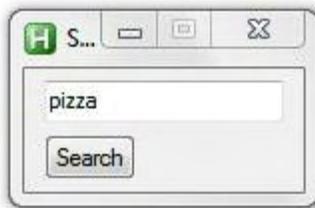


Figure 1. The navigation field of your Web browser will display the parameters needed to execute a search of the site.

In this case, *Food.com* merely adds the name of the food to the end of the search URL. The following snippet will execute a recipe search:

```
^!r::
Send, ^c
Sleep 200
Run, http://www.food.com/recipe-finder/all/%Clipboard%
Return
```

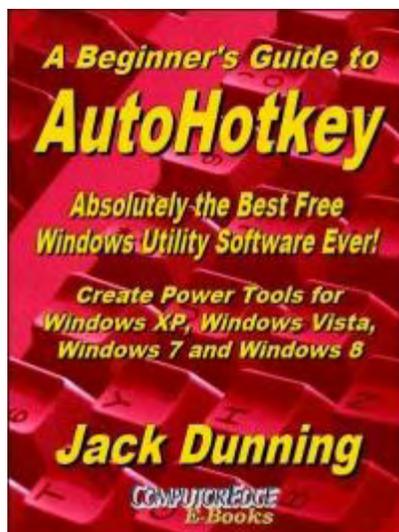
Note that the entire URL is copied (including the *http://*) with only the search keyword being replaced with *%Clipboard%*. It's that simple. Now, after loading, whenever you highlight a food item on your Windows computer in any document or Web page and hit CTRL+ALT+R simultaneously (! is the ALT key), a recipe search of *Food.com* will be conducted using the selected food.



But it's not always convenient to highlight the food item—especially if you're not in a document or on a Web page which contains the words. Unlike Google or Wikipedia which you might want to use whenever you come across curious words in a document or on a Web page, you're not likely to have the proper words available for highlighting when you're searching for a new recipe. Wouldn't it be better just to input the food into a window (such as the one displayed on the left), then immediately search for the recipe? Next time we will look at the few lines of code needed to open an input window for entering the recipe keyword search. It will be simple. It only takes three additional lines of AutoHotkey code.

If you have any AutoHotkey questions, I'm anxious to help out. Just send your AutoHotkey stumbling block queries to [AutoHotkey Questions](#). Sometimes it's the little things that slow us down and all we need is another set of eyes on it.

* * *



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.

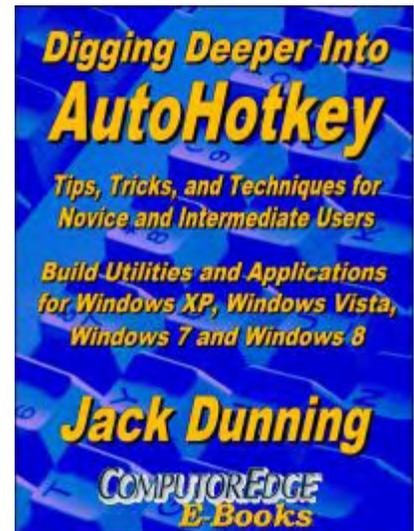
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of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

[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 *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.



[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:

[*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

“Style Over Substance” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Style Over Substance; The PC Shift Away From Windows; The All-Digital Library of San Antonio; The Real Advantage of E-Books; Specialized Tablets; Macs Unaffected; Anyone Want to be Microsoft's CEO?; Save Web Pages as PDFs.

It's almost a cliché that people obsessed with their looks (such as celebrities) often have no worthwhile personality inside. When people value style over substance, they often come across as vapid, but when companies value style over substance, they look even more foolish.

In an attempt to bolster their image, Blackberry hired R&B singer Alicia Keys as their "creative director" in January 2013. Just one month later, Alicia Keys got caught tweeting from [her iPhone](#) instead of using a Blackberry phone, which she promptly blamed on hackers. Now one year later, Alicia Keys and Blackberry are [ending their relationship](#).

The big question is why did Blackberry think paying Alicia Keys millions would somehow translate into increased sales of Blackberry phones? When you have companies making boneheaded decisions like hiring an R&B singer to promote smartphones, you have to wonder at the intelligence of Blackberry's executives who approved this illogical decision that assumed if people like Alicia Keys, they'd also like Blackberry smartphones.

You can often tell which companies are in trouble when they hire celebrities solely for publicity purposes. Back in 2011, Intel hired the Black Eyes Peas singer will.i.am as their [director of creative innovation](#) because we all know how closely related singing is to microprocessor technology. Fading camera giant Polaroid even [hired Lady Gaga](#) as their creative director. Anyone think that Polaroid is going to lead their industry any time soon? Notice that Intel no longer seems like the invincible technology leader they once were?

When companies try to buy a celebrity's popularity for their own products, that's a clear sign that the company is in trouble. Rather than choose the logical solution and just focus on making better products, companies prefer to waste millions paying a celebrity to prop up products that most people have stopped caring about years ago.

In 2008, Microsoft [paid comedian Jerry Seinfeld](#) \$10 million dollars to help Microsoft promote Vista. Microsoft's latest waste of money involves hiring UK television star Jonathan Ross as their [executive producer](#). Any time a company has to buy a celebrity's fame to promote their products, that's a clear warning sign that the company should really be focusing on making better products instead.

You can even see how Apple has [used celebrities](#) in ads in the past. Notice that whenever Apple uses a celebrity, it's typically at a time when Apple felt in trouble such as their recent 2012 ads with Samuel Jackson to promote the iPhone when sales of Samsung phones were threatening iPhone sales.

Paying for a celebrity to endorse a product is far different from paying a celebrity to become a creative director for one or more years. Yet in both cases, whenever a celebrity appears with a company, watch that company carefully. The celebrity's appearance is often the first sign that the company knows they're in trouble and they need instant publicity in hopes of turning their fortunes around.

If you work for a company that carelessly hands over millions to incompetent CEOs and gives celebrities creative director titles for even more millions, you're probably working for a company that has no future. That's when it's time to look elsewhere for opportunities before you get caught in a company spiraling downwards like Blackberry.

The PC Shift Away From Windows

Microsoft made two huge mistakes that basically shot themselves in the foot. First, they released Windows 8, which has been poorly received, despite the beta testers complaining about it long before Microsoft released Windows 8 basically unchanged from the beta testers' complaints.

Second, Microsoft got into the PC manufacturing business by creating and selling Surface tablets that act like ultra-mobile laptops. With consumers steering away from Windows 8 and manufacturers unhappy competing with Microsoft, look for more manufacturers to [adopt Android and ChromeOS](#) for their future products at the Consumer Electronics Show.

With declining sales of Windows PCs and competition from Microsoft, manufacturers are looking for alternatives to Windows. That means releasing low cost Android and ChromeOS computers that will entice many away from the higher cost of a Windows PC for a lower cost Android or ChromeOS PC. The more manufacturers embrace Android and ChromeOS as an alternative to Windows, the more choices people will have to use anything but Windows.

When companies like Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Acer, Asus, and Toshiba start promoting non-Windows PCs, you'll know that the long monopoly of Windows will be coming to a merciful end.

The All-Digital Library of San Antonio

If you thought that printed books would somehow survive in libraries, you may want to take a look at San Antonio's newest library that contains computers, iPads, but [no printed books](#) whatsoever. The library purchased a 10,000-title digital collection for the same price as physical copies, but the county saved millions on architecture because the building's design didn't need to accommodate printed books.

"If you have bookshelves, you have to structure the building so it can hold all of that weight," Head librarian Ashley Elkholf said. "Books are heavy, if you've ever had one fall on your foot."

Other cities have proposed all-digital, bookless libraries but relented under heavy resistance from people who still prefer printed books. Yet San Antonio's bookless library is definitely the future. Instead of building a structure to accommodate stacks of books, you just need a building optimized to accommodate the needs of its patrons. Thus you can allocate more space for people and less space for printed books.

Digital books make it easy to search for a title. No more books placed on the wrong shelves or pages torn out. Unlike printed books, digital books never wear out either or get damaged from someone spilling liquid on it or breaking the binding.

In the past, libraries could only afford a fixed number of books. Since digital books don't take up any room, even the smallest library can offer a large selection of digital books just like a major city library. The future is clearly digital, and digital libraries are just the beginning. Once libraries get beyond the idea of only loaning out a single copy of a digital book at a time, imagine having a whole city library's book collection at your fingertips without ever having to wait for someone to return a book so you can read it next.

Printed books are simply getting too expensive to make, ship, store, and maintain. Regardless of how much you may love printed books, eventually people will no longer love the price they have to pay for a printed book, and that's when digital books will take over for good.

The Real Advantage of E-Books

In the first quarter of 2012, e-book sales reached \$282 million in sales while printed book sales only hit \$230 million. If you think that trend will magically reverse itself soon, you probably also believe that every Windows 7 user will cheerfully upgrade to Windows 8 in the near future. E-book sales will only continue to rise due to their low cost to distribute, but what's particularly unique to e-books is the ability to [track reader's habits](#).

With printed books, there's no way of knowing how long someone reads, what passages of text they find most interesting, or what types of books they read afterwards (or even if they

finish the book at all). However with digital books, it's now possible to track readers' actions.

Barnes & Noble, which accounts for 25% to 30% of the e-book market through its Nook e-reader, uses the Nook to study customers' digital reading behavior. Jim Hilt, the company's vice president of e-books, says the company is starting to share their insights with publishers to help them create books that better hold people's attention. Some of the insights from Nook readers include:

- Nonfiction books tend to be read in fits and starts, while novels are generally read straight through.
- Nonfiction books, particularly long ones, tend to get dropped earlier.
- Science-fiction, romance and crime-fiction fans often read more books more quickly than readers of literary fiction do, and finish most of the books they start.

Readers of literary fiction quit books more often and tend skip around between books. If readers tend to quit reading a book or book series at the same point, that's a huge clue that something needs to be fixed. Either the author needs to write something different or the publisher needs to add some type of graphic or interactive element to maintain the reader's attention in a specific area of a book. Just as Web pages track your browsing behavior, so will tomorrow's e-books track your reading habits.

For some people that might make them uncomfortable, but for publishers and authors, this type of information can be valuable feedback to help them write more engaging books. Already Amazon has discovered that since readers tend to stop reading nonfiction books far more often than fiction books, one solution is to publish shorter nonfiction books. Just as advertisers on Web sites can optimize the design of their ads, so will publishers and authors of the future be able to optimize the design and writing of a book.

You can hide your head in the sand and pretend that printed books will forever be the dominant form of reading, or you can accept the inevitable that digital books that can track your reading habits will start shaping the way people read, publish, and write books. The more information authors and publishers know about their books, the better they can improve to meet the needs of their particular audience.

No two authors will attract the exact same type of readers, so knowing the habits of their reading audience can give authors insights on how to please them and keep them coming back for more. Book reading analytics is the real future of e-books and that's information you can never get from a printed book.

Specialized Tablets

Although Android tablets are growing, it's often a case of multiple manufacturers flooding the market with low cost Android tablets that people buy solely due to the low price. One of the

most popular Android tablets is Amazon's Kindle, which is more of a fork of Android than an actual Android tablet since it's designed to run Amazon apps so that way people buy apps from Amazon.

Now that Amazon has found out how to make money from an Android tablet, DreamWorks, the studio founded by Steve Spielberg, plans to offer their [DreamTab Android tablet](#), specifically geared for children although it's still capable of being used as a regular Android tablet by adults.



Figure 1. The DreamTab represents a specialized Android tablet.

The DreamTab will come pre-loaded with DreamWorks content such as *Shrek* and *Kung Fu Panda* apps, sport an 8-inch screen, and cost less than \$300. The real money won't be in selling tablets but in using the tablet as a marketing tool to promote DreamWorks.

With so many manufacturers dumping low cost Android tablets on the market, it's hard for any of them to make money selling hardware alone. With most people buying apps from Google or other app stores, Android tablet manufacturers can only make money selling tablets with razor thin margins, and then they have to compete against other Android tablet manufacturers doing the same thing.

Perhaps the future for Android tablets will be as specialized devices like the Kindle or DreamTab. Trying to profit off Android tablets alone will likely never happen, so look for more specialized Android tablets from other companies in the future as they find a way to lock

you into their content so they can actually make money from their Android tablets.

Macs Unaffected

Yahoo recently discovered that hackers broke into their servers and managed to plant malware on Yahoo's ads. That meant that people in Europe who clicked on Yahoo's ads would download malware that would infect their computers. Of course, Yahoo issued a [public apology](#) with the comment that "users using Macs and mobile devices were not affected."

Although Yahoo isn't saying, most likely the malware didn't affect Linux users either since malware is often crafted for a specific operating system. That means Yahoo could just as accurately stated that only Windows users were infected.

So when comparing Windows PCs to Macintosh computers, price should be just one criteria. Now toss in the need to get and maintain an antivirus program (many people get tricked into buying commercial antivirus programs that come pre-installed on many PCs) and now you have additional considerations when choosing Windows.

For maximum safety, simply run [VirtualBox](#) and install Linux for free as a virtual machine. Then do all your browsing on the Internet using a Linux browser instead of a Windows browser. This will effectively screen all Windows malware from infecting your computer because it can't get past your Linux virtual machine to infect your Windows operating system.

With so many free antivirus programs available, there's absolutely no reason for anyone to buy an antivirus program unless they enjoy spending more money. Pre-installed trial versions of antivirus programs (also known as bloatware) simply inconvenience the consumer and often trick them out of their money when free alternatives could easily be pre-installed instead. If you enjoy being deceived by computer manufacturers promoting bloatware, then you might as well add in the additional cost and hassle of antivirus programs as one more "advantage" of a Windows PC.

Anyone Want to be Microsoft's CEO?

When Steve Ballmer announced he was stepping down as CEO, Microsoft's stock started rising. Back then, Microsoft's plan was to have a new CEO by the end of 2013. Now it looks like they won't have a new CEO until sometime early in 2014.

What's possibly making the [search for a new CEO](#) harder is that Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer will still be on the board of directors, which could interfere with any new CEO's decisions for how to run the company. When you're the boss, yet can't do anything unless both Bill Gates and Steve Ballmer agree to it, you're not really the boss.

Since Steve Ballmer just reorganized Microsoft (again), any new CEO will likely be stuck with Steve Ballmer's latest decisions. If the new CEO tries to dump Steve Ballmer's decisions, they'll likely face pressure from both Steve Ballmer and Bill Gates. Steve Ballmer can now help guide Microsoft while letting a new CEO take all the blame.

Curiously, nearly everyone [involved in Windows 8](#) has either left Microsoft or been shuffled to a different position within the company. Perhaps even Microsoft will be forced to admit that Windows 8 alienated their own customers. Yet unless Microsoft dumps the real decision makers for approving of Windows 8 (Steve Ballmer and indirectly Bill Gates), the problem still remains.

The best way for Microsoft to change is to embrace a new leader, not cling to their old ones who allowed the company to miss the shift to mobile devices and force the mess of Windows 8 on the public. Until Microsoft can eliminate the influence of Steve Ballmer and Bill Gates, Microsoft's future doesn't look too promising.

* * *

If you find a particularly interesting Web page, you can print it out. However, the latest version of Safari also lets you save a Web page directly as a PDF file. Just click File > Export to PDF. Once you capture a Web page as a PDF file, you can then read it using the Preview program on OS X or the iBooks app on iOS.

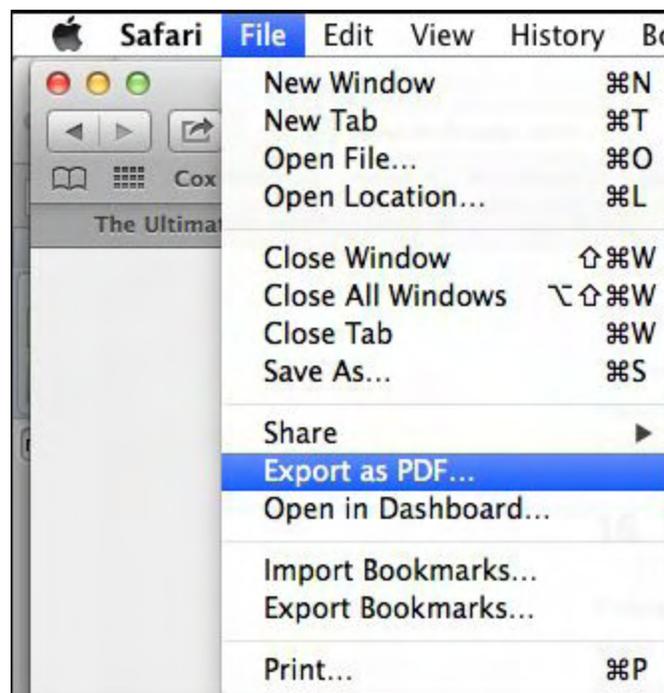


Figure 2. You can save a Web page as a PDF file within Safari.

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](#).



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"More Dangerous Place," "Quick Launch vs. Pinned Icons," "Using Numbers to Open Quick Launch Items"

More Dangerous Place

[Regarding Marilyn K. Martin's December 20 [article](#), "Delivery Wars and More High Tech News!":]

The statement "The world turned into a more dangerous place after 9/11," is really not correct. It was merely the "perception" of danger that became more apparent. There had already been one previous attempt to blow up the Trade Center. The real "more dangerous place" can more accurately be traced back to the Iran Hostage Crisis where 52 Americans were held hostage for 444 days (November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981), and this was, more or less, the beginning of the current "Near East" problem.

-Shiva Notaraj, Albuquerque, NM

Thank you for your comment, Shiva.

Personally, I think the Major Crisis that just continued with 9/11, is that President Jimmy Carter and other politicians let the secular Shah of Iran fall. That opened the door to Rule by Jihadists in the Mid East, which deeply destabilized that entire region.

[*Iran and the Shah - What Really Happened*](#)

And despite the earlier attempt to blow up the twin towers in New York City, 9/11 resulted in "completed attacks" and massive carnage. This was the biggest loss of life on American soil by an enemy since the Civil War, thus my statement that "The world turned into a more dangerous place after 9/11."

-Marilyn K. Martin, Texas

Quick Launch vs. Pinned Icons

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

I just noticed Dave's comment about launching another instance of a program. He referred to the Quick Launch area of the taskbar, and mentioned that shift + left-click would open a new instance of a program. The "Quick Launch Toolbar" was officially removed in the Windows 8 desktop and replaced by pinning programs to the taskbar. But I'm grateful for the "shift-click" trick since that is now the easiest way to open a new instance. While it's still possible to reinstate the deprecated "QLT", it may be simpler to remember to shift-click the pinned icon.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

While you may be technically correct, I prefer to think of it as the Quick Launch feature being combined with the program tabs rather than eliminated. This more closely describes the reality.

-Digital Dave

Using Numbers to Open Quick Launch Items

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

Not sure if it's just me, but on my Dell XPS Windows 7 Ultimate machine, this only works with the upper row of number keys and not the number pad.

-Dale Harrington, Aurora, CO

That appears to be true on my Windows 7 computer as well.

-Digital Dave

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

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