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Darknet

There is a cyber world most people don't know exists and may never see it.

Magazine Summary

List of *ComputorEdge* Sponsors

Digital Dave
by Digital Dave
Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
How Many Firewalls?; Recording Music from Cox Cable; Windows 8 or 8.1?

Darknets: Hiding in Anonymity
by Jack Dunning
Tor (The Onion Router) Is a Darknet Which Can Hide Your Internet Activities from Big Brother
Like parallel universes, there are parallel Internets shrouded in secrecy. Used for both bringing down tyrannical governments and illicit activities, Tor (The Onion Router) protects dissidents as well as drug dealers from prying eyes.

Easy Beginner AutoHotkey Tricks You Should Use with Windows
by Jack Dunning
Using the Same Right-click Menu Repeatedly? Protect from Carpal Tunnel with This AutoHotkey Tip
If you have a right-click menu that you use over and over again, then you can save time and repetitive finger actions by setting up an AutoHotkey hotkey to get the job done.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

by Wally Wang

Disappearing Technology

Disappearing Technology; Looking Back at Windows 8; Predicting the Stock Market with an iPad; More iWatch Rumors; Empty Trash Securely.

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

by ComputorEdge Staff

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

"Adding Icons to AutoHotkey Menus," "Litecoin Cyber Currency," "IE 11 Outlook Problem," "Joe Pinole, Hotel Networking"

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Digital Dave

"Digital Dave answers your tech questions." by *Digital Dave*

How Many Firewalls?; Recording Music from Cox Cable; Windows 8 or 8.1?

How Many Firewalls?

Dear Digital Dave,

How many firewalls do I need? My router has a firewall. I use Cox cable which provides McAfee security with a firewall and Windows has security essentials with a firewall. Is one better than another? What needs to be turned off to download software? If I get routine updates without turning anything off, are the firewalls working?

Thanks for your help,
CCLeix
San Diego, CA

Dear CC,

The firewall in the router serves a different purpose from the firewall in your computer. When a router is placed between the Internet and a computer, it isolates the computer(s) by using a set of internal IP addresses for the computers (either assigned by the router or preset). Outsiders cannot directly access a computer on this internal network without first going through the router. There are two primary ways that an outsider can get through a router: port triggering and port forwarding.

Internet communications occur via channels called ports. There are thousands of these ports available each labeled with a number. Certain ports are always used for specific purposes. For example, the port used to send e-mail is 25, while the port used to receive e-mail (POP3) is 110. Normally the router ports are closed to the outside unless they are triggered (port triggering) by an internal computer. Then port(s) are opened and the outside traffic is allowed to respond to the requests from the computer.

In some cases, a specific computer will need to be available to an outside request without any triggering. For example, you want to access a Windows computer remotely over the Internet

and you don't have a VPN (Virtual Private Network) setup. The only access is via the IP of the router, but normally the needed port (3389) is blocked. The answer is to set up the router to forward any requests on that port to the machine you want to control. (This will require a fixed internal IP be assigned to the target computer.) Port forwarding is used to automatically send any traffic on the port to the right computer. Sometimes this type of port forwarding setup on a router is needed for servers and certain games.

Normally, routers are generally set to ignore queries from the outside unless they are specifically prompted by a computer on the internal network. This should be sufficient for most users.

You should only have one active firewall on your computer. Most likely you're using either whatever comes with McAfee or Windows Firewall with Advanced Security—not both. This firewall serves the same purpose as the router firewall, except there will be many adjustments made to it for listening and responding, depending upon what software you have installed. When a program is installed, it will make adjustments to the firewall by opening the appropriate ports. You can find these settings in the firewall setup. Sometimes certain software may require you to access the firewall software and open ports specifically for that program, but that is less common with today's programs.

Inadvertently installing the wrong program is how Trojan Horse malware gets control of your computer. If you accidentally download and run this type of malicious software, it first adjusts your computer's firewall, then it can trigger ports on the router to allow outside access. After that the barn door is open.

You should not need to make any adjustments to the firewall in order to download software or receive routine updates. These are both initiated by the computer and will temporarily trigger the appropriate ports on the router. Your firewall is still working while only briefly opening ports to accomplish the appropriate tasks.

You want both your router firewall and computer firewall active, since each gives a slightly different layer of protection from intruders.

Digital Dave

Recording Music from Cox Cable

Dear Digital Dave,

I live in San Diego and use Cox communication for my television service. My service has those channels where they only play music and show you bits of information about the artist. Is there a way to record the music off of the television or surround sound system to a CD or a memory card? Because once you pick the type of music you like, usually all the songs are

pretty good to just download for personal use.

Thanks, Dave,
Mike
San Diego, CA

Dear Mike,

Anything that you can play through speakers you can record. It's a matter of having the right equipment in the right place. If you're using a receiver to drive your surround sound, an audio output from your receiver could be used to connect some type of recording device whether a DVD recorder, computer, or something else. The exact set up would depend upon what you're using to record.

While I can understand your wanting the recordings for the car or another device, whether it's legal to do or not is another question. Of course the music industry doesn't want you to ever record, make a mixed CD, or upload to an iPod anything that you haven't specifically purchased. It is questionable whether the fees you pay to Cox qualify under Fair Use. If you buy a CD album or individual songs in digital form, then Fair Use says that you are allowed to make mixed CD or upload those tunes to an iPod for personal use. However, you are not supposed to distribute them in any form. Copying the signals from cable television may fall into the same category—I don't really know. After all, you can record video programming for later viewing. However, putting a television show on digital medium which can be easily distributed over the Internet is considered piracy. In any case, the music and entertainment industry doesn't get too much sympathy from the general public.

I've never attempted to record music from cable. (Okay, I did record Internet audio once as a test of the Windows audio recorder.) I usually just connect to Pandora through the Internet for free music. You can create the same type of channels for specific genres of music based upon artists or songs. The advantage to Pandora over the cable offering is that you can play the same channels on any of your devices, whether a smart TV, smartphone, computer, networked Wi-Fi Blu Ray DVD player, Roku, or any other Internet connected devices. No need to record anything. The free version does have some ads, but they are not nearly as intrusive as the ads on the radio.

Digital Dave

Windows 8 or 8.1?

Dear Digital Dave,

I have a new Dell beginner's computer with Windows

8 and they're offering me 8.1 free. However, wouldn't this be too much since there is only 4GB of memory? Plus, I'm a senior and don't want to mess with a complicated download, so would it be better to just use 8?

How much of a hassle is this upgrade and do the benefits outweigh the trouble? I like Windows 8 and find it easy to work with, also, it's only used for surfing newspapers and writing, plus looking at videos, therefore it would be a lot easier to just use it. You might find it to be fun doing this sort of thing, but I hate installing something like this and then setting it up—life is too short for this madness.
Alan Morast
Denver, Co

Dear Alan,

Some people may be shocked to hear that you "like Windows 8 and find it easy to work with." (You're supposed to be befuddled with Windows 8 and its Modern Start screen.) That means most of your battles with Windows 8 are over. The question of Windows 8.1 is now in front of you.

First, if you're already comfortable with Windows 8, then you probably won't find Windows 8.1 too much different. Most of the changes were in response to complaints from people who found it a hassle compared to Windows XP or Windows 7. The things that you like about Windows 8 should still be there and there are a few improvements in how the Modern interface works. It might be a good idea to see how Windows 8 has changed in Windows 8.1 before you decide. Checkout Jack Dunning's article "Making Windows 8.1 Act More Like Windows" or for even more in-depth information his e-book *Misunderstanding Windows 8.1*.

As for installing Windows 8.1, it is as simple as doing a Windows update—although you will find it through the Windows Store, not Windows Update. While it takes longer than the usual update, once started, upgrading from Windows 8 to Window 8.1 is all automatic.

Be sure to do all the regular Windows 8 updates before downloading and installing the Windows 8.1 Upgrade. Skipping some updates may not be a problem, but it's better to be safe than sorry. Check for updates by searching for "updates" in Settings (+W). Click "Windows Update" or "Check for updates."

To get your free Windows 8.1 Upgrade go to the Microsoft Store in the Modern Start screen. (The Windows 8.1 Upgrade will not appear in Window Update.)

Once you start the download process, the installation will take a while. You can continue to use the computer while Windows 8.1 is downloading and installing, but eventually it will go into its rebooting mode. When that starts, you will need to patiently wait until it's finished with the install configuration.

When completed I was supposed to be sent a code by e-mail for some type of account

validation. I never received it and continued without the code or a problem. This code is for accessing your Microsoft online account from other devices in a two-step process. If you are only using the Windows 8.1 account on your computer, then there probably won't be an issue. There isn't any set up necessary unless you want to implement some of the changes mentioned in Jack's article linked above.

No one will force you to upgrade, but it is not nearly as daunting a task as it may appear. If you like what you see, (some don't, but personally I did), then it is worth the time to upgrade.

Digital Dave

Darknets: Hiding in Anonymity

"Tor (The Onion Router) Is a Darknet Which Can Hide Your Internet Activities from Big Brother" by Jack Dunning

Like parallel universes, there are parallel Internets shrouded in secrecy. Used for both bringing down tyrannical governments and illicit activities, Tor (The Onion Router) protects dissidents as well as drug dealers from prying eyes.

One of the most serious threats to tyrannical governments is the Internet. Unconcerned about borders and local laws the Internet monster ventures everywhere shouting out diverse (often unwanted) opinions, thus creating general havoc. The communication between dissident parties incites like-minded people to take action against their oppressors. Critical to the worldwide upheavals in recent years has been Internet connections in the form of Tweets, Blogs, video streaming, and other types of digital interaction. Many besieged governments have taken extraordinary steps to control the cyber chat, but none has been able to stop it.

You might think that computers would be fairly easy to control with other computers. A government with huge resources might easily track down the culprits planning their undoing. After all, when connected to the Internet every computer has an IP address. Accessing a Web page with Internet Explorer or Google Chrome automatically gives the Web page server your IP address. That's how it knows where to send the requested data. However, the same IP also tells the servers who's your Internet provider and where you live—or at least your neighborhood. Enough is known about IP address geographic locations that it is used by Wi-Fi tracking software to find tablets and smartphones—without using any GPS. If the government is looking for you (and you leave Internet tracks), then you're not hard to find.

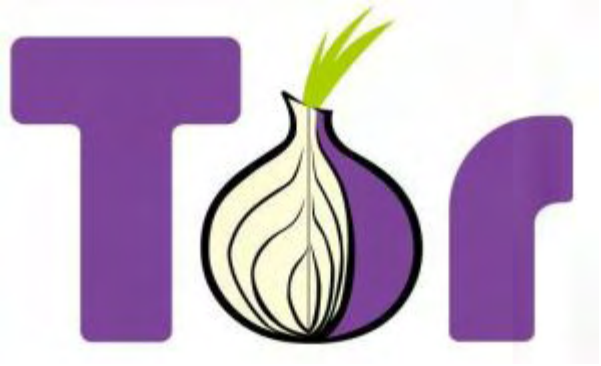
In this country, in spite of the recent NSA scandals, most people are not particularly concerned

about being watched. It's often hard to understand why anyone, much less the government, would be interested in the mundane details of our lives. The philosophy seems to be, "Who would want to listen in on my boring conversations?" (Yes, there are people who are very concerned about what the government is doing, but in this country that rarely converts to them taking steps to hide their activities. They usually just yell at the government, "Stop it!") It's accepted that if Big Brother wants to find you, he will find you. But in many other countries the free exchange of ideas that we enjoy in the United States and other free nations can result in life or death consequences. The question is: "How does someone reach out from inside a despotic regime to like-minded people both in that country and elsewhere in the world without opening up oneself to serious personal danger?" Enter darknets.

Darknets are Internet worlds unknown by most people. They don't show up in the usual Web browsers and Google does not index their hidden sites. They are where worlds can congregate in an secret environment away from prying eyes—whether for promoting dissident movements or illicit activity.

Darknet for Secret Internet Activity

Sometimes there are good reasons to hide your Internet activity—like when you're opposing an authoritarian government. Openly communicating on the Internet is inviting problems and it would be just plain foolish. Darknets provide a way for anyone to access the Internet without being tracked. For most people darknets don't exist. From PC World's Brad Chacos, "Darknets are small niches of the 'Deep Web,' which is itself a catch-all term for the assorted Net-connected stuff that isn't discoverable by the major search engines." You can't access them with Internet Explorer or other standard Web browsers. You won't find darknet sites with your Google or Bing search engine. They are a hidden subset of the Internet we know, sitting behind layers of computers in worldwide peer-to-peer networks. The key to darknet is encryption and the number of secret diversion nodes (multiple relaying computers) providing anonymity to the accessing computer. The walls of protection are often compared to the layers of an onion—thus names such as The Onion Router or Tor.



The Tor network is one of the best known and most used darknets. It runs on free software developed by the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory which provides a system for hiding activities on the Internet. The original concept was to build a way to protect military Internet communication from getting intercepted by the enemy. Some may feel it's a bit ironic that now Tor, developed by a branch of the United States government, can be used by virtually anyone to hide their Web activities—including drug dealers and terrorists. However, Tor is more than just software which can be used for good or for bad.

How Tor Works to Protect Web Browsing

Tor is an unseen Web that can't be accessed with your regular browser nor found with the average search engine. There are no Webbots roaming Tor to catalog the secretive sites. The sites are distinguished by the extension *.onion*, but plug *kbhpodhnfxl3clb4.onion* (a real Tor site for the Torsearch search engine) into your favorite Web browser and you will find nothing. To both protect activities from being discovered and access these hidden sites, special tools are needed in the form of the Tor Browser Bundle. If you're using Internet Explorer or Google Chrome, then Tor doesn't exist.

There are two key aspects to the cyber protection offered through Tor. The first is the identity protection provided to Tor browser users. The second is the creation of hidden Web pages only accessible through the Tor browser.

The way Tor works is by encrypting your Web requests (through the Tor browser) and sending it to a random hidden Tor server. The server in turn sends the request on to another Tor server—still encrypted. This relaying is done a number of times until the request is sent to its final destination (see Figure 1). The identity of the surfer is hidden behind encryption and the layers of Tor servers. If the target Web page is on the clear net (regular Web pages, not *.onion*), then the last leg of the journey is unencrypted.

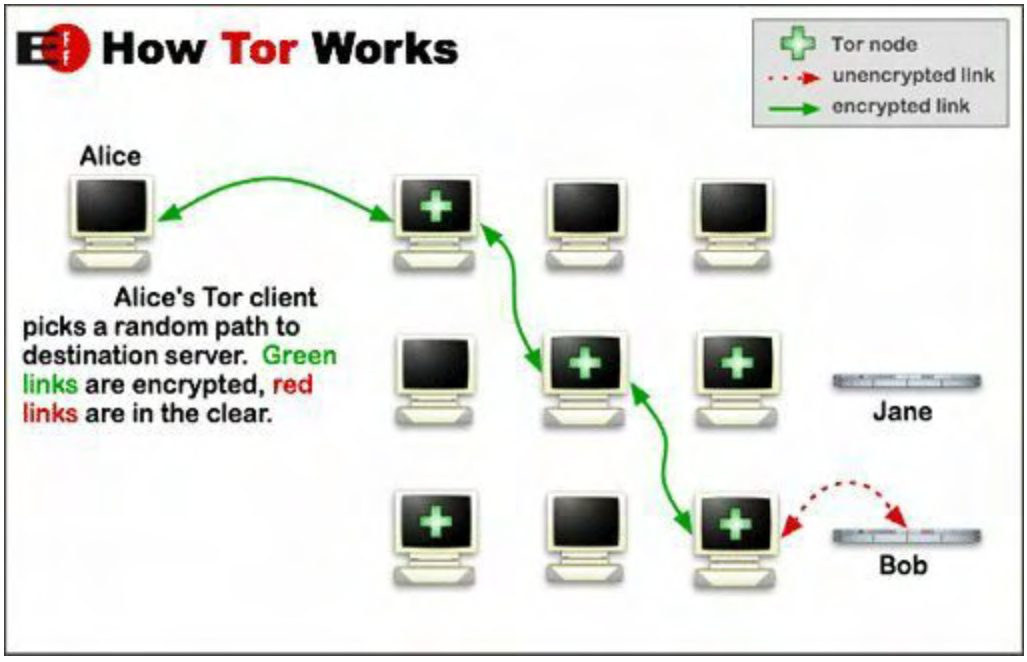


Figure 1. Tor offers encrypted Web browsing through random servers (nodes) until reaching the final destination. If the Web page is not hidden in The Onion Router network (Tor), then the last request is not encrypted.

Since one of the most common ways that computers are identified is through the IP assigned by an Internet provider, the Tor browser assigns a new IP to the computer for connecting to Web pages. Every time the Tor browser is loaded, the computer gets a new IP as shown in

Figure 6 below. By default, the Tor browser is in private mode, not recording history or cookies. In fact the Tor browser does not write anything to disk unless forced to do so. Cookies, if needed during a session, are temporarily written to memory only. When the Tor browser is closed, all cookies, history (if any) and cache are erased.

I tested this Tor IP masking by viewing a special ComputorEdge *page which returns the user's IP address. Normally, I would see the IP assigned by my Internet provider, but when using the Tor browser it displayed the temporary IP shown in Figure 6. I was well hidden from the prying eyes of* ComputorEdge.com.

The surfer's identity is hidden behind layers of equally well hidden servers relaying the Web request. On the return trip the Web page content, initially sent in the clear if it's a regular Web page, is encrypted through the hidden nodes until it is decoded by the Tor browser. This protects against the return page being tracked to the requesting computer. While Tor does a pretty good job of hiding the user's computer, once the communication is in the open (accessing a non-Tor site), any user input such as username, password, personal information given by the user is available to that non-hidden Web site—just as it is in regular browsing. The entire track is protected only when accessing a hidden Tor site with the Tor browser. Even then, if sensitive information is revealed to the hidden site, the site's owners are free to do as they will.

Anyone can download the free Tor Browser Bundle which provides anonymity while surfing the Web. Tor Browser Bundle includes a stand-alone modified Mozilla Firefox Web browser that shrouds your identity. No installation required. "The Tor Browser Bundle lets you use Tor on Windows, Mac OS X, or Linux without needing to install any software. It can run off a USB flash drive, comes with a pre-configured Web browser to protect your anonymity, and is self-contained."

The Tor Browser

Once the Tor Bundle is downloaded, it's just a matter of a double-clicking to expand the compressed files into a folder. This new folder can be moved anywhere and run from anything including a thumb drive. There are no registry settings to worry about.

If you later delete the folder, then there will be no other trace of the Tor browser on your computer. (If you're worried about the deleted files still sitting on your hard drive, use CCleaner's secure delete mode which can overwrite the file space on the hard drive to actually erase them.)

Load the Tor browser by opening the Tor folder at the saved location and double-clicking *Start Tor Browser.exe*. The program will connect with the Tor network and load the opening screen (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. When first loaded the Tor browser displays the Startpage for searching both clear and hidden (.onion) pages. Click the "Test Tor Network Settings" (circled in red) to view your temporary IP (see Figure 6).

In most cases, if you don't have special restrictions (Tor blocking) set up by your company or the government, then there should be no problem getting started. However, if you do run into problems, then there are special instructions on the Tor site for setting up alternative ways to connect (proxy servers).

You should check out the additional warnings found through the "Tips On Staying Anonymous" link. This will help you understand how Big Brother may still find you even though you're hidden. Also, note that Tor browsing is slower than normal browsing due to the anonymous relaying. Tor is not the browser for watching YouTube and other services which use plug-ins. These add-ons are often open holes in security.

Finding Tor Pages

The first thing that you'll likely want to do is get your bearings and find your way around Tor.

Type "hidden wiki" into the search field shown in Figure 2 and enter. This is a search engine which displays both the clear Web sites and some hidden Tor sites (Figure 3) with the extension *.onion.to* which is the clear version of a Tor page (*.to*) and can be opened with any browser. These *.onion.to* pages may not resemble the actual Tor page and are not hosted on the Tor network. When using the Tor browser the *.to* is automatically dropped and the hidden Tor page (*.onion*) is loaded.

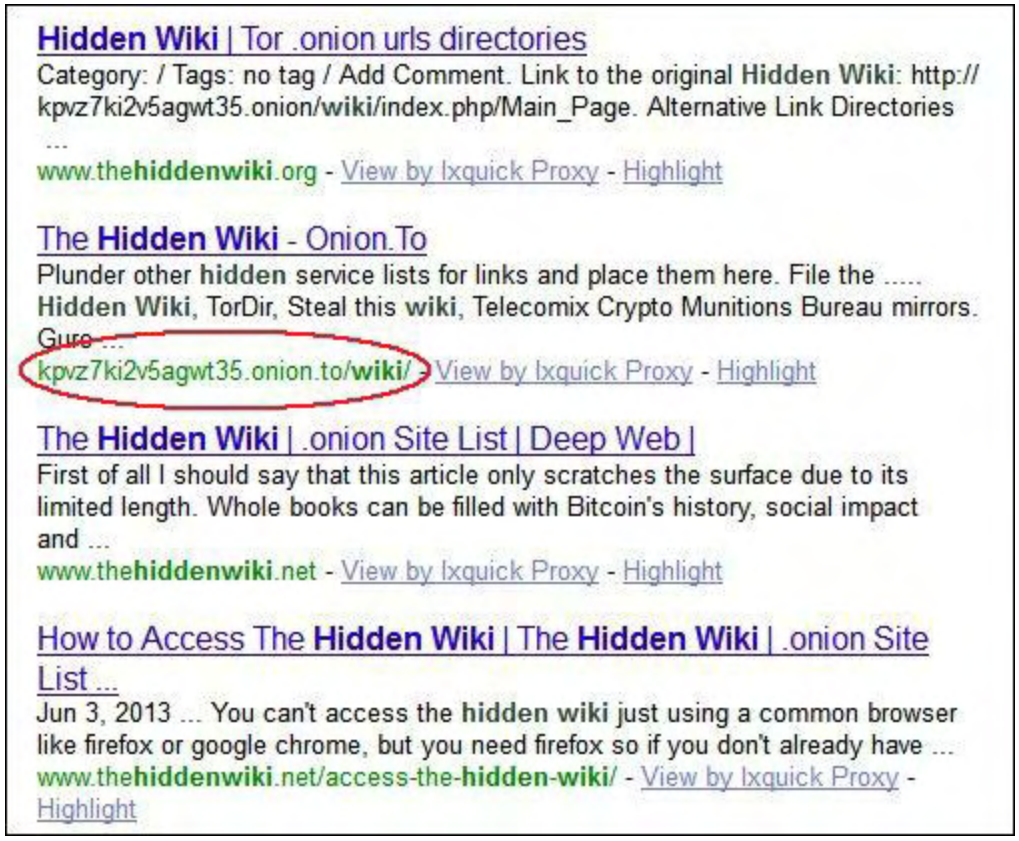


Figure 3. The initial search displays both clear and hidden (.onion.to) pages (circled in red).

While these are all Web pages on the clear net, some either list Tor page links on regular Web or will access a Tor page directly (*.onion.to*). If the links are followed when using the Tor browser, the hidden pages will load.

The Hidden Wiki

The Hidden Wiki on the clear Web is actually just a set of *.onion* links to the real Hidden Wiki (hidden). These pages will not display when the link is clicked in a regular browser unless *.to* is added to the URL (*.onion.to*)—although this is not recommended since you are not using the protections of the Tor browser or the Tor network to view the page. Clicking on the Hidden Wiki page link will load a list of Tor sites (see Figure 4).

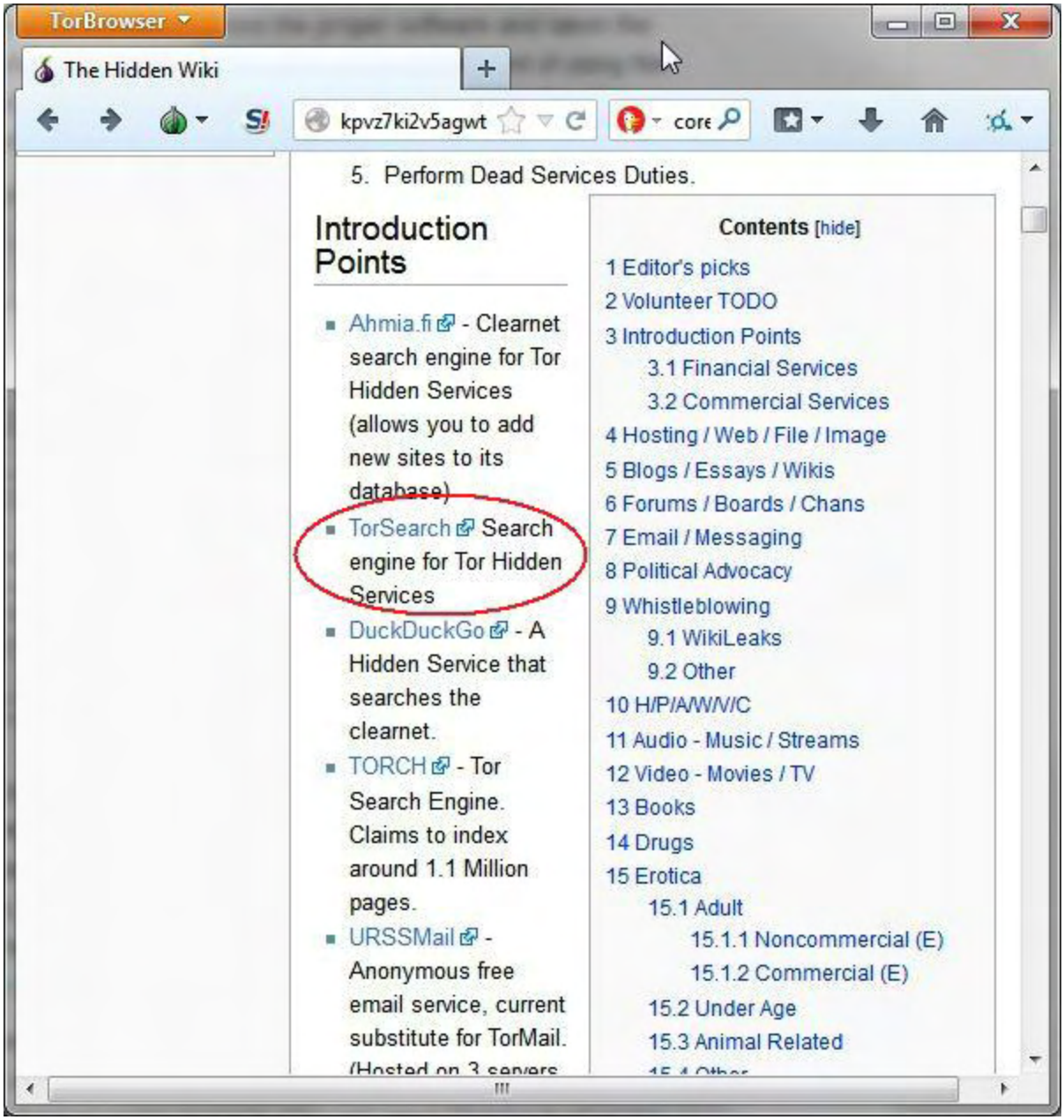


Figure 4. The Hidden Wiki displays a list of hidden sites which include Tor search engines and various other services.

Many of the linked Tor sites in the Hidden Wiki are search engines which only list hidden Tor pages. This is a good place to start. Click on the TorSearch link to load that search engine (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. The TorSearch page claims "Around 320,000 hidden pages index." Other Tor search engines may have more.

Not all Tor search engines offer the same results and often URLs change as pages move around. Enter a search term such as "hidden wiki" in the TorSearch field and you will note that all of the pages returned are hidden (.onion) pages. Many of the Tor pages on this particular list look like specialized Tor directory pages.

Because of the nature of hidden pages, the URLs might change on a regular basis. Some you may only be able to find if someone gives you the URL. By the very nature of Tor, there is no one source which offers a complete listing of what's on the Tor network. Also, since many unsavory types use Tor for illicit purposes, it is wise to use an abundance of caution and heed the warnings offered by the Tor project. There are many phishing schemes on Tor, some of which may be run by hackers or even the NSA (National Security Agency). Unless you happen to be a dissident in an oppressive country, traversing a Darknet may feel much like walking through the seedy part of town. Keep your eyes open.

As I mentioned earlier, the temporary IP address shown to the world changes every time you load the Tor browser. However, if you're in an extended browsing session you may want to reconnect with Tor and get a new IP by clicking the onion icon and selecting New Identity (see Figure 6). At one point when I was having trouble loading certain Tor pages due to a timeout in the connection, getting a New Identity resolved the problem.

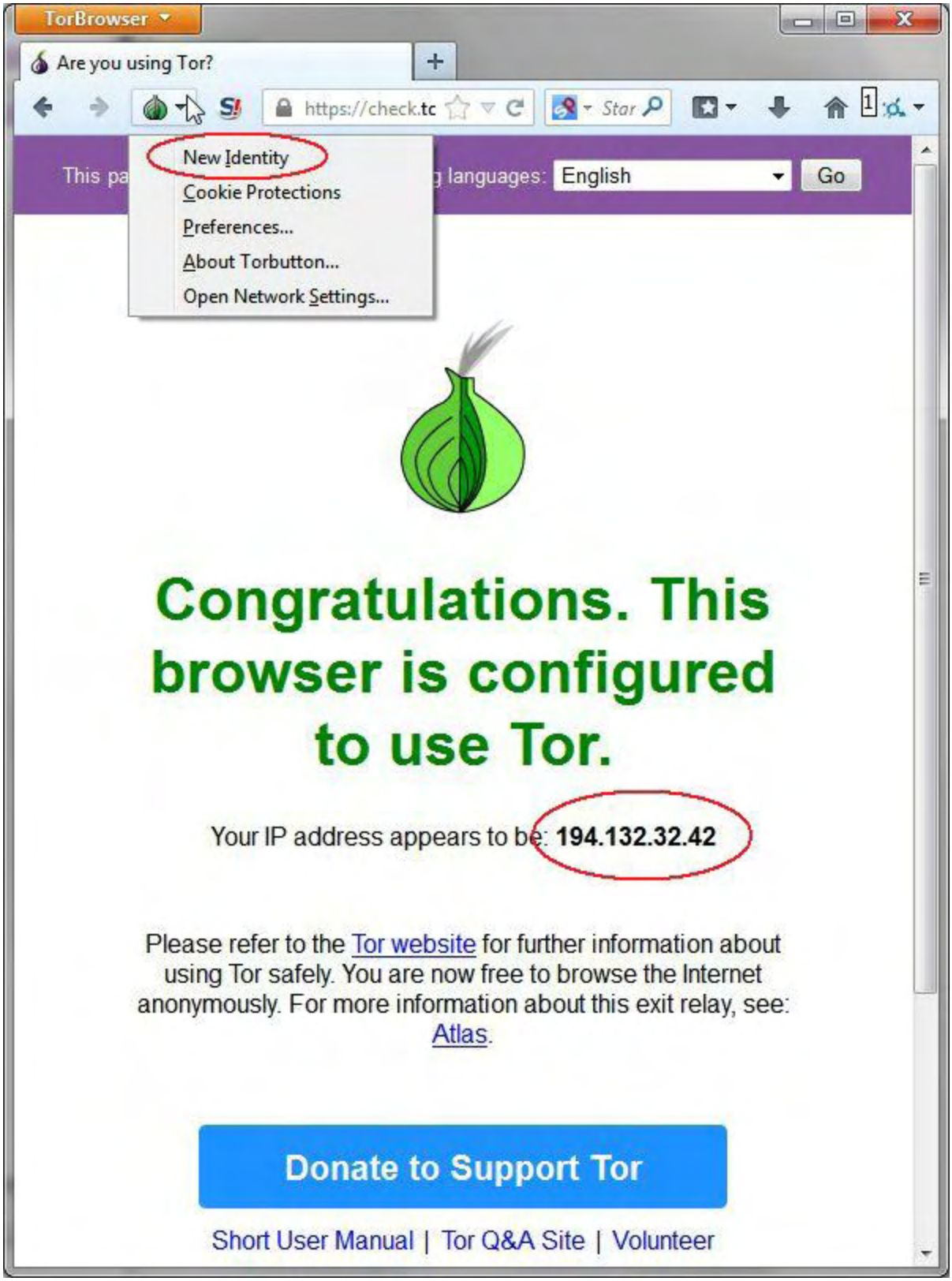


Figure 6. At any time, you can get a new identity (hidden IP address) by clicking on the onion icon and selecting New Identity.

You should exercise all the same caution on Tor as you would the clear Web.

Hidden Tor Pages

If you want to hide some Web activity, such as the company football pool, then there are ways to set up your own hidden Tor services. Hidden services may be any number of activities including Tor pages, Blogs, and e-mail. This is how the darknet Tor service completes the hidden system. Since all the connections are encrypted throughout the entire circuit everything is buried in layers of Tor nodes and difficult to identify.

While I haven't attempted to set up any Tor hidden services of my own, I've noted that there are other hidden pages which offer theirs (some free, some paid) for providing Tor page hosting, free e-mail and other features. The main problem with these services is that unless you know and trust them, they could be phishing operations looking for personal information or even one of the NSA computers.

If you do decide to purchase hidden services, the coin of the realm is generally "Bitcoin: The New Cyber Currency". Since there are no identities revealed in Bitcoin transactions, using Bitcoin falls right in line with the paradigm of anonymity behind Tor.

Some media companies have set up hidden Tor sites for people who leak sensitive information about government or company activities. In these situations, Tor hides both the leaker and the people receiving the leaks. This is probably one way that Snowden disseminated US national secrets. The notorious WikiLeaks is a well known user of Tor. In fact, it would be no surprise to find out that the NSA is an active user of Tor for its own purposes, both for hiding its own activities and setting up dummy relay nodes and hidden sites to capture traffic and phish for terrorists. I have no doubt that the CIA knows Tor well. Since everyone is anonymous, you don't really know who you might be talking to.

For good or bad, Tor (and other darknet services) are here to stay. While they get rapped for illicit activity and leaking national secrets, they are also used for a great deal of good. See for yourself in this list of how "Normal people use Tor." Maybe all you want is avoid leaving tracks on the Internet. I don't know that I will make much use of the Tor browser myself, but anything that puts fear into the autocracies around the world should be applauded.

Jack is the publisher of ComputorEdge 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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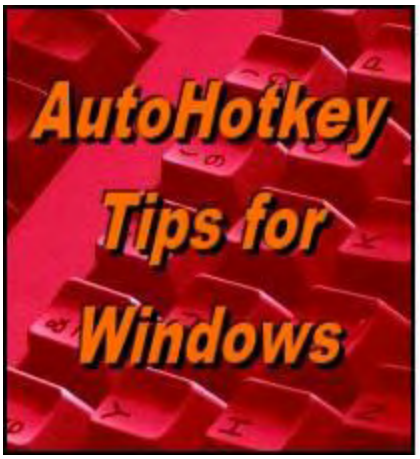


Easy Beginner AutoHotkey Tricks You Should Use with Windows

"Using the Same Right-click Menu Repeatedly? Protect from Carpal Tunnel with This AutoHotkey Tip" by Jack Dunning

If you have a right-click menu that you use over and over again, then you can save time and repetitive finger actions by setting up an AutoHotkey hotkey to get the job done.

If you want to save yourself some mouse clicks, a possible contributor to carpal tunnel syndrome, in an often used right-click menu sequence, then you should turn your menu selections into AutoHotkey hotkeys. For many right-click options, there are already assigned hotkeys. In those situations, it's often easier to use the hotkey combinations rather than right-click, move down the menu, pop up the submenu, slide down the new menu, then left-click on the desired item. If nothing else, doing this mouse procedure over and over again becomes quite tedious. Especially, if you have to do it a lot. The problem is that some programs don't have a hotkey for selected options.

For example, in many e-mail client programs it can be useful to add certain domains to the Blocked Senders list to stop anymore junk mail from a specific domain. In the Windows 7 Mail program, this is done by selecting the received junk message, opening the right-click menu, sliding down to "Junk email", waiting for the next menu to open, then left-clicking "Add sender's domain to blocked sender list" (see Figure 1). Then any incoming mail from that domain is automatically moved to the Junk Mail folder. But there is no hotkey for adding the domain to the Blocked Senders list. The option and hotkey combination shown as "Mark as junk" merely moves the e-mail to the junk folder without any type of permanent remedy.

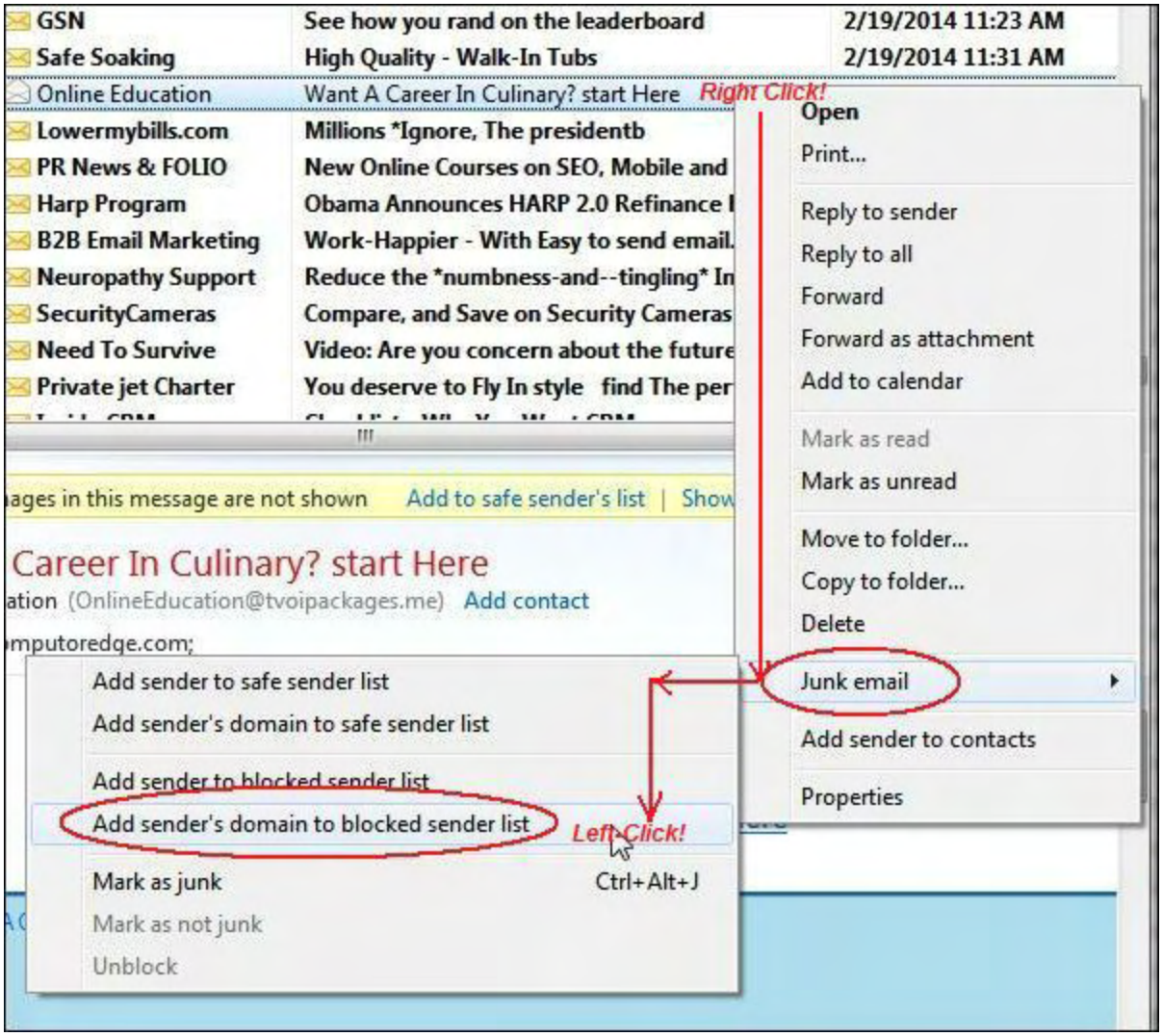


Figure 1. The sender's domain is added to the blocked e-mail list through the right-click menu.

To remedy this situation the following short AutoHotkey script can be used:

```
^!j::
  Click Right
  Sleep 200
  Send, {DOWN 13}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {RIGHT}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {DOWN 3}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {ENTER}
Return
```

When loaded this script will execute the domain blocking for Windows Mail in Windows 7. It is not a universal script because it is tailored to the specific menu in Windows Mail. But that means you can easily change it to conform to any right-click menu in any Windows program.

Hotkeys are setup by adding specific key combinations to an AutoHotkey script followed by a double colon (::), followed by action commands and terminated by the Return command. This places in memory a routine which will be activated every time the hotkey combination is pressed.

Note: You do need the free AutoHotkey program installed on your computer, but writing a script can be as simple as adding the code to a Notepad file with the .ahk *extension. See "Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script."*

To activate the action, the target e-mail must be selected in the e-mail list when CTRL+ALT+J (^+!+J) is pressed. (You may note that this is also the hotkey combination assigned to "Mark as junk." You can use any combination you like, but this will override the original combination so the hotkeys will both send the e-mail to the Junk folder and add the domain to the blocked list.)

The Click command (*Click Right*) is used to send a right-click to the selected item. This opens the right-click menu for the selected item. But since the *Click* command is used, it's necessary for the cursor to remain within the e-mail list pane when the hotkey combination is executed. Otherwise, the right-click menu will open for wherever the cursor happens to be sitting (the Desktop or other window) with unpredictable consequences. (To prevent random right-click menus from a misplaced hovering mouse, a trick for blocking the routine when the cursor is not over the list of messages appears below.)

The Sleep command (*Sleep 200*) is there merely to pause the script while allowing enough time for the menu to open and become active. Otherwise the script may outrun the menu action and do nothing—or worse the wrong thing. The number of microseconds used can vary based upon what your Windows system needs. Initially, you may want to slow down the script by making the delays longer (*Sleep 1000* for one second) so you can see whether the proper menu items are being selected.

The Send command (*Send, {DOWN 13}*) is used to move the cursor down the menu to "Junk email." The number 13 added to DOWN simulates pushing the down arrow 13 times. It's important to get the number right. Otherwise the wrong option could be activated. That's the reason for slowing it down while testing. Then after the submenu automatically opens, the right arrow key is sent (*Send, {RIGHT}*). Down three more (*Send, {DOWN 3}*), then the ENTER key is sent (*Send, {ENTER}*) to execute the option. Don't use the *Click Left* command because at this point the actual mouse cursor could be sitting almost anywhere.

Preventing Action from a Wandering Mouse

This trick is a little more advanced and you don't need to do it if you're comfortable with keeping the mouse hovering inside the message list pane in Windows Mail. But it does protect against inadvertent right-click menus with wrong selections.

As noted above, the *Click* command will activate at the location of a hovering mouse. As long as the mouse is anywhere over the list of messages, then the *Click Right* command will act on the currently selected message. In order to prevent random right-click menus caused by a mouse wandering over other windows (or panes within Mail), the hotkey routine must be stopped from activating when the mouse is not hovering over the list of messages.

The AutoHotkey download includes a program called AutoIt3 Window Spy. After installation, it can be found in the AutoHotkey programs folder. This program is commonly used to identify specific information about active windows and controls within those windows for use in AutoHotkey scripts. Open Window Spy by selecting it from the Programs list, finding it through the Start Search field (Windows Vista or 7), or right-clicking on the icon in the System Tray for an active AutoHotkey script (*.ahk*) and selecting Window Spy from the menu, see Figure 2.

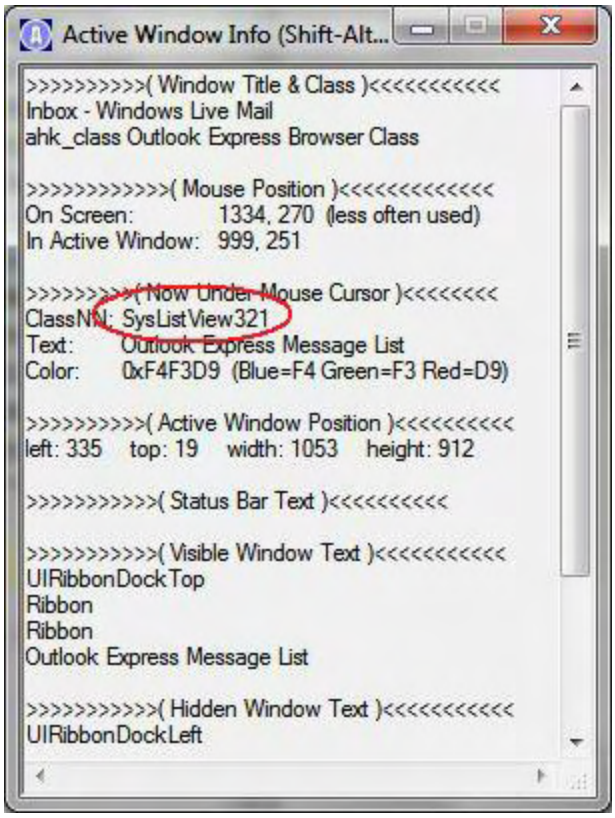


Figure 2. Window Spy shows that the Message List and a control class of SysListView321 when Mail is active and the mouse is hovering over the Inbox list.

Click on a message in Windows Mail (or whatever program you're using) and note the value of ClassNN in the Now Under Mouse Cursor section. This is the control id needed to isolate the routine—in this case *SysListView321*.

To isolate the routine to that control pane the following code is added to the script:

```
^!j::
MouseGetPos,,,, MailWindow
```

```
If MailWindow = SysListView321
{
  Click Right
  sleep 200
  Send, {DOWN 13}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {RIGHT}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {DOWN 3}
  Sleep 200
  Send, {ENTER}
}
Return
```

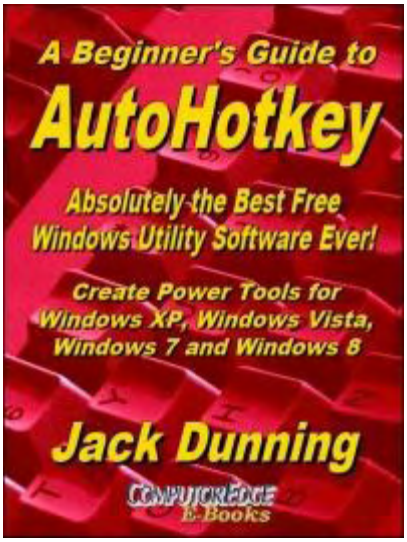
The MouseGetPos command is used to grab the control id for whatever control is under the hovering mouse in the active window and stored it in the variable *MailWindow*. Note that there are four commas used before the *MailWindow* variable name. They are all required, otherwise different information will be store in *MailWindow* (see the MouseGetPos command linked above).

Next, only if the variable *MailWindow* equals "SysListView321" will the rest of the right-click menu routine run. This prevents accidental firing of the routine when the mouse is in the wrong location—outside the message list pane.

Warning: If you accidentally add a domain, such as gmail.com, to the blocked domain list, then you won't see any messages from people who use that domain (e.g. Gmail). Periodically check the Blocked Senders list for domain that should not *be blocked.*

You may not need this script for making a hotkey to add domains to the blocked e-mail list, but this same simple technique can be use anywhere in Windows where there is a right-click menu. If you find yourself repeating a mouse right-click procedure ad infinitum, then you should set up a hotkey combination with AutoHotkey. It's as simple as that. It's quick and may save you from carpal tunnel syndrome.

* * *



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 ComputorEdgeBooks 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.

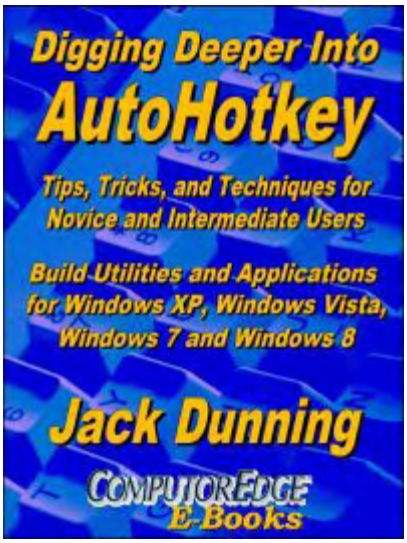
Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while 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 *ComputorEdge*, 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 *ComputorEdge* 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 ComputorEdge 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 *ComputorEdge* cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! *That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputorEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"*

Special Free Offer at ComputorEdge 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

"Disappearing Technology" by Wally Wang

Disappearing Technology; Looking Back at Windows 8; Predicting the Stock Market with an iPad; More iWatch Rumors; Empty Trash Securely.

Remember when people went on vacation and mailed postcards to their friends? Now they can just upload a picture on Instagram or Twitter and let people see their pictures instantly.

What about looking up a company in the Yellow Pages? Folding a map? Using a travel agent? Paying to put a classified ad in the newspaper? Use a disposable camera? There are so many activities we used to do that have disappeared in the past few years that looking back, it makes you wonder how anyone could have believed those disappearing technologies would be around forever.

What's surprising is that the leaders of disappearing technology rarely make the transition to a new world, despite their massive lead in their current market. The Yellow Pages represented an early form of search engines, so logically the Yellow Pages should have been Google. Montgomery Ward pioneered mail-order shopping, so they should have become Amazon. Kodak dominated the photography business so they should have been Instagram. Every major city newspaper dominated the classified ad market, so they should have been Craigslist.

What's amazing is that Microsoft pioneered the Tablet PC way back in 2001, which should have evolved into the iPad. The huge problems with these early Tablet PCs were their higher cost compared to ordinary laptops, the weight and bulk that combined a tablet with a laptop without being optimized for either use (sound familiar?), and the lack of dedicated tablet programs that took full advantage of the tablet form.

In return for paying more and getting a Tablet PC that was too heavy to use comfortably as a tablet with virtually no programs that took advantage of the tablet form, can anyone guess why Tablet PCs never grew in popularity? Yet Microsoft correctly predicted the future, then fumbled it away because they never optimized their tablets for mobile use. If an iPad weighed as much as a laptop and cost even more, nobody would buy an iPad.

In 2000, Microsoft introduced Microsoft Reader, an e-book reader program that focused on displaying text clearly on screens while also allowing note taking and the ability to read text out loud. Way back in 2000, Microsoft essentially predicted the e-book market. Instead of promoting e-books, Microsoft basically released advanced technology and failed to give people a reason why they should use it. Not surprisingly, Microsoft let their Microsoft Reader project die in 2011. In the meantime, Amazon took over the e-book market long ago because Microsoft never bothered to exploit their early advantage in e-book reader technology.

In 2004, Microsoft introduced smartwatches, but killed the project in 2008 due to poor sales. So Microsoft basically had a ten year head start on everyone in tablet computing, e-book readers, and wearable computing, and they fumbled away all three huge advantages while watching competitors race past them to the point where Microsoft will likely never catch up in any of those three major markets.

So what mistakes did Microsoft make? Instead of designing Tablet PCs as mobile computers, Microsoft tried to turn laptops into tablets. This is nearly as bad as trying to cram the desktop operating system interface of Windows XP into the tinier screen of smartphones (Windows Mobile), or trying to cram the smartphone interface of Windows Phone into the larger screen of PCs (Windows 8).

With Microsoft Reader, the company didn't make it easy for people to publish and distribute e-books like Amazon has done with their Kindle self-publishing program. By making it difficult to create e-books to distribute through Microsoft Reader, few people had a reason to use Microsoft Reader. With few people using Microsoft Reader, even fewer people had a reason to even try to sell e-books for Microsoft Reader, creating a vicious cycle of no return.

Microsoft had the lead in e-book publishing that they could have turned into distribution as well. Instead, the company threw the technology on the market, hoped the tech-savvy users would find a use for it, and couldn't figure out why no one was using their advanced technology when even they couldn't figure out why they would use it.

With Microsoft's smartwatches, the company charged $39 and up a year for a subscription to receive news through FM radio. The cost of the smartwatch combined with an annual subscription fee to give you information you could easily get somewhere else made Microsoft's smartwatch expensive and relatively useless.

Microsoft's mistakes in tablets, e-book readers, and smartwatches all boils down to creating products that didn't dramatically offer advantages over existing technology. That's essentially the same mistakes Microsoft keeps repeating with Windows 8. It doesn't matter how fancy the technology might be if it doesn't help people do something faster or better that they couldn't do before.

With so many examples of Microsoft anticipating the future long before any rivals came up with similar products, it's clear that Microsoft is loaded with technical talent. The way Microsoft fumbled away their ten year advantage over rivals also shows that Microsoft is

loaded with short-sighted business executives who fail to recognize innovation even when it's staring at them right in front of their faces, such as Steve Ballmer laughing at the iPhone, which now earns more money than the combined revenue of every product that Microsoft sells.

When former giants like Montgomery Ward, Kodak, and the Yellow Pages lose their lead, never to recover again, does anyone think this can't possibly happen to Microsoft in the near future? Just a few years ago, nobody thought that Blockbuster Video would ever lose their lead in the video rental market. Now most Blockbuster Video stores are gone.

Most kids growing up today still can't believe people once listened to music on vinyl records, had to watch TV shows at a certain time or miss them forever, or used telephones with cords that required talking to an operator to make a long distance call. In the future, people might one day look back and wonder what happened to Microsoft.

Perhaps they'll remember the name of Microsoft in the same breath that they mention names like Blackberry, Palm Computing, and Nokia. The only difference is that Microsoft actually created advanced products way ahead of their competition, then did nothing with it until their rivals came up with something even better.

Looking Back at Windows 8

When Microsoft first released Windows 8, Windows enthusiasts hailed it as a revolutionary interface. Writing in the February 20, 2013 issue of the *MIT Technology Review*, Simson Garfinkel wrote that "After using the new operating system in all its incarnations on a phone, on Microsoft's Surface tablet, and on several desktops, I've come to regard it as truly transformative. Windows 8 will well serve the needs of those nontechnical users who just want to access their online social networks, watch Netflix, and go shopping—especially since the underlying system provides more security while making it easier for them to find, download, and install their (Microsoft-approved) apps. Windows 8 does a poor job of catering to knowledge workers like me who earn a living by synthesizing information from multiple data sources or use application programs that have hundreds of specialized features. But those brain-heavy office workers do not represent Microsoft's present or future."

Here's a bizarre example of confused thinking. Simson Garfinkel says that Windows 8 is great for nontechnical users. Yet Windows 8's disappearing icons on the Charm Bar and requirement to go through multiple steps to perform the simplest tasks (such as shutting down your computer) means the interface is much harder to use, specifically for nontechnical users.

Simson Garfinkel admits that Windows 8 does a poor job of catering to knowledge workers who need to use programs with specialized features, but then claims that "those brain-heavy office workers do not represent Microsoft's present or future."

Doesn't this ignore Microsoft's strength in the enterprise market? So Microsoft created an operating system to cater to nontechnical users, while making it harder for nontechnical users to use. Then they're marketing Windows 8 to the enterprise market while not making the interface suitable for the enterprise market?

When you cater to nontechnical users, but make the interface difficult for nontechnical users, and when you complicate tasks for the enterprise market while trying to sell to the enterprise market, is it really surprising that Windows 8 has such poor acceptance among the public in comparison to Windows 7?

Microsoft clearly doesn't lack engineering talent. What they sorely lack is design talent and executives capable of long-term, strategic planning that doesn't involve trying to copy the leader in another market every few years. With a new CEO, Microsoft has a chance to distance themselves from their culture of technological complexity. Can the new CEO change Microsoft in time?

With Windows 8 sales stalling, Sony's PlayStation outselling the Xbox, Windows Phone struggling, and Windows RT doing nothing to boost sales of Surface tablets, Microsoft's new CEO better change directions for the company in a hurry.

Given the inherent problems with Windows 8, Windows 9 will have to clean up the mess that Windows 8 created, and even Windows 9 won't likely win back customers who have already defected to Linux or the Macintosh. Nobody wants to wait for Microsoft's promises that the next version will fix the problems of the current version. If Microsoft keeps shooting themselves in the foot, they'll have nobody to blame but themselves, although you can be sure all the top executives will grant themselves million dollar bonuses long before the company gets into serious trouble.

Predicting the Stock Market with an iPad

People have come up with all sorts of ways to predict the stock market, even including reading astrological signs. What's interesting about so many different stock prediction methods is that many of them actually work, but only under certain circumstances. The problem is you never know when those favorable circumstances might appear or suddenly change.

One of the more mathematically based stock predicting methods involves Fibonacci numbers. According to its supporters, Fibonacci numbers can be seen everywhere in nature from the spiral of sea shells to the blossoming of flowers. Because Fibonacci numbers occur in nature, the theory is that stock prices also tend to move based on Fibonnaci numbers.

While you could calculate Fibonacci numbers on your own, it's far simpler to use a program to calculate these numbers for different stock prices instead. One such program for the iPad is called Stock Signals.

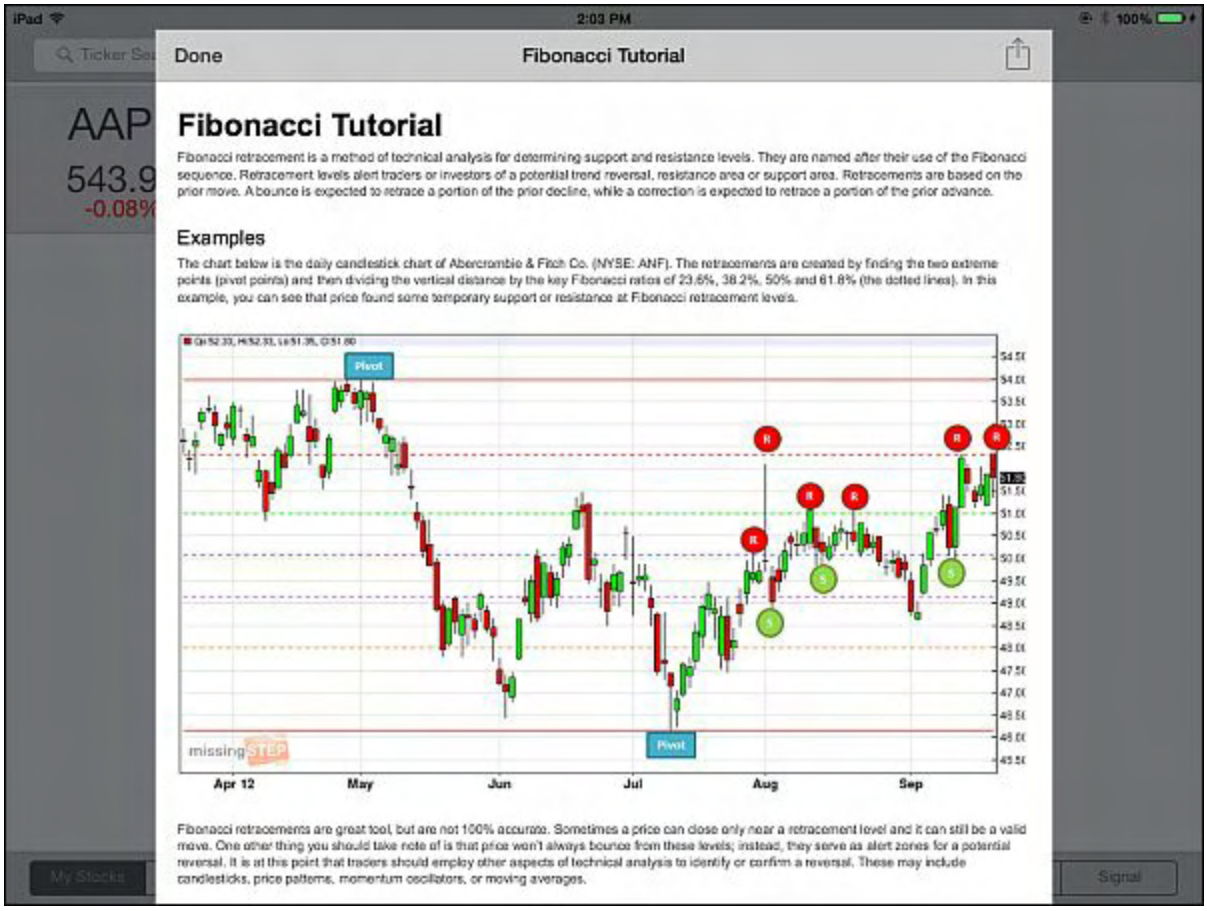


Figure 1. Stock Signals uses Fibonacci numbers to predict stock prices.

By simply typing in a stock symbol such as APPL for Apple, you can not only track the latest stock prices, but also see buying (green) or selling (red) signals based on Fibonacci numbers. Now you can try timing your stock purchases to buy low and sell high.

Figure 2. Stock Signals tries to alert you to potential buying and selling opportunities.

If you track your favorite stock, you'll see plenty of times when Stock Signals predicts right and when it predicts wrong. Instead of trying to guess when Stock Signals may be right or wrong, it might actually be better to simply stick with all of its predictions.

The way most stock prediction methods work is that if you stick with the system over time, statistically you'll come out further ahead than if you didn't follow the system at all. That takes discipline though to keep following the system even when it keeps failing. Discipline is basically all that separates great stock traders from losing traders, which explains why automated trading systems that are completely controlled by computers can consistently churn profits out of the stock market.

Besides offering buying and selling advice, Stock Signals can also display the latest financial news so you can follow along with news that could affect your stock portfolio. Stock Signals comes in a basic and professional version so you can try the basic version. If you like it, then consider upgrading to the professional version.

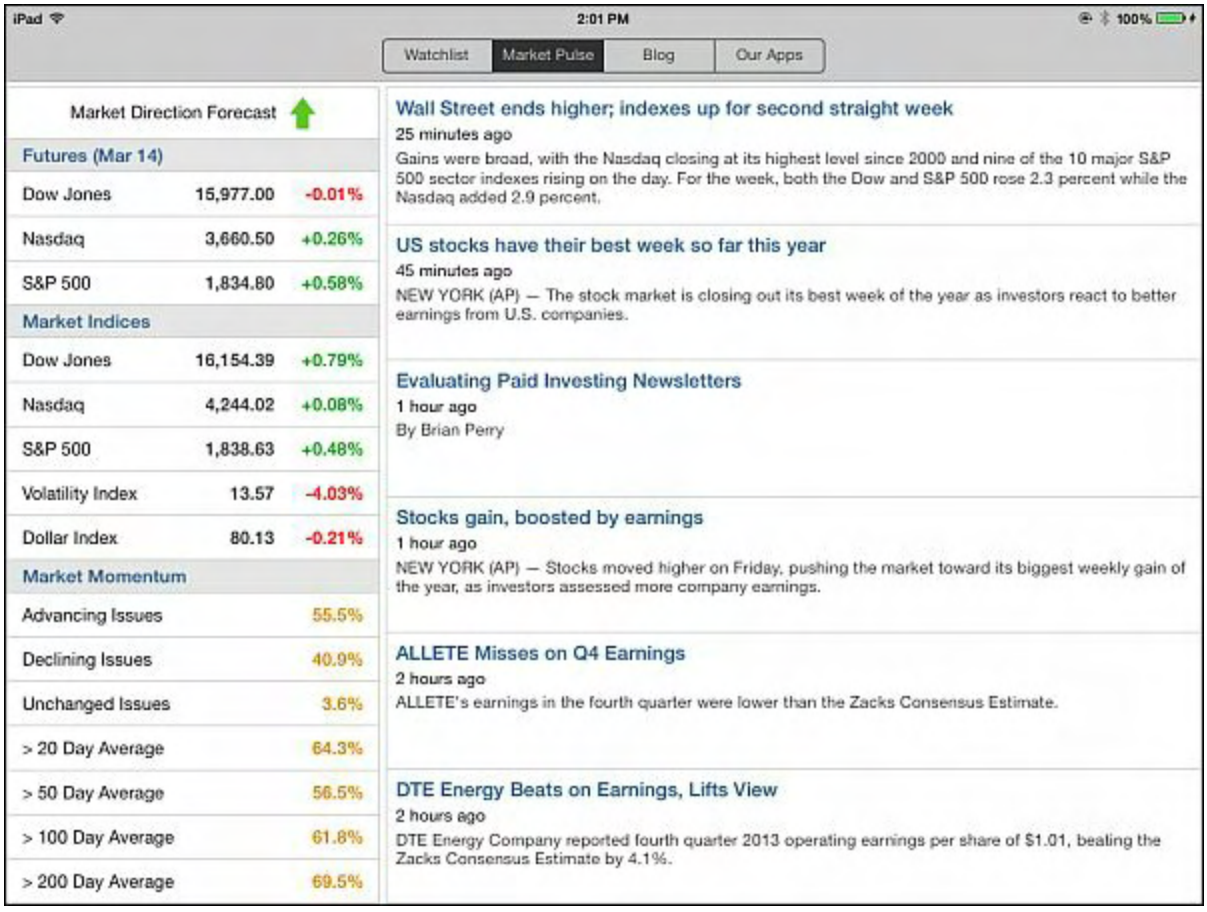


Figure 3. Stock Signals can track financial news.

Will Stock Signals make you rich in the stock market? Maybe, but remember that animals often pick stocks better than many so-called professionals. If Stock Signals doesn't predict

winning stocks, perhaps you can ask your dog, cat, or hamster for advice. Then as a last resort, ask a human. Just make sure you don't pay that human an outrageous fee until that person can prove that he or she can actually make money for you.

More iWatch Rumors

In the days leading up to the announcement of the iPad, rumors started coming out so often about the device that Hewlett-Packard even tried to preempt the iPad by releasing their Slate PC running Windows 7. Not surprisingly, shoving a desktop operating system in a tablet form failed dramatically.

Now rumors keep piling up on the potential features of the iWatch wearable computer that Apple will supposedly release sometime this year. The latest rumor points to using optoelectronics to measure changes in light reflected by the body. By using optoelectronics, a device could monitor blood oxygen levels in a process known as pulse oximetry.

Not coincidentally, Apple recently hired Marcelo Malini Lamego and Michael O'Reilly, two former executives from the pulse oximetry company Masimo Corporation. Why would Apple suddenly load up with so many medical device specialists if they weren't planning to do something in that field?

Today's wearable computers either don't offer anything special (Samsung's Galaxy Gear smartwatch) or offer minor but interesting features like video recording (Google Glass). Unfortunately for Google Glass, constant video surveillance may be useful, but only for a handful of actual applications such as police officers recording their actions. For most people, the ability to constantly record video is nice, but not necessarily critical.

By measuring heart rates or glucose levels, the potential iWatch offers far more useful features that can't be duplicated by current technologies as easily. Most likely the iWatch will focus on the health and fitness market for athletes who want to improve their performance, and potentially ill people who need close monitoring of their physical conditions. For many people, the iWatch could open a whole new field of computing combined with biosensors.

The expertise needed to duplicate the iWatch will be difficult to copy, which means the iWatch will likely carve out a sizable niche for itself. After all, if your life depends on having the best wearable computer to monitor your health, you probably won't choose a second-rate copy cat device just to save a little money or to get the option of customizing your device's operating system if it puts your health at risk.

The world of wearable computers should prove interesting to watch. Google has Google Glass while Apple has the rumored iWatch. That leaves everyone else with no long-term strategy for the wearable computing market other than to copy Apple or Google. Microsoft's goal is to cram one operating system into every device possible, so let's see how Microsoft gets

Windows 8 working in the smaller size of a wearable device without compromising its effectiveness.

To learn more about the potential uses for wearable computers, visit the Interaction Design Foundation site where you can read examples of wearable computers. One example is augmented reality, where the computer could provide additional information about something you're looking at, such as providing street names when you look at a road.

Figure 4. Augmented reality can provide you with additional information at what you're seeing.

There's also mediated reality, which provides altered information at what you're looking at, such as displaying thermal images of animals or humans in a dark area. You could also use thermal imaging to determine which cars in a parking lot recently arrived (because the engines are still warm), or where heat might be leaking out of a building that needs additional insulation. If you think wearable computing has no purpose, you can join the naysayers who said the same thing about graphical user interfaces, touchscreen interfaces, and tablet computers.

Wearable computing promises to create whole new fields and applications, but only for those willing to embrace new technology and apply them in creative ways. If you lack creativity, then you can cling to existing technology and claim that it represents the pinnacle of technological progress that can never be surpassed for the rest of eternity.

* * *

In case you're paranoid that the National Security Agency might spy on your computer, you might want to be careful when you delete files. On most computers, deleting a file keeps the file physically on your hard disk and only overwrites the data when the computer needs the file's hard disk space.

For security, you should shred everything you delete, which overwrites the file with random data. To force OS X to securely erase anything you dump in the Trash icon, just click the Finder icon, click the Finder menu, and choose Preferences.

Click the Advanced icon and make sure you select the "Empty Trash securely" check box. Now each time you empty the Trash, OS X overwrites your files with random data to obscure its contents, making it difficult (but not impossible) to recover again.

Figure 5. You can make OS X securely erase your Trash contents by default.

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

How to Write a Great Script with Final Draft 9

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 ComputorEdge Staff

"Adding Icons to AutoHotkey Menus," "Litecoin Cyber Currency," "IE 11 Outlook Problem," "Joe Pinole, Hotel Networking"

Adding Icons to AutoHotkey Menus

[Regarding the November 8 Adding Icons to the QuickLinks AutoHotkey Script column:]

Jack,

I work in a large financial corporation, so I am very lucky that I am able to use in AutoHotKey at work. Unfortunately, only the Autohotkey (Basic) has been approved for use, and not AutoHotKey_L or AutoHotKey 2.0, so some of the ideas in your column won't work—specifically the addition of the icons.

That said, I'm less concerned about that then I am removing the file extensions, so I am writing to ask you if the file extensions can still be removed if still using the BASIC version of AutoHotKey?

I may have simply missed it, but I was unable to ascertain if the extension could be removed under the BASIC version of the program.

I may get the powers that be to change over (or add) the next version, but I have noticed (at home) that the script I use breaks under AutoHotKey_L but works fine under the BASIC version. Hence another reason to stay with what we have.

Anything you can tell me is appreciated.

Thank you,

-William Collins

The extension replacement should work find in the basic version of AutoHotkey Menu command. The only thing that you're doing is replacing how the item is displayed. It is the Run command that requires the .url extension to launch a Web site which is why you need to identify those shortcuts and add the extension back to the menu item to Run the Web shortcut

(as shown in the linked column).

AutoHotkey_L is now considered the official version of AutoHotkey by the entire community, not just a branch or variation. You should be able to get it approved as a natural upgrade.

While I have not found a basic AutoHotkey script that won't run in AutoHotkey_L, I'm sure that there is some syntax which may be sensitive. If you could give me an example of something that doesn't run in AutoHotkey_L, I may be able to find the problem. I haven't found any scripts yet that ran in the basic version, but won't run in AutoHotkey_L. I'm not saying there aren't any, but there may be an issue that you want to fix even in the basic version.

-Jack

Litecoin Cyber Currency

[Regarding Jack Dunning's February 7 article, "Bitcoin: The New Cyber Currency":]

I know several people who are mining litecoins which are a direct spin off of bitcoins. Their value is about $25 and they are easier to mine than bitcoins. It might be worth looking into if you want a lower entry point. These people have serious mining rigs with three and four high powered graphics cards doing the processing and they are in large co-ops of other miners. Projections show that the equipment can be paid for in about three months with litecoin profits.

-Marcus, Alabama

IE 11 Outlook Problem

[Regarding the February 7 Digital Dave column:]

Dave,

One problem with IE 11 that Microsoft has not worked out is its interface with Outlook. Now you'd think that since both programs are made by MS they would have done some testing, but apparently not. Seems that Outlook uses IE for its Internet hookup (don't ask me how!). IE11 has been cutting off the ends of Outlook messages and one never knows where it's going to happen. You can imagine the consequences under certain circumstances.

The simple solution is to remove IE 11, reinstall IE 10 and uncheck the automatic upgrade option. There are some other possible workarounds but they haven't proved 100% successful. I know not everyone uses Outlook but anyone in a business environment who does might find

this useful.

-John H, Encinitas, CA

Joe Pinole, Hotel Networking

[Regarding the February 7 Digital Dave column:]

I wonder what version of Windows Joe is using on the laptop and is the tablet Android or Windows and is the smartphone a Windows phone? He can use the Homegroup system available in File Explorer in Win 7 and above, or if all of his devices are wireless capable they can individually access the Internet connection and use DropBox to exchange files, pictures and music. If the NAS is not Wi-Fi capable, then he could connect it to the laptop via the Ethernet port. There are also software solutions to connecting devices via their IP address.

Unless Joe is planning many more such business trips it seems a bit expensive to opt for a hardware solution to linking devices as though he had other people accessing the Internet and these devices at the same time.

-Buck-o, El Cajon, CA

That depends upon whether you think $20-$30 is expensive for a flexible solution to the Internet sharing problem while on the road.

-Dave

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Table of Contents