A woman with short white hair and glasses, wearing a black jacket over a red top, sits in a red chair in a library. She is resting her chin on her hand. To her left is a wooden bookshelf filled with books. Behind her is a large window showing a view of a town with a prominent church tower and a domed building. The scene is lit with warm indoor lighting.

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Your Own E-Books**

**June 20, 2014**

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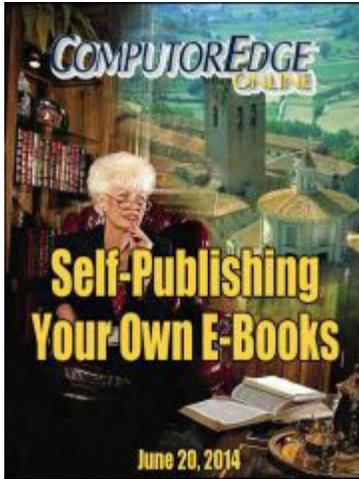
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*by Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

Backup on 1TB External Hard Drive; Windows XP Support Stopped; Windows Shutdown.

#### [Self-Publishing Your Own E-Books](#)

*by Jack Dunning*

**Independent Authors Can Go It Alone by Self-publishing E-books**

Long gone are the days when writers must submit manuscripts to book publishers, then hope to be accepted.

Now they can take their future into their own hands with e-books. This is the first in a series of articles on self-publishing e-books.

#### [Picking and Choosing Colors](#)

*by Jack Dunning*

**Whether a Web Designer or Script Writer, Alex's Color Picker Gives Instant Help**

You may not have realized that AutoHotkey has commands for working with screen colors. This color picker script is an excellent tool for anyone who needs to work with the codes.

#### [Wally Wang's Apple Farm](#)

*by Wally Wang*

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**by Charles Carr**

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**by Matthew W. Beale**

**or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution**

One Step Beyond (MP3)?

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"Windows XP Support," "ARM Processor—RISC vs. CISC"

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## Digital Dave

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

*Backup on 1TB External Hard Drive; Windows XP Support Stopped; Windows Shutdown.*

---

## Backup on 1TB External Hard Drive

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have newly installed Windows 7 on a Dell 3000. Loving this (mostly)—just need guidance. One issue, a bit stumped: How to open external HD to review/retrieve as well as send docs to backup.*

*Thanks,*

*Joe McGuiure  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Joe,

The Windows Backup and Restore Center (Control Panel => Backup and Restore or Start Search "backup" and select) is the key to using an external hard drive for backup on Windows 7 (see Figure 1).

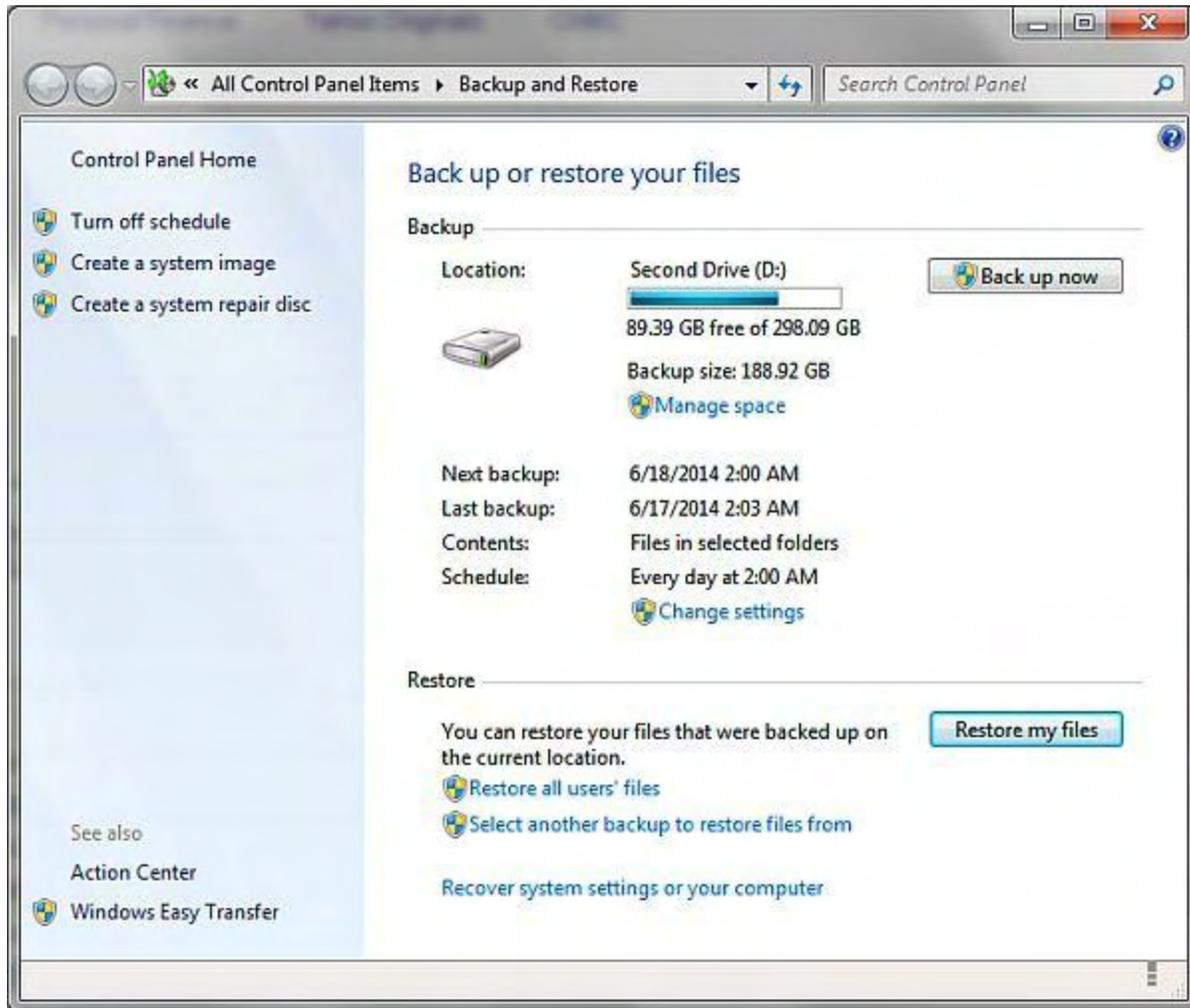


Figure 1. Regular backup of folders and files can be made with the Backup and Restore feature.

You can set it up to do regular backup of all your files (not more often than daily). You can pick which files/folders or take its suggestions. You can also make a system image which is an entire copy of your Windows system in its current state.

Later, if you need to restore a file, then you can use the same Backup and Restore to retrieve either individual files and folders, or restore everything.

This is not meant to be an instant backup of files. For that you will use features in individual programs, a special backup utility, or manually copy (CTRL+C) and paste (CTRL+V) the file to another location. (Plus, I see that Jack has written some [AutoHotkey scripts for backup.](#))

Digital Dave

---

## Win XP Support Stopped

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*When Microsoft and Google announced no further support for Windows XP, Microsoft meant they won't take XP support questions and Google meant it won't support IE 8. Am I correct? Can't I retain Windows XP indefinitely as long as I use Google Chrome?*

*James Taylor  
San Diego, CA*

Dear James,

You're mostly right. When Microsoft ended support for Windows XP, it merely meant that it would no longer provide any updates—security or otherwise. (Plus, I suppose that Microsoft won't take support questions for Windows XP.) However, you can use Windows XP as long as you want. Your amount of risk depends totally on how you use the computer.

If you use it primarily for basic word processing and other applications which don't require Internet interaction, then you have very little risk. If you use the Internet and e-mail and take basic precautions (don't download from strange Web sites, don't open unknown e-mail attachments, and use third-party antivirus software), then your risk is still relatively low. Most of the hype about Windows XP suddenly becoming unsafe to use since Microsoft dropped support is based upon someone finding a gaping hole in the operating system. It's possible, but after all the years that XP has been in use (and debugged) it's not likely.

As for Google Chrome, rather than dropping support for Windows XP, they have actually extended at least through April of next year. What Google has dropped is its support for Google Analytics (used by Webmasters to analyze Web traffic) for Internet Explorer 8. That's all. If you don't use Google Analytics (or Internet Explorer 8), then it has no impact on you. However, Google Chrome, as well as Firefox, is considered more secure than Internet Explorer (any version). I would switch to Chrome for that reason alone.

Digital Dave

---

## **Windows Shutdown**

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*When I leave my computer on for a few hours and come back to it, I get the error message, "Windows did not shut down successfully." Then I am asked how I want to reboot i.e. normally, safe mode, etc. What is wrong?*

*Thank you for all your help, always.*

*Lynne  
Magnolia, Texas*

Dear Lynne,

While you were away from your computer, something caused your computer to reboot. There are a number of things which can cause this. Most commonly it is some type of system error which causes the infamous Blue Screen of Death—after which the computer will attempt to reboot. If Windows does not go through all the proper motions when shutting down, it will give you the message you noted. Usually you can use the Normal mode without problems.

This is also something that you will experience if there is a power failure which abruptly cuts the juice to the computer—although an automatic reboot generally depends upon a BIOS setting.

I don't allow my Windows computers to go into hibernate or sleep mode. These features are notorious for having problems in Windows. If I'm going to be away from my computer for an extended period of time I shut it down. If it's a computer that needs to monitor other activities, then I don't want it to sleep or hibernate.

It is not uncommon for things to go wonky in either sleep or hibernate. If you use either of these modes, I would go into Power Options and disable them. See if that solves the problem.

You may also need to Repair Windows. Depending upon your version of Windows you can use Windows Repair or Startup Repair (Refresh your PC in Windows 8). These functions will overwrite the system files that may be corrupted with clean copies. A quick search of the Web for "Windows repair [your version]" should yield a number of pages which will give the steps for your version of Windows.

It is also possible that while you are gone an installed program is crashing and taking the system with it. Is there any software that you leave open when you're away from your computer?

If you recently installed new software on your computer or ran an update, you may want to Restore to an earlier Restore Point.

It is also possible that the hard drive (or any hardware part) is starting to go and causing a crash. Flaky hard drives can be a source of this type of reboot problem. Running the built in Windows [Chkdsk](#) program will scan the drive for errors and is capable of blocking bad sectors.

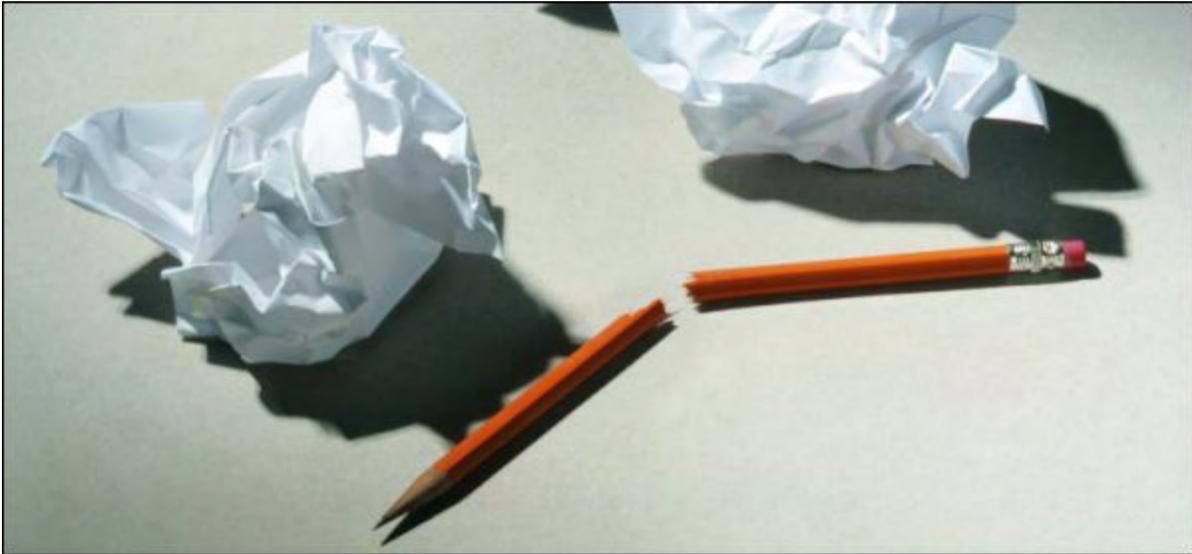
As an absolute last resort, you may need to reinstall Windows. If this problem continues to occur on a regular basis, regardless of any fixes you apply, then you may have no alternative. Back up all of your files first.

Does your PC ever crash when you're sitting at it? If it's always when you're away, then

hibernate/sleep is a decent lead. I know that I haven't covered all the possibilities, but these are some places to start looking. Hopefully, disabling hibernate and sleep will do the job.

Digital Dave

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## Self-Publishing Your Own E-Books

**“Independent Authors Can Go It Alone by Self-publishing E-books”** by Jack Dunning

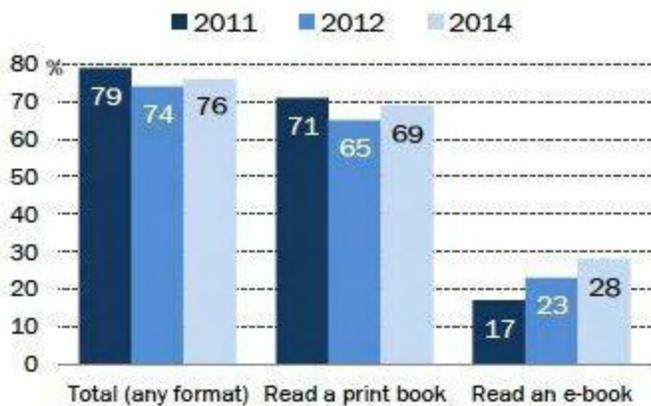
*Long gone are the days when writers must submit manuscripts to book publishers, then hope to be accepted. Now they can take their future into their own hands with e-books. This is the first in a series of articles on self-publishing e-books.*

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Anyone who is a regular reader of *ComputerEdge* is well aware that I've dedicated a good portion of my business plan to publishing e-books. So far ComputerEdge E-Books has published more than 20 books either written by either myself or other *ComputerEdge* authors. I believe that the future of e-books is growing while the demand for traditional paper books will continue to shrink. It is not straight line growth for e-books for a variety of reasons and there are a lot of potholes in the road for anyone who plans to self-publish, but I believe that digital books are the future.

## Most adults read a book in the past year; print remains most popular, but e-reading is on the rise

Among American adults 18 and older, the % who read at least one book (in total, in print, or as an e-book) in the past year



\* "Total" also includes those who listen to audio books (not shown).

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet Project Omnibus Survey, January 2-5, 2014. N= 1005 American adults ages 18 and older. Interviews were conducted on landlines and cell phones, in English and Spanish.

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Paper books will not completely disappear. There are many situations where hardcopy is much more suitable than electronic forms of the same book, but the bound paper market will continue to slowly shrink. It just too expensive to put ink on paper and ship to bookstores. In fact, the cost of production, distribution, and marketing for traditional reading matter is so high that the author often gets only pennies on the dollar. The major portion of the price of a paper book goes to the publisher, wholesalers, and retail outlets. Now those partnerships, which squeezes authors, is collapsing at the hands of the digital e-book. More opportunities exist in the e-book market for people who want to self-publish.

It's relatively easy to generate an e-book and provide it to readers in a variety of digital formats compatible with everything from iPads and Kindles to the PC. The hard part is writing and editing the book so

that it resembles some form of readable text. Yet, it has been the authors who have been left with the short end of the stick. The one area where traditional publishers added value was marketing and distribution. While the marketing problem continues to be a huge obstacle, distributing e-books is now simple and can be done at almost no cost.

Over the next few weeks I will pass along what I have learned about digital publishing and where I think it is going. If you have a book in you or a particular expertise that you would like to share with the world, then self-publishing e-books may be right for you. You may want to publish just for friends and family or earn a few extra dollars by selling your book on Amazon. If you're driven enough, then you may want to set up your own Web catalog to sell your books online. (Enter a credit card number and download a book.)

In the long term, this last approach to authors writing, publishing, and marketing their own e-books might become a popular way to sell books. There are problems with depending upon behemoths like Amazon to sell your books. While an independent author may keep a high percentage of the price of each sale (60 to 70%), the constraints Amazon places on the terms of the sales forces the self-publisher into sometimes unsuitable decisions (more on that in future articles). Plus, as the number of self-published books rapidly grows on Amazon, most books get lost in the mass of Amazon e-book titles. Don't get me wrong. Amazon is *the* major player in the e-book market—they practically created it with the Kindle and they will sell far more books for you than any other e-tail business—including Apple iTunes and Barnes and

Noble NOOK. But, it's up to you to figure out how to get the attention needed to sell your books—whether on Amazon or your own Web site. Publishing on Amazon cannot be your entire marketing plan. But first it is worthwhile to take a look at who reads e-books.

## Who Reads E-Books?

While the Amazon Kindle virtually created the e-book market (similar to how the iPhone sparked the smartphone market and the iPad spawned the tablet market), the success of smartphones and tablets has added fuel to the fire. When the first people purchased Kindles, it was specifically to read books. Most of the early buyers were avid readers looking for ways to clear their shelves of paperbacks. The occasional reader didn't bother with a Kindle. Picking up a book, scanning a newspaper, or reading a magazine was enough for the casual reader. The initial surge in e-book consumption came from these reading enthusiasts who devour one book after another. (There's usually one or two of these people in every family.)

A large portion of the current e-book market consists of consumers of fiction. These are people who love the written word (and particular authors) so much that they don't flinch at purchasing a digital version of a book at the same price as the paperback version. It's the words they want—they just happen to come in a form which is more convenient and easier to store than paper.

Over a year ago, one of my sons, who is a voracious reader, gave his old Kindle to his mother. He had just upgraded to a newer Kindle and wanted to pass along the other one. He even offered to let his mother use his Kindle account. I'm not sure he knew what he was getting into since he now pays for each book she downloads.

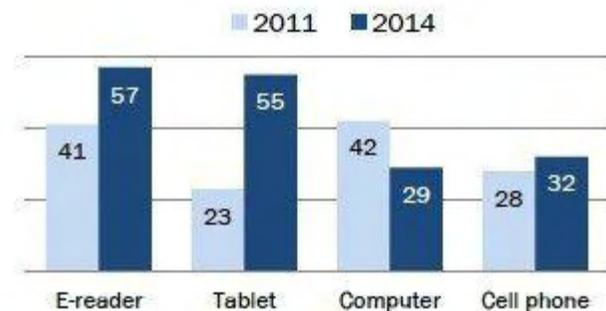
My wife is a woman who had never used a computer other than to Skype with her grandchildren—after I set up a session. She loves her books and can be pretty particular about what form they take—or so I thought. She took to the Kindle with a relish. She absolutely loves it. I do help her to load a new book, but the fact that the Kindle is not a paper book doesn't bother her. She loves that she can enlarge the type to a comfortable reading size. (She does feel a little guilty about charging her books to our son, but not guilty enough to stop doing it.) For me this is anecdotal proof that the e-mail market is only in its infancy. The problem facing the major publishers is that the traditional paper book business model doesn't fit this new market.

## Enter the Tablet Computer

The next boost to the e-book market was the introduction of the iPad tablet. People buy e-readers such as the Kindle to read books. People buy tablets to surf the Web, check their e-mail, play games, and possibly read e-books. The market expanded for digital books because now a new group of people might read e-books (casual readers who own tablets), not because

### As tablet ownership grows, more use them for e-books

Among all e-book readers ages 18 and older, the % who read e-books on each device



Source: Pew Research Center surveys, Dec 2011-January 2014. Interviews were conducted on landlines and cell phones, in English and Spanish.

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they live for it, but because they can.

The impact the tablet computer has on markets is far beyond that of e-readers such as the original Kindle or NOOK. The e-reader is one dimensional—only good for reading e-books. The tablet is much more versatile. That's why Amazon is always one of the first companies to produce a reading app for all the tablets and smartphones regardless of make. The Kindle is not just an e-reading device anymore. It is also a multitude of software programs which can turn any smartphone, tablet, or computer into a Kindle e-reader. Now Amazon sells the [Kindle Fire HD](#) and larger [Kindle Fire 8.9" HDX](#) in the tablet market at a low subsidized price. These Kindle products are offered not so much for competing with other tablets as they are for

promoting and protecting the Amazon e-book market.

People who never before considered buying a Kindle now own an e-book reading platform in the form of a tablet computer—whether it is an iPad, Android, or other system. They may or may not actually read any books, but the odds are significantly higher that they will now that they own a device which can download and open the e-books.

## Resistance to Change

The major obstacle to the growth of the e-book market is resistance to change. Many lifelong readers love the feel of the paper volume in their hands. This is the way that they've always known it, so why change now? Some completely ignore e-books because they have no desire to replace their current comfortable reading habits. It is easy to pick up a book and start reading.

There are technological hurdles to overcome when using e-books. If you buy a Kindle, then the process of selecting and downloading e-books is relatively simple—as long as you get your books from Amazon. But if you get e-books from another source, then you need to use a more involved method for loading the e-book on you device (called sideloading). Virtually all e-readers and tablet computers have a way to add third-party books, but it often requires the use of a computer connection. If someone is not comfortable with their own computer literacy, then they are less likely to venture into any outside e-books.

This is one reason why I wrote tutorials on "[How to Download and Read Free E-Books](#)" and "[Free Software for Reading E-Books on Your Computer](#)." The more people know about how

to get and read e-books, the more likely they are to do it. Making people comfortable with using digital books is an important step in this growing market. Until that happens the progress will be slow for the self-publisher.

## What's Needed to Write E-Books?

I never thought that I would write any books. It just sort of happened. I started writing articles and columns extensively for *ComputerEdge* when the paper version collapsed (along with many of the local computer stores). I could no longer afford a contingent of freelance writers, but I didn't want to abandon *ComputerEdge*. I had spent a good portion of my life living the paper magazine and I needed to find out what could be done without it. (A smarter person may have just given up, but that wasn't in me.) For a number years, I pumped out the columns every week while keeping the online version of *ComputerEdge* alive.

All of that weekly *ComputerEdge* editorial content sits in the database which drives the Web site. I wrote the software that runs *ComputerEdge* years ago for both the Web site and the paper magazine and it essentially works the same way today. As I accumulated more and more content, I realized that much of it could be turned into e-books and sold on Amazon. Maybe the years of work would pay off.

I wrote a program that made it easy for me to draw articles into a new e-book database and generate EPUB e-books. It worked remarkably well. (Again, the writing and editing is the most time consuming part of the process.) It's easy to post e-books for sale on Amazon. All you need to do is fill in the blanks, upload the e-book and a cover, choose your pricing, and you're done. Within 12 hours the book is up for sale. But without the original columns and articles sitting in that database, there would have been no books. That's the point.

What *ComputerEdge* has given me is a personal system for writing. It's not the software or computers, but the routine that makes me sit down and write. Fortunately, everything I publish on *ComputerEdge* has the potential to become part of a book. If I decide to make a book, I don't need to start over at the beginning. I import the pertinent columns, organize the chapters in my e-book program, then edit and rewrite. It's the week in, week out routine that's put me in the position to publish e-books.

If you want to write a book, get a system. There are many people writing Blogs, but how many have considered turning them into books? I'm not saying just throw together a bunch of random Blogs, turn them into an e-book, and put it up for sale. It needs to be a Blog with a theme or niche. The Blogs need to lead somewhere. And, they must be written on a regular basis. It doesn't even matter if anyone reads your Blog (although it helps). What's important is that you communicate—and do it regularly.

If you Blog about a topic that interests you, then people with similar feelings will find you. They may not be in great numbers, but even a tiny bit of feedback will help keep you on

track. Eventually, you should see a common theme running through your writing (if you didn't know what it was from the start). The book will start to develop. The chapters may not be in the right order—in fact they probably won't. What's important is to do something each week (or each day). Before you know it, the book will have written itself.

You don't have to use a Blogging system to start writing. Any word processing program will do. What's important is a systematic approach to writing a chapter at a time.

## Do What You Care About

I was lucky. The habit I developed by just keeping *ComputerEdge* going put me in the position of having the material for a number of books mostly written by the time I even thought about generating e-books. Now, I strive to work on topics in which I have an intense interest. That's why I picked AutoHotkey a couple of years ago. I'm so obsessed with the free Windows utility software, that everything I write about AutoHotkey is an effort to communicate its power. I know that AutoHotkey is not for everybody, but I want to reach as many of the right people as I can.

When I started writing the columns about "Things You Ought to Do with AutoHotkey" I knew they would become an e-book—this time a freebie available at [ComputerEdge E-Books](#). (This free e-book was always a part of a longer range plan e-book marketing plan which I will discuss in more detail in a future article.) The book was relatively easy to write both because I hit one topic (chapter) each week and I cared about the topic. Some people may think me over zealous, but I'm not going to convince anyone to try AutoHotkey if I don't believe in it myself. That's why you see so much AutoHotkey content on *ComputerEdge* and why I now have four AutoHotkey e-books (one free at [ComputerEdge E-Books](#)) and the other three available at both Amazon and ComputerEdge E-Books.

I've also published AutoHotkey e-books because there aren't very many people current publishing AutoHotkey books. That means if someone does a search on Amazon for AutoHotkey, they're going to see my books first. I've produced a number of Windows books, but, unless you include my name in the search, good luck finding them on Amazon. AutoHotkey is a niche market with far fewer buyers for books than Windows, but with the lack of current competition, I can sell as many AutoHotkey books as I can Windows books. The moral is find a niche where you can become an expert and concentrate on it. (Naturally, it must be an area of intense interest to you.) If you just do what everyone else is doing, then your e-books will be lost in the chaff of the multitude of the other e-books on the same topic.

The point is that I can write AutoHotkey books only because I find the topic challenging and have a desire to communicate my feelings about it with others. If your only goal in writing is to make money, then you will likely produce a mediocre book and fail to generate revenues. You must care about your writing and the topic.

## Only the Beginning

As I work through this series of articles on e-book publishing, I will address the obstacles that I've encountered and how I plan to overcome them. One article will address working with Amazon—and it is the one company you should work with—as well as my thoughts on others (iTunes, NOOK Press, etc). In another article I plan to talk about selling your e-book yourself with a Web shopping cart set up for downloading the books and charging credit cards. At some point I will cover my own system for putting together e-books and converting them to the various formats (including software). There must be an article on marketing—which is the most difficult problem—especially if you plan to charge for the book. I don't do any of these things perfectly and I'm a long way from what I would consider successful, but I have a plan and will expose it. I learned long ago that success is much more about persistence than brilliance.

As you might guess, when I'm finished I will probably turn this short series of articles into an e-book—most likely a freebie. There are a ton of e-books on self-publishing available on Amazon (many of them free), so it could be difficult to break into that market and make any money.

I have two purposes in writing about e-book self-publishing. The first is to communicate my experiences. The second is to spur people to take a closer look at e-books and how they work. For now, I'm satisfied if I can get a few more people to either give reading e-books a try or get others to publish their own e-books. Every new digital volume gives someone a reason to read an e-book.

In another ten years, most of the books we read will be in digital form. Paper books will still be available, but a novelty.

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*Jack is the publisher of ComputerEdge Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called The Byte Buyer. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](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:*

Recently released is Jack's FREE AutoHotkey book, [AutoHotkey Tricks You Ought to Do with Window](#), available exclusively at ComputerEdge E-Books in the EPUB for e-readers and tablets, MOBI for Kindle, and PDF for printing formats.

ComputerEdge E-books offering is his [AutoHotkey Applications](#), an idea-generating intermediate level e-book about using the AutoHotkey Graphical User Interface (GUI) command to write practical pop-up apps for your Windows computer. (It's not as hard as it sounds.)

[\*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!\*](#)

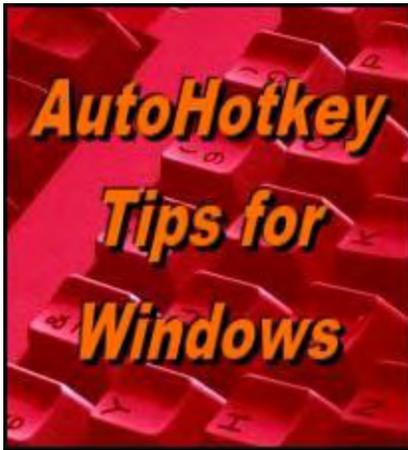
[\*Misunderstanding Windows 8: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Windows 8 \(Seventh Edition\)!\*](#)

[\*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.



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

## **Picking and Choosing Colors**

**“Whether a Web Designer or  
Script Writer, Alex's Color  
Picker Gives Instant Help”**

by Jack Dunning

*You may not have realized that AutoHotkey has commands for working with screen colors. This color picker script is an excellent tool for anyone who needs to work with the codes.*

---

If you want to add some color to your scripts or Web site, then you're going to love this AutoHotkey script. With this little utility app called [Alex's Color Picker](#) you can quickly find the standard codes for all the colors used in AutoHotkey and other programming languages. There are four options for working with colors (see Figure 1): pick from a menu of basic colors; choose from a color palette; enter the code to see a color; or capture the color sitting under a hovering mouse cursor.

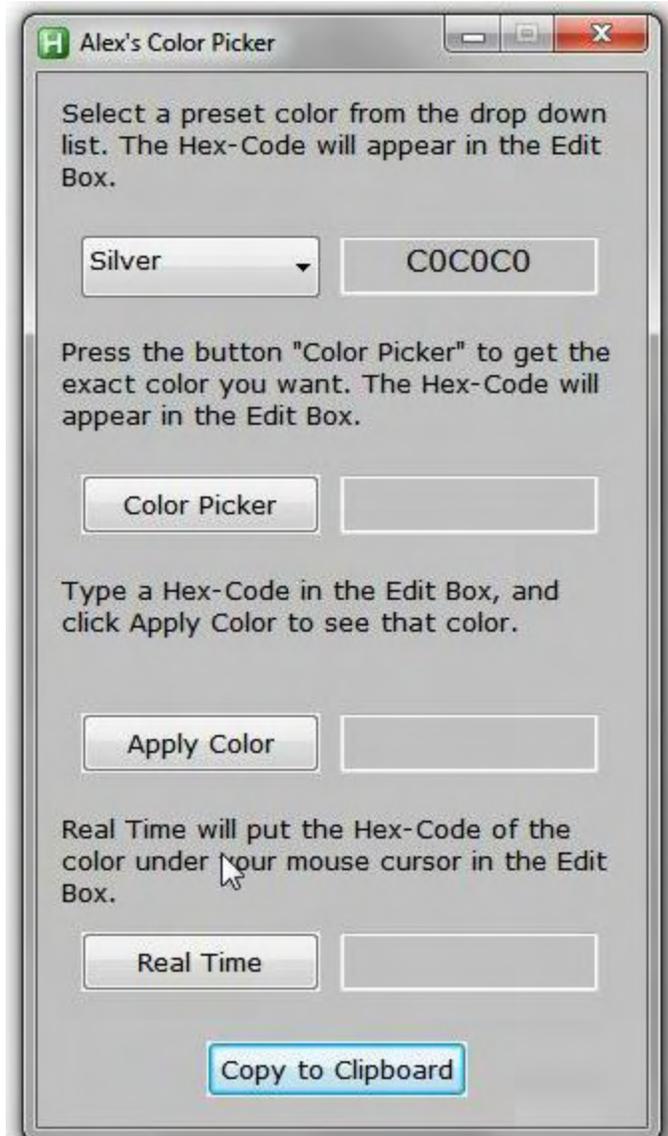


Figure 1. The AutoHotkey script "Alex's Color Picker" offers four ways to work with colors.

You no longer need to look up the colors in the back of a manual or use one of those color tables found on the Web. Alex's Color Picker quickly provides all the information you need. You can even match any color on your computer screen.

*Note: You may not need this tool for anything that you do, but it's fun to play with—at least once.*

I was able to load this tool by simply copying the code into a new AHK script file in Notepad. (After the AutoHotkey program is installed, right-click in Windows Explorer and select New => AutoHotkey Script. see "[Installing AutoHotkey and Writing Your First Script.](#)") I then copied the code for the [Alex's Color Picker](#) page by selecting (highlighting) the text in the Code box (see Figure 2) and copying it (CTRL+C or right-click and Copy).

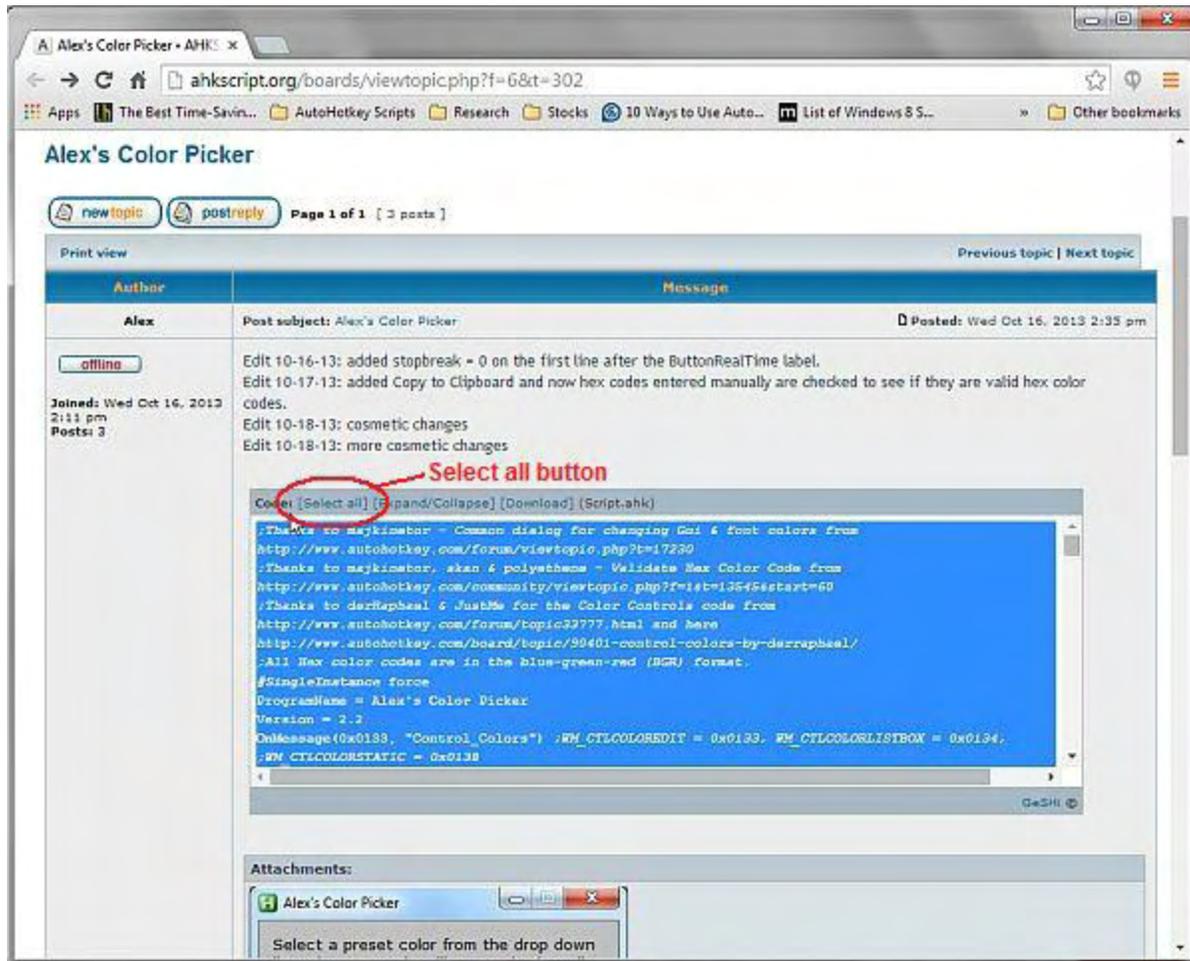


Figure 2. Click the "Select all" button to highlight the code in the box for copying, either with CTRL+C or right-click and Copy.

I pasted (CTRL+V) the code into the new AHK file and saved it with the name *ColorPicker.ahk*. Right-clicked on *ColorPicker.ahk*, then selected Run Script. The window shown in Figure 1 popped up.

Pick a standard color from the dropdown menu at the top of the window and the background will change to that color while displaying the hexadecimal code in the box on the right (see Figure 3).

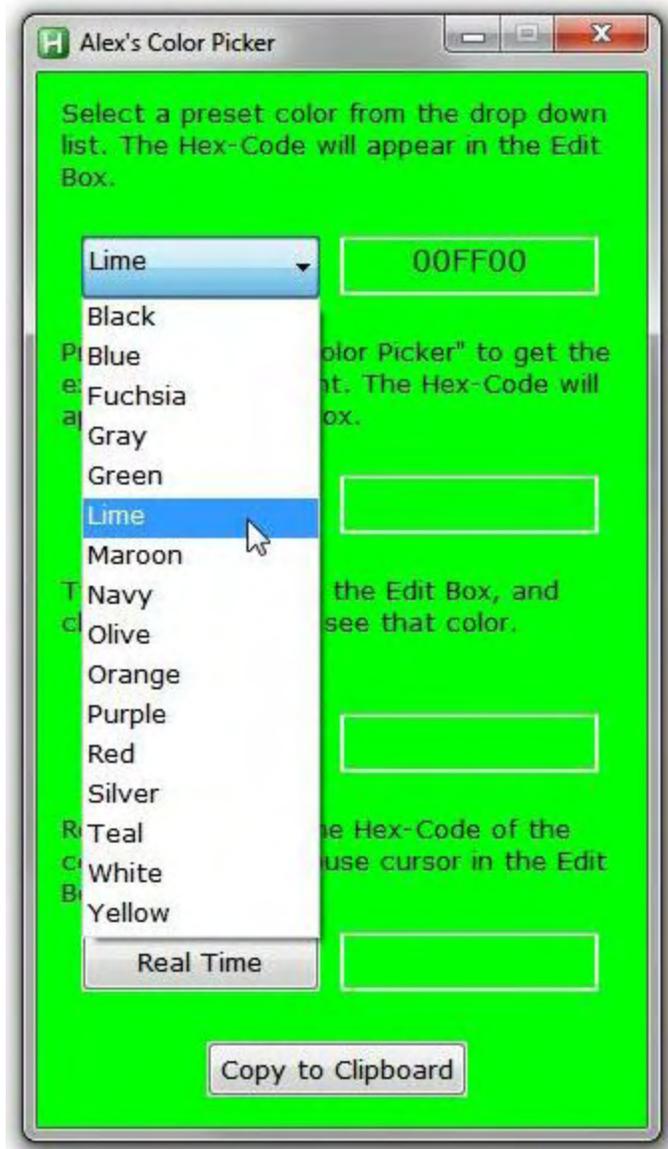


Figure 3. The dropdown menu allows you to select basic colors and displays the code in the box on the right.

If you want to select a color from a palette, click the Color Picker button. The color selection window opens (see Figure 4).

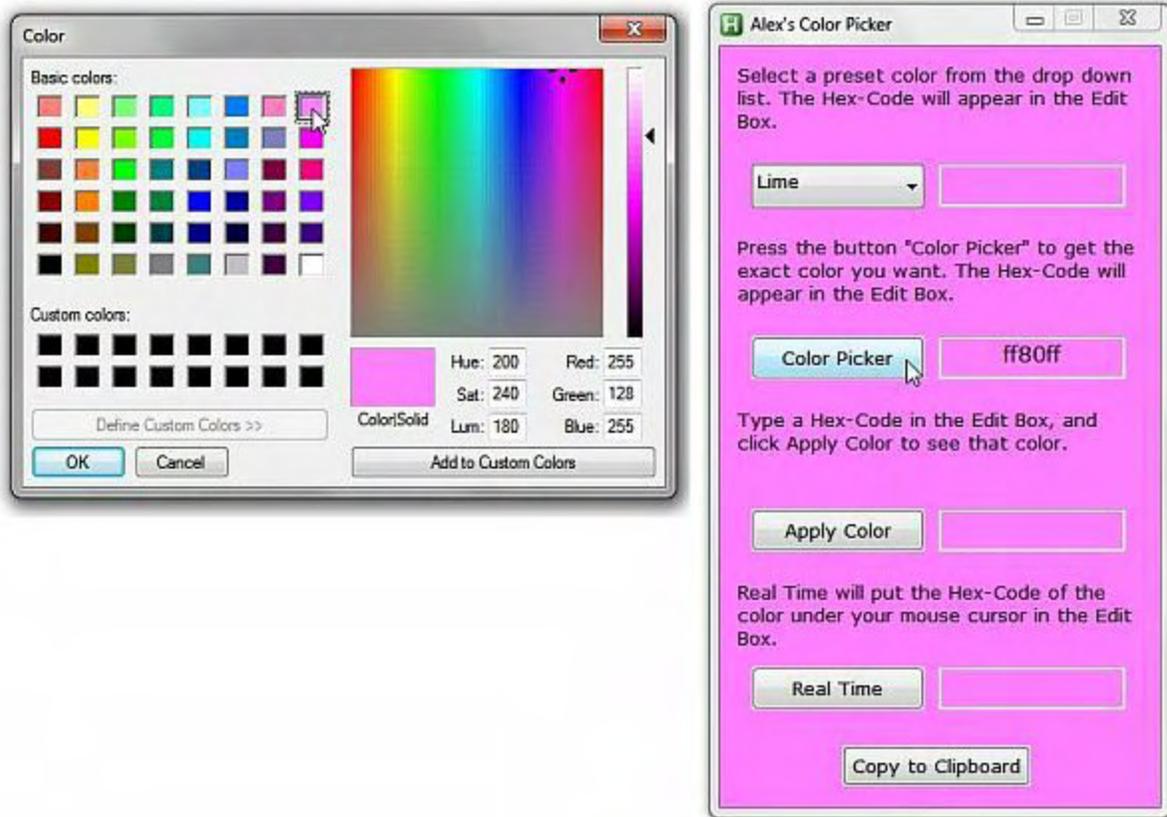


Figure 4. Click the "Color Picker" button and the color palette pops up.

Once you select a color and click OK, the background of the Color Picker window will change to that color and the hexadecimal code appears in the box to the right of the button.

If you want to view which color is produced by a particular hex code, enter the code into the box to the right of the "Apply Color" button. The background will change respectively (see Figure 5).

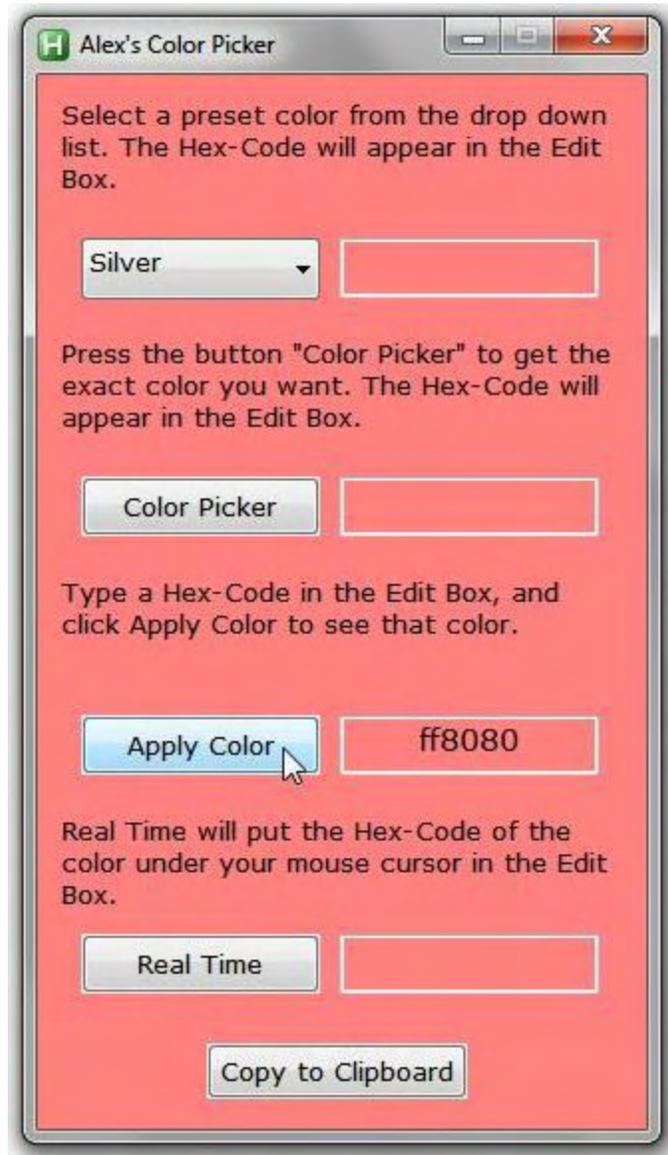


Figure 5. Enter the code and click the "Apply Color" to view the color.

Possibly the most useful feature is the "Real Time" button which changes the window's background to whichever color currently resides under the mouse cursor—as well as the code (see Figure 6). Use the hotkey combination CTRL+E to capture the current mouse location.

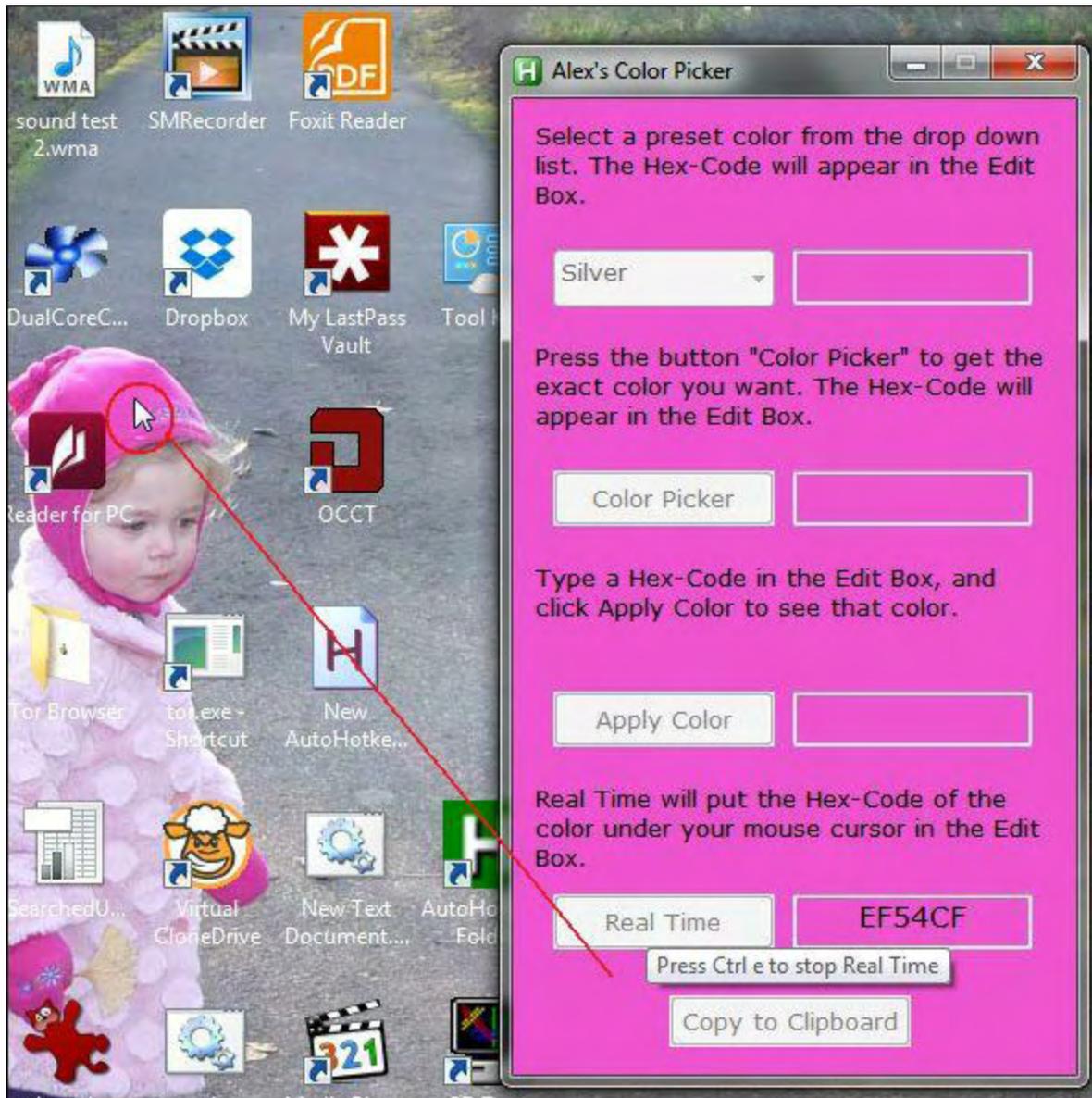


Figure 6. Use the "Real Time" button to display the color under the hovering mouse cursor. CTRL+E to pick.

At any time you can click the "Copy to Clipboard" button to capture the code for the current background in the Windows Clipboard.

Alex's Color Picker script is not too long, but it is not a beginner's script. There are some more enigmatic techniques used which involve the [DllCall\(\)](#) function. I did note that the color under the mouse cursor used the AutoHotkey [MouseGetPos command](#) and [PixelGetColor command](#):

```
MouseGetPos , xpos, ypos, WinTitle1, ControlID,
PixelGetColor , color, %xpos%, %ypos%, rgb
```

I had not previously seen *PixelGetColor* in use. I will leave decipher the script up to you. There are certainly bits and pieces which would be useful for working with colors in other scripts. For me this color picker is another cool use for AutoHotkey.

\* \* \*

## Free AutoHotkey E-Book

Just released! [\*AutoHotkey Tricks You Ought To Do With Windows!\*](#) This e-book includes both those tips and the reference material (Table of Contents and indexes) from the other three AutoHotkey books. Pick up a copy free and share it with your friends.

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*Jack is the publisher of ComputerEdge Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called The Byte Buyer. His Web site is [www.computoredge.com](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:*

Recently released is Jack's FREE AutoHotkey book, [\*AutoHotkey Tricks You Ought to Do with Window\*](#), available exclusively at ComputerEdge E-Books in the EPUB for e-readers and tablets, MOBI for Kindle, and PDF for printing formats.

ComputerEdge E-books offering is his [\*AutoHotkey Applications\*](#), an idea-generating intermediate level e-book about using the AutoHotkey Graphical User Interface (GUI) command to write practical pop-up apps for your Windows computer. (It's not as hard as it sounds.)

[\*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

“Clinging to the Past” by Wally Wang

## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

*Clinging to the Past; Steve Jobs Fascination and Delusion; Tackling Difficult Problems; Sapphire Glass and Liquid Metal; New iMac Models; OS X's Dictation Feature.*

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Back in 2000, Microsoft realized that existing programming languages like Java had flaws so they decided to create their own programming language called C#. Over a decade later, Apple decided to jettison Objective-C as the programming language of choice for the Macintosh and iOS, and create a new programming language called Swift.

What's odd is that if you search for tutorials on Swift on the Internet, a large majority of those tutorials are geared towards helping Objective-C programmers transition to Swift. What you'll find are far fewer tutorials geared towards helping novices learn Swift as a new language altogether.

For anyone who has learned a foreign language, the first step is always translating a foreign language into your native language. Eventually as you get more proficient, you can speak a foreign language without relying on your native language for translation.

That's what programmers need to do when learning Swift. Instead of seeing Swift through the eyes of an Objective-C programmer, people need to learn Swift's way of thinking and programming without the baggage and corruption of other programming languages' limitations getting in the way. Nobody drives a car thinking it's just a faster version of a horse and carriage, yet early cars were called horseless carriages and treated as such.

The human mind tends to cling to the past because it's easier to hold on to what you already know rather than take the time and effort to learn something new. When confronted by something new, even if that new item is dramatically better, the typical response is to ignore the new item altogether.

Failing that, the reaction can quickly turn from dismissal to outright anger. What rarely happens in far too many people is an honest evaluation of both the old way of working and the new way just recently introduced. Just look at the angry letters in past issues of this magazine

to see how so many Windows supporters gleefully dismissed anything by Apple, then angrily attacked anything made by Apple while deliberately refusing to acknowledge the problems of their own chosen technology.

Finally when faced with overwhelming evidence they could no longer ignore (the dismal reception to Vista and Windows 8), many ardent Windows supporters simply shut their eyes to facts so they can continue clinging to their beliefs, even if those beliefs are no more substantial and real than the Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, or the Tooth Fairy.

Why the human mind clings to the past while fearing and suppressing the future is probably the number one reason for the lack of progress in human civilization. To learn more about how the human mind thinks (or doesn't think), read [\*The Art of Thinking Clearly\*](#) by Rolf Dobelli.

Each chapter in the book examines a common thinking fallacy among people such as thinking that bad luck only happens to them (while ignoring the numerous times bad luck didn't happen to them) or believing that winning the lottery can solve all of their life problems (ignoring numerous lottery winners who make their lives worse after winning millions of dollars).

After reading *The Art of Thinking Clearly*, you may be amazed at how many people don't think clearly, yet ardently believe that they do. The more you understand how your brain works (and often doesn't work), the more you'll learn to better understand how you draw your own conclusions about life and whether they actually make sense or not.

## Steve Jobs Fascination and Delusion

Now that Steve Jobs has been gone, a strange myth has evolved that seems to believe that Apple can't survive without Steve Jobs and that Steve Jobs never made any mistakes. Of course, this conveniently forgets the fact that under Steve Jobs, Apple launched MobileMe, Ping, and the original iMac's hard to use "hockey puck" shaped mouse.

Steve Jobs also was initially against letting outsiders develop apps for the iPhone until others changed his mind. First Apple only let developers create Web-based apps. Then Apple finally opened up their iOS platform to outside developers to create native apps using Objective-C and now Swift. In the process, Apple also created a huge revenue source for themselves through taking a percentage of all sales sold through their App Store.

The latest report even claims that Steve Jobs was [against the iPad mini](#). Steve Jobs once criticized smaller Android tablets as unusable. When Apple finally released the iPad mini, they sold millions of units, proving that a smaller iPad could be popular after all.

Obviously Steve Jobs guided Apple from an also-ran computer company into a technological powerhouse that even die-hard Windows enthusiasts can't ignore (as much as they'll try using deception and outright lies to convince people otherwise).

Steve Jobs was never perfect and to believe otherwise is just another form of delusional thinking. Steve Jobs could and did make mistakes. Yet overall he proved a far more competent CEO than the vast majority of CEOs who collect millions every year for doing relatively little to improve the company's fortunes. If critics really want to attack anyone, they should focus on the numerous incompetent CEOs who drain a company's treasury in return for wrecking that same company's future. Instead of worshipping Steve Jobs, it's better if we just worship the principles he followed that involve aesthetic appeal with an eye towards making people's lives easier through advanced technology. Sadly, those principles are too often completely ignored by rival technologies.

## **Tackling Difficult Problems**

It's easy to solve trivial problems such as releasing a larger smartphone or a smaller tablet and calling that innovation. The hard part is solving a difficult problem that current technology can't solve easily.

One of Apple's innovations that are right in front of everyone's face is their HealthKit framework for capturing health data. While this information may seem trivial except for fitness fanatics, the medical community has an entirely different view on the potential of HealthKit.

Right now, one of the greatest flaws of the current medical system involves access to medical records. One doctor often doesn't have a complete picture of a patient, especially if that patient is seeing that doctor for the first time. What HealthKit could potentially solve is the ability for medical personnel to accurately and reliably access a patient's complete medical history through a combination of Apple's TouchID fingerprint sensor (to verify a patient's identity), cloud computing (to provide near universal access to your data wherever you happen to be), and HealthKit (for storing your vital medical history in a uniform format that doctors can easily access and read).

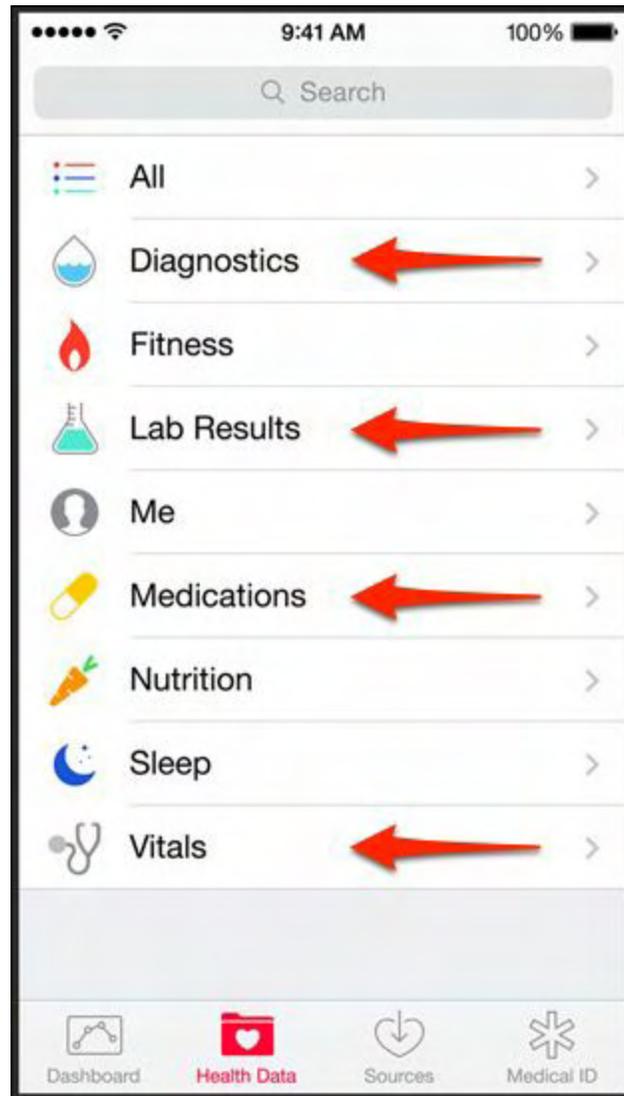


Figure 1. HealthKit promises to provide a single location to display vital medical information.

Dr. Joh [in Forbes speculates](#): "Imagine if with just your phone, you could travel with all of your former imaging studies (e.g. chest X-rays, CT scans). Your verified vaccination records. Your biopsy results. Your list of allergies. Your lab tests from the last 10, 15, 20 years. All the medications and doses you've ever been on, for what time period, and why. Your heart rate and blood pressure measurements from every clinic visit you've ever made."

To access such vital information, you'll need an iPhone or iPad. To record daily information, you'll need Apple's rumored iWatch. While Samsung and Google plan to offer [rival health storing technology](#), they'll also need to introduce reliable hardware that people will trust with their critical medical data.

Given Android's spotty security record through its openness that attracts ordinary programmers and malicious malware developers alike, and Samsung's inability to do anything more than simply sell a wide variety of products at different prices, it seems likely that Apple's TouchID fingerprint sensor can go a long way towards securing your medical data. Nothing

will be perfect, but any improvement will be far better than the current chaotic system where doctors routinely miss crucial information like a patient's potentially fatal allergic reaction to antibiotics like penicillin.

When the medical community and wearable computers make storing and monitoring vital health information simple and easy, that's going to be the true innovative breakthrough that critics will ignore, overlook, and finally accept. After Apple releases their wearable computing device, you can expect that the computing (and medical) world will never be the same again.

To get a glimpse of the future, you can read how an iPhone worked with a glucose monitor and an insulin pump to automatically [control blood sugar levels](#). A Newburyport, Massachusetts 8th-grader tested the device and then switched back to his previous method of monitoring blood sugar levels. "When I wasn't wearing it I had to sit out a lot of activities because my blood sugar was low. It was frustrating," he said.

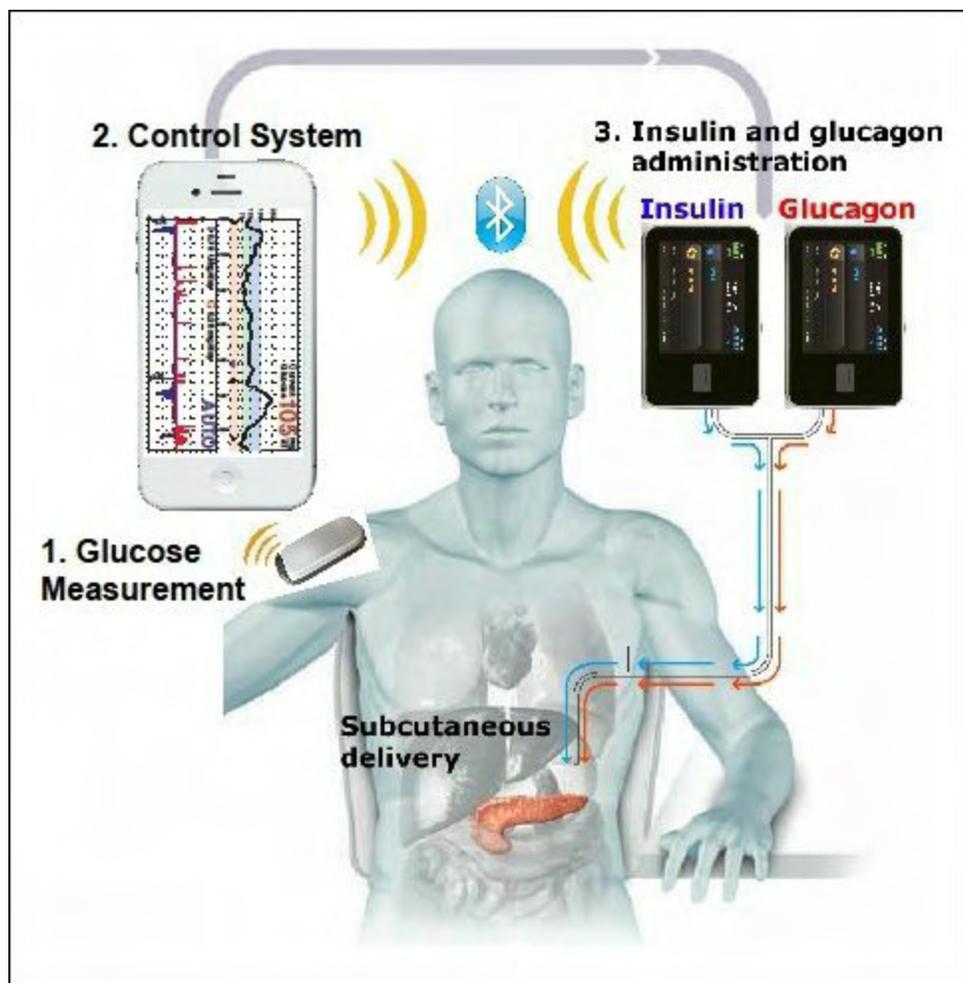


Figure 2. An iPhone can help monitor blood sugar levels.

Ed Damiano of Boston University, who worked on the project, said "The iPhone is a perfect platform. We could not have done this without (Apple co-founder) Steve Jobs." Damiano added that the iPhone is a powerful computer that people can carry with them, which is

perfect for coordinating the components of all the medical devices that create an artificial pancreas.

If researchers could turn an iPhone into a medical device, imagine what researchers could do with a wearable computer like Apple's rumored iWatch? Wearable computers have a huge future for medical purposes. The future will clearly focus on making computers mobile, wearable, and easy to use. Anyone think Windows 8 can successfully morph into a usable operating system that meets these three criteria?

## Sapphire Glass and Liquid Metal

One way that Apple hopes to keep rivals from copying their technology is to snap up the best materials for themselves. Back in the early days of computers, most laptops were made out of plastic with stickers plastered all over them. Apple made plastic laptops but suddenly shifted to cases carved out of entire blocks of aluminum. That difference alone has forced other manufacturers to improve the aesthetic appeal and strength of their own laptop cases. Notice that even Microsoft used magnesium to build cases for their Surface tablets?

A few years back, Apple made an [exclusive deal](#) with Liquid Metal to use their innovative material in future products. To date, the only product Apple has used Liquid Metal for has been the tiny paperclip-like pin for opening the SIM socket on the iPhone. Yet long before rivals have even considered using materials like Liquid Metal, Apple has already licensed its exclusive use, which shows Apple's long-term focus.

Another material that Apple has snapped up is sapphire glass, which supposedly is [tougher than current products](#) such as Corning's Gorilla Glass. Right now Apple only use sapphire glass for the lens covers of their built-in iPhone and iPad cameras, but given Apple's heavy investment in sapphire glass production, it seems likely that the company expects sapphire glass to cover the entire iPhone and iPad screen.

When a company invests billions in materials that nobody else currently uses, that's either extreme foolishness or long-term strategic planning. Whichever result, it shows that Apple is not afraid of advancing technology while locking out rivals at the same time.

## New iMac Models

If you're thinking about buying a desktop Macintosh, wait. Apple reportedly will introduce new iMac models next week. Since the Mac mini has gone well over a year without any updates, Apple might release new Mac mini models too.

Any time you're looking to buy an Apple product, check the [MacRumors Buyer's Guide](#). This site tracks the time between updates of all the major Apple products so you can determine if

you should buy a product now or wait a little while longer.

Obviously if you need a product now, then buy it now. However if you can afford to be patient, then you can make sure you buy the latest model, or save money buying a discounted model from the previous generation.

Just keep in mind that if you save money buying a less expensive Macintosh, it might not have the memory or hard disk space you need to keep up with future OS X updates. Some people like buying the most computer possible upfront while others prefer to save money buying the least expensive computer and then upgrading it later when they need it.

Some Macintosh models allow you to upgrade the memory yourself, but others (such as the iMac and MacBook Air) make adding memory impossible for all but trained technicians. With models that don't offer upgradeable memory chips, buy more memory than you need. At the moment 4GB of RAM is the bare minimum you should use, but 8GB is better and 16GB will definitely keep your Macintosh capable of running for years to come.

Since Macintosh computers tend to hold their value better than their PC counterparts, consider selling your current Macintosh to help defray the cost of a new Macintosh. As more people rely on iPhones and iPads, you can expect more people to start relying on Macintosh computers at the same time.

\* \* \*

For people who don't like to type, you can use OS X's dictation feature. Normally this dictation feature forces you to talk in short bursts and then wait for your computer to transmit your audio to Apple's servers for processing.

In case you want faster dictation, click the Apple menu and click System Preferences. When the System Preferences window appears, click the Dictation & Speech icon. Now select the Enhanced Dictation check box to allow your Macintosh to do voice processing right on your computer.

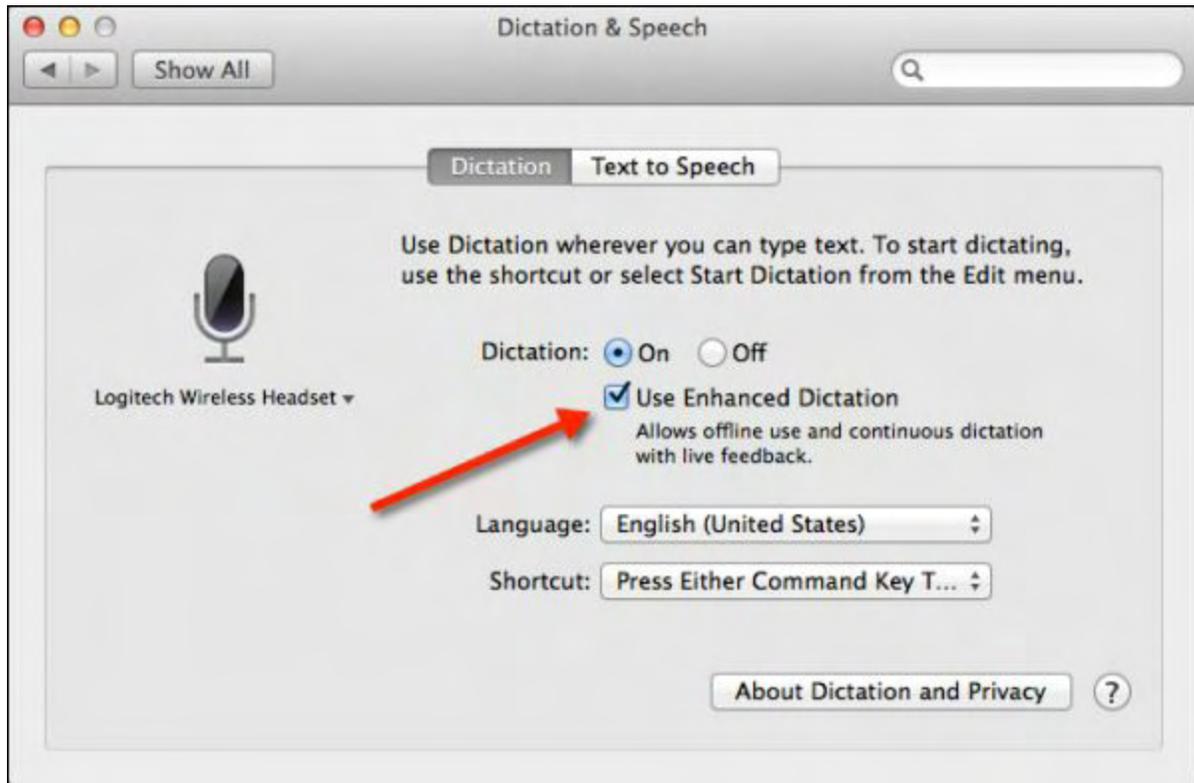


Figure 3. The Enhanced Dictation feature lets you speed up voice processing.

The drawback of enhanced dictation is that it takes up hard disk space, but the advantage is that dictation now works faster while forcing you to pause less frequently.

*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\*](#)

[\*The Element of a Great Script: Back to the Future\*](#)

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

[\*The Elements of a Great Script: It's a Wonderful Life\*](#)

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 & Product news reviews



## Worldwide News & Product Reviews

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

*E3 = 'Edgers' Excellent...er...Edventure!; Study: Users Quickly Delete Problem Apps; Snowden Anniversary Shows Americans Distrust Big Business' Use of Their Personal Data...But Happily Snoop on Each Other; This BlueBud is for You.*

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### E3 = 'Edgers' Excellent...er...Edventure!

As it is every year, this past week's E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) at the LA Convention Center was a complete and total blast. Several days later my ears are still ringing from all that was going on and my head is still buzzing processing the dazzling confluence of pure tech and artistic creativity concentrated in one place over the span of just three days.



Some quick take-aways:

- Yea, the presence of gaming consoles is bigger than ever, primarily due to the recent debut of Sony's PS4 and Microsoft's Xbox One devices. Both are as awesome as one would expect for devices likely expected to last for roughly the next 10 years, but the pleasantest of surprises

had to be that the venerable PC has not only survived the console onslaught but emerged as *the* platform of choice for so-called "serious gamers."



CE News and Reviews Editor Charles Carr (center) with two of the magazine's 'young guns,' Alex Caratti (right) and Jeremy Halligan (left).

A couple of reasons: The PC has an endless upgrade path—processors, motherboards, memory—and, most importantly, video cards. As a result, the PC is always able to stay at least one step ahead of consoles in not only purely technical areas like graphic resolution but also in less tangible areas like game mod-ability—the ability for players to make modifications and add content to the games they love playing. Another huge boon to PC gaming is, of course, Valve's Steam online portal, which has unified the PC gaming community like no other factor. So, PC gamers, rejoice!

- Continuing with PCs, Indie Gaming is bigger—and better—than ever. A large section of the South Hall was dedicated to an enormous gathering of Indie game developers, publishers, and fans. The 30 best games out of nearly 1,000 were showcased on hundreds of PCs. Check out IndieCade [here](#). Sure, for the most part these are not AAA titles like Call of Duty and Oblivion, but these *are* the young programmers, writers, and artists who *will* make titles that will *astound* you in years to come.
- One of the big things happening at the show was something I'm personally less-than-thrilled about: the continued exponential growth of pay-to-play online gaming like World of Warcraft, Dota2, and League of Legends. Every large developer wants a piece of the pie—some by charging a monthly fee, some with so-called in-game microtransactions. Who can blame them? All-told, these games generate tens-of-millions of dollars of revenue *per month*. So go ahead and make all that sweet, sweet money, but keep creating standalone, single-player titles.



CE reviewer Jeremy Halligan in the Indie Games area.

- Perhaps the biggest thing happening at E3 was the omnipresence of VR (Virtual Reality) headsets—primarily ones from Oculus, the VR pioneering company recently purchased by Facebook. Oculus headsets were everywhere (see picture 2), but the best demonstration of the you-are-there technology was, as one would expect, at Oculus' own booth (see picture 3) where dozens of eager attendees could experience private five-minute VR demos at the same time.



CE reviewer Alex Caratti at Oculus.



*Snowden Anniversary Shows Americans Distrust Big Business' Use of Their Personal Data - But Happily Snoop on Each*



The research shows that despite a large number of people being worried about the amount of data online services collect from them, a large number are still happy to snoop on one another.

Other key points include:

- Over half of people (52%) state they've been put off a service because of the information they've been asked to share
- While two thirds (65%) confirm they worry about how much data online services collect from them
- But nearly half (47%) of 18-24 year olds have confessed to reading someone's messages without permission
- Three quarters (76%) confirm they worry about how much data online services collect from them
- But nearly half (45%) of 18-24 year olds have confessed to reading someone's messages without permission

A year on from Edward Snowden's famous NSA leaks, a study by the file-transfer service, WeTransfer, finds that data capture continues to be at the top of Americans' minds. People are increasingly concerned about how companies are using data that they freely share online, yet they are quite comfortable snooping on others both on and offline.

The study showed how concerned we are about big business, with:

- Three quarters (72%) stating they're worried about what companies do with that information;
- Nearly 3 in 5 (57%) Americans see data collection as an invasion of their privacy;
- A third (33%) are equally as worried about what kind of information companies are selling on as they are "annoyed" someone is making a profit out of them.

Meanwhile, the influence of Snowden has been profound, as:

- Almost one fourth (23%) see having to share their data as restricting their freedom; but
- Perhaps unsurprisingly, compared to the UK (27%), Americans are the most concerned about governmental monitoring, as nearly a third (31%) voice their concerns; and
- More than 1 in 5 (22%) state they wouldn't use a service if it sold on their information, with over 55s most likely to avoid a service selling on their information. Having said that, 10% said they wouldn't mind if they see a kick back and receive part of the profits.

Yet, it's one rule for big business and another for us. According to the report, many of us are natural snoopers, and social media has helped to facilitate our inquisitiveness. In spite of our concerns about what information companies have on us and sell, we as individuals are still happy to snoop on other people.

In fact, nearly half (45%) of people who've grown up in an era of social media and text messaging (18-24 year olds) have confessed to reading messages without permission, compared to only 1 in 10 (8%) people over 55. Women are the more curious sex, as 27% confess to reading messages without permission, compared to just over 1 in 6 men (18%).

Founder and CEO of WeTransfer, Bas Beerens said: "It's been a year since Edward Snowden leaked several highly classified documents and there's been a constant stream of new stories revealing aspects of snooping, phone hacking and data collection ever since. It's therefore no surprise that consumers are worried about their data, how it's being used and where it ends up. As a result, it's crucial for the tech industry to regain the trust of the people who use their services, as well as redefine the use of data in the digital age."

Kerry Anderson  
kerry.anderson@thisisfishburn.com

## **This BlueBud is for You**

Product category: Bluetooth headphones  
Manufacturer: Jaybird  
Models: BlueBud X and Freedom Sprint  
Web site: [www.jaybirdsport.com](http://www.jaybirdsport.com)  
Price: \$169 for Bluebud X, \$100 for Freedom Sprints

Choosing a decent pair of headphones is always a problem when it comes to working out. You have variables like sweat, varying movement, and louder than average environmental noise to deal with; and luckily Jaybird has produced some premium products to help making that choice a little bit easier. They offer some great Bluetooth earphones that come in two models, the BlueBud X and the Freedom Sprint.

The two main differences between the devices is in terms of the options you have to wear them, and in choosing which one works better with you it comes down to preference and also the shape of your ear. The main problem I face with headphones is that any model that relies on the ear canal to hold it in place usually falls out; if you face this problem as well you're in luck!

Jaybird combats this problem in a few ways, so either model you choose you're sure to find a comfortable and secure fit. Both models come with "secure fit cushions" that press into the contours of your ear and prevent the earphone from moving around. Along with these

cushions, the Freedom Sprint's use an over-the-ear hook to give you extra security if the ear tips don't fit securely in your ear. Both of these options are able to be attached or detached at your liking, so you aren't forced to use a securing method at all times. One thing the BlueBuds come with that the Freedoms don't is nifty little clips that wind up the excess cable and keep it off your neck, the Freedoms don't feature this option. Also, to add to its arsenal the BlueBuds come with X-fit technology, which allows the headphones to be worn with the cable under the ear or over-the-ear, the latter allows for extra stability that the hooks provide in the Freedom Sprint's.



Sound on both these models was absolutely incredible, and the noise isolating features offered was great on both as well. Differences in the two models were subtle, except on the BlueBud Xs I felt that the bass was much richer, and the highs had a little bit more crisp to them.

If you're an audiophile the BlueBud Xs are going to be the best choice for you, as overall I felt that the sound produced by these is much better overall. In terms of noise isolation, they both have amazing abilities in this area. With both models, I put them on and couldn't hear my fingers if I snapped them in front of my face. In the gym or outside, there was virtually no noise (besides some basic ambiance and environmental noise) that penetrated through the earphones.



As far as battery life and connectivity goes, both models offer the same ability for both. Both models feature rechargeable batteries, that I was able to get 8 hours of use out of on a single charge. The wireless connectivity is Bluetooth technology, and both models paired and connected flawlessly, and setting them up is as easy as setting them to pair and connecting them to your device.

One thing to keep in mind is that Bluetooth is a very finicky technology in terms of the strength of the connection. If you're in the gym, you may experience audio loss here and there but it is because of the Bluetooth connection and not the earphones themselves (once you figure this out, you can take a deep breath). Bluetooth thrives the closer the source device is, and being in an open room (like a gym) with the device in your pocket will cause loss in connection every once in a while. To combat this, pick up an armband to keep the device closer to the receiver and you'll experience no loss in audio stream.

Choosing between these two models may be tough, especially since the BlueBuds are \$70 more than the Freedoms. Personally, I don't see the jump in sound quality from the latter to be worth the price jump, but if you are a diehard when it comes to audio quality that might be just enough to sell you. What may be worth the money is the way they stay in your ear, and the X-fit on the BlueBuds is definitely worth it, in my opinion, due to the added comfort over the Freedom's plastic ear hooks.

Summing up the differences in what comes with the device, if you want the ear hooks you're going to have to go with the Freedom Sprint's and if you want to keep the cable nice and tidy only the BlueBuds come with the cable clips.

Selecting between these two is more a matter of what fits best with your ear, as both come with the "secure fit cushions" that in my experience kept the headphones snug and secure at all times. Both models feature an absolutely gorgeous hard case that snaps closed magnetically, as well three different ear cones for you to choose from for best fit. The coolest part of these headphones is that they feature a "Lifetime Warranty against Sweat" that is included with both

models as well, so if you ever have damage caused by sweat call up Jaybird and they'll get you back in business. If you're ready to make the jump into premium wireless earphones, Jaybird is definitely a sure fire bet for your money.



Review contributed by Jeremy Halligan

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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

*One Step Beyond (MP3)?*

## Sony and High-Resolution Audio



Audiophiles aren't a recent evolution of the species. They're not even some sort of invention of contemporary culture, and in fact seem averse to it. Mutants amongst the masses who are hooked on smartphones and extraordinarily portable media in various forms, especially, of course, digital music.

Full disclosure: the former head of Fraunhofer IIS, sometimes credited with the creation of the MP3 format, is an old family friend. Such a statement is really unnecessary, however, as there's nothing that I could state on the subject of MP3s that hasn't already been said, reiterated, ad nauseam. But it's obvious that such highly compressed audio files freed the music, or rather our ability to carry a previously unwieldy collection with us wherever we go.

There does indeed tend to be a necessary sacrifice for such convenience, and back to audiophiles, this is a tradeoff they generally haven't seemed interested in. So for them, the technology involved in disseminating music almost seems to have stopped at vinyl, although newer formats such as SACD (Super Audio CD), for instance, has grabbed some interest, as has lossless digital formats to a certain extent (ALAC, FLAC, et al.).

So—still perhaps engaging in the folly of generalization here—audiophiles have digital options, too.

## A Nebulous Concept?



The subculture of audiophiles, to some, seems almost insular, and whether or not that's fair, the love of music is universal, something seemingly demonstrated by the Pono Kickstarter campaign as it attracted 18,220 backers who pledged \$6,225,354 (the goal was \$800k). If nothing else, Pono showed that the desire for greater quality exists, perhaps amongst a much wider base than simply those self-identified as audiophiles.

The rather nebulous concept of high resolution/fidelity audio continues to grab attention (there is, for instance, at least one campaign similar to Pono on Indiegogo at the moment), and Sony—a company almost synonymous with personal music for a lot of people, myself included, thanks to their Walkman product line that predates iPods, smartphones, et al.—has joined in, garnering a few headlines in the process. Although Sony has yet to release their latest Digital Walkman designed for High-Resolution Audio in the US (the NW-ZX1, a product nonetheless available for purchase on Amazon for between \$750 & \$800), they have launched a number of products designed for Hi-Res music, including "four new audio/video receivers, a Blu-ray Home Theater system and a series of loudspeakers," according to the company.

With loads of hype in the ether, and a fair measure of misapprehension, I spoke via e-mail with Aaron Levine, Product Marketing Manager for Home Audio at Sony, to understand the issue(s) a bit more, in what will be the first in a series of feature interviews in this digital music-focused column (I'll initially fixate on hi-res audio, obviously).

**"Listening to Hi-Res music is an experience, music should not just be in the background."**



Matthew W. Beale: It's been said that "High-Resolution Audio" is simply a marketing phrase, and has little value otherwise. What does it actually mean for Sony, both in terms of hardware and the music itself?

Aaron Levine: "High- Resolution Audio" isn't just a marketing phrase, it's a movement by the Consumer Electronics Industry and music labels. We have been working with Sony Music, Universal and Warner on education and support of the movement. As an industry we want to provide the consumer with an ability to experience music as the artist intended at full bandwidth and reconnect with music emotionally. This is something that has been missing with low-resolution music. For Sony, Hi-Res Audio means any digital music that is above CD quality. For hardware, we want to make sure that we support the widest range of digital music formats and the various resolutions that follow. With the music, it's up to the artist, recording engineer and label to decide the resolution being recorded. Ironically, many of the artists and recording engineers have already been recording in Hi-Res however, the most popular music download and streaming services don't ask for it.

MWB: Regardless of whether or not Pono has actually created anything new, they've certainly grabbed a lot of attention. What does this interest represent to you and Sony's "High-Resolution Audio?"

AL: High-Resolution is important to the consumer and artist—quality does matter. This is a movement by the industry, not just one company.

MWB: There is some disagreement with regard to "the human aural perception system" and high quality/fidelity music. In your opinion, how much can our ears really hear?

AL: There is the science behind the frequency range the human ear can hear, but music is 3 dimensional. There is a sonic stage, depth and texture to the sound that isn't part of the frequency range. This is 3D for your ears. Music fans want to hear the master recording, they want the experience the artist set out to deliver, compression and even CD doesn't fully deliver

that experience. The additional data provided by high-resolution brings back that and adds the emotional connection you have (with) the artist. Instead of debating what the human ear can hear—go listen to high-resolution music, try and listen to a track you are familiar with, I can promise it will sound better in Hi-Res and allow you to reconnect with the music and artist.

MWB: Ultimately, for anyone who isn't an audiophile, what's the winning the argument for investing in higher quality music, and of course the means (gear) with which to play it? What's the cure for highly compressed music file addiction, if you will?

AL: Go listen to it. It's hard to go back once you've been exposed to the experience of listening to Hi-Res and the quality it provides. If you love or even like music, listen to it as the artist intended. Consumers love to see live music, because of the experience. Listening to Hi-Res music is an experience, music should not just be in the background. The experience will re-connect you with music you love and allow you to develop a deeper relationship with your favorite artist. Consumers always want better sound. In the digital music space it didn't exist in a non-audiophile product that was easy to use. We've rolled out a series of Hi-Res products geared toward different lifestyle uses that cover audiophile and music enthusiasts.

Compressed music is easily accessible and we're working toward making Hi-Res music just as accessible. The addiction is accessibility so you consume more not better. Almost every consumer would rather invest more on quality than quantity.



Although I'm not sure this had the force (or grace) originally intended, I'll be back with another in a series of feature interviews, the first several of which exploring the concept of high quality/resolution music. Please contact me with any questions of your own. Prost.

*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@hotmail.com](mailto:withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hotmail.com).*



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

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

*"Windows XP Support," "ARM Processor—RISC vs. CISC"*

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### Windows XP Support

[Regarding the May 30 [Digital Dave column](#):]

DD,

You mentioned in your recent article that the poster should just continue to use Windows XP and that updates will continue. I hope that you wrote this article prior to Microsoft stopping support for Windows XP since all further security updates have stopped. Using Windows XP now is a security risk.

Thanks,

-Richard, Oceanside, CA

*Richard, I never said that anyone should continue to use Windows XP nor that there will be more security updates coming from Microsoft. I merely said that the updates which were previously available are still available.*

*As for the security risk, it has not changed significantly from what it was before Microsoft dropped its so-called support. 99% of security problems are caused by careless user behavior.*

*-Digital Dave*

DD, I am sorry if I misinterpreted your reply to Robert Di Giorgio in this week's ComputerEdge; I have read your column since The Byte Buyer days and your articles are the first that I read.

You wrote in the article "Even though Microsoft no longer supports Windows XP, the service pack downloads should continue to be available. Even if you install an older version, you should be able to get up-to-date. Then, using Windows Update should get you all the security updates as well."

I just thought that you should have emphasized that Microsoft stopped updating XP with security and service pack updates. I would hate to have someone think that they are secure with XP when they are not. And I do agree with you on the "security" provided by Microsoft with their updates. I use antivirus/malware protection but depend primarily on common sense when accessing the Web; I do not open anything that I do not recognize without "sandboxing" it first.

Thanks again for the great column,

-Richard

## ARM Processor—RISC vs. CISC

[Regarding the May 30 [Wally Wang's Apple Farm column](#).]

Your comments on the ARM processor being the reason one operating system is better than another is inaccurate. For those that don't know, ARM is a specific implementation of a Reduced Instruction Set Computer. The x86 architecture is a Complex Instruction Set Computer (CISC). The great advantage of the ARM processor is that it consumes less energy and produces less heat.

-Marcus, Alabama

*As you correctly stated, ARM processors consume less power and produce less heat which is their huge advantage. However, I'm completely mystified how you thought that my mention of ARM processors somehow inferred that one operating system is better than another. After all, Linux runs on both ARM and Intel (along with PowerPC) processors and even Windows runs on ARM and Intel processors so where in my article did you reach the conclusion that I claimed that one operating is superior to another based on the processor it runs on?*

-Wally Wang\*#I#

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