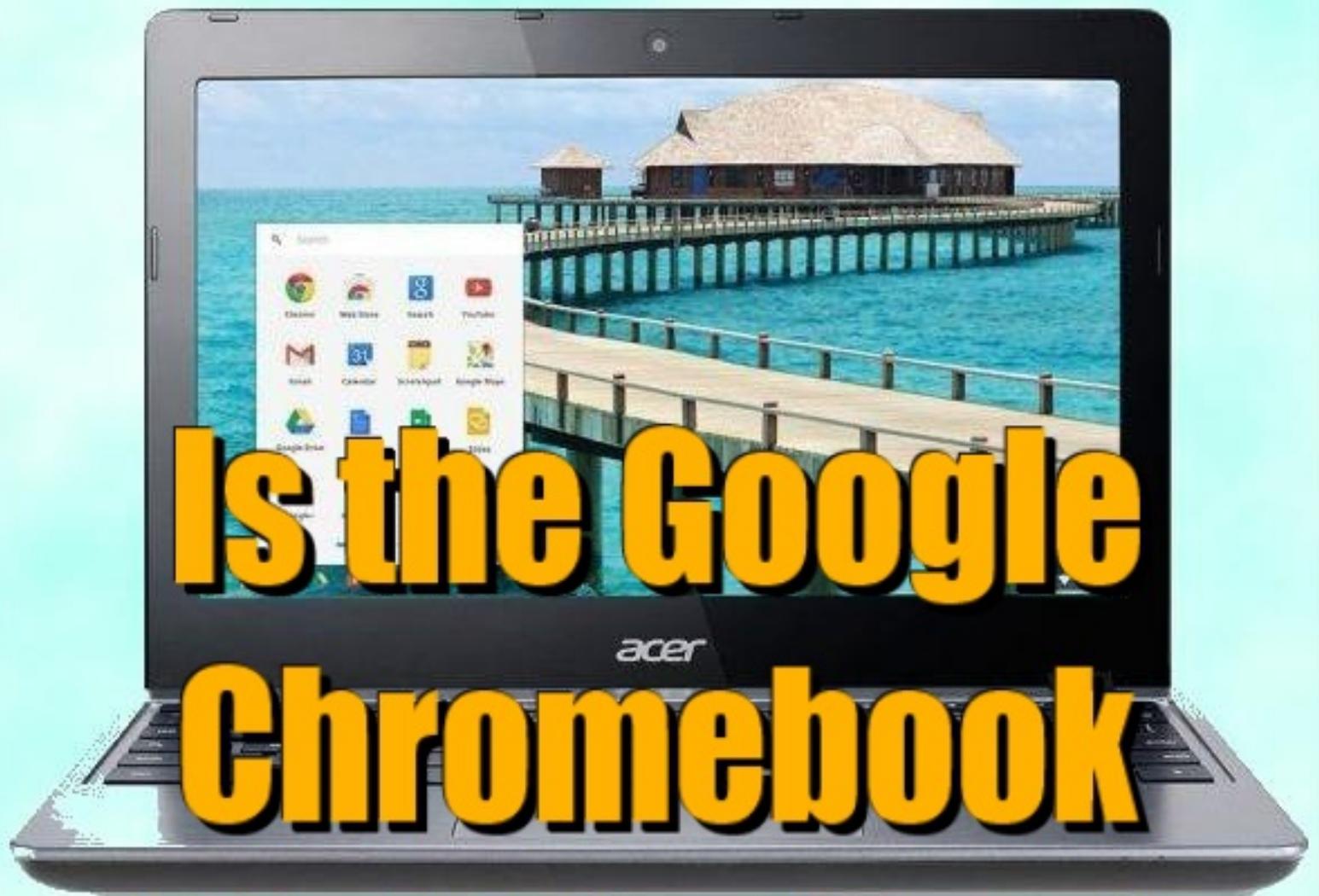


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**Is the Google
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May 16, 2014

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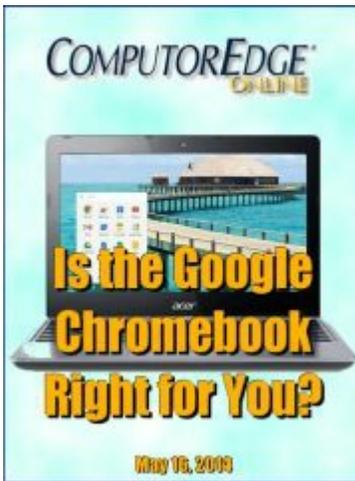
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Is the Google Chromebook Right for You?

With the drop of support for Windows XP and prices, many people may find that a Google Chromebook computer is all they need.

Magazine Summary

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[Digital Dave](#)

by Digital Dave

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.
Losing Internet Connection; Recognizing Spam.

[A Look at Chromebook Computers](#)

by Jack Dunning

Running the Google Chrome Operating System, Chromebooks may be sneaking up on the laptop market.

Now that there are more devices running alternative operating systems, it's possible that Chromebooks have become acceptable—especially at such a low price.

[Looking at AutoHotkey Pop-up Windows](#)

by Jack Dunning

Easy to Use Graphical User Interface Windows (GUIs) Are Built Into AutoHotkey
Sometimes to understand how a built-in AutoHotkey tool works, all we need to do is see it.

[Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#)

by Wally Wang

Killing the Status Quo

Killing the Status Quo; AMD Licenses ARM Technology; The Limitations of One Platform; iOS Dominates in Business; Market Share vs. Profits; Experts Flocking to Apple; Microsoft Misses the Boat Again; Create an Alias of a File or Folder.

[Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers](#)

by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Digital Dave's Tips," "Windows 8.1 Scan," "Selling Pretty Things," "How to Cut, Copy, Paste, Alias Files"

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Digital Dave

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

Losing Internet Connection; Recognizing Spam.

Losing Internet Connection

Dear Digital Dave,

Occasionally, I completely lose the Internet. I can generally get it back by turning the router on and off, but not all the time. Sometimes I get it back when I restart my computer. Is there something else I should try?

*Pat Smith
Fairfax, VA*

Dear Pat,

It sounds like something is going bad in your connections. It could be occurring anywhere between your ISP and your computer. There are three main points where a device might be failing: the modem, the router, or the network card in your computer. Plus, a faulty cable anywhere in the system can cause intermittent problems.

You can often tell by the lights on the modem and the router where the break in the connection is. I'd guess since cycling the router helps, it's probably not the modem. Any other devices on the network (tablets, smartphones, TVs, PCs, etc.) can tell you if your computer is the problem. Proceed from there, knowing where the problem is. Update router firmware and unbury it from dust as it can't hurt. I don't like calling support until I know where the problem is and that I'm not wasting my time.

Having said that if you can't figure out where the problem is, next time it occurs, call technical services at your ISP. They should be able to tell you if they can see your modem. If they can see the modem (it may be a combination modem/router), then the problem is most likely inside your network and not with the ISP. (I have seen times when a bad connection outside was the cause of a problem. The tech confirmed it when he couldn't see the modem from his location.)

You are now down to the router, your network card, or the cable between the two (unless wireless). The best way to determine if it's the router is to hook up with the same router to another computer or device. If the other device works, then check the cable by replacing it with one you know is good. If other devices don't work with the router then you may need to replace it. (Sometimes all a router needs is the latest update to its firmware.) If other computers hookup, but you still can't connect with the problem computer, then you may be looking at a bad network card in your computer.

One of the best ways to check a network card problem is to add another connecting device either through a USB port adapter or an expansion card. If the new route works, then there is likely a problem in the original network card. Replace it and try again.

The problem with intermittent problems is that they don't fail reliably. Just as you think you're getting close to a solution, things start working again. This makes it difficult to find the real source of the problem. At times the best approach is Easter eggging which is replacing components (almost randomly) in hopes that the problem will go away. Naturally, since cables are the least expensive, they would be replaced first.

After any replacement leave the configuration alone until and unless the problem occurs again. Next, replace or circumvent the network card in the computer. Again, wait for a recurrence, then target the router. If nothing resolves the issue, then consider moving to another location which isn't jinxed and not so close to Washington, D.C.

Digital Dave

Recognizing Spam

It seems that at least three things are inevitable: taxes, death, and e-mail Spam. With all the attempts to block these annoying (and sometimes dangerous) messages, a certain amount of it continues to get through. Sometimes the best we can do is quickly recognize the Spam and delete it.

If I don't immediately recognize Spam based upon the Subject line, I have a few checks I do before deleting it. (Regardless, I never download files or follow links unless I absolutely know the source—which isn't very often.) I do this habitually and recommend it for staying safe.

First, I check the e-mail address (see Figure 1). If I don't recognize it or it's just plain silly, I delete it.

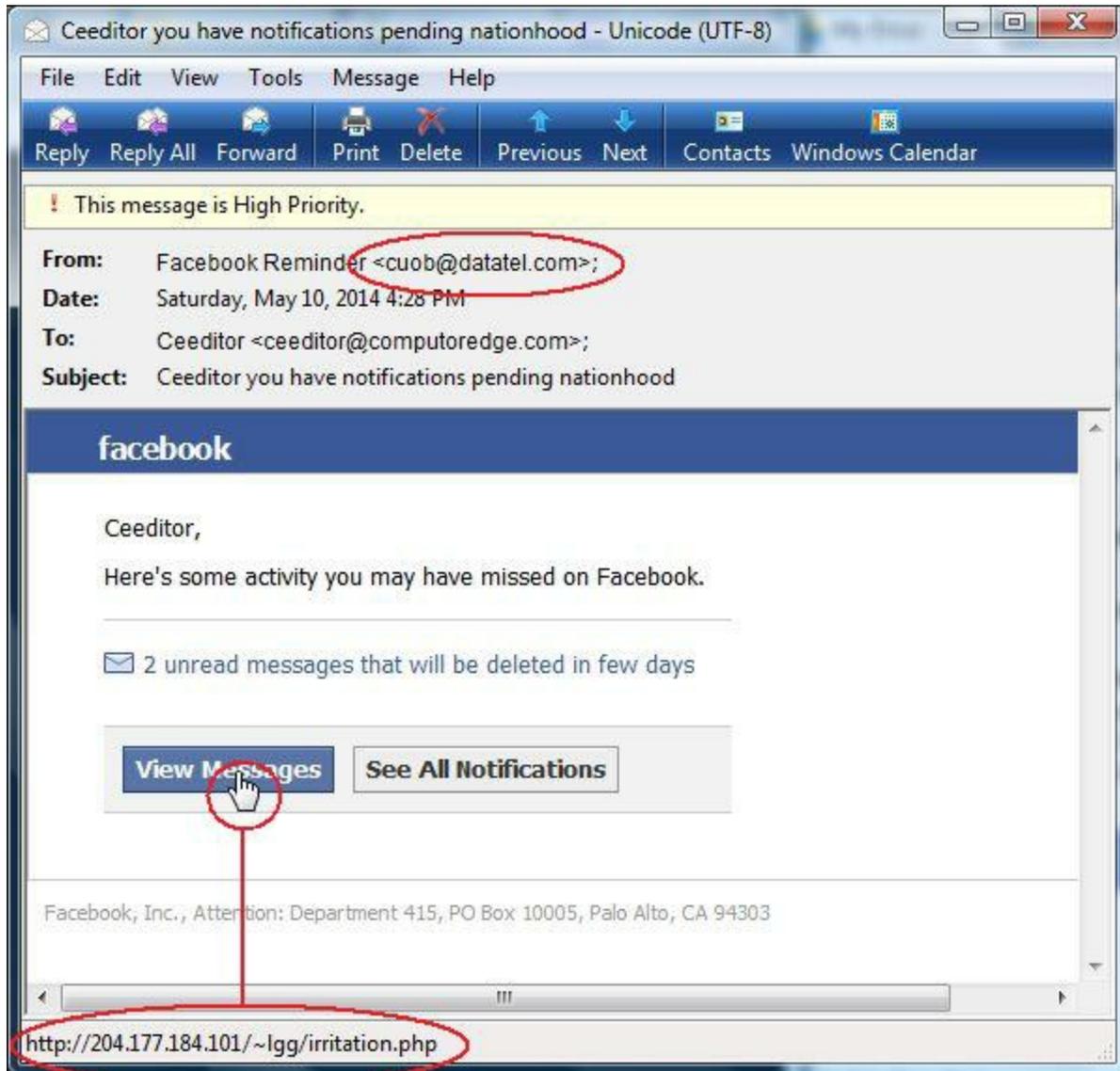


Figure 1. Spam usually gives multiple indications that you don't want to click on a link.

Sometimes they spoof the e-mail address and included links that may seem perfectly legitimate. That is until you hover over the link as shown in the bottom of Figure 1 (do not click). Notice that the real address appears at the bottom of the window and has nothing to do with the claimed originator. Again, this message is sent to e-mail purgatory.

Regardless of how legitimate an e-mail looks, I'm unlikely to follow the links. The best way to follow up on something you think is valid is to go directly to the site, either from links saved in Favorites or by typing in the URL. Then login and check it out yourself.

These simple steps can save you a world of heartache. Eventually, you will receive an e-mail that looks like it's from your bank, but it's not. Take your time, think it through, and don't click that link.

Digital Dave

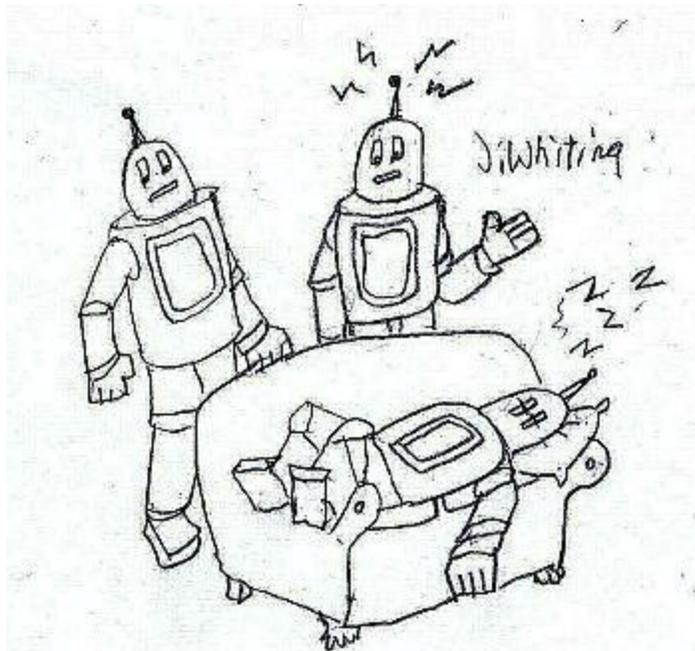


A Look at Chromebook Computers

“Running the Google Chrome Operating System, Chromebooks may be sneaking up on the laptop market.” by Jack Dunning

Now that there are more devices running alternative operating systems, it's possible that Chromebooks have become acceptable—especially at such a low price.

It's been almost three years since the first [Chromebooks](#) shipped. Running the Linux based [Google Chrome operating system](#), Chromebooks use the Cloud (Google Drive) for the bulk of its programs and data storage. They are similar in size to Netbooks with a keyboard and generally include 11" to 14" screens. The smaller Chromebooks weight about 2.5 pounds with a battery life of approximately 8.5 hours.



**"Every time the Internet goes down,
Robbie falls asleep."**

In many ways the Chromebook is in the same market as a tablet computer. It is an inexpensive alternative to Windows computers if all you need is Web browsing, video streaming, and basic programs such as those available in Google Docs (simple word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, etc.) which is now part of Google Drive. (There are a growing number of apps available for the Chromebook—many of them useable when not Internet connected.) Since it is Internet dependent for so many functions Wi-Fi is its primary connection to the world and its own programs.

The biggest selling point for Chromebooks is the price. Ranging between \$200 and \$350 they are a cheap way to get computing.

What's remarkable is that these prices are

competitive with tablets which don't include a keyboard. (Unlike tablets, most Chromebooks don't have a touchscreen, although they are generally available for about \$100 more.) The Chromebook is positioned to impact both the laptop and tablet market.

When first introduced in 2011, many critics panned the Chromebook as being the next Netbook which was then getting killed by tablets. "[Why Chromebooks will fail.](#)" "[Five reasons Why Google Chromebooks Will Fail.](#)" Being tied to the Internet with limited capabilities would surely doom the machine to the trash heap of computer history. Plus, the Chromebook does not run Windows programs, Mac programs, iPad programs or even Android programs. However, and surprisingly, [holiday sales numbers](#) of Chromebooks were good enough to

encourage more manufacturers to introduce their own models with greater capabilities.

The use of Chromebooks is tiny compared to almost any other type of computer, but Chromebook may be a stealth market creeping up on all other devices from desktop PCs to tablets. It certainly has Microsoft worried who (it is rumored) is now considering an almost free Web-based version of Windows. They also spent a good deal of money on advertising which trashes the Chromebook.

Three years after its introduction, it's time to take a closer look at Chromebooks. For some people, they may be all the computer that they will ever need. For others, a Chromebook might make a nice augmentation to their smartphone, tablet computer, and desktop PC. While they have been panned by the critics, for some reason people keep buying them.

What's Included with a Chromebook

Chromebook Screens

With screens larger than most tablets, Chromebook may be a little better than a tablet for surfing and viewing Web pages, although the higher end tablets have much better screen resolution. They operate very much like any laptop except the Desktop (which looks like most desktops) runs programs in tabs in the Google Chrome Web browser (see Figure 1). In fact with no other Web browser available, the Chrome browser is the backbone of a Chromebook. (If you use the Chrome Web browser on your current computer, then you will be familiar with the look and feel of using a Chromebook since virtually all of the apps run through the browser interface.)

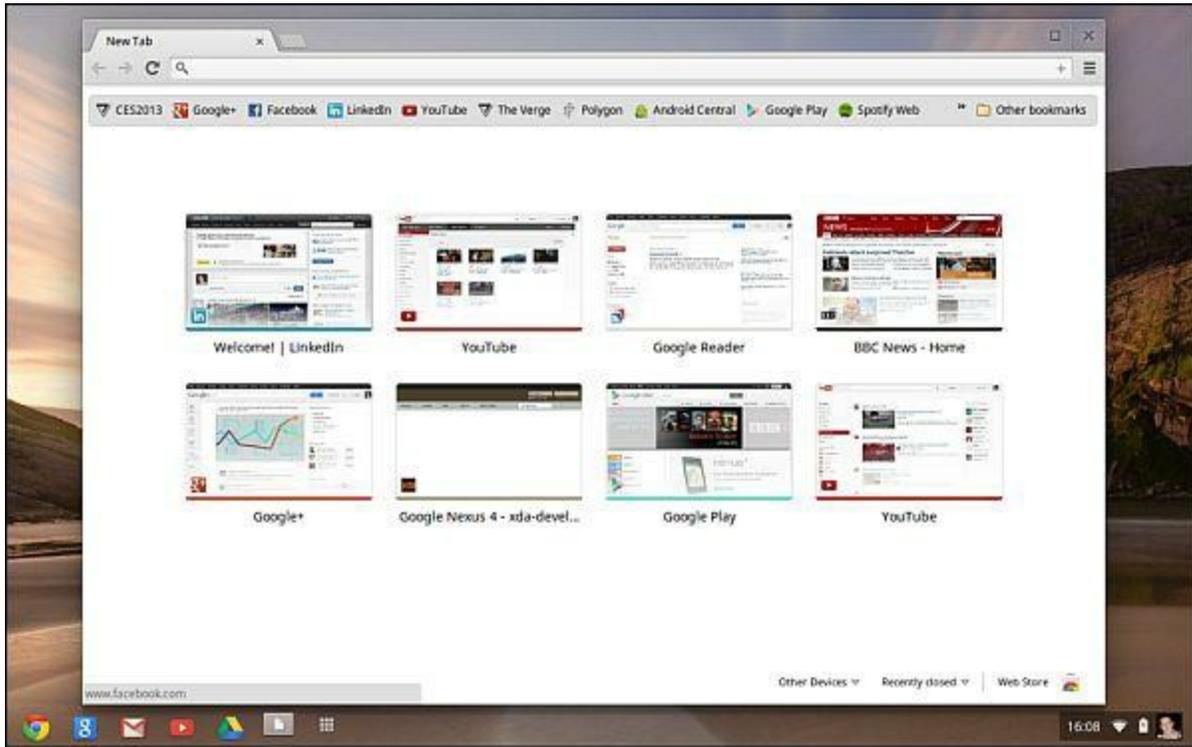


Figure 1. A Chromebook screen.

For a laptop the screens might seem a little small. Most laptop computers come with larger screens than Chromebooks, but that comes with the higher price and weight.

Keyboard and Touchpad

Chromebooks are meant to be a laptop and not a tablet replacement, which is why they come with a full keyboard as standard equipment. While low-end laptops generally are Windows computers, Chromebooks are aimed at people who want the basic functionality of a laptop without the higher price. At \$200 to \$300 some people consider them practically disposable. Even with their limitations, they could be well suited for the majority of today's common computer tasks: social networking, video streaming, e-mail, and e-book reading. Plus, Chromebooks universally appear to have a multi-gesture touchpad for those who don't attach a mouse.

I still find the smaller keyboard awkward and using a touchpad often makes strange things happen when an errant finger touches it. I would need to add a mouse and disable the touchpad.

Camera

While frequently not mentioned in the specifications (you have to dig), it looks like Chromebooks generally come with a built-in camera. (You can see the camera in the images of the Chromebooks below.) This has become mandatory on all tablets and laptops for making video calls. On the downside Skype is not available for the Chromebook because there is not

yet a Skype app. This may be deliberate on Microsoft's part who now owns Skype, but it could be their mistake. As an alternative to Skype Chromebook owners can use [Google+ Hangouts](#). If Chromebooks get any significant market penetration, then it will likely promote Google+ Hangouts prominence—and Google's plan to rule the world.

RAM, Solid State Drive, and Google Drive

The standard Chromebook comes with 2GB RAM and a 16GB solid state drive. This is puny compared to most laptop computers. However, the Chrome OS does not have the overhead associated with Windows and the apps are fairly light. While a 16GB drive is quite small, Google Drive provides 100GB of Cloud storage free for two years. The idea is to maintain most programs and data files in the Internet Cloud. Many critics felt that users wouldn't like giving up this control. Apparently, Chromebook buyers are not bothered about keeping their files in cyberspace. (After the two years of free storage, 100GB of Google Drive is \$1.99 per month. It's free for 15GB of space. You don't lose any of your files after the two years expire, you just can't add more if you don't upgrade the account.)

For additional storage or moving files, Chromebooks come with a Secure Digital media card reader. I found it interesting that most write ups didn't mention this, but with a little digging you can generally find the information.

Wi-Fi and 3G/4G Cellular

All Chromebooks come with Wi-Fi since it is expected that this will be the primary connection to the Internet. (I did not see a hardwired Ethernet connection, so you better have Wi-Fi wherever you plan to use it.) Some do offer free 3G/4G cellular, but without a plan it is generally limited to 100 or 200MB a month—which is practically nothing if you're streaming video. The best deal is probably the lifetime free 200MB/month from T-Mobile for the HP 14-q070nr 14-Inch Chromebook listed at the end of this article, but even that is only enough for the occasional emergency. Chromebooks also include Bluetooth.

USB and HDMI Ports

Most Chromebooks come with two or three USB Ports. These are good for a mouse and a number of other devices, but you can't use one for a printer. To print from a Chromebook use [Google Cloud Print](#) which apparently works pretty well with any printer anywhere.

An HDMI port seems to be standard on a Chromebook. This can be convenient for streaming video (say Netflix) to an HDTV.

Examples of Chromebooks

I noted that overall the Chromebooks offered at Amazon had mostly positive reviews from the buyers. It seems that for people who have decided Chromebooks are good enough for them,

they are overall pretty happy. That means they will be recommending Chromebooks to their friends. It certainly makes a person curious.

Acer C720 Chromebook (11.6-Inch, 2GB)

A Chromebook with some of the best overall reviews and lowest price at \$199.99 is the [Acer C720 Chromebook \(11.6-Inch, 2GB\)](#) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Acer C720 Chromebook (11.6-Inch, 2GB).

It includes 2GB RAM, a 16GB solid state drive, one USB 3.0 port plus one USB 2.0 port, built-in HD Webcam, two built-in stereo speakers, HDMI port, 8.5-hour battery life, and weighs 2.8 pounds.

Samsung Chromebook (Wi-Fi, 11.6-Inch)

Competitive with the Acer is the [Samsung Chromebook \(Wi-Fi, 11.6-Inch\)](#) (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Samsung Chromebook (Wi-Fi, 11.6-Inch).

At \$224.00, the Samsung Chromebook includes 2GB DDR3L RAM, 16 GB solid state drive, two USB ports: 1 USB 3.0 and 1 USB 2.0, an HDMI Port, and weighs 2.4 pounds. Other than Samsung's own faster 1.7 GHz processor, it was difficult to find much difference between this one and the Acer Chromebook.

Toshiba CB35-A3120 13.3-Inch Chromebook

Having a slightly larger screen can make a big difference in a laptop computer. The [Toshiba CB35-A3120 13.3-Inch Chromebook](#) is only slightly more expensive at \$269.99 (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Toshiba CB35-A3120 13.3-Inch Chromebook.

The 13.3" Toshiba includes 2GB DDR3 RAM, 16GB solid state drive, and two USB 3.0 ports. The larger screen size brings the weight to 3.3 pounds.

HP Chromebook 14

The [HP Chromebook 14](#) has a still larger 14" screen and higher \$293.99 price (see Figure 5).

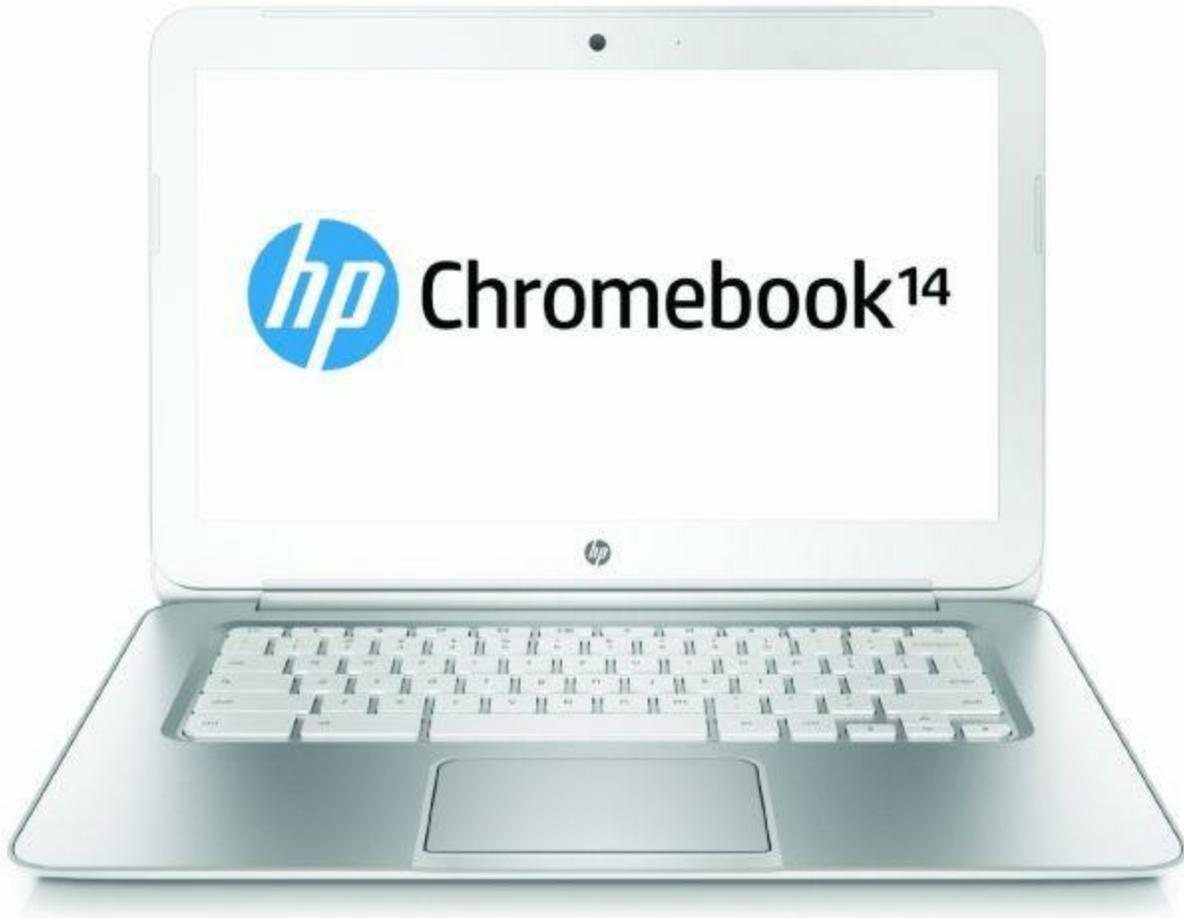


Figure 5. HP 14-Inch Chromebook.

In addition to the larger 14" HD screen, the HP includes 2GB DDR3L SDRAM, 16GB solid state drive, Intel HD Graphics, and three USB ports: two 3.0 and one 2.0. It weighs a hefty 4.1 pounds—which is slightly less than the 13" MacBook Pro at 4.5 pounds.

HP 14-q070nr 14-Inch Chromebook (free T-Mobile 4G)

What looks like a better deal than the HP Chromebook 14 at only about \$36 more is the [HP 14-q070nr 14-Inch Chromebook \(free T-Mobile 4G\)](#) at \$329.98 includes free T-Mobile 4G for life.

The memory is upped to 4GB DDR3L SDRAM, plus there is free lifetime (of the Chromebook) 4G. Albeit you only get 200MB per month of cellular connection, but that may be enough for those emergencies when no Wi-Fi is available. Of course, if you live in the mountains where there is no service, it may not be much help.

Chromebooks Are Now Acceptable

Ironically, tablet computers may have made the environment ripe for Chromebooks. We now are more likely to accept alternative operating systems. Apple iOS has proved that a new operating system can dominate in a market. Android shows that people are willing to accept substitutes for the original—especially at a lower price. Requiring a Wi-Fi Internet connection and limited functionality have been made acceptable by tablet computers. Dropbox and other Cloud storage systems have made Internet file systems a common occurrence. What the critics said would doom Chromebooks has turned out to be the key to its success.

Maybe in a couple of years we will look back at the Chromebook as a fad that jumped to the forefront (like the Netbook), then faded into oblivion. But somehow it seems different this time. Different enough that I might a Chromebook of my own. Years ago when I wrote the programs for *ComputerEdge*, they were all Web based—and still are. That means that I should be able to do the vast majority of my daily work through a Chromebook. There are times when I need access to some Windows programs, but as I pointed out in "[Chrome Remote Desktop for Sharing and Connecting from Anywhere](#)", I will be able to access any of my Windows computers from anywhere to run those programs. At such a low price, it is certainly worth exploring.

It may turn out that a Chromebook could be a good replacement for a Windows XP computer—especially if your primary activity is surfing the Web and streaming videos. More than ever it will depend upon how a person uses their computer. For me it would likely to be an add-on to what I already do.

I don't know if any new operating system can truly compete with Windows' dominance (even with all of Microsoft's missteps). The Apple Mac has made some inroads in the past few years, but Microsoft still maintains about 90 percent of the market. Chromebooks don't show up on the scale yet. It will be interesting to see how things develop.

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

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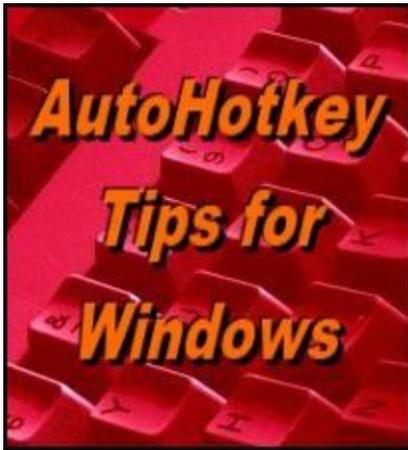
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and [*That Does Not Compute!*](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.



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

Looking at AutoHotkey Pop-up Windows

“Easy to Use Graphical User Interface Windows (GUIs) Are Built Into AutoHotkey” by Jack Dunning

Sometimes to understand how a built-in AutoHotkey tool works, all we need to do is see it.

Some of the best tools in AutoHotkey are the GUIs (Graphical User Interface—pronounced "gooey"). These are pop-up window controls built into AutoHotkey which make slapping together applications much easier. The power of GUI controls is that they turn what could be a complicated programming task into a relatively simple scripting problem. When various GUI controls are combined, they become creative applications. A list of these [GUI controls](#) can be found at the AutoHotkey Web site; however, there are no images to displaying how they look. This is unfortunate since just seeing one can spark many ideas for scripts and applications. All of the GUIs come with options for tailoring features and functions.

The purpose of this column is to show how the various GUI controls look by posting images from some of the educational scripts I've written. Most of these scripts can be found at the *ComputerEdge* [AutoHotkey Dropbox download site](#). Once you see them, it will be easier to understand how you may want to use them.

Quick and Handy AutoHotkey GUI Windows

Not including commands such as *Menu* and *SplashImage*, there are over 20 GUI controls available in AutoHotkey. The ones listed here are in semi-random order based on their use in various scripts. Many such as the *Edit* control and *Text* control are commonly combined with other more flexible GUIs. Information on the scripts which use the GUIs is included.

MonthCal GUI Control

One of the coolest GUIs is a pop-up calendar called [MonthCal](#) (see Figure 1). It automatically handles calendar functions allowing you to quickly zoom to different months and years. Its output is the selected date.

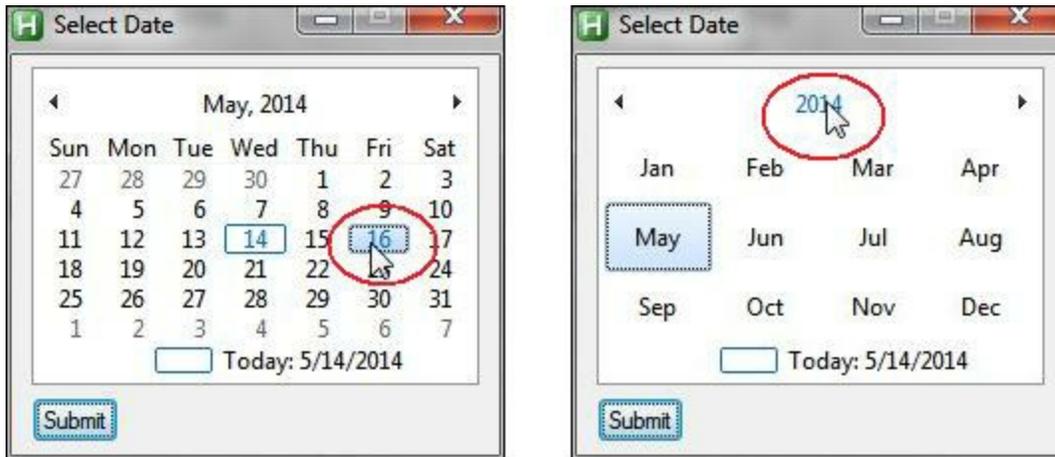


Figure 1. The MonthCal GUI control makes it easy to work with dates in AutoHotkey scripts. Click Submit to use the selected date.

- *AddDate.ahk* and *AddDate.exe* give an example of the MonthCal control with more information at "[Enter the Current Date into Any Windows Program Automatically](#)" and "[Common AutoHotkey Messages and Errors](#)"—updated the *MonthCal GUI* to deal with common AutoHotkey error and combining with other scripts—included in the book *A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey*. Two hotstrings are found in Chapter Twenty-six of the new book [AutoHotkey Applications](#), the second of which demonstrates how to use the *MonthCal* GUI window.

Listview, Text, Edit, and Button GUI Controls with Right-click Menus

The [ListView GUI control](#) is one of the most powerful AutoHotkey controls with the capability of adding right-click menus to its rows (see Figure 2). Text, Edit, and Button controls are commonly used in many GUIs.

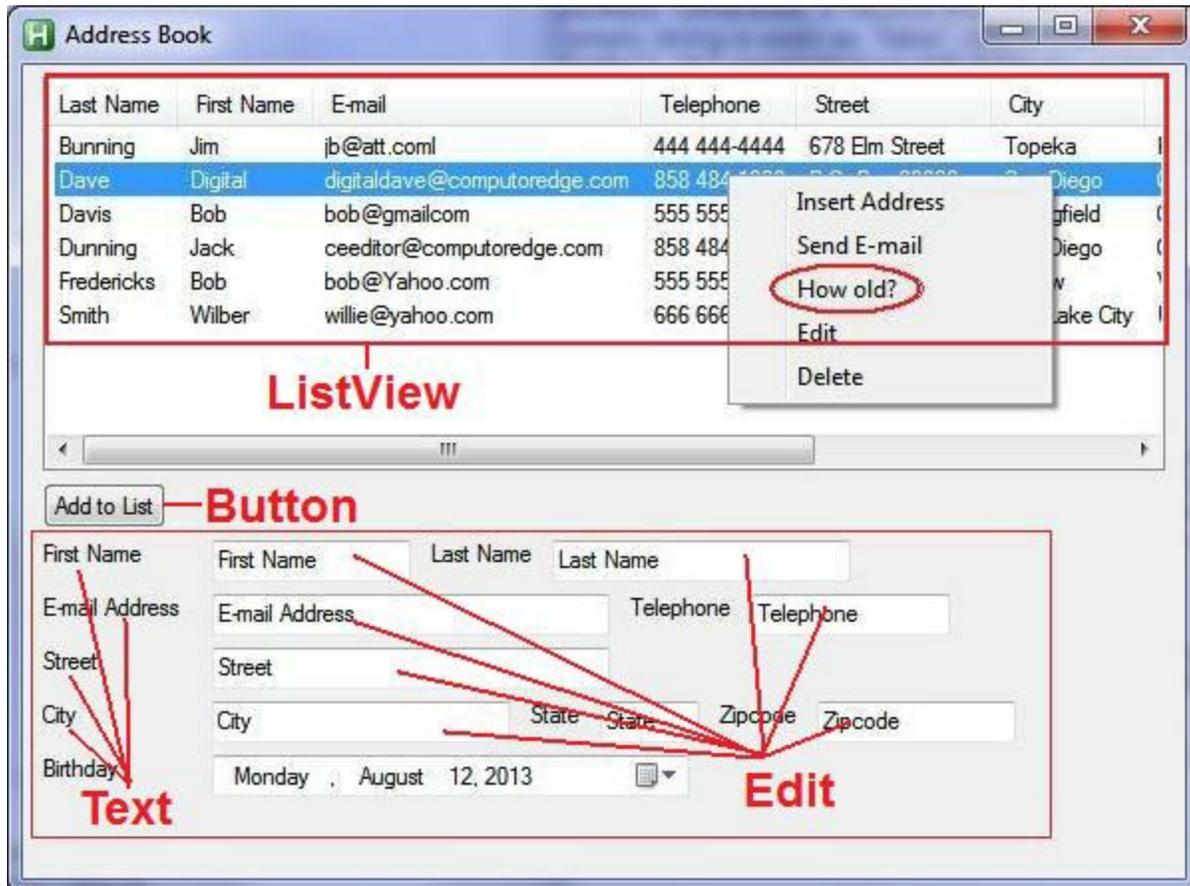


Figure 2. The ListView control is used in conjunction with Text, Edit, and a Button control to build an address book app.

- *AddressBook.ahk* and *AddressBook.exe* in *AddressBook.zip* are the subject of the "Windows Address Book App" in Chapter Eleven and Chapter Twelve of *AutoHotkey Applications* demonstrating the power of the *ListView* GUI window.

A personal address and data book which uses AutoHotkey *ListView* to display entries. Right-click on entry to send e-mail, insert the address in any document, or calculate ages.

DateTime GUI Control

Similar to the *MonthCal* control, the [DateTime control](#) which appears all on one line will input both time and date, but has an optional dropdown calendar (see Figure 3).

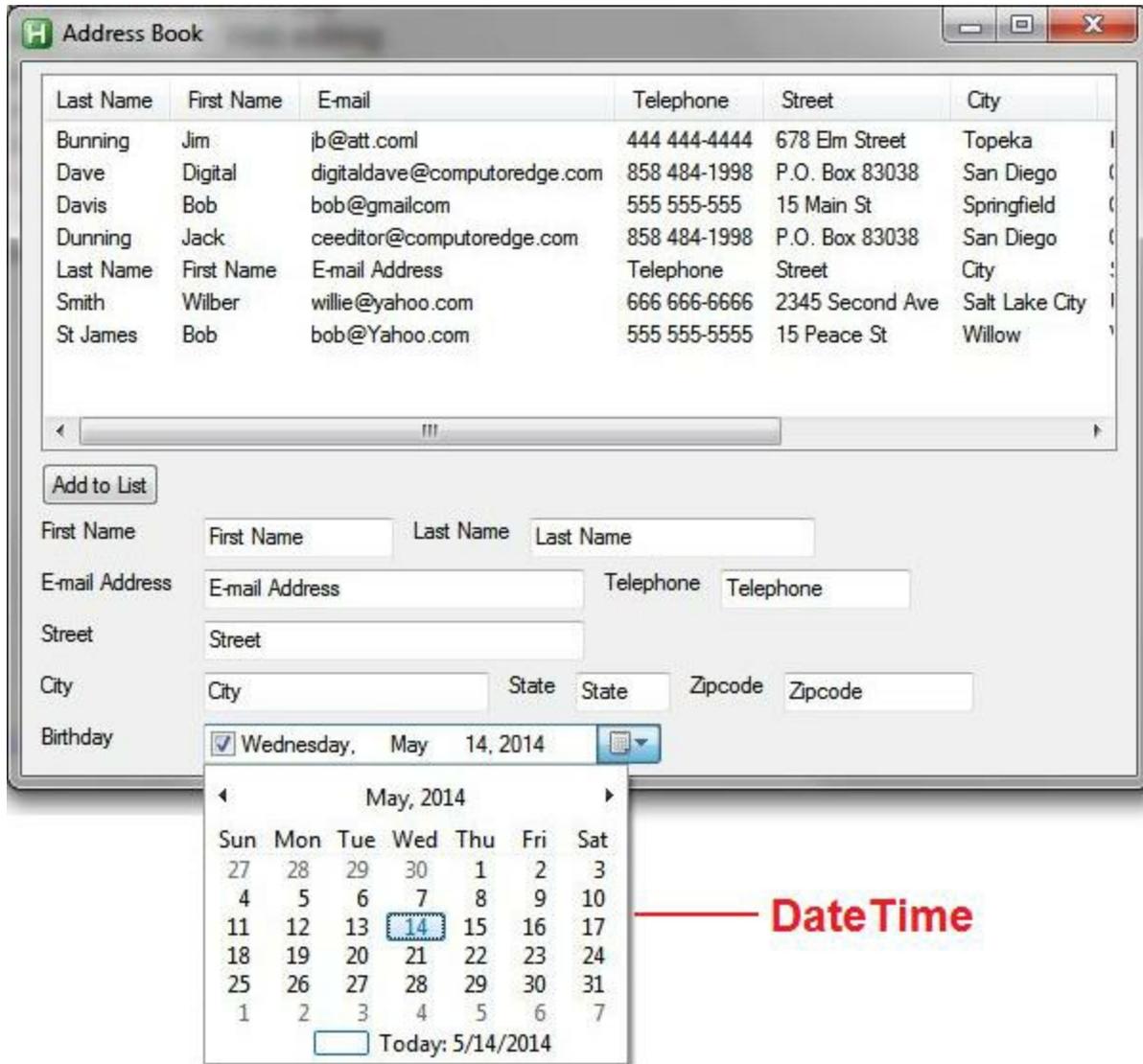


Figure 3. This DateTime control uses the optional dropdown input calendar.

- *CalorieCount.ahk* and *CalorieCount.exe* in *CalorieCount.zip* "A Windows Calorie Counting App" discussed in the *AutoHotkey Applications* book also uses *ListView* and the *DateTime* control (see Figure 4).

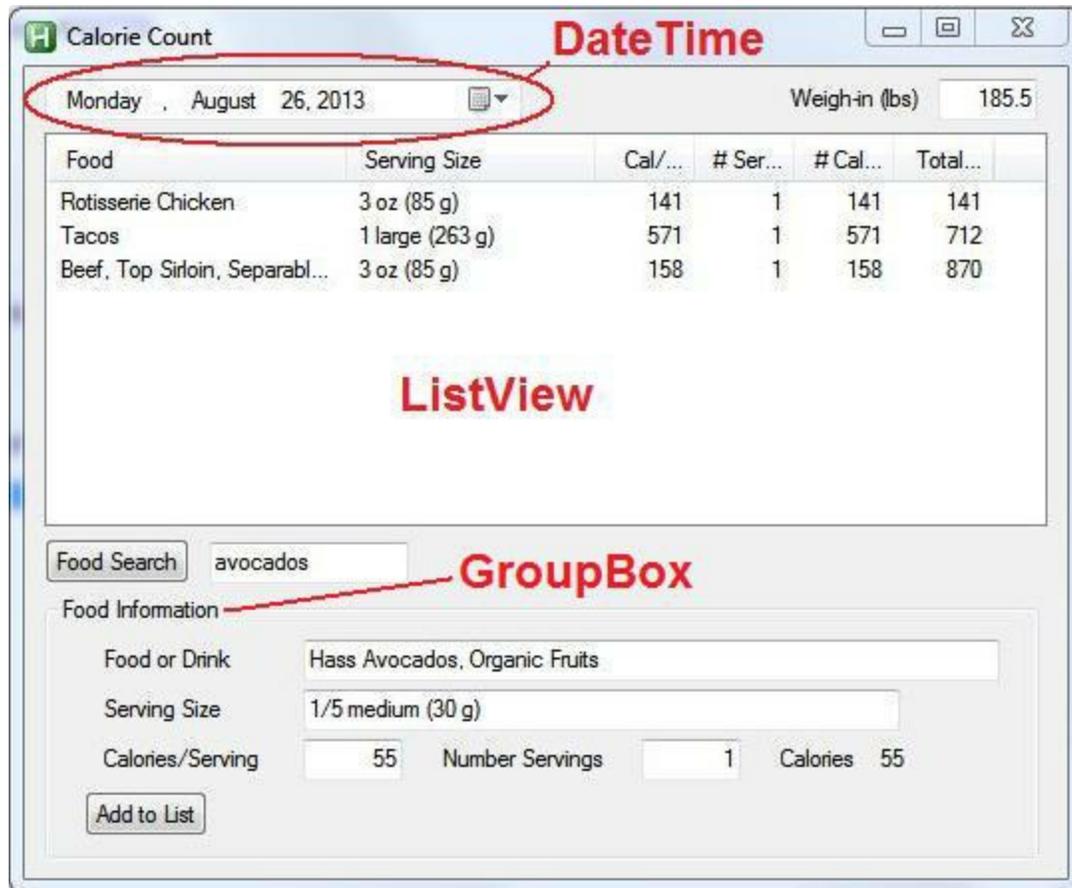


Figure 4. Both `ListView` and the `DateTime` control are used in this AutoHotkey calorie counting script.

This example of a *ListView* GUI window accesses the Web page caloriecount.about.com to pull in selected food data including serving amounts and calorie counts. It automatically tracks daily calorie totals.

Progress and UpDown GUI Controls

The [Progress GUI control](#) and [UpDown control](#) are used in this EggTimer script (see Figure 5). The *Progress* bar moves to the right as the time is counted down. The *UpDown* control is used in conjunction with *Edit* controls to increment numbers in the Edit field.

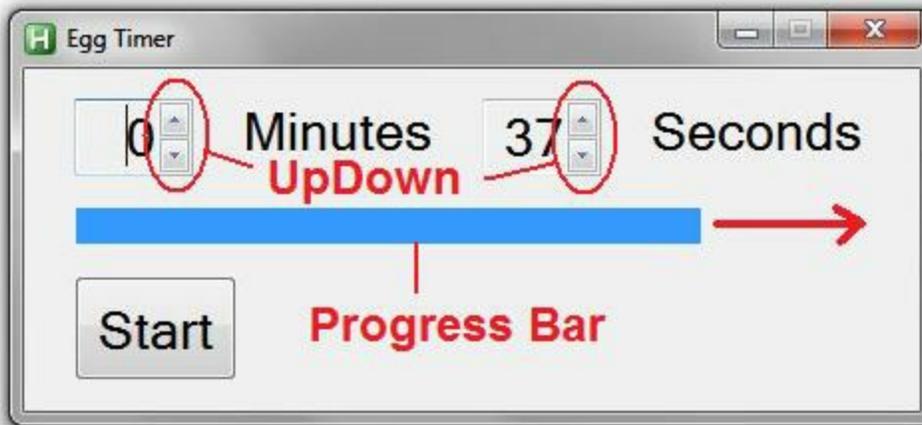


Figure 5. The EggTimer script uses both the graphic Progress bar to show time passing and the UpDown control to input even minutes and seconds.

- *EggTimer.zip* contains *EggTimer.ahk* and *EggTimer.exe* are discussed in "Chapter Seven: The Perfect Soft Boiled Egg" of the new *AutoHotkey Applications* book.

The EggTimer app uses the *UpDown* control and the *Progress Bar* control in a GUI window as a timer (after loading, press CTRL+F12). Set the desired time interval, then click Start. The time counts down to zero in the edit windows while a progress bar works its way from left to right. Once the countdown increments to zero, a bell rings, the computer voice says "Your eggs are ready!", and a window pops up with the same message. Now you have the perfect soft boiled egg.

Hotkey GUI Control

The [Hotkey GUI control](#) is similar to an *Edit* control except only possible hotkey combinations are allowed (see Figure 6). This is useful for setting up hotkeys while a script is running such as the Instant Hotkey app below. The WIN key (🌈) is not allowed in the *Hotkey* field.

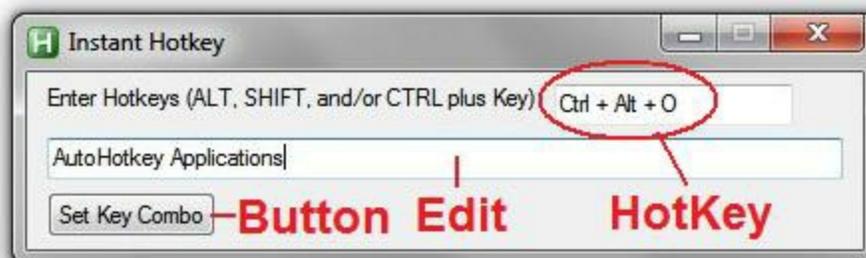


Figure 6. The Instant Hotkey script uses the Hotkey GUI control to set up hotkey combinations for entering the text added to the Edit field.

- *InstantHotkey.ahk*, *InstantHotkey.exe*, and *InstantHotkey.zip* discussed in "Chapter Four: A

Free Windows App for Temporary Hotkeys" of *AutoHotkey Applications* uses the *Hotkey* GUI control to set up temporary hotkey combinations for entering text in documents and Web pages.

The *InstantHotkey* script quickly sets up temporary hotkey combinations for adding repeated and/or long lines of text to any current Windows document or Web editing field. This is handy for those situations where you know that you will be using a particular term or set of terms a number of times. The window to set up the hotkey opens immediately when the script is loaded. After the combination is set, it can be changed by right-clicking on the icon in the System Tray and selecting *ShowHotkey*. Hovering over the same icon will display the current hotkey combination setting in the ToolTip.

Picture GUI control

The [Picture GUI control](#) is used to add graphic images to a GUI pop-up (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. The Picture GUI control and Text GUI control is used to make launching buttons for applications.

- *LaunchWindow.ahk* and *LaunchWindow.exe* "[Make Your Own Start Pop-up for Windows](#)" included in the book *Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey*.

The *LaunchWindow* script is a demonstration of how AutoHotkey GUI windows and controls can be used to build a tailored Start pop-up menu window for any version of Windows—including Windows 8. *LaunchWindow* uses the hotkey combination CTRL+WIN+L to open the pop-up.

TreeView GUI Control

Similar to the navigation pane of Windows Explorer the [TreeView GUI control](#) has many features similar to the *ListView* control and is often used in conjunction with it. In the example below, *TreeView* is used with *Edit* to create a Recipe Book that pops open to the list of ingredients (see Figure 8).

- *RecipeTree.zip* "Chapter Seventeen: Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part I: AutoHotkey Script Development with TreeView Control" of *AutoHotkey Applications* and five more chapters cover the development of the Recipe Book script demonstrating an alternative application with the *TreeView* AutoHotkey GUI control.

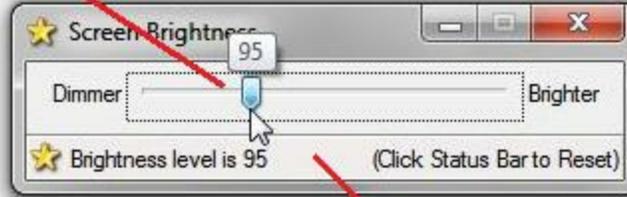


Figure 8. This Recipe Book script uses TreeView to list recipes and ingredients. The preparation steps are stored by the Edit control on the right.

Slider and StatusBar GUI Controls

The [Slider GUI control](#) simulates an analog control for setting a range of values (see Figure 9). The [StatusBar GUI control](#) adds a display at the bottom of a GUI window for showing app information. The *StatusBar* can also be turned into a hot button area.

Slider Control



StatusBar Control

Figure 9. As the Slider control is moved with the left mouse button the value is reflected in the StatusBar control and a ToolTip message. Click the StatusBar control to reset the brightness to the default.

- *ScreenDimmer.zip* discussed in "Chapter Eight: A Slider App for Dimming the Computer Screen and Adding a StatusBar to the ScreenDimmer App" of *AutoHotkey Applications* demonstrates both the *Slider* control and the *StatusBar* control in a GUI which dims the computer screen. The second part of the chapter adds the *AutoHotkey StatusBar* which can reset the screen control, plus a one-click pop-up in the System Tray.

DropDownList GUI Control

The [DropDownList GUI control](#) creates a dropdown menu of items (see Figure 10). In this case the *DropDownList* menu is loaded with open windows.



Figure 10. This DropDownList shows open windows. Selecting one will bring it into view on the Desktop.

- **WindowList.ahk** "[Finding Lost Windows with AutoHotkey](#)"—included in the book *Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey*.

The idea for the *WindowList* script was inspired by a reader wanting to bring lost (off-screen) windows back in view. This script creates a *DropDownList* menu from all the open windows (CTRL+WIN+L to activate after load). The list is filtered to avoid Windows system windows. When a window is selected from the menu, it is activated and positioned on top near the upper left-hand corner of the screen.

- **WindowMove.ahk** "[Snapping Windows \(Part 1\)](#)" and "[Snapping Windows \(Part 2\)](#)"—included in the book *Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey*.

A window manipulation script which also uses the same *DropDownList* GUI control, *WindowMove* is a demonstration app similar to Aero Snap. When the hotkey combination CTRL+WIN+M is activated, the script creates a dropdown list of moving and sizing options for the last active window. It only moves that last window activated. To move another window the menu must be closed, the new windows selected, then CTRL+WIN+M.

For the following GUI controls, the examples come directly from sample scripts on the Web at the AutoHotkey site. While they are not used in one of my specific application, seeing them may inspire other scripts.

The Checkbox GUI

The [Checkbox GUI](#) toggles on and off with each click. It's designed for making specific selections—often times multiple (see Figure 11).

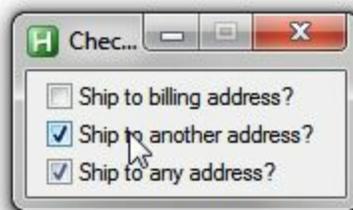


Figure 11. The Checkbox control allows individual items to be checked.

The Radio GUI

The [Radio GUI](#) is used to set up a group of selection options (see Figure 12). When one radio button is clicked, the remaining buttons will be deselected. If multiple selections are needed, the *CheckBox* GUI is a better option.

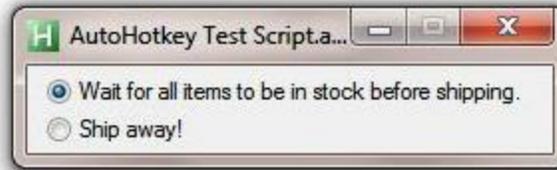


Figure 12. AutoHotkey Radio Button GUI.

The ComboBox GUI

The [ComboBox GUI](#) is similar to the DropDownList except it allows adding text input rather than always forcing a menu selection (see Figure 13).

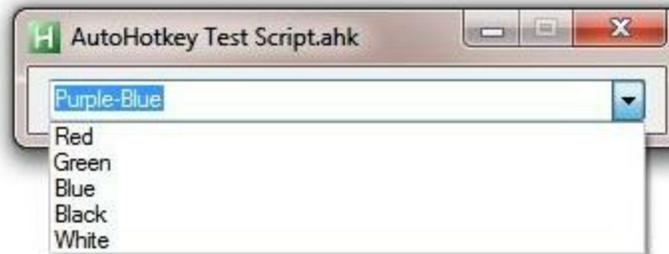


Figure 13. AutoHotkey ComboBox GUI.

In Figure 13, "Purple-Blue" has been typed in rather than selected from the menu

The ListBox GUI

As the name states, the [ListBox GUI](#) is a box containing a selection list (see Figure 14). When using the "multi" parameter, multiple selections can be made. The "sort" parameter alphabetically sorts the contents of the list. When the list is longer than the height of the box, scroll bars automatically appear.

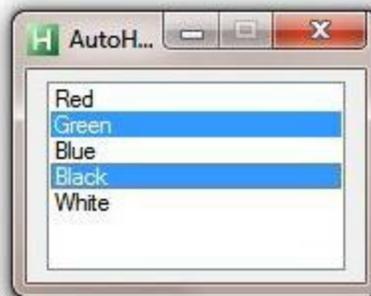


Figure 14. An example of the ListBox GUI control.

The *ListBox* is a good alternative to *DropDownList* when there is a large number of selection items, yet you want to limit the screen space taken up by the control. Also, unlike the *DropDownList*, *ListBox* does not pop up when clicked nor close when it is not the focus.

The GroupBox GUI

The [GroupBox GUI](#) is a container for formatting other controls (see Figure 13). The [code for creating the panel](#) in Figure 13 is a bit more complex, although when broken down line by line, it is merely a long list of simple commands.

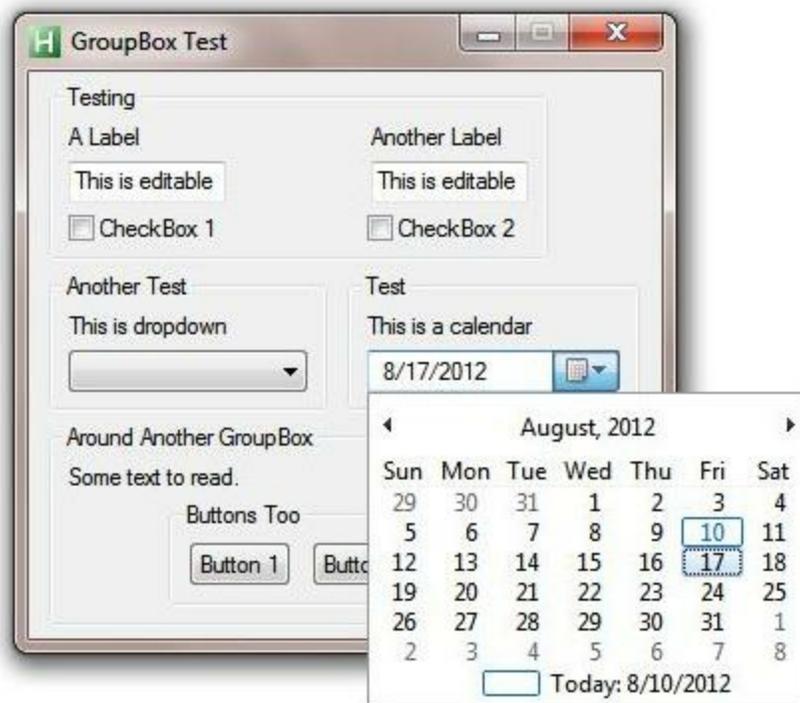


Figure 15. AutoHotkey GroupBox GUI.

GroupBox is distinguished by the light outline of the box. Other controls are placed inside relative to its upper left-hand corner. This way an entire box full of controls can be moved by changing the coordinates of the *GroupBox*. The *GroupBox* control was also used in the Calorie Counting app mentioned earlier in this column.

Tab2 GUI Control

The [Tab2 GUI control](#) is used when there are various sets of data (or controls) which may fit into a three-dimensional array or be placed under tabs to save space (see Figure 14). Under

each tab there is a two-dimensional set of items. The [code for the routine](#) in Figure 14 opens another window displaying the results when the "Test" button is clicked.

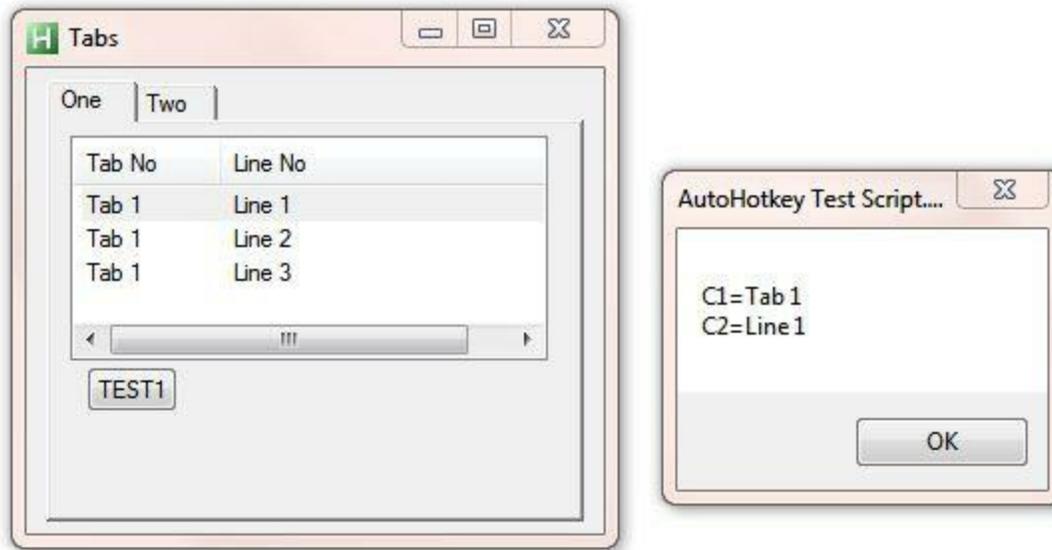


Figure 16. AutoHotkey Tab GUI.

So Many GUI Controls

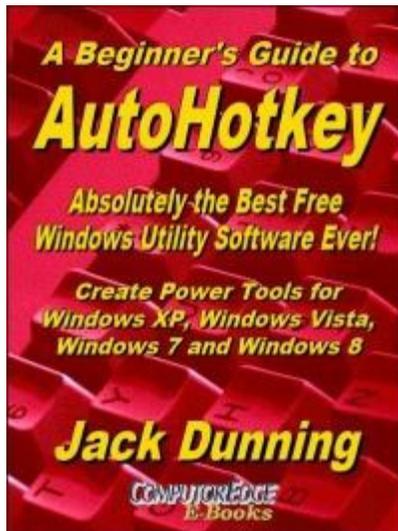
It's a little overwhelming for new programmers to look at so many GUI controls all at once. It's difficult to remember which GUI does what. Yet, I've found that this type of pictorial overview is a tremendous help in the long run. One day when working on a particular script, the right GUI—which has been languishing in the back of your mind—will pop to the front, helping to create the perfect solution. Writing scripts (or programming) is not about knowing every element of a language by heart—it's knowing where to look for those solutions when you need them.

Other Graphical Commands

While the list above only includes GUI controls, there are other commands for pop-up windows or menus. In particular, the Menu command creates pop-up menu structure, the MsgBox command is commonly used for pop-up info and decision windows, and SplashImage creates a pop-up.

The scripts that I've written are posted at the *ComputerEdge* [AutoHotkey Dropbox download site](#). Many of these scripts are discussed in detail in the recently released book *AutoHotkey Applications* available at [ComputerEdge E-Books](#) and [Amazon](#).

* * *



The new second edition with more chapters and an index to the AutoHotkey commands found in the book is available in e-book format from Amazon (and other formats—EPUB and PDF— at the ComputerEdgeBooks Web site linked below). Jack's [*A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8*](#) offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey.

Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their

Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while working on the Web. AutoHotkey has a universality not found in any other Windows utility—free or paid.

Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of windows, making any window always-on-top, copying and moving files, and much more. Each chapter builds on the previous chapters.

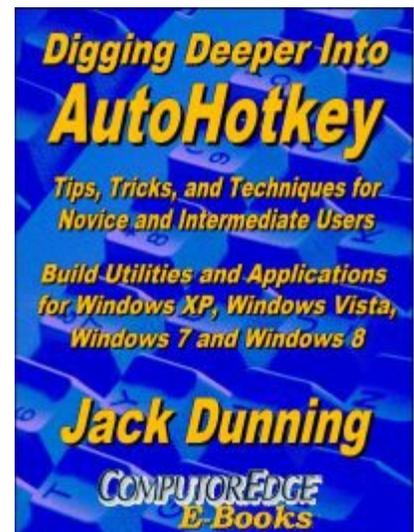
[For an EPUB \(iPad, NOOK, etc.\) version of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

* * *

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

[For an EPUB \(iPad, NOOK, etc.\) version of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here!](#)



[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of Digging Deeper into AutoHotkey click here!](#)

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

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

Jack's [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8](#) and [Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey.](#)

Our second compilation of stupid ComputerEdge cartoons from 2011 and 2012 is now available at Amazon! [That Does Not Compute, Too! ComputerEdge Cartoons, Volume II: "Do You Like Windows 8 or Would You Prefer an Apple?"](#)

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

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

[Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle,](#)

[Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7,](#)

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

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



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“Killing the Status Quo” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Killing the Status Quo; AMD Licenses ARM Technology; The Limitations of One Platform; iOS Dominates in Business; Market Share vs. Profits; Experts Flocking to Apple; Microsoft Misses the Boat Again; Create an Alias of a File or Folder.

Entrepreneurs typically spot a problem and then build a company around providing a solution to that problem. If all you can do is solve minor problems, you'll wind up working in a job. If you can solve bigger problems, you might be able to start your own company.

Perhaps the best way to spot a good idea is to ask if it will disrupt the status quo. McDonald's disrupted the idea of sit-down restaurants, Amazon disrupted the idea that people needed to buy books in bookstores, and Netflix disrupted the idea that people could only rent movies from video rental stores. When you attack a seemingly safe industry and totally upend its entire business model, you probably have a great idea for a business.

That's why Mink, a 3D printer for cosmetics, looks so attractive. The idea behind Mink is to use inexpensive 3D printers so people can [create their own cosmetics](#). Developed by Harvard Business student Grace Choi, Mink promises to disrupt the \$55 billion global makeup industry, which Grace says "makes a whole lot of money on a whole lot of bull. They do this by charging a huge premium on one thing that technology provides for free, and that one thing is color."

By using Mink, anyone can look for colors on the Internet, find the one they like, and use their Mink 3D printer to create their own personalized cosmetics. Since most cosmetics contain the same ingredients but with different brand names and price tags, the Mink 3D printer gives people greater freedom at lower cost while delivering cosmetics to the customer without the need for fancy stores or distributors.

Take away the fancy stores and distributors and you can see what killed the music store industry, the video rental industry, and the bookstore industry. Disrupt the status quo, cut out the middleman, and you could have an innovative idea like the Mink 3D printer.

The next time you're stuck in a job you don't like, ask yourself what big problems you despise and you could be looking at a tremendous entrepreneurial opportunity. Ask Federal Express what it's like competing with the status quo of the post office or what Priceline.com thought about competing with armies of travel agents. Look for the status quo and then kill it, and that's one way to possible entrepreneurial success.

Just look at the once-dominant Windows PC industry to see how smartphones and tablets carved up that industry to earn billions in profits while companies dependent on PCs struggle in today's new world. You don't want to cling to the status quo because when someone else disrupts it, you'll risk going down the drain when they do.

AMD Licenses ARM Technology

Dell Computers recently went private to avoid public scrutiny and other PC manufactures like Acer continue to struggle selling PCs to a shrinking market. To survive in the mobile computing world of today, Intel is trying to convince Android manufacturers to use Intel chips in their mobile devices and turn away from the traditional ARM-based processors.

On the other hand, AMD, Intel's biggest rival, is trying a different approach. Rather than try to convince mobile computing companies to switch to x86 processors, AMD has simply [licensed ARM technology](#) so they can make their own ARM processors for use in servers and mobile computers.

AMD still plans to make x86 processors, but they'll pin-compatible, meaning they can fit in the same circuit boards as AMD's ARM processors. Now companies can choose whether they want to use an AMD x86 processor or an AMD ARM processor.

By embracing the mobile future of ARM processors, AMD has set themselves up to survive in the future. In comparison, Intel is trying to do the impossible by getting everyone to switch from ARM processors to Intel x86 processors.

Intel claims their new x86 processors are nearly as power-efficient as ARM processors. Yet ARM now claims their processor technology is getting nearly as powerful as Intel's x86 processors.

Unless Intel can demonstrate a huge advantage of their mobile x86 processors compared to ARM processors, nobody will switch en masse to Intel's mobile processors. Intel still hopes that their x86 technology can stay relevant. Then again, Kodak thought that they could keep film relevant in the photography world too, so that tells you what the future might look like for Intel sooner than they might think.

The Limitations of One Platform

In the old days, companies could survive just by releasing software for Windows. With Google hoping that Chromebook laptops can [replace Windows PCs](#) and mobile computing (running iOS and Android) seriously denting sales of Windows laptops, any company that relies solely on Windows risks becoming obsolete in a hurry.

Just look at all those companies that stayed with MS-DOS for too long and didn't transition to Windows fast enough. Lotus 1-2-3 was the standard MS-DOS spreadsheet on the market until Microsoft Excel (on Windows) displaced them. WordPerfect was the standard MS-DOS word processor until Microsoft Word (on Windows) took the lead. dBASE was the standard MS-DOS database until Microsoft Access (on Windows) took over. Companies that stick with Windows will likely find themselves in the same dilemma that companies faced by sticking with MS-DOS for too long.

Back in the old MS-DOS days, a company called Borland International dominated the MS-DOS compiler market with products like Turbo Pascal. Then Microsoft killed Turbo Pascal by releasing Visual Basic (on Windows). Borland failed to transition to the Windows world fast enough and got decimated as a result.

If you want to see tomorrow's obsolete dinosaurs, just look for any company that relies solely on Windows. At one time, Borland sold a BASIC compiler called Turbo BASIC. Surprisingly, Turbo BASIC wasn't a dramatic improvement over Microsoft's QuickBasic, so Borland returned the rights to the compiler back to the original creator, who renamed it as [PowerBasic](#). PowerBasic runs on both MS-DOS and Windows, but since the world is shifting to mobile operating systems like iOS and Android, you can pretty much guess PowerBasic's future.

Another Borland MS-DOS compiler was Turbo Prolog, which let you write programs in Prolog, a popular artificial intelligence language. Prolog's popularity faded so Borland returned the rights of Turbo Prolog back to its creators, who now sell it as [Visual Prolog](#). Visual Prolog only runs on Windows, so as fewer people rely on Windows, you can also see the future of Visual Prolog.

If you're a developer, you can't afford to write Windows-only programs any more so you can't rely on Windows-only compilers. If you're just an ordinary computer user, you definitely don't want to rely on software that can only run on Windows.

With Apple rumored to be releasing a new version of AppleTV along with a wearable computer dubbed the iWatch, your best bet is to learn and develop programs that can run on iOS. With Google Glass already running on Android, you should also keep Android in mind too.

In the mobile computing world and the soon to arrive wearable computing market, iOS and Android dominate so you might as well follow the trends and latch on to the growing iOS and Android markets. Or you can cling to Windows like people once stuck to MS-DOS, and watch the computing world leave you behind.

iOS Dominates in Business

While iOS and Android dominate the mobile computing market, businesses seem to lean [more towards iOS](#) than Android. According to Good Technology, iOS dominates the business market with a 92 percent share.

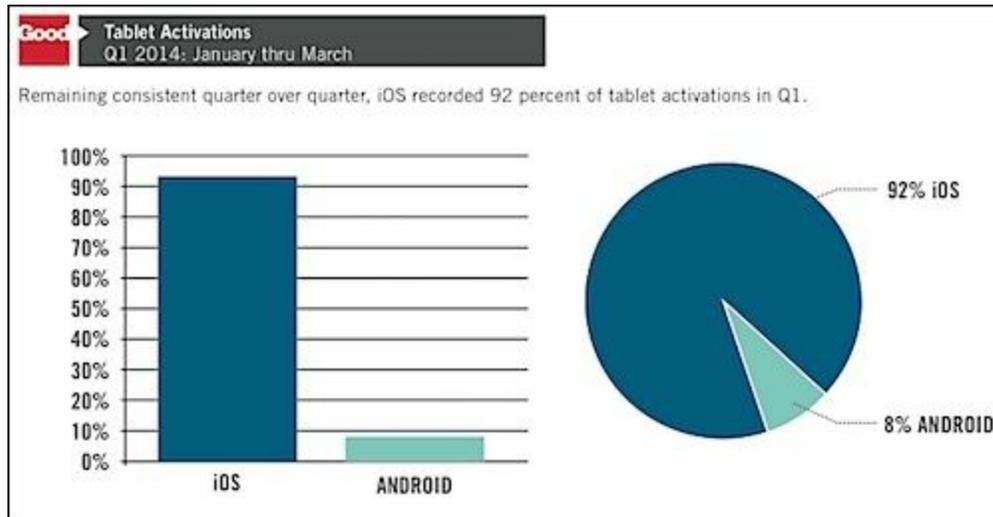


Figure 1. iOS dominates Android in the business market.

Good Technology also reported the percentage of industries that rely on the iPad. Although Android tablet sales keep rising, businesses still rely more heavily on the iPad over other tablets including Android tablets and Windows 8/RT tablets.

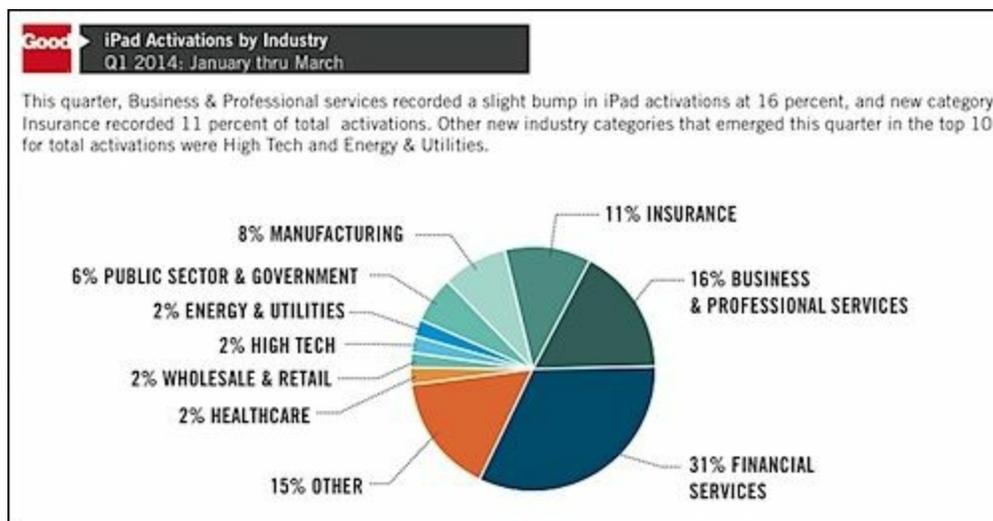


Figure 2. A wide variety of industries rely on the iPad.

Like Windows PCs in the past, the iPad represents a standard platform with predictable performance. As more businesses use the iPad, more businesses will flock to the iPad. For decades, the Macintosh represented an alternative to Windows PCs, but the advantages were

minor and the trouble to switch too great.

Today that's happening in the mobile computing market. Both iOS and Android are more firmly entrenched than Windows 8/RT. Even worse, the advantages of Windows 8/RT/Windows Phone are relatively small so their advantages are too minor and the trouble to switch is too great, much like the reason why so many people recommended Windows PCs instead of the Macintosh during the 90s.

If you want to use a tablet for business, you can't ignore the iPad. Then consider the advantages of the iPad compared to the advantages of Android or Windows 8/RT tablets. In case you still think the business world revolves entirely around Windows, you can see this latest report from Canalsys that shows Apple has sold more Macintosh computers and iPads than the sales of PCs and tablets from other companies including Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and Lenovo.

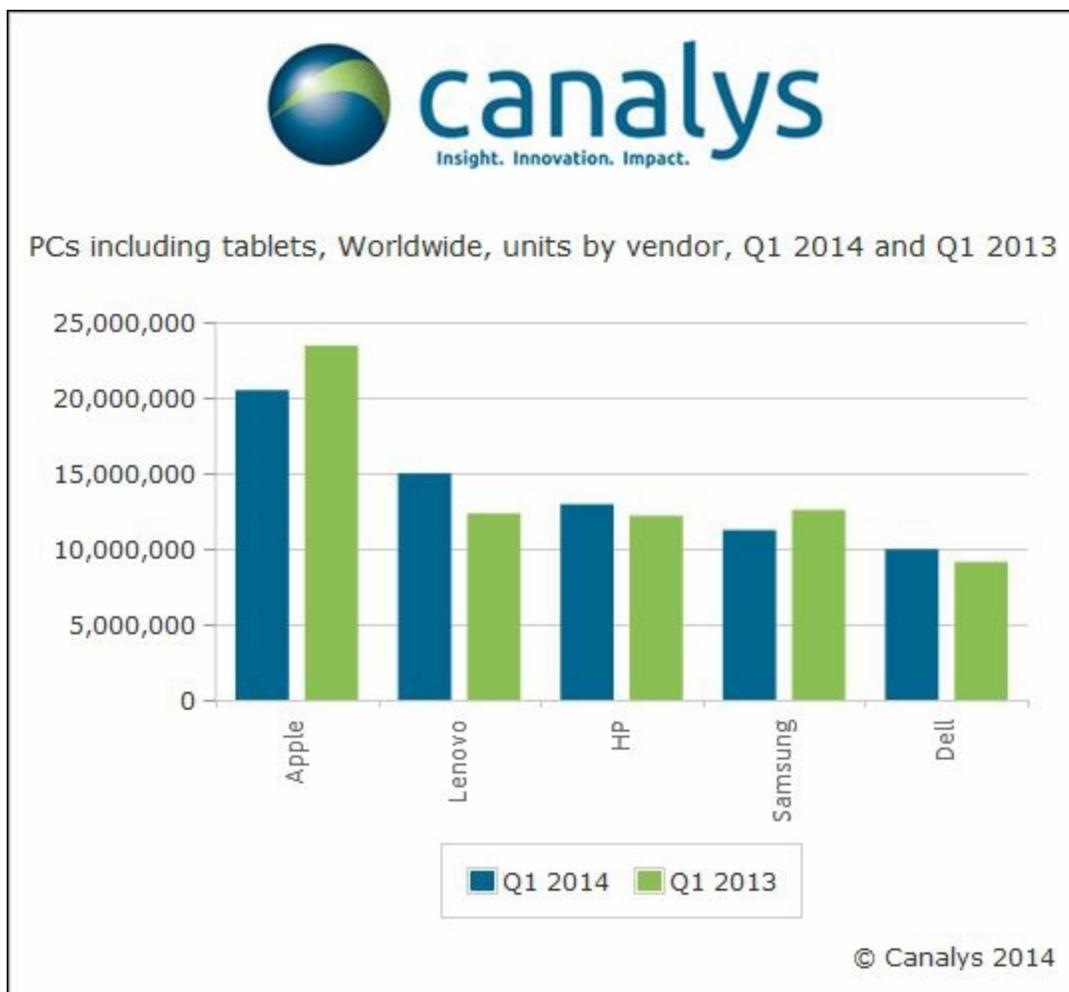


Figure 3. Canalsys claims that Apple has sold more computers (including tablets) than any other vendor.

Market Share vs. Profits

The goal of any business is to maximize profits. One way to maximize profits is to maximize market share, but market share alone is never the goal. If you can maximize profits without a dominant market share, then market share is irrelevant.

IDC recently reported that despite only having a 15 percent market share in the past quarter, Apple took [65 percent](#) of the entire smartphone industry's market. Besides Samsung, all other smartphone vendors lost money despite the fact that Android smartphones have a larger market share.

Given the choice between higher market share and higher profits, Android vendors are choosing higher market share and getting little to no profits, which makes their higher market share pointless. In comparison, Apple focuses on a smaller market share and still winds up making the most profits.

In the business world, you can kill yourself struggling for market share or you can provide high-end products and services, charge more, and maximize profits. When people complain about the high prices of Apple products, they're basically saying they want a five star, luxury hotel that charges them Motel 6 prices. These same people likely don't provide five star service in their own job and ask for minimum wage, yet they somehow think that Apple should do that.

If you think Apple charges too much for their products, start by accepting minimum wage at your own job or business while providing better service and see how sustainable that practice can be. When you can consistently provide higher quality service while accepting lower wages as your reward, you can demonstrate that you actually live by the same principles that you think Apple should follow.

Experts Flocking to Apple

To differentiate themselves in the smartphone market, Nokia has chosen to focus on the quality of their built-in cameras. Now Apple has hired away Nokia's [lead camera designer](#), Ari Partinen.

Given a choice between working for struggling Nokia and its declining smartphone market, and working for Apple, it was probably an easy decision to make. Besides taking Nokia's camera expert, Apple could also get Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre if Apple acquires Beats Electronics. Apple might not be interested in acquiring the brand name as much as they could be interested in acquiring Beats Electronics' [streaming music service](#).

Back in the old days of music, people had to buy tapes and audio CDs. When digital audio files took over, they wiped out the retail music stores and helped make iTunes the most popular digital music store in the world.

Now as streaming music services grow in popularity, sales of individual music files have

started to drop and show no signs of suddenly turning around any time soon. Streaming music threatens to make iTunes as obsolete as iTunes made Tower Records. If Apple wants to survive in the music industry, they need to embrace streaming music services.

Whether all the talent Apple has gathered can work together remains to be seen, but with so much talent flocking to Apple, it's getting harder for other companies to attract and hold their best workers. Would you rather work for a company that sells the most popular smartphone and tablet, and may soon dominate the wearable computing market too? Or would you rather work for a company treading water trying to survive (Blackberry) or a company coasting on past successes and chasing the leaders in every major market that they failed to exploit ahead of time (Microsoft)?

Microsoft Misses the Boat Again

In 1998, Microsoft teamed up with Clarion to create the [Auto PC](#), which offered "the benefits of interactive speech technology, connectivity, information on demand and enhanced entertainment to the automobile." Does this sound similar to Apple's goal with [CarPlay](#)?

After the Auto PC faded, Microsoft developed [MySync for Ford](#), which proved buggy, unreliable, and cumbersome to use. Critics savaged Ford's MySync system so much that Ford finally dumped Microsoft and switch to Blackberry's QNX operating system instead.

When built-in computers become commonplace in every car, you can thank Microsoft for leading the way. Then you can thank Microsoft for getting out of the way so everyone else could create more reliable technology that even novices could use and enjoy.

* * *

If you want to create an alias of a file or folder and place it in a new location, just hold down the Command+Option keys, click on the file or folder you want to use, and drag the file or folder to a new location. When you release the mouse and the Command+Option keys, OS X will create an alias of that file or folder.

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 or you can follow him on Twitter [@wallacewang_com](#).



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Digital Dave's Tips," "Windows 8.1 Scan," "Selling Pretty Things," "How to Cut, Copy, Paste, Alias Files"

Digital Dave's Tips

[Regarding the May 2 [Digital Dave column](#):]

Left click and dragging has two different default behaviors. If the destination is on the same drive, a move is the default. If the drives are different it will do a copy. That is why I think it is always best to do the right click so you know which one you are doing. The context menu will show the default action in bold. In Dave's screenshot, Move here is bold and is the default in his example.

-Marcus, Alabama

Windows 8.1 Scan

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

Hi, after downloading Windows 8.1.1 on a Dell with 8, a scan was run. Using the same Norton product and it took 1 hour 13 minutes and roughly 390000 files were scanned. With Windows 8 it took 22-minutes and scanned roughly 268000 files. My question is: are all the old files still in from 8, and what happened to the old OS? I'm the one that wrote you earlier about liking the 8 version. Also, this new version couldn't be that much larger, could it? Appreciate your thoughts on this.

-Alan, Denver Co.

Selling Pretty Things

[Regarding the May 2 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]

Rich,

If you reread my earlier reply, you will see that I actually agreed 100% with your comment about the drawbacks of all-in-one computers. I was just adding the fact that pretty isn't just limited to all-in-one units and that sometimes having the best equipment is irrelevant if people aren't happy with their computer.

After all, how many people buy cars based on getting the most horsepower and technology for their money? For some people, looks can be important regardless of the technology inside, especially if the technology inside doesn't offer a huge difference in performance over a similar product that may be uglier and cheaper.

So I'm not misinterpreting what you said. I'm just adding other factors for people to consider so they can truly buy what they want and need.

-Wally Wang

How to Cut, Copy, Paste, Alias Files

[Regarding the May 2 [Wally Wang's Apple Farm column](#).]

I help my girlfriend with her iMac regularly. In Windows, I can right drag a file to somewhere else on the same drive and get a menu to move, copy, or create a shortcut to the file in the new place.

Perhaps a tip on how to do similar things (I know an alias is similar to a Windows shortcut) on the Mac? I can right click on the Mac and create an alias right there, but then have to move it by dragging to new folder, two operations. Lastly, is there a way to force a move and/or copy when dragging a file somewhere else? Either solely with the mouse, or with a combination of command, option, ctrl, shift or other keys?

Perhaps a tip in an article with a chart showing the options would be helpful for more than just me?

Thanks,

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

ComputerEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at ComputerEdge.com. Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at

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Table of Contents

List of ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
San Diego ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
Colorado ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
ComputerEdge™ Online — 05/16/14	3
Is the Google Chromebook Right for You?	4
Magazine Summary	4
Digital Dave	6
Losing Internet Connection	6
Recognizing Spam	7
A Look at Chromebook Computers	10
What's Included with a Chromebook	12
Examples of Chromebooks	14
Acer C720 Chromebook (11.6-Inch, 2GB)	16
Samsung Chromebook (Wi-Fi, 11.6-Inch)	17
Toshiba CB35-A3120 13.3-Inch Chromebook	17
HP Chromebook 14	19
HP 14-q070nr 14-Inch Chromebook (free T-Mobile 4G)	20
Chromebooks Are Now Acceptable	20
Looking at AutoHotkey Pop-up Windows	22
Quick and Handy AutoHotkey GUI Windows	22
MonthCal GUI Control	22
ListView, Text, Edit, and Button GUI Controls with Right-click Menus	23
DateTime GUI Control	24
Progress and UpDown GUI Controls	26
Hotkey GUI Control	27
Picture GUI control	28
TreeView GUI Control	28
Slider and StatusBar GUI Controls	29
DropDownList GUI Control	30
The Checkbox GUI	31
The Radio GUI	31
The ComboBox GUI	32
The ListBox GUI	32

The GroupBox GUI	33
Tab2 GUI Control	33
So Many GUI Controls	34
Other Graphical Commands	34
Wally Wang's Apple Farm	37
AMD Licenses ARM Technology	38
The Limitations of One Platform	38
iOS Dominates in Business	40
Market Share vs. Profits	41
Experts Flocking to Apple	42
Microsoft Misses the Boat Again	43
Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers	45
Digital Dave's Tips	45
Windows 8.1 Scan	45
Selling Pretty Things	45
How to Cut, Copy, Paste, Alias Files	46