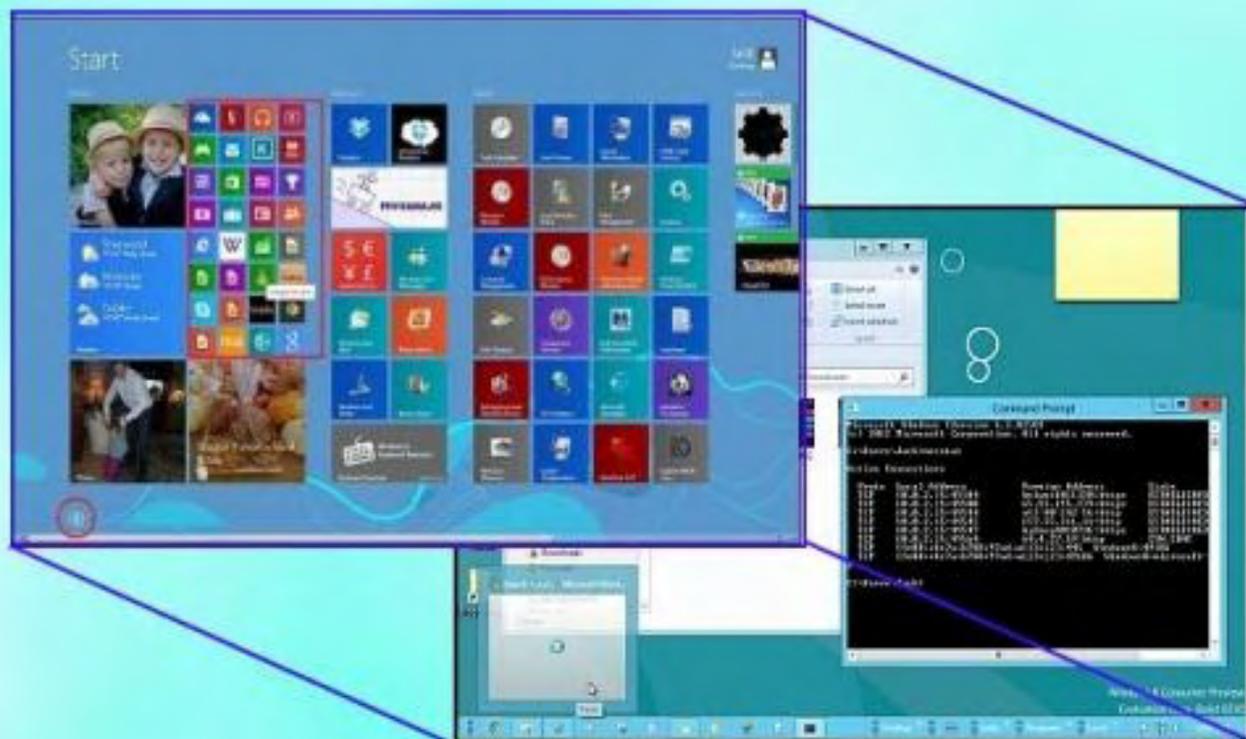


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# Windows 8 Changes Again!

May 9, 2014

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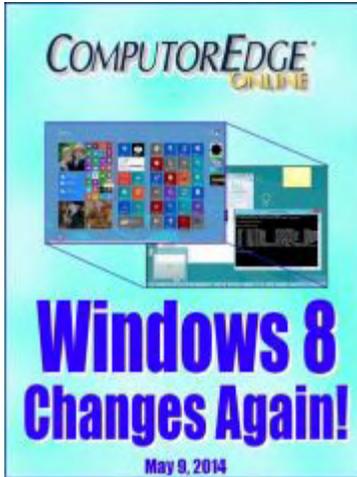
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# Digital Dave

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

*Camera Lag and Computers; Wireless Internet Problem with Displaying Web Pages.*

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## Cameras and Computers

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I know this question is a little out of your norm; however, I have an Olympus E-Volt 500, and an E-Volt 620. My question is this: the new (620) has seemed to slow down. What I mean is the lag time is more than when I bought it. Can a camera experience the same as a computer (seem to slow down I mean)? The 500 seems a more simple machine and works more or less as new.*

*Mark Kowal  
Denver, CO*

Dear Mark,

I don't consider any questions out of the norm, although there are some topics such as Greek poetry that cause me to struggle. (I'm much better with Geek poetry.)

As for digital cameras, while they are essentially special purpose computers, they should not encounter the same slowdown problems as, say, a Windows Vista computer. Some people have speculated that larger size flashcards in cameras might cause a problem as they become more fragmented, but that makes no sense at all. File fragmentation of memory cards does not affect speed since there are no moving parts.

My guess is that any slowdown you're seeing in the E-Volt 620 is because that camera has more features than the E-Volt 500. The primary features that cause a lag between pushing the button and snapping the picture are all automatic. Autofocus and auto light settings will delay the actual aperture opening until the settings are complete. My guess is that as you discovered many of these types of features, you've tended to use them more and experienced the inevitable lag—especially in low light situations.

These automatic settings are great for people with a limited understanding of photography, but

as people become more experienced and learn more about the various features of their cameras, they opt for more of the manual settings which will virtually eliminate any time lag and produce better quality images. While I appreciate the auto settings in cameras, I have missed many a shot because a child turned its head during the auto adjust of the camera. Fortunately, it's easy to delete a picture when all you get is the back of a head.

Digital Dave

---

## Wireless Internet Problems

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I can't get any Web sites using my browser on my laptop on my wireless home network, and it's driving me crazy! Here's why:*

- 1. My laptop has no trouble getting Internet using a wired connection on my home network.*
- 2. My laptop has no trouble getting Internet at coffee shops.*
- 3. My other wireless devices (tablet, smartphone) have no trouble getting Internet on my home network.*
- 4. My laptop is listed as an attached device in the settings of my wireless router.*
- 5. I can ping Web sites using the command prompt on my laptop.*

*I just can't get any Web sites using a browser! It's bananas! Any suggestions, please?*

*OBTonyD*

*San Diego, CA*

Dear OBTonyD,

I assuming that you've tried the Windows [connection repair tool](#), if using Windows XP, or Diagnose and Repair (or Identify and repair network problems) depending upon your version of Windows. These often resolve network problems although it is difficult to know what it fixed.

You've done a pretty good job of isolating the problem. Since everything else works, the problem is occurring between your home wireless router and the Wi-Fi connection on the laptop. The fact that your wired connection works doesn't help much since the network cable connection uses a completely different connection from the Wi-Fi. But since other Wi-Fi devices do connect, the laptop, which works at coffee shops should also work. There are a number of things that you can try.

Sometimes when you can't connect to Web sites it's because your local DNS (Domain Name Service) is corrupted. First open the Command Prompt window (⊞+R => *cmd*, OK). Enter:

```
ipconfig /flushdns
```

This will renew your DNS table. You may need to restart your browser.

If this doesn't work than there is one more step worth trying. Sometimes a network adapter doesn't properly find an external DNS automatically. You can specify the DNS servers you want to use. In these situations, I prefer the Google DNS servers (IPs 8.8.8.8 and 8.8.4.4). Open the wireless adapter settings and select Properties for Internet Protocol Version 4 (TCP/IPv4). A window similar to Figure 1 will open.

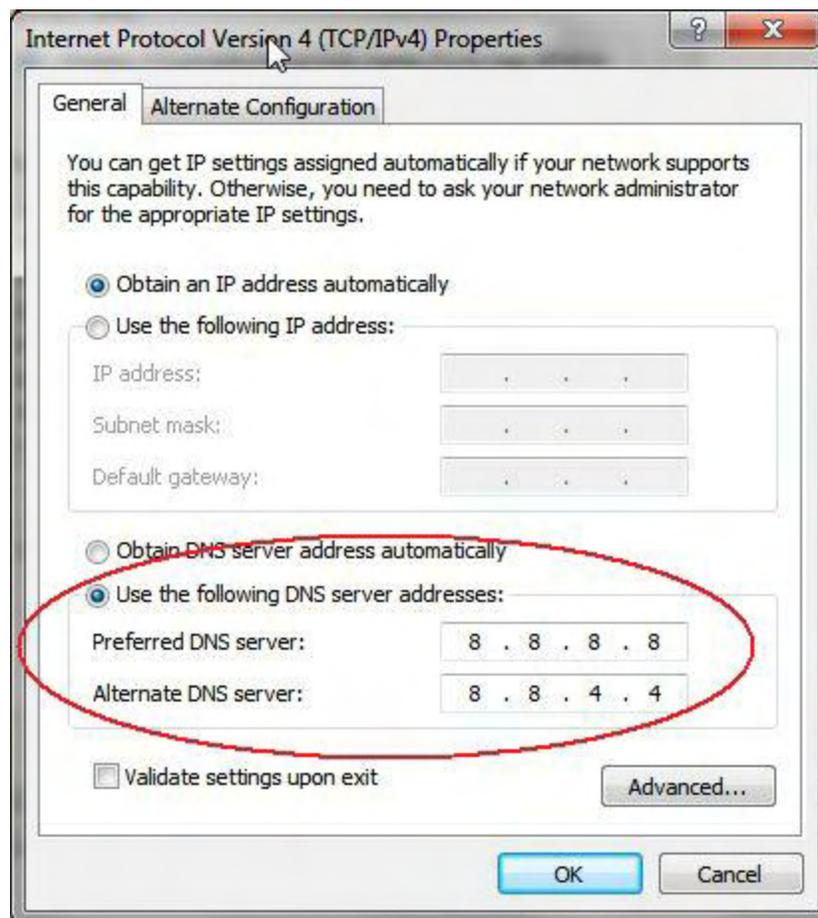


Figure 1. Select "Use the following DNS server addresses" and add the Google DNS servers 8.8.8.8 and 8.8.4.4 for the target addresses.

Add the two Google DNS server addresses to the "Use the following DNS server addresses" section. This should bypass any other DNS servers which may be causing a problem.

Another option is renewing the IP while the wireless adapter is connected. Again, open the Command Prompt window (⊞+R => *cmd*, OK). Enter:

```
ipconfig /release
```

then:

```
ipconfig /renew
```

It's quite possible, that this is all that's needed to resolve the issue between the router and the Wi-Fi card.

If nothing else works then you can try resetting the [Winsock](#). Winsock controls the network connection and its corruption can cause Web pages to not be displayed. Again open the Command Prompt window and enter:

```
netsh winsock reset
```

Hopefully, one of these steps will resolve the issue. I'm also open to any other ideas offered by other readers.

Digital Dave

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## Is It Windows 8.1 Update 2 Or Windows 8.2?

**“Coming This Fall Is Yet Another Version of Window 8”** by Jack Dunning

*Some want to call it Windows 8.1 Update "Update", but it's primary feature is the return of a "real" Start Menu to Windows 8.*

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If the rumors are correct (and they generally are), the Microsoft charge toward retrofitting Windows 8 to act like earlier versions of Windows continues unabated. In a few months, possibly August or September, Windows 8.1 Update 2 (or maybe Windows 8.2) is scheduled to be released. (This is driving computer book authors nuts. Every few months older Windows 8 books once again become obsolete. I just updated *Misunderstanding Windows 8.1* to [Misunderstanding Windows 8.1 Update 1](#). In a few months, I'll need to do it again. (We'll make any update available at no cost to anyone who purchases the current version.))

In the article "[Windows 8.1 Turns The Corner](#)" I expressed that Windows 8 had hit its stride with Windows 8.1 Update 1 by adding a universal Taskbar which appears on every screen whether the Windows Desktop or Modern User Interface (UI). I continue to think that this one step which more closely integrates the two worlds (PC Desktop and Tablet apps) moves the operating system from a wait-and-see to a buy. Not only does the Taskbar appear on every screen, but any program including the tablet-like apps can be pinned to it. There are a few other beneficial changes, but this new Taskbar capability is by far the most significant.

The question is whether the Windows 8 brand has been irreparably damaged by all of

Microsoft's missteps. Now when someone hears the name Windows 8, they think of a confusing, hard to learn version of Windows. Once a brand takes a negative position in the brain, it's almost impossible to dislodge it. This intractable position may be insurmountable for Windows 8. That's why it's expected that Windows 9 or some variation of the name will be released in the Spring of 2015. As much as anything, Windows 9 will be an attempt to dump the name Windows 8.

## **What's New in Windows 8.1 Update 2?**

Microsoft has shaken up some of the leakers in their midst by getting one of them arrested. (He pled [guilty](#).) But, that hasn't stopped the rumors from flying. (I'm not sure why Microsoft wants to stop all the leaks. They are the only thing that has kept the hopes of Windows users alive.) This time the sacred Start Menu is scheduled to return to the Desktop (see Figure 1). While I don't consider this change nearly as important as the recent expanded role of the Taskbar, for many people it will be like going home again. This change will eliminate the last major complaint about Windows 8.

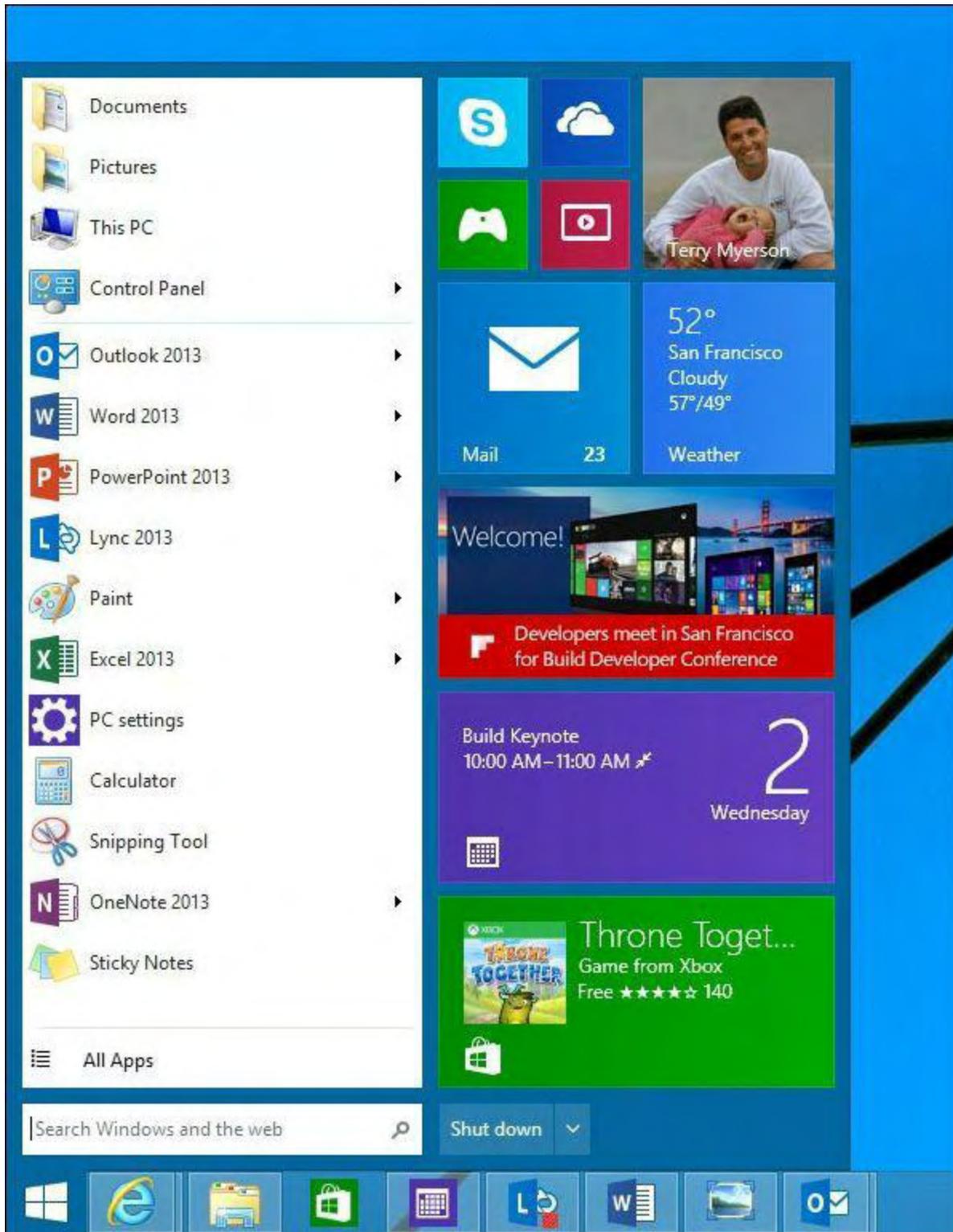


Figure 1. The planned Start Menu for Windows 8.1 Update 2 looks like older Windows Start Menus except Modern UI app tiles can be pinned to it.

Note how much the new Start Menu looks like the Windows 7 Start Menu with a list of pinned programs and a Search field at the bottom of the pop-up. However, it appears that tiles from the Modern UI can be pinned to the right side of the Start Menu.

The new Start Menu will probably doom the [Start8 Start Menu replacement](#) from Stardock and other similar type utilities designed to overcome the deficiencies in Windows 8. It's been a good run, but there were only so many copies of the original crippled version of Window 8 which were going to sell.

It looks like running a Modern UI app in a window on the Desktop will have to wait for Windows 9. That's not a concern for me, since most of those apps are merely nice to have and not essential. (Plus, pinning the Modern apps to the Taskbar—available in the current Windows 8.1 Update 1—is not that much different from running them in a separate window—except that they are always full screen. They are now easily accessible from the Taskbar.) The rumor is also that Microsoft will continue to more closely integrate the Cloud—possibly even coming out with a version of Windows that runs primarily from the Cloud. It would be a basic operating system for inexpensive computers. Without an Internet connection, the computer's capabilities of this Cloud version of Windows 9 would be similar to the Starter version Windows 8.

The current Windows 8.1 Update 1 is getting pretty good, although often reluctant reviews. "[Windows 8.1 is now usable without touch.](#)" "[With Windows 8.1 Update 1, Microsoft makes Windows more palatable for business users.](#)" There is a general consensus that Windows 8 has now evolved enough to be released to the general public. In other words, Microsoft would have done much better if Windows 8.1 Update 1 had been the original release of Windows 8—but it wasn't.

We should know in another month if the Windows public is forgiving enough to accept the current (not yet finished) version of Windows 8. While Windows 8.1 did show a full percentage point jump in usage during April, much of that could have been due to Microsoft's drop of support for Windows XP and the accompanying fear mongering by the press about the dire consequence for continuing to use XP. By the end of May, the dust will have settled and many more Window 8 users may upgrade to 8.1.

Once the next update to Windows 8.1 is released I will be able to safely say that using it on a PC is not that much different from using earlier versions of Windows—except that you will have access to the tablet-like apps—which you may or may not care about.

---

*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](http://www.computoredge.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoredge.com](mailto: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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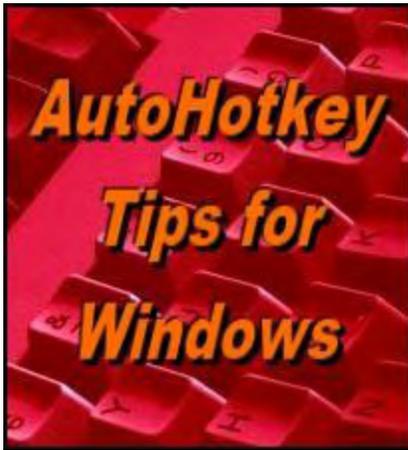
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**Yet, One More  
Reason to Use  
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## **AutoHotkey Tips for Sharing Files on Dropbox or Networks**

**“Whether Using Dropbox or a Network Drive, There Are Ways to Share Data Files”** by Jack Dunning

*Anytime files are shared between more than one computer, there are potential problems. However, there ways to recognize changed files and use them to update AutoHotkey apps.*

---

Last week I discussed how [Dropbox](#) works and the problems with using it for [shared data files](#). This time I will offer AutoHotkey techniques which make it possible to share data files between computer systems through Dropbox or on a network.

Note: If you're planning to share a data file between computers, it is far better to use a network drive than Dropbox. While you will have less User Account Control issues with Dropbox (the files actually reside on each local computer), the significant time lag during any update introduces a host of other problems with conflicting file versions. I found that since the network drives are much faster and the same file is used by all the computers (no syncing to the Web, then re-syncing with each computer), there is less opportunity for conflict—although the problem is not entirely eliminated.

## **How to Share an AutoHotkey Data File**

Absolutely the best way to share a data file is to only allow one person to update it. This will prevent the possibility of conflicting versions since the master file only exists and gets changed in one place by that person. Then when the latest version is made available to the other computers, they only need to read the file and update the local app. This single master approach may or may not be an option in an app, but regardless the steps required to update a local AutoHotkey app remotely are the same. It is a two-step process. First, the app must check to see if the file has changed. Second, it must run an update routine when it recognizes that the file has changed.

## **Checking for Changed Files**

I didn't find an easy way to make Windows notify AutoHotkey when there is a change to a data file, so the next logical step was to have the app periodically check for changes in the data file. An easy way to do that is with the [SetTimer command](#) which by default runs at specific intervals:

```
SetTimer, RefreshTrigger, 2000
```

Set to 2000 microseconds the label (subroutine) `RefreshTrigger` runs every two seconds. How often you run the label depends upon what you think is optimum for checking for changes in the data file. The `SetTimer` line of code should appear toward the end of the auto-execute section (loads on launch) of the script since the data file should already be loaded into the app before the checking for changes starts.

The label `RefreshTrigger` was written for the `ToDoList.ahk` script discussed in [earlier columns](#). The object is to determine if the data file `ToDoList.txt` has changed. To accomplish that for comparison purposes we need to know the modification date of the data file when the script is first loaded. This is done with the [FileGetTime command](#). By default `FileGetTime` retrieves the timestamp for the last time the file was modified.

```
FileGetTime, LastTime , ToDoList.txt
```

The timestamp for the last modification of `ToDoList.txt` is saved to the variable `LastTime`. This line of code should appear in the beginning of the auto-execute portion of the script. Once the `RefreshTrigger` label starts running, it will use the `LastTime` timestamp to check for a new data file.

If you are writing a similar subroutine for another app then some of what's in this `RefreshTrigger` label may not apply:

```
RefreshTrigger:
    FileGetTime, CurrentTime , ToDoList.txt
    If (LastTime < CurrentTime)
    {
        LastTime := CurrentTime
        LV_Delete()
        ListLoad()
        SetColor()
        LastTime := CurrentTime
    }
Return
```

Note that the `FileGetTime` command is used to check the file modification timestamp each time it runs. If the timestamp has not changed (`LastTime = CurrentTime`), then the subroutine does nothing. If the file is changed by another computer, then `LastTime` will be less than `CurrentTime`. This causes the remainder of the subroutine to execute.

The `Listview` is cleared with the [LV\\_Delete\(\) function](#). If `LV_Delete()` is issued with no

parameters within the parentheses, it clears the current *ListView* of all rows.

The *ListLoad()* function is a user-defined function that was created from the code used to load the *ToDoList.txt* file when the script is first loaded. By turning this code into a function, it's possible to reload the file at any time. The *SetColor()* another user-defined function is for resetting the appropriate background colors as discussed in an [earlier AutoHotkey column](#).

Finally, *LastTime* is reset to the timestamp of the latest file (*LastTime := CurrentTime*).

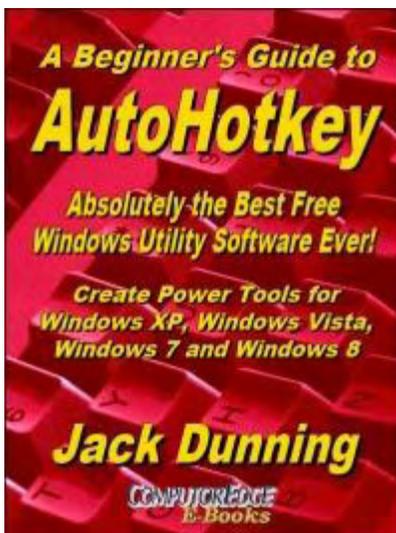
I have not posted the *ToDoList.ahk* script which includes these changes because I have not completely debugged it. Quite frankly, although I did get the script working, it is one of those situations where I might be better off almost starting from scratch. There are too many times that the file is saved which increases the risk of version conflict in the data file. Possibly adding a button to activate the saving action would be a better option since it would minimize the number of times the file changes.

These techniques could be used to create a network messaging system or AutoHotkey apps which automatically reload themselves when they see a new version in Dropbox or on the network. If you have any questions, please e-mail me by clicking "[Submit AutoHotkey Questions](#)" (here or in the right-hand navigation frame).

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\* \* \*



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.

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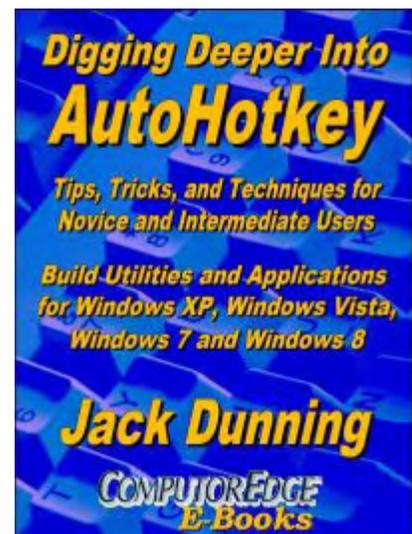
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\* \* \*

Jack's latest AutoHotkey book which is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputerEdge* is now available at [Amazon for Kindle hardware](#) (or free software) users. Since the columns were not all written in a linear fashion, the book has been reorganized and broken up into parts by topic. The book is not for the complete beginner since it builds on the information in [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey](#). However, if a person is reasonably computer literate, they could go directly to this book for ideas and techniques without the first book.



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*Jack is the publisher of ComputerEdge Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called The Byte Buyer. His Web site is [www.computoregde.com](http://www.computoregde.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoregde.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoregde.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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# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Do You Need Microsoft Office?” by Wally Wang

## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

*Do You Need Microsoft Office?; The Indoor Tracking Revolution; Sony's Lesson for the PC Industry; The New MacBook Airs; More Clues About iWatch; Using the Finder.*

---

One unspoken assumption in the business world is that you need Microsoft Office because everyone else in the business world uses Microsoft Office. Yet as SoftWatch discovered, many people who have Microsoft Office [don't use it](#) for more than viewing documents or light editing at best.

SoftWatch found that the average employee spent only 48 minutes per day using Microsoft Office. Outlook consumed about 68 percent of that activity, Excel took second place with 17 percent, or an average of 8 minutes per day, leaving Word and PowerPoint trailing with only 5 minutes and 2 minutes per day each.

Keep in mind that Google paid SoftWatch to convince people to switch from Microsoft Office to Google Apps, but ask yourself how much do people really need to use Microsoft Office? How much do you really need to use specific features of Microsoft Office that no other program offers?

If you're a heavy spreadsheet user, then you probably use many of the fancy features of Excel. Yet the vast majority of people probably don't use the fancier features of Microsoft Office, which means most companies are paying for Microsoft Office because they never truly examined how much they really use Microsoft Office.

If you're not using specific features found only in Microsoft Office, chances are good you don't really need Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office can be overkill with so many features buried in the program that finding and using the features you need can be difficult. Use a simpler word processor, spreadsheet, or presentation program and you might find you can do your work faster with less frustration.

So why do people cling to Microsoft Office as if that were the only software in the world that every business absolutely needs? Most businesses stick with Microsoft Office simply because

it's a safe choice, especially if the company is willing to pay for it. After all, why risk going with a less expensive option if for some reason that less expensive option doesn't offer all the features you really need?

So people don't necessarily stay with Microsoft Office because they want to, but often because they feel they have no choice. Yet if they took the time to investigate their actual needs, many people might find that alternatives like Google Apps, iWork, LibreOffice, and OpenOffice could be just as useful and less expensive. Basically ignorance and fear, rather than compelling features, keeps far too many people dependent on Microsoft Office.

When given a choice, many people are happy to buy a Macintosh, iPhone, or iPad. How many people have you met who are just as happy and eager to buy Microsoft Office?

Microsoft Office isn't bad software, just way too complicated for most people's needs. Using Microsoft Office to write a letter or balance a budget is like buying a bulldozer to plow over weeds in your garden. A bulldozer would work, but it would be too expensive and cumbersome to use just for digging up weeds in a garden when a hand shovel would be less expensive and easier to use.

In your own everyday use, keep track of how often you use Microsoft Office. Then track which features you use that can only be found in Microsoft Office. Chances are good that you rely on Microsoft Office far less than you might have originally thought.

## The Indoor Tracking Revolution

When Apple introduced the iPad, many people immediately mocked it as a useless device. Then the iPad redefined the tablet market and everyone now recognizes it as a revolutionary product. Now critics clamor for Apple to release a new revolutionary product every quarter so they'll have something else to mock and criticize as useless.

No matter what revolutionary technology Apple or any company introduces, you can be certain hordes of people will fail to recognize its revolutionary features. The latest revolutionary technology that most critics completely overlooked was iBeacon, Apple's short-range technology for tracking users indoors.

Every major mobile phone now comes with GPS (Global Positioning System) to track your location on a map. What iBeacon does is track your location inside buildings. Major League ball parks are experimenting with iBeacon technology and now Virgin Atlantic plans to [use iBeacon](#) in London Heathrow Airport.

"We know who you are, where you are in the airport and on that basis, we also know your customer journey from the Beacons. So if we know when you're going to arrive and what your favourite cocktail is, we can have that ready in the Upper Class Wing," said Virgin Atlantic's Head of Development for eBusiness James Shanahan.

As more businesses rely on iBeacon, more people will have a reason to get an iPhone. Apple's iBeacon not only provides a useful service, but also gives the iPhone an advantage over rival smartphones. When you see everyone else taking advantage of iBeacon but you can't because you're using an Android or Windows Phone smartphone, you'll realize how much you're missing out.

People don't buy technology as much as they buy what makes their life better. Compared to a landline phone, any smartphone is a vast improvement, but compared to the old smartphones of the past like Blackberry, the iPhone represents a vast improvement. Android and Windows Phone have their own advantages, but with technology like iBeacon being used in more public areas along with Apple's huge app library, the iPhone just becomes the safer product to buy, just like buying a Windows PC with Microsoft Office back in the 90s.

## Sony's Lesson for the PC Industry

Of all the PC vendors, Sony has long had a reputation for designing some of the most stylish PCs on the market. Unfortunately for Sony, they also tended to charge more for their products too. In the last year, Sony [reported a loss](#) of \$1.25 billion.

The big difference between Sony and Apple is that anyone can get a cheap PC, so why bother paying more for a Sony PC? With Apple, you either buy a Macintosh or not; there's no cheaper alternative.

Sony competes in the commodity market where PC users relish finding the least expensive equipment possible, regardless of any drawbacks that comes from maintaining that equipment later. When all PCs are basically the same, price is the only difference, so the lower price always wins.

The reason why luxury restaurants can get away with selling expensive hamburgers is that a cheap McDonald's hamburger is nowhere near the quality of a more expensive hamburger. If upscale restaurants tried selling McDonald's hamburgers for twice the price that McDonald's does, they would fail too.

Sony PCs look good, but once you get past the surface appearances, it's still the same Windows PC that a Dell, Acer, or Hewlett-Packard PC can give you. Does anyone really want to pay more to get the exact same thing they could get at a lower price from someone else?

Now compare a Macintosh to a typical Windows PC and you can immediately see lots of differences. If the price of an iMac is too much for you, you can pay much less with a Mac mini, especially if you already have a Windows PC so you can reuse the monitor, keyboard, and mouse. The fact that people willingly pay more to get a Macintosh over a Windows PC and still be happy about it tells you that some people believe the extra cost of a Macintosh is worth the price to get away from the problems of dealing with Windows.

Of course, not everyone thinks that way, but enough people do to make you realize that Windows is simply failing to attract or even keep its current users. At one time, Windows had over 90 percent market share while the Macintosh had roughly 2 percent. Now Windows has dropped [below 90 percent](#) for the first time in decades, and the Macintosh has grown to 8 percent. More importantly, Macintosh sales keep going up, so apparently other people realize that price isn't the only factor to consider when buying a computer.

Sony's billion dollar loss highlights the fact that you can't ask a premium price for a commodity product. However, you can ask a premium price for product that offers users a chance to get away from something they dislike. There's a reason why more people prefer airplane travel over taking a Greyhound bus. A Greyhound bus ticket may be cheaper, but most people don't want to put up with the hassle of the longer travel times and the far lower quality of a bus station.

There's also a reason why most people choose to pay money to buy food at a supermarket or a restaurant rather than dig for free food from a dumpster in a back alley. If price is your sole consideration, it's far cheaper to eat discarded food in a dumpster behind a restaurant rather than pay for food inside that same restaurant. After all, it's still the same food, just partially eaten by someone else before being thrown away and mixed in with the rest of the garbage.

The fact that most people are willing to pay for food rather than eat for free out of the garbage is proof that price is never the sole criteria in judging any product. Most people are willing to pay for a better product, but not everyone shares the same values. Some people are happy with a cheap computer while others value the quality they get from a more expensive and more capable computer.

The next time someone tries to convince you that price should be your only criteria for buying a computer, ask that person if they sleep for free in the streets and eat for free out of the garbage. Chances are good that everyone can find a reason to pay more for what they want. In Sony's case, people just aren't willing to pay more to get the exact same Windows PC they can get for much less somewhere else.

## The New MacBook Airs

Apple recently released the newest MacBook Airs with modest improvements but a \$100 drop in price. Now you can get an 11-inch MacBook Air with 128GB flash storage and 4GB of RAM for \$899. Given the choice between a MacBook Air and an iPad, which one should you choose?

The smallest MacBook Air weighs 2.38 pounds while the heaviest iPad weighs 1.05 pounds. If you need to write programs, use Windows, or rely on programs that only run on OS X, then you'll want the MacBook Air. If you value mobility more, then the iPad is the obvious choice.

Think of the MacBook Air as a supplement to an existing computer. With its limited storage space (128GB up to 512GB), you'll have less room than a heavier laptop or a desktop. For occasional mobility, such as traveling and working out of a hotel room, a MacBook Air can be fine. If you want mobility for everyday tasks, such as waiting in a doctor's office or in line at an airport, an iPad will probably be easier to carry and faster to start up while being easier to hold in one hand.

The MacBook Air really competes less with the iPad and more with Microsoft's Surface Pro 2 tablet that runs Windows 8. The Surface Pro 2 weighs 2 pounds, comes with 4GB of RAM, but only 64GB of storage for \$899. Since you can run Windows on a Macintosh using a virtual machine program like Parallels, but you can't run OS X on Windows 8, the MacBook Air gives you access to both OS X and Windows software. The Surface Pro 2 can act like a tablet, so if you want the features of tablet and a laptop (that isn't quite as light as a tablet and isn't nearly as powerful as a laptop), then you'll want to look at the Surface Pro 2 (unless you need connection to a 4G cellular network).

Just as few people rely exclusively on an iPad for all their computing needs, so will few people rely exclusively on a MacBook Air or a Surface Pro 2 for all their computer needs? It's possible, but only if you absolutely need portability at all times. Whatever computer you choose, you can bet that being mobile will remain important for many years to come.

## More Clues About iWatch

While other companies patiently wait for Apple's wearable computer so they can copy it while dismissing it as useless, Apple has quietly been hiring multiple experts in health and sensor technology. Their [latest hire](#) is an MIT researcher, Eric Winokur, who has written academic papers focusing on cardiovascular ear-worn devices that measure vital signs. He published two 2012 papers, the first entitled "An ear-worn continuous ballistocardiogram (BCG) sensor for cardiovascular monitoring" and the second entitled "A wearable vital signs monitor at the ear for continuous heart rate and pulse transit time measurements."

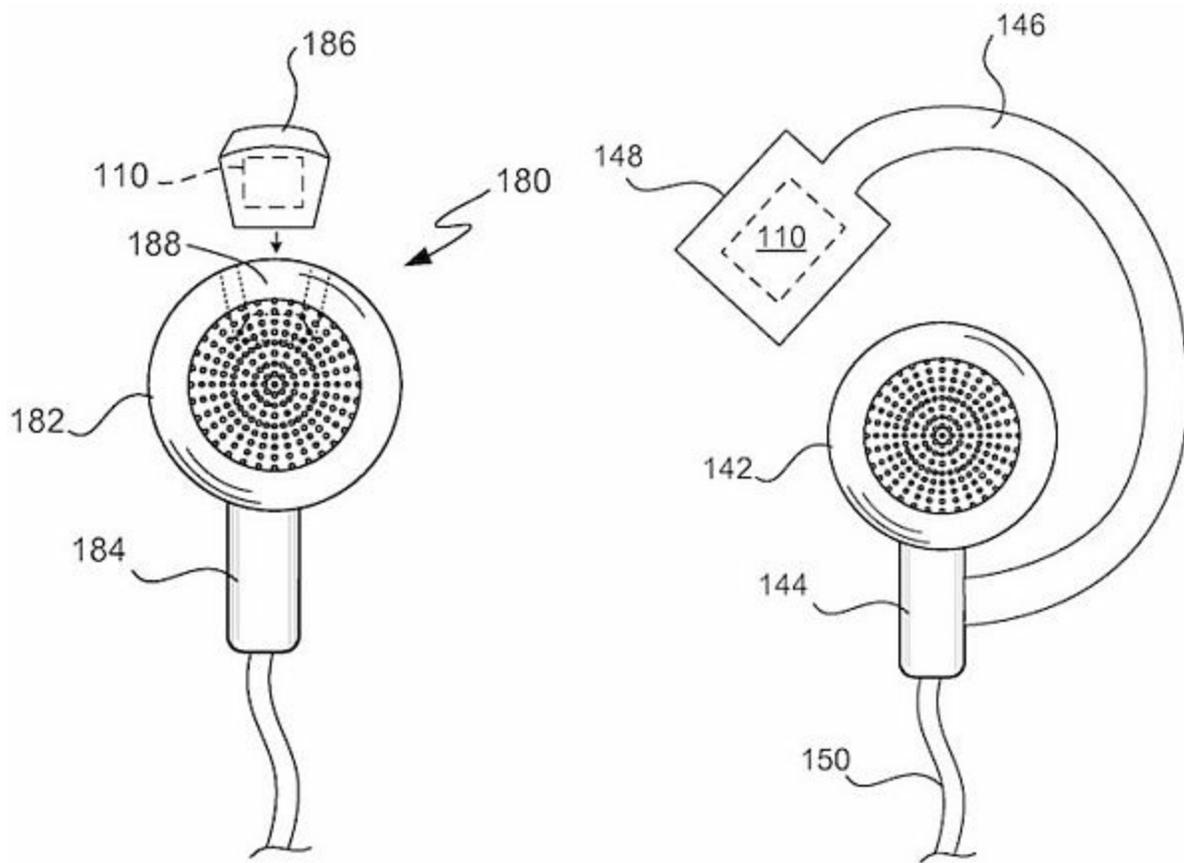


Figure 1. Apple's latest patent involves sensors embedded in ear buds.

With Apple hiring so many health and sensor technology experts, it's clear that the iWatch will be a health and fitness monitoring device. What's less clear is how rivals will be able to match this technology without hiring equally competent medical sensor experts. It's simple to copy the user interface of an iPhone, but it's much harder to duplicate medical sensors.

Nike dropped a further clue about the iWatch by abandoning their own hardware-based wearable technology and focusing on their health and fitness software instead. Given Nike's close relationship with Apple, it seems likely that Nike could already be planning to release software for the iWatch the moment it arrives so Apple can demonstrate both the features of the iWatch along with the features of Nike's software.

The iPhone became popular when independent developers could create apps. With the iWatch, Apple could create a whole new health-related ecosystem for third-parties to develop [health and fitness related apps](#) that could tie in with the hardware sensors of the iWatch. Rather than develop their own medical sensors, third-parties can focus their creativity on interpreting the data that the iWatch sensors can detect. Not only does this simplify development for third-parties, but it also further boosts the popularity of the iWatch, just like Apple's huge App Store library boosts the attractiveness of the iPhone.

The iWatch won't be a mobile phone crammed into a smaller package like Samsung's Galaxy Gear Watch. Instead, the iWatch will give people access to health-related information that was

previously too expensive or cumbersome to detect, especially when you're walking around during your daily activities.

New technology should always give you advantages that older technology can't give you. That's the reason why the netbook faded so rapidly since it was nothing more than a smaller, cheaper laptop. Samsung's [Galaxy Gear Watch](#) isn't selling well because it basically duplicates the features of a smartphone.

When Apple releases the iWatch, wait for armies of critics to dismiss it as a disappointing failure, just like they did with the iPad and iPhone. Then watch other companies claim the iWatch offers nothing new while they suddenly [copy its features](#) and claim that they were the true innovators.

\* \* \*

When using the Finder, OS X can be a bit schizophrenic. If you drag a file from one folder to another on the same storage device (such as your hard disk), the Finder moves the file. However, if you drag a file while holding down the Option key, the Finder makes a copy of the file. To indicate that the Finder is copying a file, you'll see a green plus sign icon underneath that file as you drag it.

Yet if you drag a file from one storage device to another, such as from your hard disk to a flash drive, the Finder copies the file. Basically the Finder tries to make sure you don't accidentally move a file from one storage device to another by mistake and lose track of it.

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*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\*](#)

[\*How to Write a Great Script with Fade In\*](#)

[\*The Elements of a Great Script: Star Wars\*](#)

[\*The Elements of a Great Script: Die Hard\*](#)

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](mailto:wally@computoredge.com) or you can follow him on Twitter [@wallacewang\\_com](#).



# Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

*8 Hate—What's Up With That?; Cyber Attackers Using DDoS Attacks to Influence Stock Prices and Limit Trading; Is the Death of PCIe SSDs Imminent?; Torque Up Your Music.*

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## 8 Hate—What's Up With That?

WebiMax's Chris Hardwick sent us his thoughts on the oft-reported dislike of Windows 8 by the general public and what it means to IT professionals:

Earlier this year, Tony Bradley of *Forbes Magazine* wrote a piece dissecting the hate over the Windows 8 OS and gave a few good reasons why you should give Windows 8 a second look.

He noted that the performance of Windows 8 is far better than Windows 7, it is far more secure than Windows 7, Vista and XP, and it is far more versatile than any other Windows operating system.

Unfortunately, technical specs do not matter as much as they once did, and the public just doesn't like Windows 8. There have been petitions to bring XP and 7 back instead.



This is bad news for IT personnel across the country as they have long had dominion over what software and applications were being used in the office space.

However, as users become more aware and more exposed to other IT products out there, they will have a growing influence over what IT personnel purchase.

James Keating III—Business Technology Architect of Evolving Solutions, a Minnesota-based cloud system and managed hosting provider—echoed these points in a recent blog post on the public's reaction to Windows 8. According to Keating:

- The general public has much more purchasing power than they once did. This is due to the ubiquity of technology in their lives in and outside of the office.
- IT professionals must use perceptions and emotions more when purchasing IT equipment as IT equipment will need to appeal to the general public rather than the IT expert.
- Even if a particular item has the desired specs, if the perception is off, it's not going to be well-received.

## Cyber Attackers Using DDoS Attacks to Influence Stock Prices and Limit Trading

Michael E. Donner, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer with the Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) protection service [Prolexic](#), writes:



Prolexic Technologies [has analyzed] nearly a dozen global DDoS attacks that indicates cyber attackers are using DDoS attacks in an attempt to influence market values and interfere with exchange platforms. The Prolexic Security and Engineering Team (PLXsert) details the findings in a white paper, *DDoS Attacks Against Global Markets*, which was published today and can be downloaded [here](#).

"Typically, DDoS attacks are launched to fuel public discourse, or for revenge, extortion and blackmail—but that is changing," said Stuart Scholly, president of Prolexic.

"During the past few years in particular, DDoS attack campaigns have posed a significant threat to the financial services industry, as well as other publicly traded businesses and trading platforms. As part of our DDoS attack forensics, we have uncovered a disturbing trend: Many of these malicious attacks appear to be intent on lowering the target's stock price or currency values, or even temporarily preventing trades from taking place."

The public image of a global business or financial service is closely associated with its cyber presence. Taking a publicly traded firm or exchange platform offline—and spreading rumors that raise questions about its ability to conduct business online—can create false or misleading appearances. This is a hallmark of market manipulation. Overall, PLXsert found a direct relationship between DDoS cyber-attacks and a temporary change in the valuation of a company.

"A few specific cyber-terrorist groups are responsible for most of these attacks. So far they have not been successful in bringing down an entire major marketplace," explained Scholly. "But DDoS attacks keep getting bigger, stronger, longer and more sophisticated, so we cannot be complacent. What's more, the risk goes beyond the actual outage—social media chatter and media coverage can amplify the perceived effect, disruption and damage caused by a cyber-attack campaign."

## Is the Death of PCIe SSDs Imminent?

Mark Smith, Executive Vice President/Partner with JPR Communications, writes in this week:



"In recent years, the enterprise SSD market has gained significant traction from organizations looking to reap the benefits of server-side flash. Until now, PCI Express-based flash has been the performance standard for SSD implementation—praised for its high bandwidth and low latency.

"Although compelling, the improvement over pre-existing technologies (namely SATA/SAS) has served to obscure several shortcomings. While PCIe represents progress, it is still a less-than-optimal approach for applications with strict performance requirements. The introduction of Memory Channel Storage (MCS) eliminates the need for suboptimal trade-offs—thereby unlocking the true potential of flash in the enterprise.

"When NAND flash first started gaining popularity, storage protocols and interconnect speeds were the performance bottlenecks. While PCIe's theoretical bandwidth appears attractive, limitations due to design create significant overhead—thereby reducing its real-world applicability.

"PCIe is not a native storage interface and requires an onboard controller to manage resources between flash and server I/O. Handling large amounts of flash creates computational complexity, limiting both the performance and reliability of the controller. Thus, despite access to a wide pipe, PCIe-based SSDs are unable to realize the high-speed interface under load—making theoretical bandwidth irrelevant.

"The above architectural limitations impact the throughput of data and subsequent IOPS supported for both read and write operations. As a result, when outstanding I/O requests scale beyond controller thresholds, latencies dramatically increase. Furthermore, due to the limited number of card slots, it is often impractical to scale PCIe-based solutions without significant investment in additional IT infrastructure."

Diablo Technologies, a company Mark Smith's PR firm represents, claims to have come up with an approach that overcomes the drawbacks of traditional PCI Express architectures and represents the next logical step in the evolution of server-side flash storage technology called Memory Channel Storage.

"Memory Channel Storage is a 'purpose-built' solution, designed to provide a scalable interface that expands the architectural advantages of flash as memory," said Riccardo Badalone, CEO and Co-Founder of Diablo Technologies. "By maximizing parallelism and eliminating the complexity of PCIe-based architectures, MCS accelerates and virtually eliminates the latency overhead associated with data persistence. Applications can now perform several million IO operations per second with ease.

"MCS is an innovative storage architecture that enables non-volatile media to reside within the

memory subsystem. By placing NAND flash into a highly-scalable DIMM form factor, MCS delivers tens of terabytes of flash capacity in a single server, with near-DRAM speed. Diablo's MCS technology eliminates the I/O performance bottleneck, supporting levels of application acceleration far beyond the capabilities of PCIe-based SSDs."

Diablo has published results supporting the benefits of deploying Memory Channel Storage over leading PCIe-based solutions. The White Paper detailing the results is available for download [here](#).

## Torque Up Your Music

Product name: Torque t103z in-ear headphones

Manufacturer: Torque Audio

Web site: [www.torque-audio.com](http://www.torque-audio.com)

Price: \$179.95

If you observe lots of mobile device users casually listening to music, you might get the impression that their earphones all are pretty much the same. Except for price, they pretty much look alike and pretty much have the same features and accessories. This impression that earphones are pretty much the same (except for price) now has become even more wrong than ever before, however, thanks to Torque-Audio's t103z in-ear headphones. This product comes with several noteworthy differentiating features, including hardware called TorqueValves designed to customize the user's listening experience without relying on a software-based (battery consuming) equalizer.

The t103z in-ear headphones' noteworthy differentiating features begin with their packaging. This product's packaging is one of the most impressive I've seen. It consists of an outer cardboard box and an inner metal one (Figure 1).

The package's outer cardboard box is roughly 6" high by 4" wide by 2" deep with distinctive orange and white text in English and French on the front, back, bottom, and one side. In addition to some marketing text, the outer box's back displays Apple's "Made for iPod, iPhone, iPad" logo and its front depicts the t103z's left earpiece, a silicone sleeve, and a TorqueValve as if you were looking at them with Superman's x-ray vision (Figure 1A). An open, rounded-square window reveals the real left earpiece inside the package. One more detail about the outer box's front—it has a flap that swings open to reveal English and French text on its flip side explaining the TorqueValves (Figure 1B) and an open rounded-rectangle on the outer box's interior surface that reveals the inner metal box. Very cool.

The package's inner metal box feels light, is slightly smaller than the outer cardboard one, and it has a translucent plastic window on its front side revealing the contents—the in-ear headphones and three pairs of color-coded TorqueValves mounted in the TorqueValet (Figure 1B; details momentarily). These contents are securely held in place by a black foam insert.

Removal of the insert reveals a second one that securely holds the t103z's cables. Removal of the second insert reveals the rest of the package's accessories which include four pairs of black silicone sleeves (large, medium, and small pairs that are single-flanged, plus one pair that is double-flanged), a ruggedized carrying pouch (roughly 4 inches square) in black with bright orange trim and zipper, a garment clip, and documentation. The documentation consists of a single sheet of white card stock (3 X 3 inches) with black text in English and French about the ear pieces, plus a black card stock booklet (3.5 X 4 inches) with white text in English and French about safety, warranty, getting started, specs, TorqueValves, and TorqueRemote.





Figure 1. The t103z in-ear headphones' packaging differentiates this product from competitors—it consists of an outer cardboard box that has a front flap with an x-ray view of the product, English and French text, and a rounded-square opening that reveals one of the product's earpieces (A), and an inner metal box that has a transparent front side revealing both earpieces, the remote, jack plug, and TorqueValet securely held in place by a black foam insert (B).

This product's differentiation from competitors continues with its modern, eye-catching style. Orange components accentuate the earpieces, TorqueRemote, and jack plug. In addition, the earpieces' shape uniquely distinguishes the left channel earpiece from the right. Whereas competitors use letter labels ("L" and "R") that typically border on illegibility, the t103z's earpiece stem's position indicates channel sidedness—the left earpiece's stem is on its left side, the right's on its right side (Figure 2). Muy elegant!

Another differentiating design feature which separates the t103z from competitors is its cabling. The cabling incorporates two form factors—a single flat, linguini-shaped cable that goes from the right-angle, reinforced jack plug to the in-line TorqueRemote; and dual thin, spaghetti-shaped cables that go from the TorqueRemote to each earpiece (Figure 3). This design has notable usability benefits and consequences discussed further below.



Figure 2. The t103z earpieces' design further differentiates this product from competitors; the left channel earpiece's stem is on its left side and the right's is on its right side, eliminating the need for (typically illegible) letter labels.

A third differentiating design feature—this product's signature one—is the TorqueValves. These metal, cone-shaped units screw in and out of the earpieces to emphasize a specific audio range; TorqueAudio calls this feature Passive Audio Valve Technology. The three standard equipment TorqueValve pairs emphasize (respectively) realistic sound reproduction ("reference" valves), bass ("deep" valves), or highs ("clear" valves). Each pair is color-coded to maximize user friendliness—reference valves have a red band, deep have yellow, and clear have black (Figure 4). The TorqueValves deliver their distinctive sound by means of an aperture which varies in diameter between the pairs—the reference units have the narrowest aperture of the three pairs, the clear ones have the widest (Figure 4).

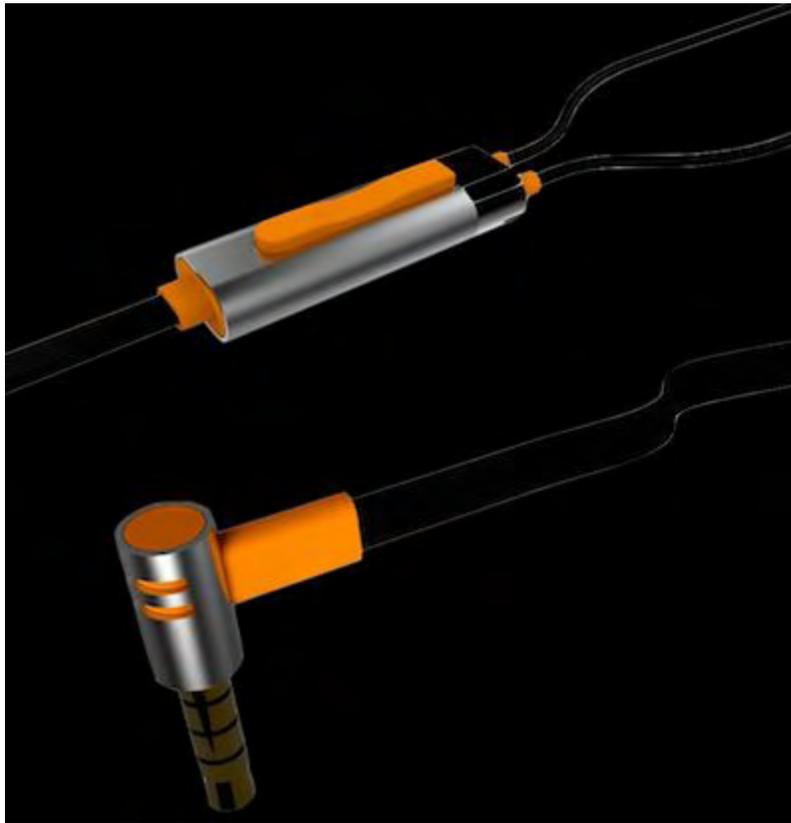


Figure 3. Two types of cabling are included in the t103z in-ear headphones: a single flat, linguini-shaped cable goes from the jack plug to the TorqueRemote, and dual spaghetti-shaped cables go from the TorqueRemote to the earpieces.

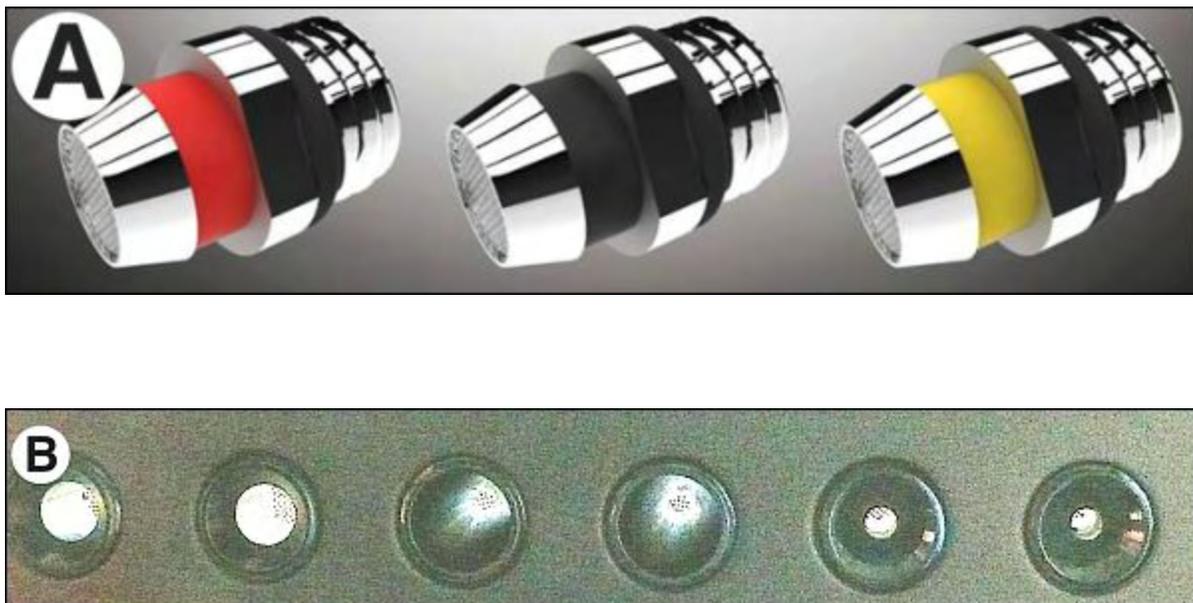


Figure 4. The t103z in-ear headphones employ user-installable TorqueValves for sonic customization. Each pair of TorqueValves is color coded (red, black, and yellow; A) and emphasizes a unique sound range depending upon its internal aperture size (B)—the red pair emphasizes realistic sound reproduction (narrowest aperture), the black pair highs (widest aperture), and the yellow pair bass (intermediate aperture).

These differentiating characteristics—earpieces' shape, flat cable, and TorqueValves—translate into a first-class, premium listening experience. During testing, the t103z in-ear headphones' user friendliness and outstanding audio quality totally hooked me (details in a moment).

Let's start with the aforementioned earpieces' stems that are designed to indicate their stereo channel. Instead of spending time searching for and reading (typically illegible) "L" and "R" labels, the user can quickly distinguish the t103z's left and right earpieces and commence with music listening pleasure almost immediately. Hear here!

Next, let's consider the dual form-factor cables. Like [similarly equipped competitors](#), the t103z's flat, linguini-shaped cable steadfastly resisted time-wasting entanglements during testing for this review. Regrettably, however, this product also has dual thin, spaghetti-shaped cables going to each earpiece. These spaghetti cables not only got tangled with each other during testing, they also entangled the linguini cable. Perhaps future TorqueAudio in-ear headphones will come equipped with all linguini-shaped cables

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, let's discuss the TorqueValves' effect on the user's listening experience. Different strokes for different folks; you say "treble," I say "bass." Regardless of what your acoustic preference might be, TorqueValves provide customization and variety simply by interchanging the standard equipment TorqueValues (additional pairs—"balanced," "bliss," and "smooth"—are on the horizon). Although swapping out TorqueValves costs a little time, they spare your mobile music device from the battery drain that commonly accompanies use of software equalizers.

How do the standard TorqueValves sound? Your mileage may vary depending upon your software (lossy vs. lossless tracks), hardware (music player), and bioware (auditory physiology). Testing for this review used Apple Lossless tracks, an iPhone 5s, and ears on the age-related downward slope of auditory acuity. Under these testing conditions, the clear (highs) valves won hands down; they totally hooked me. All of my favorite tunes sounded incredibly crisp and more authentic with the clear (black) TorqueValves than the other two standard pairs. In fact, my faves were clearer, richer, and fuller with razor-sharp detail, depth, and directionality (stereo separation and layering) than when I listened with competing products. My only wish for the clear TorqueValves is that they bring bass guitars and percussion into as sharp focus as the highs (but then these units probably would be something other than "clear").

By the way, the deep (bass) TorqueValves were a bit disappointing given my bias for bass. To my ears, these units gave my faves an overall murky sound rather than specifically emphasizing bass instruments. The reference (flat frequency response) TorqueValves were OK. To my ears, their audio quality was somewhat muffled compared to the clear valves; cymbals and other treble-oriented percussion instruments were less detailed and less clear. Again, your mileage may vary.

As mentioned in my previous reviews about auditory accessories, bass quality can depend

upon obtaining an adequate seal with the accessory's silicone sleeves. The possibility exists, then, that my disappointment with the deep TorqueValves was due to an inadequate seal rather than the units themselves. The deep units' sound was consistently murky with all four pairs of the t103z's included silicone sleeves, however. It also sounded murky with the well-sealing and comfortable sleeves that Bowers & Wilkins includes with their C5 in-ear headphones [reviewed here previously](#).

The TorqueRemote merits some coverage here, also. It is one of the most user-friendly remotes I've tested—its controls are exceptionally easy to find press without looking. An orange plastic piece (~1 inch long and 0.25 inch wide), positioned atop the remote, functions as the play-pause-rewind-fast forward and volume control. This piece has a concavity that controls play-pause-etc.; its volume controls are located at its ends and are elevated relative to the concavity. My only quibble with the remote is that its weight seems to pull on the earpieces just enough to leave me feeling that they're going to fall out of my ears. Torque Audio solves that problem, however, with the included garment clip—attaching it to a shirt or jacket supports the remote sufficiently to prevent the sense of falling earpieces.

In conclusion, the t103z's key features differentiate these in-ear headphones from competitors, and its most important feature is the TorqueValves that customize its sonic range through user-friendly hardware rather than battery-draining software. Music lovers whose budget accommodates this product's price tag most likely will be repaid time and again by the delight and enjoyment they experience when using these remarkable in-ear headphones.



Review contributed by Barry Fass-Holmes

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*Multiple award-winning author Charles Carr has written more than two thousand newspaper articles, magazine stories, and columns for many publications including the San Diego Union Tribune, The Californian, The North County Times, Parent Magazine, ComputerScene, and ComputerEdge Magazine where he has been an editor for more than two decades. He is also a television producer/director with shows both currently airing and in production on Cox Cable and elsewhere.*

In the 1990s, Charles wrote 3DHouse, a complete inside-and-out virtual reality tour of his family's log home in Southern California. One of the first virtual reality programs ever created, 3DHouse enjoyed tens of thousands of shareware downloads on all major portals. He also sold the rights to Radio Shack and Egghead Software. 3DHouse has since been featured in many books and articles about VR.

Carr has also been commissioned to write and/or directed many of his own stage plays. Several years ago, Carr and others looking for ways to help organizations struggling in difficult economic times, founded Art Animates Life ([www.artanimateslife.org](http://www.artanimateslife.org)).

To date, Art Animates Life, a CA incorporated, federal non-profit, has raised tens-of-thousands of dollars for San Diego area disaster relief, an arts non-profit and municipal gallery, a community outreach center, and several struggling community theaters.

Several years ago Carr was commissioned to adapt and direct the beloved Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol. The play, titled "Mr. Scrooge & Mr. Dickens," has sold out So Cal theaters for the past several years. Six shows will take place Dec. 2013 to benefit the San Marcos Historical Society.

Another original play, "All the Time in the World," has been performed many times and garnered broad acclaim from audiences and critics alike. Carr is working on a brand new adaptation of the classic Hitchcock thriller, "The Lady Vanished," to be performed spring 2014.

Carr has won many writing accolades, including San Diego Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Best Consumer Writing, and Best Arts and Entertainment. He has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

Carr is also a noted producer, director, and videographer. Several of his documentaries can currently be seen on So Cal's Cox Cable. Since its inception he has produced the Fallbrook International Film Festival's red carpet event and panel discussions.

Charles receives dozens of requests each year to appear on Southern California television and radio stations to talk about important tech events. He also speaks from time-to-time to high schools and organizations about his eclectic life in the arts.

Learn more at [www.charlescarr.com](http://www.charlescarr.com).



**Without  
Digital Music,  
Life Would  
Be an Error**

## Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

“or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution” by Matthew W. Beale

*Classically Digital, and Digital Only; A Childlike Sense Of Wonder? In The Music Industry? Huh?; Indie Cindy!; Stipe & Co. Are Back (well, sort of)*

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### Classically Digital, and Digital Only



Universal Music Group recently helped Classical music legend Daniel Barenboim launch Peral Music, a new digital-only classical label, with all releases initially available exclusively through iTunes in their higher quality "Mastered for iTunes format," which "excels the standard 16-bit 44.1 kHz sound quality of CDs, starting with a 24-bit 96 kHz studio master file" (Barenboim introduced the label in an event at The Apple Store in Berlin).

"With the experience that I have assembled over 60 years of recording, I want to try and look at the future," said Barenboim of the Peral launch. "I want to really get myself into the mentality of the digital world."

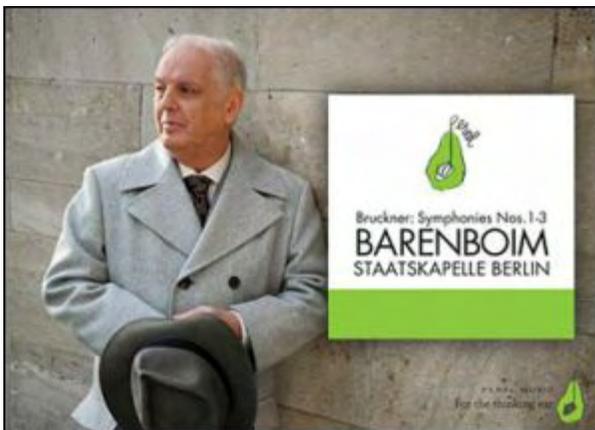
The fact that Barenboim will be featured as conductor on the releases has led some in the music media to call it a vanity label. I personally disagree, in a sense, and welcome this new digital enterprise.

The traditional music world—which obviously includes the major Classical labels—was notoriously slow and awkward in their eventual embrace of digital music, and some companies, in all candor, still don't seem to know what to do with it (how to really integrate it into their music portfolios, using its intrinsic strengths effectively). I feel that awkwardness, for instance, when I simply request a digital review copy of an album. It can be tedious and seems illustrative of just how much some of these labels still have to learn, really, even though many of them, I'll readily admit, do wonderful things in terms of releasing works from some amazing musicians.

## A Childlike Sense Of Wonder? In The Music Industry? Huh?

But Barenboim, with a long and very distinguished career thus far, possesses a degree of enthusiasm for the digital world that's both surprising and refreshing—almost like a kid with a new toy, an impression that seems to sync with the ideals and philosophy of the new label.

"I'm fascinated by young people who have such a dominion of everything that is digital. I like the purity of it," said Barenboim. "I like the fact that you don't need all the clutter—there's something incredibly direct about it. And I'm fascinated by the possibilities it offers—there are so many opportunities!"



With regard to the vanity sort of accusation, this label is in its infancy with one release available—Bruckner: Symphonies 1-3—and perhaps I'm being naive, but I believe it'd be a good idea to step back and watch how Peral grows and evolves. It's actually not surprising that the first projects would involve Barenboim in the music itself—it almost seems rather pragmatic. The next releases, incidentally, will reportedly involve Stravinsky's piano versions of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

"Celebrating the thinking ear?"

"Embracing the possibilities of digital access, Peral Music offers audiences worldwide an alternative way of listening," said Barenboim.

"In addition," according to a Universal press release, "Peral Music will offer educational resources for musicians-in-training, including a collection of studies performed and introduced by Barenboim." This includes recording "a collection of studies that young pianists all learn but rarely hear played properly."

"I want to record a piece and maybe give three or four sentences of advice about playing it, the pitfalls and challenges it presents: a sort of "Beware," added Barenboim. He has also stated that Peral is more concerned with "human development and music education rather than financial profit." He additionally noted that the new endeavor will try

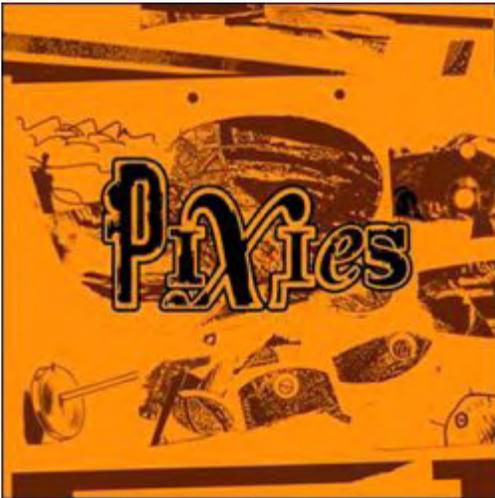


to resist "a culture of indifference by celebrating the thinking ear."

"It's typical of Daniel's unending creative engagement with his times that he's partnering with us to launch Peral Music, a label that will enable him to fully explore the possibilities offered to such a figure by the digital revolution," said Max Hole, Chairman and Chief Executive of Universal Music Group International. "Everyone at Universal Music is delighted and proud to partner Daniel in his latest innovation."

Barenboim will curate Peral music releases, and "invites curious minds to experience music with focus and new insights." "We can learn a great deal from the structure, principles, and laws inherent in music, whether these are experienced by the listener or the performer," he added. For more information, please visit [peralmusic.com](http://peralmusic.com).

## Indie Cindy!



And now for something almost completely different. In another area of digital music-related news, The Pixies, sans Kim Deal (a big deal, perhaps... forgive), recently released Indie Cindy, the first studio album since Trompe le Monde in 1991, I believe.

There seems to have been a minor explosion of Pixies lately, first with the latest iPhone commercial featuring Gigantic (I'll skip the Bill Hicks element of this discussion for the moment—not enough room here for such a rant!), along with the album and a planned tour. A sort of Pixies moment in a career seemingly filled with them (my personal fave perhaps remains Where Is My Mind? being played at the end of the cinematic adaptation of Fight Club).

Much of the material was contained in a series of EPs incrementally released up until the full album dropped, so to speak, in April, first made available though limited vinyl versions for the annual Record Store Day event.

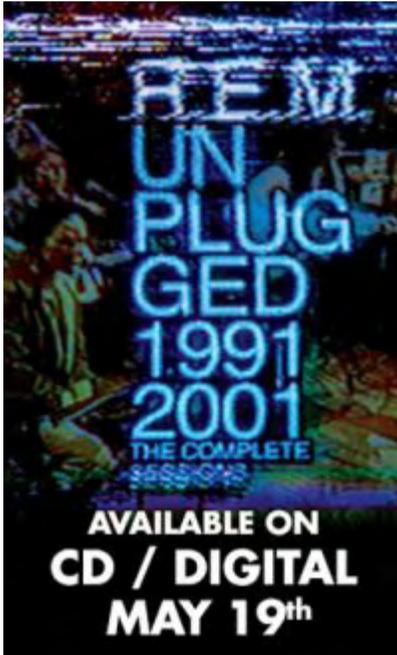
In addition to the digital version, there were 2 versions of the CD released, including one with a 40-page hardcover book featuring artwork that is reminiscent of Ralph Steadman—a compliment, to be sure.

According to the band, the new album was "produced by Gil Norton, producer of the band's classic Doolittle, Bossanova, and Trompe le Monde albums, and recorded during October 2012 at Rockfield Studios in Wales, UK."

Fans of Los Pixies won't be disappointed. The album displays a dexterity and force, musically and lyrically, along with a requisite degree of energy, something that's seemed evident through

their various live performances since reuniting in 2003-2004. Worth a listen- quite simply, inspiring and fun. Stop by [pixiesmusic.com](http://pixiesmusic.com) for more information.

## Stipe & Co. Are Back (well, sort of)



Speaking of Record Store Day, r.e.m., even though they've been disbanded since 2011, released Unplugged: The Complete 1991 and 2001 Sessions through Rhino Records for the event. Living in a town without a record store—which these days, is more the norm than the exception—I was personally, well, bummed is probably the most polite I can be on the matter.

But, on May 19th, Rhino will additionally release the albums on CD, and yes, via download, too! Of the 33 tracks, 11 were never broadcast. The 2 collections of music are significant for fans of the band as the 2nd was recorded after drummer

Bill Berry, a founding member, left the band, giving 2 distinct snapshots of r.e.m., displaying particularly how Berry's departure changed the shape, color, tone, et al., of the music. For more information, the band still maintains its Web site at [remhq.com](http://remhq.com).



I'll be back with, ideally, the first in a series of feature interviews, this one focusing on the nebulous concept of high quality/resolution music. In the meantime, I simply want to wish my Mom a wonderful Mother's Day (she's actually an r.e.m fan)—and to extend that to all the Moms reading this. Prost!

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*My first published work focused on music, and related obsessions pushed me to become a DJ, Producer, and Music Director in college radio. With this column, I feel as though I'm sort of returning to something I love (although I've never left, really). I've been tracking the evolution of online music distribution since the days of Napster, and obsessively follow music releases across a range of genres. One of my music players (on each of my devices) is going from the time I wake up until the end of the day, lulling me to sleep (or what little I actually grab). "Without music, life would be an error." ~ Fred, the mad German*

*Significantly, I'm returning to work after a prolonged personal leave, functioning in the capacity as a caregiver. Please feel free to contact me with story ideas or suggestions about digital music releases at [withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hushmail.com](mailto:withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hushmail.com).*



## Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

*"Applications Folder and Help Me/God Folder," "3D Printer Questions," "Repartitioning Drives, W7 vs. Vista, etc.," "Syncing vs. Version Backups, and Dropbox"*

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### Applications Folder and Help Me/God Folder

[Regarding the April 25 [Windows 8.1 Tips and Tricks for Everyone \(Plus a Little AutoHotkey\) column](#):]

*Wow, Thanks! Fantastic finds.*

Applications, sort of like the Mac has/uses. To sort by name, I changed view to details, then clicked on the heading Name. However, it doesn't "stick" so if you close and reopen, it's back to default. Strange.

Also, for both App folder and Help Me one, you can drag it to your Favorites for quick access from any File Explorer window.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

### 3D Printer Questions

[Regarding Jack Dunning's April 25 [article](#), "Build a New World with a 3D Printer":]

Jack:

Your article comes on the heels of another 3D printer overview which I just read in QST Magazine, and I have to say that your insights on what is important in 3D printing are better than any I have read. Most 3D printer articles concentrate on the amazement that you can actually create anything, but they fall very short when considering if anything that's created can be practically used.

For instance, I wonder about:

- Nobody seems to talk about their printhead. How does the head actually form a dot of

plastic? Do printheads "drool" like inkjet heads (and thus need a periodic cleaning cycle of spitting the heads into an ink spittoon and a cleaning with a flexible doctor blade)?

- What do you do about the flat side that starts your print job against the platen table?
- What about dimensional accuracy? Are X, Y & Z axes all similar in resolution and dimensional accuracy? If I try to make a two inch long cylinder that's 0.75" diameter, what does a finished part actually measure? If I were to measure run-out, how round is round?
- What about surface roughness? Can I print a sheet as smooth as a piece of PVC sheet? Can I create textures, like knurling and hammertones?
- Do items formed of melted dots act as strongly as a cast block of the same material? For instance, could I print a 4" length of the equivalent of a female/female ½" PVC pipe coupling and expect my part to withstand 80 psi of hot water?
- What about porosity? Is there a minimum web thickness for air or water integrity?
- Do printers deposit only melted dots or can they lay down molten streams?
- Somebody should establish a 3D printer benchmark. For instance, create a 2" cubical 5-side hollow box, wall thicknesses 0.030" and 0.100", with a 1" long ¼-20 thread projecting from one side and a 1" long 4-40 thread projecting from another side. How long does this take to complete? How accurate are the dimensions? Will the threads pass standard GO/NO GO gauges? How parallel are the sides? How flat are the sides?

I guess the problem is that we are still looking at hobbyist 3D printers as simply amazing because they actually can do some amount of additive machining. But pretty soon, you have to start asking can I make an equipment housing, can I make a liquid manifold, can I make a plastic bearing, can I make screw threads? These are all well-established tasks using subtractive machining techniques, so how do 3D printers stack up on the same tasks?

BTW, I wonder when we might see DIY plasma cutters or high-pressure liquid machining devices? These all really depend on the same positioning and motion control that 3D printers are developing, they just have custom "work heads."

-Ed Price, Chula Vista, CA

Jack, Just wanted to say I enjoyed your article on 3D Printers. I did get to see one in operation during the opening of our new Central Library here in San Diego a few months ago.

Turns out, the library makes a few 3D printers available for public use. I'm pretty sure you have to show up with a file ready to print and of course, you had to reserve a printer in advance, but there it is, available for a trial run, at no charge.

I also agree with Ed Price from Chula Vista when he said standards are needed. For example, while at the library I saw a printer produce a small Allen wrench. It looked okay, orange, sort of like a wrench you see in a toy tool kit. I wondered how much torque it might be capable of. The guy there said "it was pretty strong." I think we need just a bit more information than that. I mean, can we make keys with the printers? Or, can we make things that look like keys?

-Joe Piluso, San Diego, CA

## Repartitioning Drives, W7 vs. Vista, etc.

[Regarding the April 25 [Digital Dave column](#):]

Ditto on partitioning drives these days for data, system, etc. I don't even like the way W7/8 (not sure about Vista) create yet another, hidden partition when installing unless you partition *before* installing. Folks always seem to run out of room on one partition or the other, and have plenty on another one. A single partition makes much more sense.

Ditto on just dumping Vista. Make an image backup first if you think you might want to go back, but I'm positive you won't. After ensuring you have all the data backed up and programs you want to use in 7 available for installing, I'd repartition it as one big partition with the LiveCD below, *then* do a fresh install of 7 on that so you don't lose a partition to the hidden system folder.

Ditto (is this getting tedious? :) for opting for a second physical drive. But with that said, I've used [GParted's LiveCD](#) for ages to repartition drives and have never lost data. *But I take no responsibility for it so back up your system first!!!!* It's even free/open source, get it at [gparted.sourceforge.net/livecd.php](http://gparted.sourceforge.net/livecd.php) There is a LiveCD, USB stick, and other options. Boot from the CD/USB stick and go from there to repartition.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

## Syncing vs. Version Backups, and Dropbox

[Regarding the April 25 [Digital Dave column](#):]

Yup, backups with versioning are a great way to go vs. syncing. However, the MS Synctoy does work great. I don't think it does it automatically when you plug in a flash drive, you have to manually run it.

I'd agree, Dropbox is a much better alternative. Again, no versioning, but when you change a document on one machine, it's automatically updated on all machines.

If you don't need, or want the files stored in the cloud, I've been using [Bittorrent Sync](#) for a

year or so now with no problems. Sort of like Dropbox, but without any cloud connection. Syncs via Internet but not stored there, if not on same network. However, if on same network, skips the Internet and just transfer/update files through the LAN, which is much faster. Again, no versioning and you'd lose the feature of having a "backup" in the cloud.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

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