

COMPUTOREDGE[®] dic·tion·ar·y ONLINE

[dik-shuh-ner-ee]

Spell

Syllables

Examples

Word Origin

noun, plural **dic·tion·ar·ies**.

1. a book, optical disc, mobile device, or online lexical resource (such as Dictionary.com) containing a selection of the words of a language, giving information about their meanings, pronunciations, etymologies, inflected forms, derived forms, etc., expressed in either the same or another language; lexicon; glossary. Print dictionaries of various sizes, ranging from small pocket dictionaries to multivolume books, usually sort entries alphabetically, as do typical CD or DVD dictionary applications, allowing one to browse through the terms in sequence. All

The Best Free

PC Dictionary

2. a book or online resource containing information on particular subjects or on a particular class
3. **computer dictionary**
 - a. a list of codes, terms, keys, etc., and their meanings, used by a computer program or system.
 - b. a list of words used by a word-processing program as the standard against which to check the spelling of text entered.

September 5, 2014

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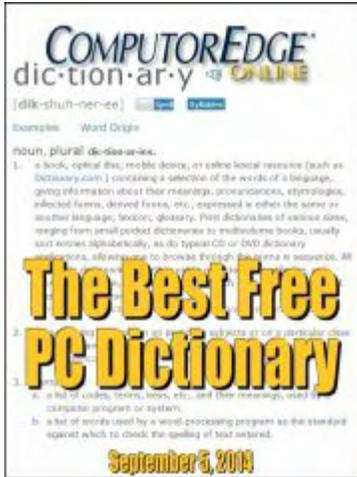
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The Best Free PC Dictionary

WordWeb is a free dictionary always at your fingertips.

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by Digital Dave

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Digital Dave

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

Adobe Acrobat XI Disk is Full Error; Unknown Entries in MSConfig; Strange Character in Linux Office.

Adobe Acrobat XI Disk is Full Error

Dear Digital Dave,

Using Adobe Acrobat XI with Win 8.1, I need to digitally sign a form. When I click in the signature area, a pop-up appears that asks me to enter my password for my digital signature. I enter it then click next, another window open asking where and filename I want to save. The location and filename is good, so I click save, and then I get a pop-up window that says:

The document could not be saved. The disk you were saving to or the disk used for temporary files is full. Free some space on this disk and try again, or save to a different disk.

I don't understand this as my computer information says I have 913GB free on my hard drive.

Please help.

John Murphy

Firestone, CO 80504

Dear John,

I've seen a number of reasons why Adobe Acrobat wouldn't save a file, but they usually related to the file being in use or not having the appropriate rights in the target folder. However, when the system says the disk is full, it's not likely to be these other issues.

I did see one situation where someone kept running out of space for backup files. As it turned out, he had set up the computer to save backup data in drive D: rather than drive C:. Drive D: is usually the recovery drive in Windows 8 and has a limited amount of space. Although drive C: had plenty of empty space, the D: drive was full. All he had to do was change the location

of the backup drive to C:.

There is no way that I can know that this is your problem, but I would try to save the file to another location—even an external hard drive or thumbdrive. This is the same test I would do for the first two problems I mentioned. If you can save the file, then you need to recheck the original path, look for the file to be in use elsewhere, or check the security settings on the original folder.

If there is no location that will save the file, then it must be a problem with Adobe Acrobat XI. Possibly a security setting or issue related to digital signatures.

Digital Dave

Entries in MSConfig

Dear Digital Dave,

I'm running Windows 7 64-bit. Is there any way to confirm whether the startup items loaded through MSConfig are valid and really needed, like one I see called StrongVault Online Backup? Checking properties doesn't give much info.

Also, what's the difference between the locations in Registry that I'm familiar with like microsoft\windows\currentversion\run items and the items in the locations listed as WOW6432Node\microsoft\windows\currentversion\run? As always thanks for your info.

Rob Macfie

San Diego, CA

Dear Rob,

The best way to determine whether a program is needed or not is to do a quick search for the program name. (Here, let me [Google that for you!](#)) There are a couple of useful pages found on the list.

The first is [ShouldIRemoveIt.com](#) which tells us that although StrongVault is not particularly dangerous, it is often added with other junkware and you will most likely want to remove it. There is another page which gives more [detailed removal instructions](#). There are also a number of pages that want you to use their software, but often eliminating this type of program is as easy as opening Programs and Features and uninstalling it. Sometimes you may need to remove a Registry entry.

It is always better to determine the use of a program before disabling it.

The *WOW6432Node* Registry entry is found on 64-bit Windows computers. It's used to

properly direct 32-bit program reads and writes.

Digital Dave

Linux Office

Dear Digital Dave,

Is there a way to stop the faded rectangles at the end of just about every sentence?

Thanks,

Spunky

New Subscriber

Dear Spunky,

I'm not familiar with Linux Office, but that won't stop me from offering a possible solution.

In most word processing programs there is a feature usually found in the View menu which turns on a mode called Non-printing Characters. When it is turned on, the user can see special characters such as carriage returns (ENTER key), spaces, tabs, etc. This makes some types of editing easier, but the characters will never appear on a printed page. They can be turned off through the same view menu.

I'm guessing that the faded rectangles you're seeing are return characters at the end of each paragraph. You can confirm this theory by hitting the ENTER key. If there is no setting for turning off non-printing (or formatting) characters, then you may be forced to live with them or switch to something else such as LibreOffice which does allow you to turn these things on and off.

Another possibility is that the rectangle is often used when the program doesn't know what character the code it sees represents. Maybe these files were imported from another OS? Maybe they use the Windows line termination style instead of the Linux style? But if this is the case, you should be able to delete and replace the characters by selecting the range that holds the character and hitting ENTER.

Digital Dave



Free Software for Finding the Right Words

“WordWeb Is a Serious Tool for the Wordsmith” by Jack Dunning

After agonizing over AutoHotkey dictionary apps, it's much easier to use someone else's program, plus, a quick update on Windows 9.

This article is primarily about another free Windows program I found worth highlighting—especially if you do much work with the English language. It's called WordWeb and was recommended by Buck-o who has been using it for over a decade. But before digging into why I've started using the free version of WordWeb, I will update the status of the coming Windows 9.

Windows 9 Update



I must admit that Windows 8 was a huge mistake for Microsoft—at least from a marketing point of view. While it does experience slow growth in usage, Windows 8 has not become an accepted alternative to Windows XP or Windows 7. Most Windows users have skipped this one and seem content to wait. It's not that people are flocking to alternative desktops such as the Mac—a few are, but most are not. Yes, sales are up for both Mac and the Chromebook while Windows computer sales are contracting from last year. But that may be due to the fact that the vast majority of current Windows users are sitting on the sidelines. (Sure there are a number of people who have switched to the Mac and swear

that they will never come back, but it's not having much impact on the overall usage numbers. Most Mac buyers are already Apple users.)

I use a Windows 8.1 laptop in tandem with a Windows 7 desktop. The laptop is now my main computer, but my use of both Dropbox and Box storage makes it easy to switch back and forth—and I do. I have very few problems with the Windows 8.1 computer and it runs everything that I need. However, I find that I look forward to the day when Windows 9 is released. I do like using the Windows 8.1 laptop. It is fast and reliable. However, there are a couple of things that annoy me and they are both related to the Modern user interface.

First, occasionally the Charms bar will inadvertently pop up on the right side of the computer screen. I *never* need the Charms bar and wish that there were some way to turn it off (see Figure 1). Second, there are some tools which run in the Modern UI and have similar names to similar desktop utilities. Yet these Modern tools are almost useless by comparison. For example in Windows Backup (File History in Windows 8), Windows Update, and Network Settings, the Modern UI versions are childlike with few useful features compared to the more traditional Windows Desktop tools. As a PC user, I don't want to be presented with silly stripped down capabilities that confuse the search for a real solution. I rarely use the Modern UI (except by accident) and wouldn't mind if it just disappeared. (It now appears that Microsoft has finished making improvements Windows 8. There will be no Windows 8.2.)

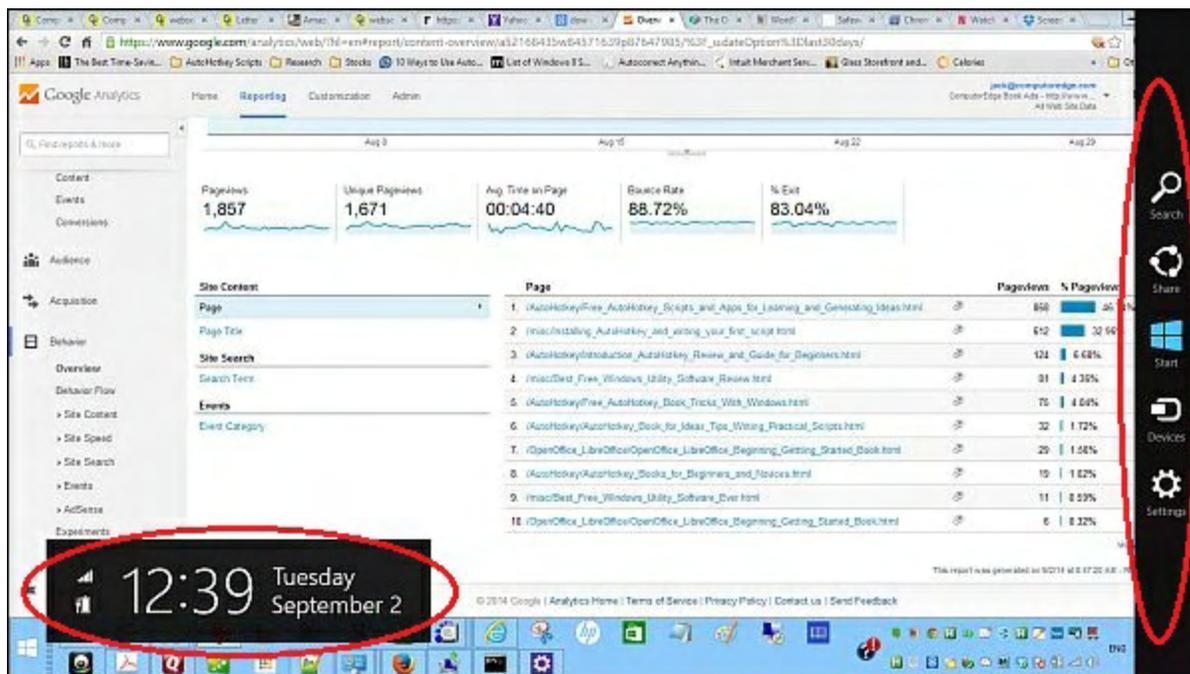


Figure 1. A slip of the mouse and the Charms menu pops up.

Rumors about Windows 9 suggest that the Start Menu is coming back to the desktop and the Charms menu might be history. In other words, Windows 9 for the desktop will look more like Windows 7—which looks a lot like Windows XP. Until this happens, don't expect much to happen in the Windows computer market. The latest rumor about the release date for

Windows 9 is April 2015. Some people expect Microsoft to rush it out sooner, but others have indicated that the consumer version may be as late as Christmas 2015. In any case, most users don't seem to be in any rush to make a change.

How does Microsoft get away with putting out a questionable operating system every other version—Windows Vista and now Windows 8? It's because most Windows users are in no hurry to upgrade. The PC world no longer sits with bated breath as each new operating system is introduced. The current computers in use—whether Windows 7 or Windows XP—are good enough. Waiting a year or two for a better machine (which costs less) is no problem as long as your current machine is still running. If Microsoft gets it right with Windows 9, then there will be a market backlog waiting and ready to explode. Windows 8 will quickly disappear as its users upgrade to Windows 9. I will be among those people.

I'm not telling people to avoid Windows 8 (now 8.1). In fact, if you need to replace a Windows computer with another Windows computer 8.1 is a perfectly acceptable (if at times annoying) solution. When Windows 9 does come to the market, the upgrade will likely be very inexpensive—if not free. I would not buy a Windows 7 computer only because Windows 8.1 is faster and just as easy to use—once you learn how to avoid the Modern UI.

Betting on Windows

I remain convinced that Windows will be around for a long time...maybe even decades. That's one of the reasons that I dedicate so much time and effort to AutoHotkey—a free utility scripting language which runs in Windows. Many of the inadequacies in Windows (and other Windows programs) I've been able to fill with short AutoHotkey scripts. One of my most used script I call [QuickLinks](#) for navigating my favorite and most used applications and Web pages (see Figure 2). While it's a huge help in Windows 8.1, I use it just as much in Windows 7 and my other Windows computers.

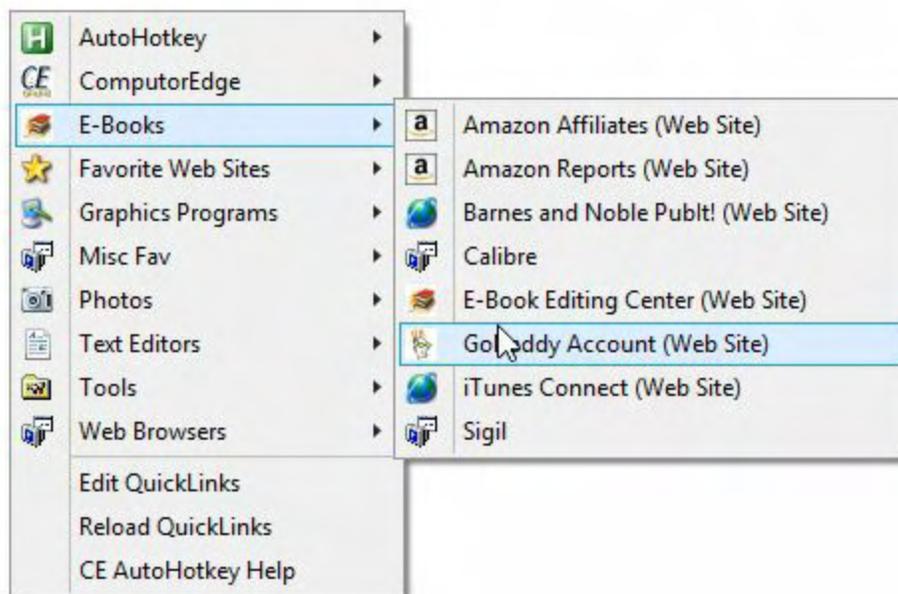


Figure 2. A simple AutoHotkey pop-up can be tailored for launching particular programs and visiting special Web sites.

AutoHotkey has been around for quite a while, but since it is open source (free) it doesn't get much advertising. Unlike many utility programs it is a language for creating your own actions and gadgets on a Windows computer. It can be a simple one-liner that enters your e-mail address with a keystroke or a little more complicated app such as the Calorie Counting gadget I currently have posted (see [Free AutoHotkey Scripts and Apps](#)). The point is that AutoHotkey runs in all current and future versions of Windows because it uses the basic underpinnings on which Windows is built. As long as Windows is around, AutoHotkey is likely to be useful.

With AutoHotkey anyone can add utility and richness to their Windows experience. For youngsters, it's a great way to learn programming a little at a time. (Unlike many other programs, an AutoHotkey script may have as little as one line.) The kids may start with building rapid fire game controls or simple text replacement, then expand to *If-Then* statements and *Loops*, eventually graduating to creating widgets with the built-in graphical user interfaces (GUIs). The techniques used in AutoHotkey are the same as those found in any of the more enigmatic programming languages.

For oldsters, writing AutoHotkey scripts makes running a Windows computer much simpler while stimulating the neurons in the brainpan. Producing simple AutoHotkey snippets can make your Windows computer work the way you want it to work and amaze your friends.

However, as obsessed as I am with AutoHotkey, it should not be used for everything—especially if there is a free alternative that does everything you need. For example, I originally highlighted an AutoHotkey script that does a [dictionary search](#) on the Web. Recently, the script broke—probably due to a change in the target Web page. I suggested a couple of alternative approaches, but none were particularly elegant. Then, Buck-o suggested using WordWeb—his favorite for the last ten years. It didn't take much to convince me to switch.

Use WordWeb As Your Dictionary

Every once in a while someone recommends a program that will quickly become a regular part of your daily routine. That's how I view WordWeb. The free version of [WordWeb](#) includes its own built-in dictionary, meaning it can be used even when the Internet is unavailable. (There is a paid version available with various options for adding more features and dictionaries, but for the average person the free version offers much more than you would expect.)

Like AutoHotkey, WordWeb works with any program, but you don't need to always highlight a word first. All you need to do is hover the mouse cursor over the target word, hold down control, and right-click. The definition windows pops open. The beauty of this form of control is that it works even on text which is not selectable, such as window titles and menu headers. Of course, if you do select some text, then WordWeb will do the search with a hotkey combination. (I followed Ron Cerrato's lead and changed the hotkeys to CTRL+ALT+D as we previously using with AutoHotkey.) This method offers a replace option after the search (see Figure 3).

Note: if you use the CTRL plus mouse right-click option, do not preselect the term. You will get residual garbage probably from hidden selection characters (e.g. *Ifcharactersm§QiiLi*). Preselecting the search term and using the hotkey combination will give you the most accurate results.

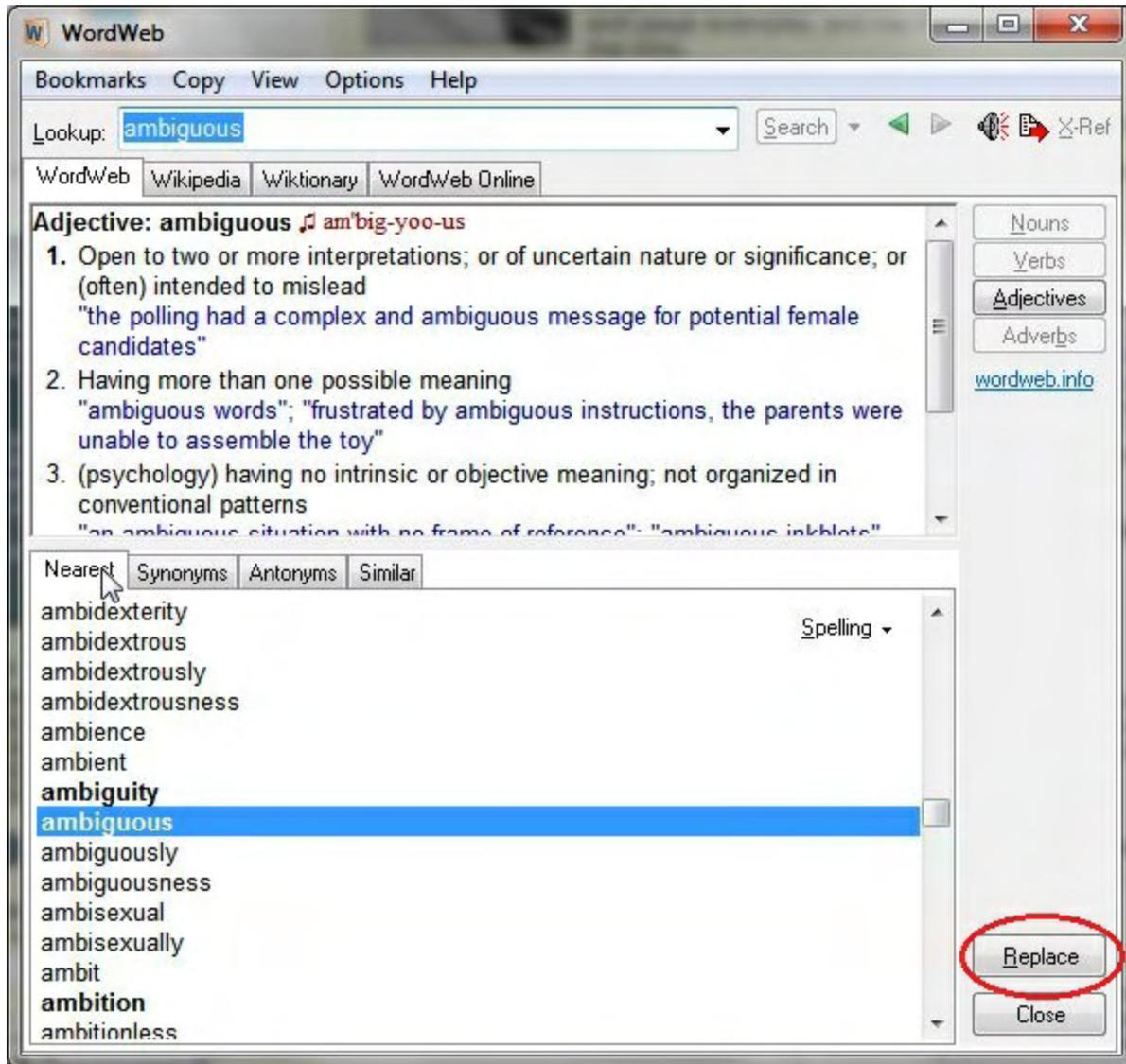


Figure 3. WordWeb offers a list of other possible words for replacement when a term is selected and search with the hotkey combination.

Not only do you get definitions in the pop-up window, but there is a list of other words which may be the correct form or spelling. Many of the words also offer an audio pronunciation as indicated by the note symbol next to the definition. In some cases, such as the word resume, you will get multiple audio pronunciations (resume and résumé).

While the synonyms and antonyms are useful, if you looking for replacement words the Similar tab gives much more variety for options (see Figure 4).

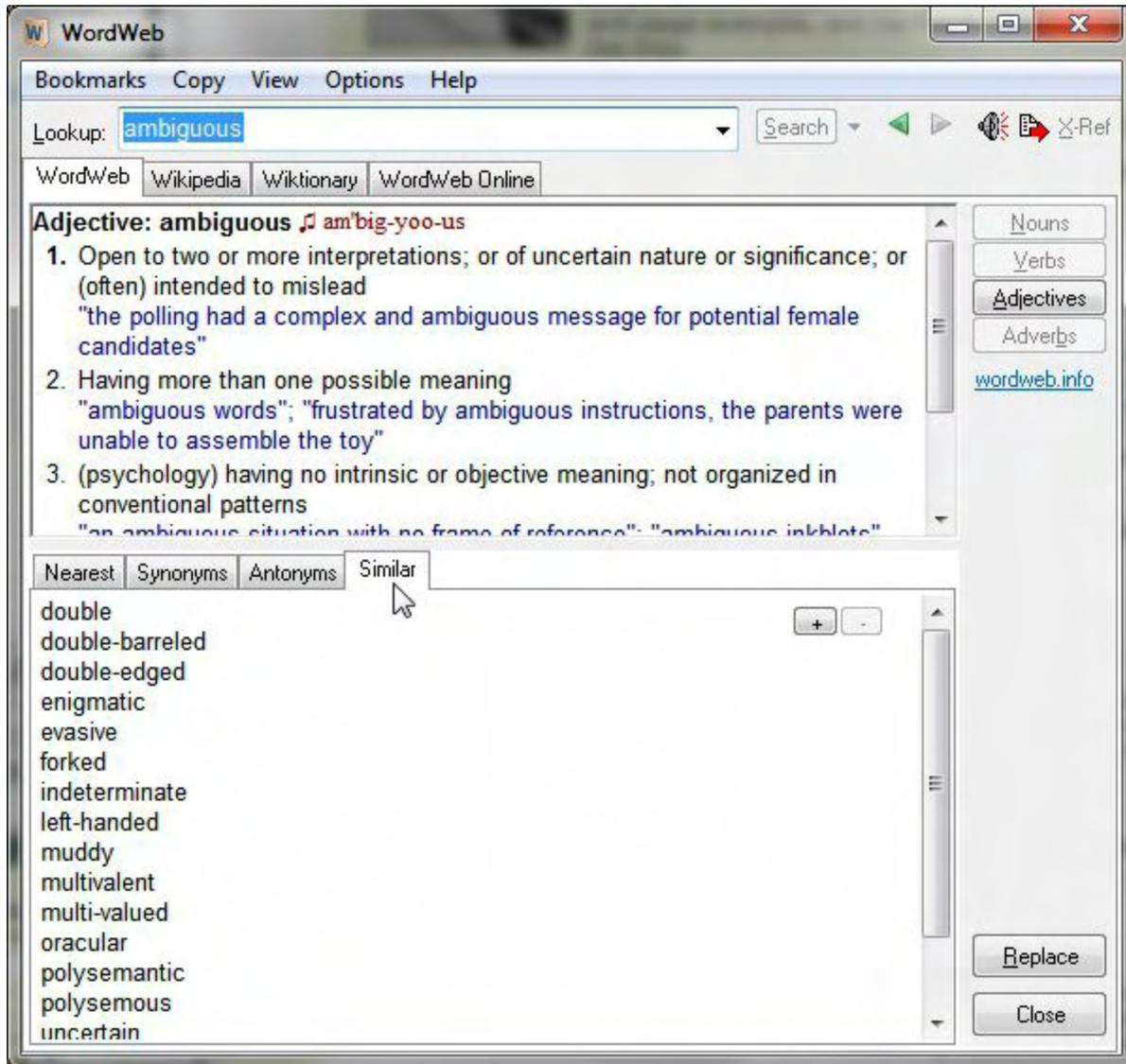


Figure 4. The Similar tab offers a variety of other words which may be used to convey the same thought. Some may even be more precise than your original choice.

If you are looking up a proper name or location, there is no need to separately load Wikipedia. The next tab does it for you (see Figure 5). No opening a Web browser.

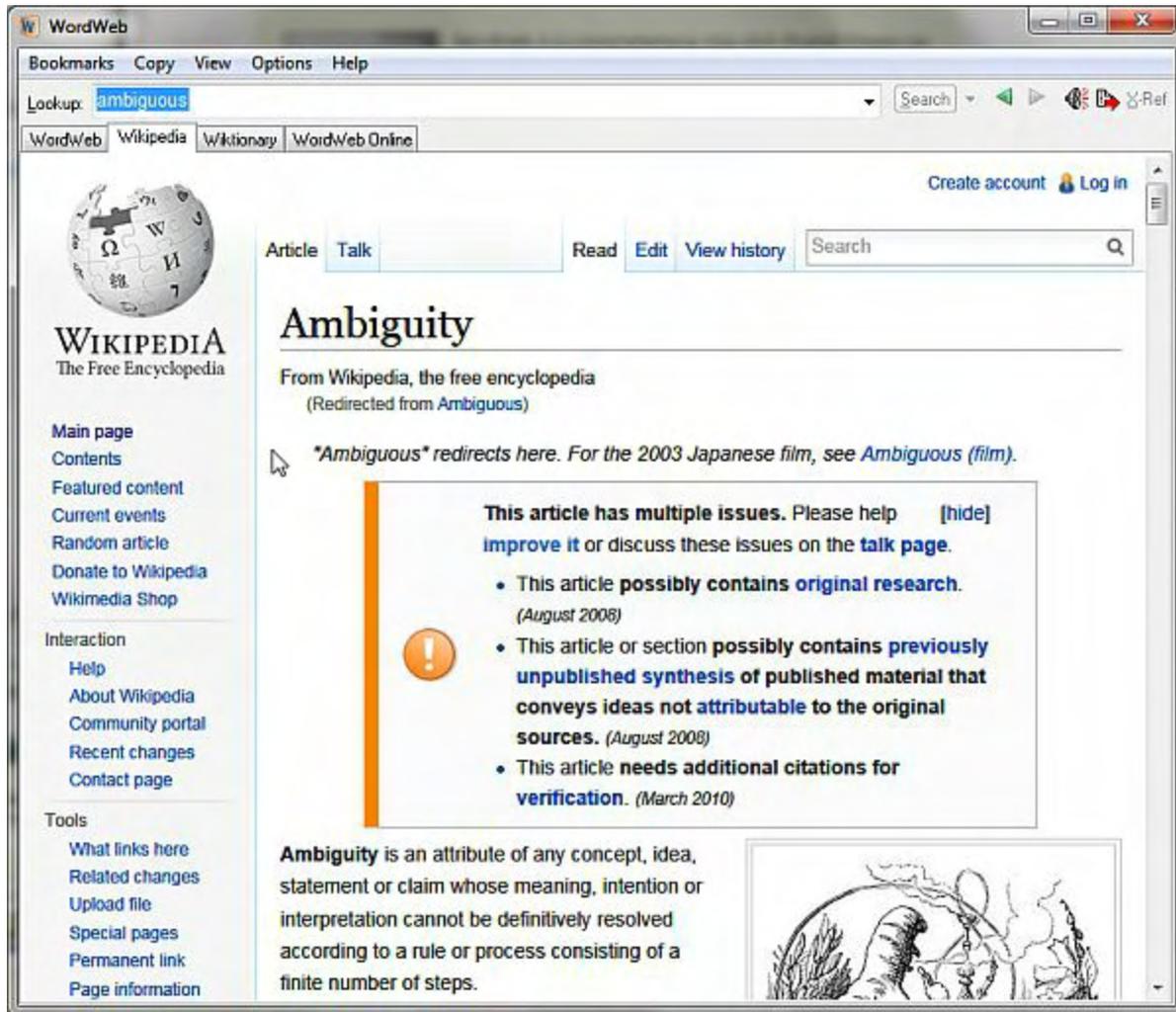


Figure 5. The free version of WordWeb directly accesses Wikipedia.

If you want a more comprehensive look at the word than appears in the built-in dictionary or if the word somehow doesn't appear, then the Wiktionary tab accesses the site for the wiki-based Open Content dictionary by the same name (see Figure 6).



Figure 6. Use the Wiktionary tab to open the online dictionary.

Finally, and maybe best of all for those struggling in a foreign language, the WordWeb Online tab offers various Web sites which offer translations for words into different languages, as well as, more Web resources (see Figure 7).

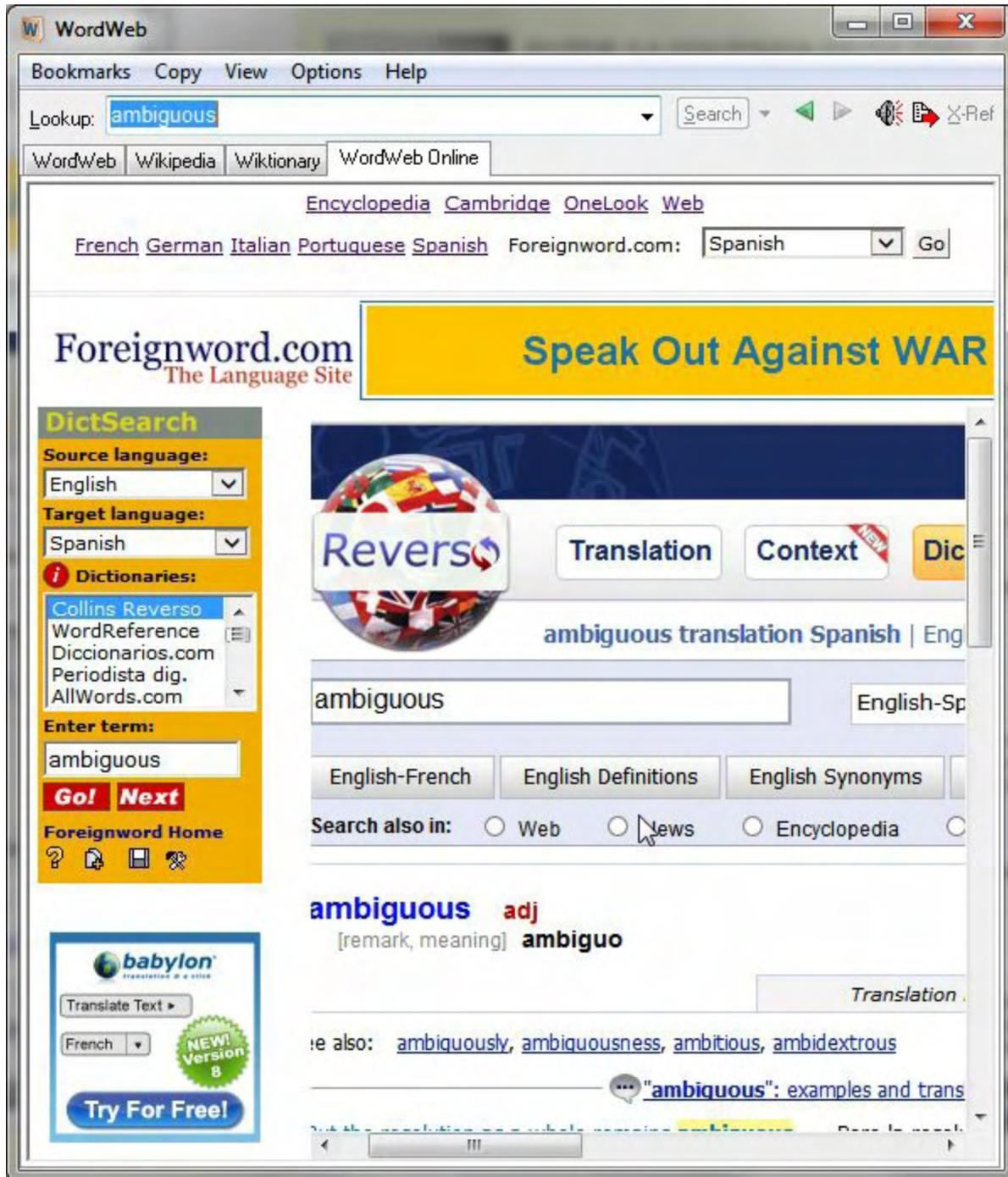


Figure 7. The WordWeb Online tab makes it easy to find the word in another language

In options, the hotkeys can be changed, the program can be set to load automatically on startup, and, one of my favorites, set the window to always-on-top while active. To write a script in AutoHotkey that does the same thing would be a major undertaking. It could be done, but why would you when it is so easy to download the free version of WordWeb?

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:

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.)

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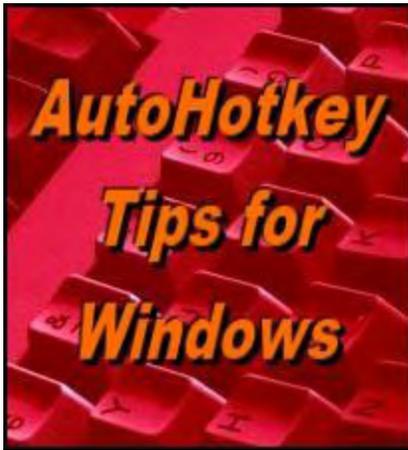
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and [That Does Not Compute!](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.



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

Strings Versus Numbers in AutoHotkey

**“A Simple Keyboard
Mistake Can Cause
Functional Problems” by**

Jack Dunning

Understanding the difference in how strings and numbers behave is critical to making AutoHotkey scripts work, as shown by this [Calorie Count app](#) problem.

As I was adding food items to the [CalorieCount app](#), I noticed that occasionally the calories would not calculate properly. This would happen when I used a decimal point to add a fraction of a serving as shown in Figure 1. This should not occur.

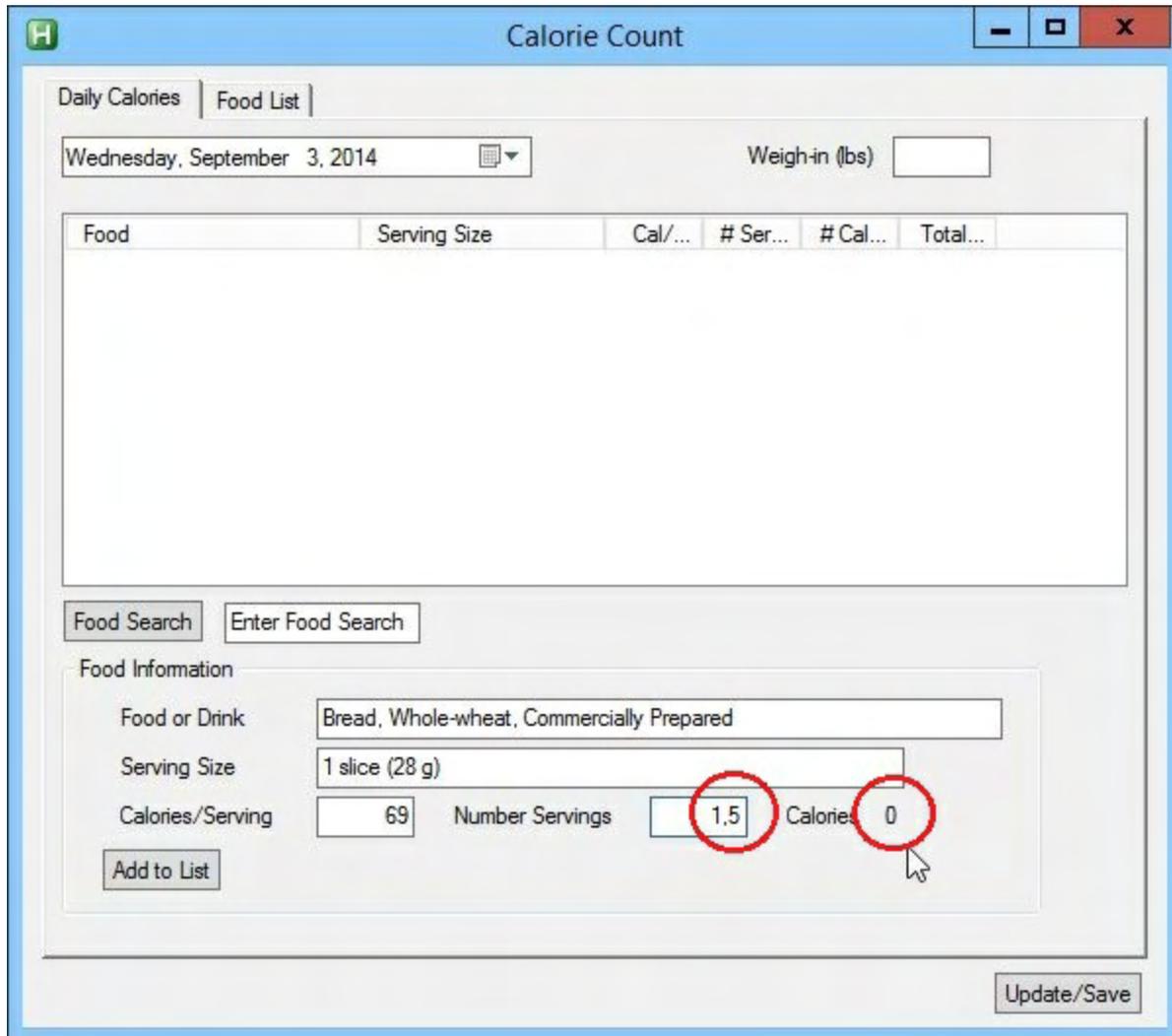


Figure 1. At times, when a fraction of a serving was added, the total calories would show up as zero.

As it turned out, the problem was caused by me hitting a comma rather than a decimal point. (The comma and period are right next to each other on the keyboard.) When a comma is used the number is no longer a number and not available for calculations, thus the new product is zero. This is an easy mistake to make.

I could insert a warning to users not to accidentally hit the comma key, but that puts too much pressure on the user to remember. I needed another approach to trap the error. In many languages a variable can be defined and/or formatted as a number making any non-numerical input impossible. That is not the case in AutoHotkey.

AutoHotkey Numbers Versus Strings

This might seem like a trivial issue, but it's important to understand these concepts when writing an AutoHotkey script. I can't tell you how many times in various language I've agonized over a bug only to find that a variable was inadvertently of the wrong type—a

number acting like a string or a string acting like a number. There are a host of issues which can arise from these errors. If you have either text formatting problems with numbers or numbers which won't calculate, then variable type might be the source of your problem.

The simple way to look at the difference between numbers and strings is by whether the values can be used for calculations. If the answer is yes, then it is a number. If no, then it is a string.

A string can be thought of as text characters which normally appears in a word or line. Strings can be made up of almost any characters including numerical digits. Mathematical operations will not work on strings. An example of a numerical string would be your zip code (e.g. 92101). While the zip code is composed of strictly digits and mathematical operations could be done with it, it would make no sense to do so. It should always be treated as text (or a string).

Numbers are only composed of numerical digits and possibly one decimal point. With the exception of preceding a number with a positive (+) or negative (-) sign, in AutoHotkey the addition of any other non-numeric character will immediately change the number into a string—making it non-functional for calculations.

In all programming languages it is important to differentiate between numbers and strings. Some languages force you to define your variable type before you can use them. Others such as AutoHotkey make no such demands and will treat variable as either numbers or strings depending upon how they are used. There are advantages to both approaches, but we are concerned only with how AutoHotkey works.

Controlling the Variable Type

With the CalorieCount problem, the comma accidentally added to the number (Number Servings) turns the number into a string. Therefore, the calculation can't work. There are several approaches to dealing with this situation.

In many programming languages there are input field formatting options which prevent the entry of the wrong type of data. This exists in AutoHotkey as well, however the option that might work best (*Number*) in the [Edit control](#) does not allow decimal points—only the digits 0 through 9. This is fine for integers, but won't work for fractional units.

The next option is to use the [UpDown control](#) which would force the preceding *Edit* control to increment numerically. Again it defaults to integers and the code to add decimals is a little more than I want to deal with right now.

A third option is to watch for the mistake of pressing the comma key and catch it. This can be done through a validation routine or label. The easiest place to add the validation is the label which already exists:

```

TotalCalCalc:          ;Calculate total calories
  Gui, Submit, NoHide
  StringReplace, Food5, Food5,`,,,,all ;added to change comma to decimal
  TotalCalVal := Round(Food4 * Food5)
  GuiControl, ,Food6, %TotalCalVal%
Return

```

The [StringReplace command](#) is used to change any commas accidentally added into decimal points. That way the routine continues to properly calculate properly. If the food item is added to the list, then it will appear as a decimal and not a comma. This is not a very elegant solution, but it works.

Hint: Sometimes when I find that a value refuses to act like a number (won't calculate), even though it is composed of all digits, using one of the [mathematical functions](#) (*Abs()*, *Floor()*, etc.) will force the string to become a number.

Regular Expressions (RegEx) for Validation

Since there is no easy formatting built into AutoHotkey (at least as far as I've found), the best way to validate data in an *Edit* field is through the use of [Regular Expressions \(RegEx\)](#) in a subroutine (label). I have avoided the use of Regular Expressions in the past because they can get quite confusing—especially for the novice. But ensuring that data entered into a number field is in the right format calls for it.

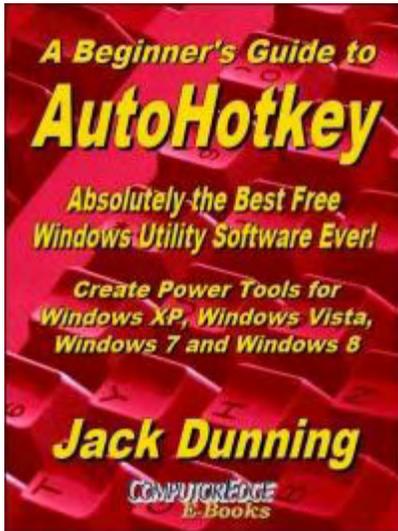
Regular Expressions are not limited to AutoHotkey. In fact they are available in most commonly used programming languages. That means that examples from other sources should work equally as well as they do in AutoHotkey. There are two primary functions in AutoHotkey which employ Regular Expressions: [RegExMatch\(\)](#) and [RegExReplace\(\)](#).

There is a [Regular Expressions Quick Reference](#) available, but unless you have a basic understanding of how they work, it is not likely to be of much help. Yet, it is worthwhile to take the time to learn how Regular Expressions work. The better they are understood, the easier it is to write a useful Regular Expressions. Therefore, rather than just show the code for validating the Number Servings field in the Calorie Count app, I plan to take up the topic next time with more in depth discussion.

* * *

Free! [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.

* * *



The 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*](#) (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey. (Also available from [Amazon](#) for the Kindle and Kindle software on other devices.)

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.

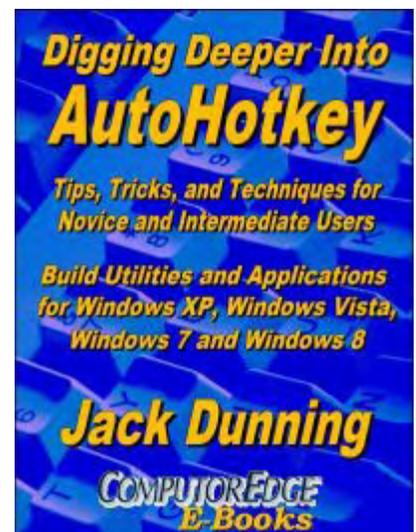
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of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

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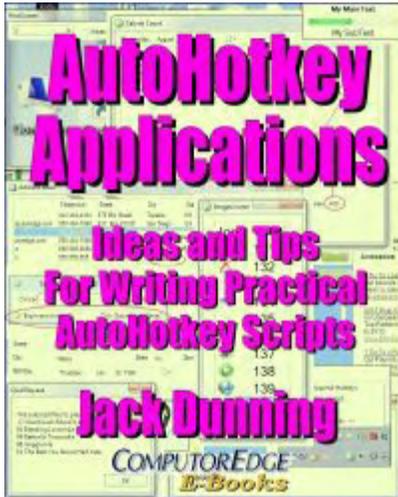
Jack's second AutoHotkey book, [*Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey*](#) (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputerEdge* is now available. Since the columns were not all written 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. (Also available from [Amazon](#) for the Kindle and Kindle software on other devices.)



[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's third AutoHotkey book [AutoHotkey Applications](#) (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) is an intermediate level book of ideas and applications based primarily on the AutoHotkey GUI command. The book emphasizes practical applications. The book is not for the complete beginner since it builds on the information in the other two books. However, if a person is reasonably computer literate, they could go directly to this book for ideas and techniques without the other books. There is an extensive index to the ideas and techniques covered in the back of the book. (Also available from [Amazon](#) for the Kindle and Kindle software on other devices.)

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

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of AutoHotkey Applications 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:

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

“Opinions, methods, and techniques about and for Apple products and devices.” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

September Surprise; The Case for Wearable Computers; Learning Swift; Backing Up Your Mac; Accepting Too Little; File Name Extensions.

On September 9th, Apple will hold a special event unveiling their latest products. The most obvious product release will be the iPhone 6, rumored to come in larger screen sizes such as 4.7 and 5.5 inch sizes. Beyond new iPhone 6 models, rumors swirl on what else Apple might announce on September 9th.

One hint that something big might occur is that Apple is holding their event at the Flint Center for the Performing Arts in Cupertino where Steve Jobs unveiled the original Macintosh. Another hint that something big will happen is the construction of a two-story [temporary structure](#) next to the Flint Center. Most likely this temporary structure will demonstrate the features of HealthKit and HomeKit for monitoring your health as you walk around and for controlling your home using Siri and Apple's rumored wearable computer dubbed the iWatch.

Recently, Apple has been [updating their HealthKit](#) software development kit to allow storing more types of data including calories burned, body-fat statistics, and sleep information. Unless you want to strap a device connected to your iPhone or iPad to record this information in your sleep, it's obvious that only a small wearable computer could easily capture this data reliably with minimal hassle.

In 2007, Apple redefined the smartphone market with the introduction of the iPhone. Then Apple redefined software distribution in 2008 with the introduction of the App Store. In 2010, Apple redefined the tablet market with the introduction of the iPad. Now in 2014, Apple will likely redefine the wearable computer market with their rumored iWatch combined with their HealthKit and HomeKit software development platforms.

While Apple revolutionized smartphones, software distribution, and tablets since 2007 (along with music distribution with the iPod and iTunes since 2001), Microsoft released their Zune digital music player in 2006, Vista in 2007, Microsoft Kin smartphones in 2010, Windows RT in 2012, and Windows 8 in 2012. Microsoft also released Silverlight in 2007 to compete

against Adobe Flash before killing Silverlight after convincing Windows Phone developers to rely on Silverlight to develop Windows Phone apps.

Given one company that produced the iPod, iTunes, iPhone, App Store, and iPad, or a second company that produced the Zune, Vista, Kin, Silverlight, Windows RT, and Windows 8, which company would you trust your future on?

The Case for Wearable Computers

With yet another police officer accused of overstepping his bounds by shooting an unarmed teenager, the idea of using [body cams](#) makes more sense. After all, if we could see a video of exactly what happened, it would be a lot easier to decide who might be guilty than relying on the bias accounts of both sides.

A body cam is nothing more than a simple wearable computer much like Google Glass. Police may soon [use Google Glass](#) to take pictures of license plates to get instant feedback on whether the car (and owner) might be wanted for any reason. As computers get smaller, more powerful, and less power hungry, wearable computers will seep into our everyday life until we'll wonder how we ever got along without them, much like kids today can't imagine not having cell phone coverage everywhere they go.

Wearable computers are coming in all forms. Taking pictures for the police will be one use while ordinary citizens may find the health monitoring features more useful in their everyday life. What will be interesting will be to see how wearable computers evolve for different uses. The police need certain features in a wearable computer while athletes and ordinary people will likely need different features.

Of course, anyone (or even any animal) needs to monitor health, so Apple's HealthKit framework will likely form the basis for wearable computers in the future. A wearable computer can tell police whether an officer is hurt if he or she is unable to reach a radio. Slap a wearable computer on a race horse and trainers can monitor whether the horse is ready to run or not.

Video recording features are not always necessary since you don't need to video yourself sleeping but you may need a wearable computer to monitor your sleep patterns. For that reason, Google Glass will likely find far more limited and specialized uses than Apple's rumored iWatch that monitors health indicators.

Wearable computers will likely set off an entirely new computer market that standard PCs can't meet. After Apple announces their wearable computer, wait to see how other companies suddenly understand what a wearable computer should do that will strangely look and act like Apple's design.

Learning Swift

If you're interested in developing and selling apps for the most lucrative mobile operating system in the world, then you'll want to create apps for iOS. To create an iOS app, you have several options.

If you're not that experienced in programming, you might prefer a simpler programming tool like [LiveCode](#) or the upcoming [Xojo for iOS](#). In return for an easier programming tool, you sacrifice the versatility of exploiting every possible feature of iOS.

For maximum versatility in exchange for greater complexity, you can use Apple's free Xcode compiler. Just wait until Apple officially releases Xcode 6 so you can use their Swift programming language instead of Objective-C. Swift is far simpler to use than Objective-C so it's nearly as easy to learn as LiveCode and Xojo but far more versatile.

To help you get started learning Swift, visit the [Learn Swift site](#) that offers plenty of tutorials and sample programs so you can see how Swift works in actual examples. The huge drawback with using Swift is that your code will only create iOS/OS X programs although RemObjects Software is developing "[Silver](#)," a tool to let you use Swift to write programs for Android and Microsoft's .NET platform.

If you absolutely need to create a cross-platform program two popular choices are LiveCode or Xojo. A more time-consuming solution involves writing your program twice in two different programming languages for two different operating systems.

Both approaches have their pitfalls. A cross-platform tool forces you to use the lowest common denominator of both operating systems. Writing two separate programs lets you exploit the best features of each operating system, but at the expense of wasting time creating two programs using different programming tools. Big companies like Adobe and Microsoft can afford to create two different programming teams. Individuals and small companies may not be able to afford this luxury.

So what should you do? If you absolutely need to create cross-platform programs, then the sacrifice of features with cross-platform tools will likely be offset by the convenience of writing a single program once to run on multiple platforms.

If cross-platform capabilities aren't that crucial, then focus on the most lucrative market possible. In the mobile world that means focusing on iOS. Since Xcode makes it easy for iOS and OS X programs to share code, creating an iOS app will let you port your program to OS X with minimal difficulties. By focusing on iOS and OS X, you can reach a growing market of customers.

Of course, you can't ignore the existing Windows market, but for individual developers, you have to decide where to focus your resources. You can focus on the growing future of iOS, or

the currently large Windows market that's not necessarily getting any larger thanks to Windows 8.

Ideally you should cater to both iOS and Windows, but given a choice, the future is clearly slanted towards iOS in much the same way that early developers had to choose between the large MS-DOS market and the future growth of the smaller Windows market at that time. Given a choice between targeting the then-smaller Windows market compared to the then-much larger MS-DOS market, guess how many MS-DOS developers flourished in the long run?

Backing Up Your Mac

A surprising number of computer users don't have any backups. In most cases, losing everything on your hard disk is just a major inconvenience, but if you have anything important such as pictures or work files, losing these documents can be disastrous.

The safest way to protect yourself is to buy an external hard disk. Then configure Time Machine to back up your entire Macintosh to your external hard disk. Now if your computer fails for whatever reason, you'll be able to restore your critical files from your external hard disk.

As an alternative or as a supplement to Time Machine, consider [CrashPlan](#). CrashPlan can back up your data in three locations simultaneously: to an external hard disk, to another computer hooked up to your network, or to the cloud. Best of all, CrashPlan only costs money if you back your files to the CrashPlan cloud. If you only back up your files to an external hard disk or to another computer on a network, you can use CrashPlan for free for as long as you want.

CrashPlan doesn't just work on OS X but on Windows and Linux as well. By using CrashPlan with Time Machine, you can insure that your files get backed up. Of course, if a fire or other disaster wipes out your computer, your external hard disk, and any computers hooked up to your network, then you'll still lose all your data.

For extra security, rotate between two external hard disks. Always keep one external hard disk connected to your computer and keep the second external hard disk stored safely in another location. Now if a hurricane or flood wipes out your home or office, your second external hard disk will be safely tucked away so you can recover all your precious data.

Accepting Too Little

In the book [The Icarus Deception](#), author Seth Godin talks about how the Icarus myth has been distorted. According to the myth, Icarus and his father were imprisoned on Crete so his

father fashioned wings out of feathers and wax so they could escape.

Most people only hear the part about the father warning Icarus not to fly too close to the sun or else the wax would melt. Like most children, Icarus ignored his father's warning, flew too close to the sun, and plunged into the ocean when the wax on his wings melted.

However Seth Godin says that Icarus's father also warned him not to fly too low or there wouldn't be enough air beneath his wings to keep him in flight. So the Icarus myth is often used to warn people not to let their ambitions push them to strive too high, but everyone ignores the equally important lesson not to set your sights too low.

If all you hear are warnings not to fly too high, you'll likely play it safe and do what's easy. In real life, that means not trusting yourself, not taking risks, not pursuing your dreams, and not making much of your life. People who aim too low almost always feel frustrated, limited, helpless, and powerless.

"The Icarus Deception" urges readers to take chances and fulfill your potential whatever that might be. Yet fear can be such a paralyzing force that it's extremely difficult to overcome. Just look at the absolute fear so many people have at the mere thought of learning a different operating system other than what they're already comfortable using, such as Windows.

Take a typical person comfortable using Windows on a PC and they'll likely never stray to OS X or Linux for fear of going through the tortuous process of learning how to use a computer all over again. Of course, those fears are often unfounded because once you know how to use one operating system, it's relatively easy to learn another one in much the same way that learning a second foreign language is easier once you've learned a foreign language before.

The key to learning anything new is to give yourself permission to fail, flounder, and feel foolish. You can never learn anything new without making mistakes and feeling lost and frustrated. That's simply part of learning.

Curiously many developers are so comfortable using Windows that they actively resist the thought of learning Android or iOS programming despite the massive and lucrative mobile market for Android and iOS apps. The fear that their hard-earned Windows programming experience won't help them master Android or iOS programming keeps these people from even trying.

Many people avoid trying anything new for fear of failing, yet by not trying, they've already failed. In the computer world, computers have traumatized so many people with a high learning curve that they're terrified of going through that same experience all over again with a new operating system.

Yet people have embraced Android and iOS so readily on smartphones and tablets because both operating systems are so easy to learn. Microsoft tried to tap into this collective fear of change by making Windows 8 and Windows RT resemble Windows Phone. The idea being

that once people get comfortable with one user interface, they'll never want to leave their comfort zone by switching to another user interface.

What Microsoft failed to realize was that learning to use Android and iOS doesn't take as much time to learn as Windows. Now that people see how unnecessarily complicated Windows can be in comparison to Android and iOS, people are more receptive to learning alternatives to Windows such as OS X and ChromeOS. That doesn't mean Windows can't still be useful, but it does mean that Windows isn't the only choice any more.

When confronted by real choice, people can better evaluate what operating system might be best for them. For some people, it might be Windows, for others it might be OS X, and for others it might be ChromeOS, Linux, or Android running on a PC.

For people clinging to their Windows XP PCs for fear of learning anything new, relax. Keep using Windows XP if it works for you, but don't be afraid to try something new and see if that new operating system could work even better. You won't know unless you try.

As Icarus found out, sometimes you can exceed the limits of your reach, but many times your own fears unnecessarily restrict you to mediocrity. If Icarus had let fear hold him back, he would never have tried flying in the first place, which meant he would have stayed imprisoned while his father flew to freedom. For many people, staying alive in a prison is far better than risking failure by trying something different, which can be the biggest tragedy of all.

* * *

Although file name extensions can seem archaic, they can be helpful in identifying the type of files stored on your computer. For example, if you create a document with Pages, your file name and extension looks like Document.pages so you can easily identify which programs created that particular file.

To hide or show extensions for individual files, just open the Finder window and right-click on a file. When a pop-up menu appears, choose Get Info to open an Info window. Now you can clear or select the "Hide extension" check box.



Figure 1. You can selectively hide or display file extensions.

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 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

"VLC Free Media Player," "Calling for Support," "Comodo Firewall"

VLC Free Media Player

[Regarding Jack Dunning's August 22 [article](#), "VLC Free Media Player":]

I replaced Microsoft Media Player with the VLC Free player on my PC years ago when I tried to play an MP4 taken with my Motorola flip phone. It worked and I was happy with it for a while until it started failing on certain other formats. Sometimes not playing at all, sometimes the quality was just plain horrible. I tried the [KMPlayer](#) [previous error corrected] free (now on version 6.0 I believe) which is free for personal use. I have yet to have it fail to play a file, even if VLC failed. KMPlayer free even has ways to sync up the sound to the video if it is off.

I am not sure if it will burn a Playlist but if you want to install a player and then forget about it KMPlayer free is a solid choice.

-Paul Anthony, San Carlos

I have been a happy VLC user for probably more than a decade now. But lately I'm finding VLC can't play some files. Windows Media Player Classic can handle most of the ones that VLC can't. I've even made WMPC my default for some kinds of files. Plus WMPC can go back frame by frame which VLC can't do. I still like VLC but it's no longer my only choice.

-Mike, Denver

Regards this article. One thing that was not mentioned about VLC, is that after playing a song, it will save that file as a VLC file. Therefore You will have a duplicate. I don't remember how to change the setting, but it can be changed to get rid of this problem. Sorry. I removed the program and will not use it anymore.

-Jack, El Cajon, CA

VLC is the best media player for playing movies...and lets you use *any* kind of subtitle. It's a very important option for those of us who are hearing impaired or do not understand the English language.

-Alex Torres, Calexico, CA

I had a typo. It is the KMPlayer. I am so sorry. I was on my mobile device and was pasting from a copy and so I kept putting in the typo. Jack, can you edit my original post?

Here is a description of the KM Player:

[KMPlayer](#) is all in one media player, covering various formats such as VCD, DVD, AVI, MKV, Ogg Theora, OGM, 3GP, MPEG-1/2/4, WMV, RealMedia, QuickTime. It has an extra feature to play Incomplete/Damaged AVI file, Locked Media Files while downloading or sharing, Compressed Audio Album (zip, rar) and so on. It also supports WIDI, 3D, 4K and handles a wide range of subtitles and allows you to capture audio, video, and screenshots in many ways.

-Paul Anthony, San Carlos

Calling for Support

[Regarding the August 22 [Digital Dave column](#):]

I provide computer support for about 100 clients. Something that has come up several times in the last year is when someone just does a search (Google or elsewhere) for anything like 'support phone number' (i.e. 'HP tech support number'), the first several results are *not* legit.

Several clients have had the same experience as Sally. They call the number thinking they are calling 'HP' or 'Cisco' or 'whatever' and they are actually calling some third party that promptly talks you into giving them access to the computer where they often load some 'support tools' which consist of some adware and remote access utilities.

They then often go right into saying your computer "is infected with 100s of viruses" and offer to fix for a fee, or they give you a hard sale to sign up for their support service plan for \$\$ a month.

Try testing it—I have. Do some simple searches to find tech support numbers for popular companies and you'll find most results turn up to be these third party vendors that I feel are mostly scams.

So my warning for all your readers: Never use a search engine to find support numbers. Try going directly to the manufacturer's Web site and look for "support" or "contact" links.

-David, Louviers, CO

Comodo Firewall

[Regarding the August 22 [Digital Dave column](#).:]

Sorry to read about Sally's predicament regarding her Comodo Firewall problems when she was coerced into calling a number in order to configure it.

I've used Comodo Firewall for years on several computers without any problems, and have not run across any such prompts Sally experienced. It's a great firewall! Did Sally click a link on Kim Komando's site or from some other site? I always try to go directly to the download page of whatever software I'm wanting to install rather than through third parties.

Software companies today are trying every conceivable way to increase revenue, and one way to do that is to slap on what amounts to malware, as you have brought up in your answer.

Free is nice, but one must exercise due diligence when installing free apps. Always install using the "Advanced" method instead of "Recommended", "Basic", or some such other verbiage. Also watch out for windows that pop up that have toolbar offers and the like ticked on as default; untick them or else you'll allow them to be installed also.

Again, I've never had problems with installing Comodo Firewalls when downloaded directly from the vendor's site. I have noticed though that many freebies are getting more sly in their methods of trying to install unwanted software during install routines.

-Andrew Kliss, San Marcos, 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 ceeditor@computoredge.com. If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit [ComputerEdge E-Books](#).

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