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Time to Get a Smartphone?

After years of holding out, Jack succumbs to temptation and gets a handheld computerphone.

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

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Digital Dave

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

Chrome Processes; Storm Outage Tip for Internet Access

Chrome Processes

Dear Digital Dave,

Thanks for the [suggestion](#) about the double digit number of Chrome.exe*32 processes running when Chrome was not open and after it was closed. You suggested a fix that said to uncheck the box: continue running background apps etc. In my case, the box was never checked and remains unchecked. Any other ideas?

Thanks again for the help you have been over the years.
Ron
San Diego, CA

Dear Ron,

That's strange. When I close Chrome, the multitude of processes eventually go away.

You must have apps loading at startup and running which use Chrome. (Google Chrome Remote Desktop could be one such program—if activated.) They may be various Google apps or possibly other programs. If they need Chrome, then it will be launched in the background when the program is loaded regardless of the browser setting. You can check Startup and Services to see what's actually loading, but there is a way to view the purpose of the processes.

I suspect that these processes are needed and likely not a problem. However, here is the trick which should help you identify what's going on. (If you see the Google Chrome icon in the System Tray on the right side of the Taskbar, then you can skip this next paragraph.)

First, you should load Chrome and enable the setting I told you to disable last week (Settings => Show advance settings… in Google Chrome and *check* the box System => Continue running background apps when Google Chrome is closed). Now close Chrome.

There should be a Chrome icon showing in the System Tray on the right side of the Taskbar. Click that icon and select "Task manager" from the pop-up menu. (This is not the same as Windows Task Manager.) A window will open showing all the Chrome processes (see Figure 1). Chrome will likely load again with only one tab.
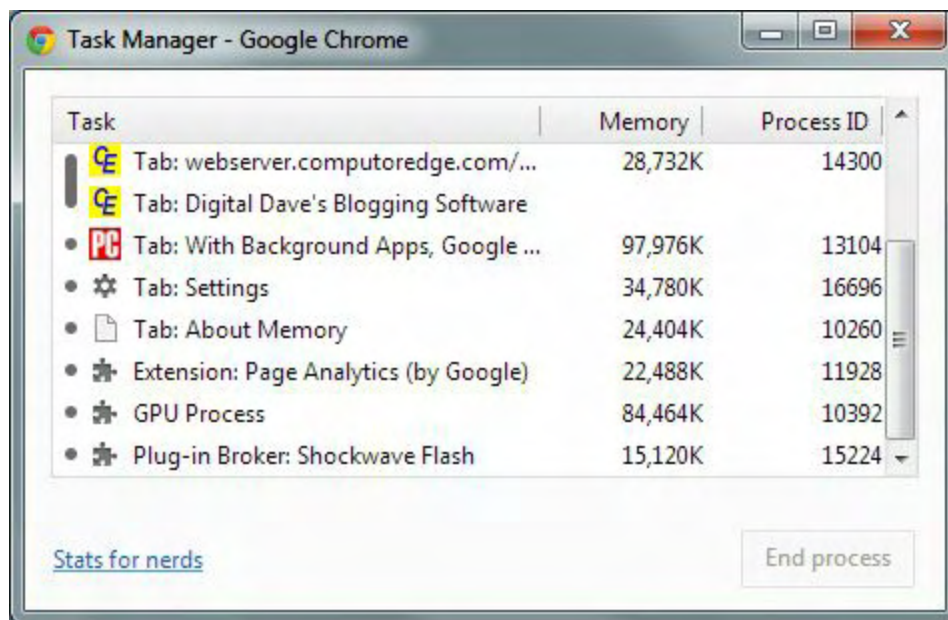

Figure 1. Google Chrome Task Manager gives the title for each of the Chrome processes.

From here you should be able to determine why you are using so many Chrome processes. Unchecking "Let Google Chrome run in the background" in the same System Tray menu will have the same effect as unchecking the box in the browser settings. The Chrome System Tray icon will likely disappear.

Digital Dave

Storm Outage Tip for Internet Access

In light of the fact that Jack Dunning is writing about getting a new smartphone this week (about time!), I'm offering yet another reason to own a smartphone.

There aren't very many people who haven't experienced a power outage during a storm. While the loss of light may be disconcerting, the loss of the Internet may be devastating—especially if you're on deadline and operate from a virtual office. You can use your laptop on battery, but that won't help if you can't access the Internet with it.

You could use your smartphone for e-mail and some minor Web browsing because the cell systems often stay up when the house power is down. (If you lose both the phone reception and the house power, then you're out of luck.) The problem is that smartphone screen is just

too small for many uses.

For example, I use a Web based *ComputorEdge* program written by Jack Dunning to write and edit my columns. I can start on a laptop, but eventually I need to access the *ComputorEdge* site to submit my answers for editing. The easiest way for me to do this is by directly hooking up my laptop to the Internet. But with the power outage my regular connection is down.

This is where the smartphone comes in. Most of today's smartphones can be turned into a Wi-Fi hotspot. The setup may be different on various types of phones, but they all do the same thing. It works by turning the phone's Wi-Fi into an access point. (When set up as an access point, the phone will no longer be using the Wi-Fi to access the Internet, but will use the mobile data plan.)

Once the setup is completed, the laptop (running on battery) can use the smartphone as a Wi-Fi connection, thus the phone's data package to access the Internet.

Another option is to connect the smartphone directly to the laptop via the USB port. This is called tethering. If the phone has the capability, then it can be set up to directly connect the laptop to the Internet via the cell data plan. In this case, it's not necessary to set up the phone as a Wi-Fi access point. The major advantage to the Wi-Fi setup is that it can be used with multiple laptops—often up to five.

If you want to be prepared for this type of emergency action, then I suggest you test the procedures before you need them. That will make it easier when you're working by candle or flashlight.

Digital Dave

Smartphone Mania

"With lower prices and competitive data packages, it's hard to resist mobile technology." by Jack Dunning

Despite the many negatives that come from the ubiquitous smartphone, there may be good reasons to own one.

I finally caved and signed up for a smartphone. There were compelling reasons for getting one, but I was ultimately convinced on a recent trip to visit my son and his family in Montana. It was not what he said, but what he did.

We were shopping together for Christmas presents for his kids. The boys are at a great age for the many varieties of LEGOs now available. We were at Target which has a pretty decent selection. As we began picking out a couple of sets, my son pulled his smartphone out of his pocket and started scanning the UPC on the boxes. He was using an Amazon app which automatically locates the same product online. He identified three items that were cheaper on Amazon. At first it just seemed like a reason to leave Target and order the LEGOs from Amazon. But then my son informed me that Target was one of the few big chains which will price match with Amazon. We took the items to the Target Customer Service desk and sure enough we saved between 20% and 30%—no shipping and no waiting for Amazon delivery.

Most of the chain stores will not match Amazon and I don't know how long Target will continue the policy, but that alone is not a good enough reason to get a smartphone. (It has been announced that [Walmart might start price matching online retailers.](#)) More incentives are needed. While I do have other reasons to own, I still feel like I'm one of the last to join the collective. Almost all of my kids already use the handheld computerphones and my daughter has just made the conversion with me.

Don't think that I'm suggesting that everyone get a smartphone. It's a personal decision that for many people just doesn't make any sense. Smartphones are about accessing the Internet when you're away from a computer…oh, and making phone calls. Sure you can play games and do other fun things, but without Internet access you may as well own a basic phone and a Game Boy. If you don't need to access the Internet (e-mail, Web sites, etc.) when away from your computer, then you don't need a smartphone. (That doesn't prevent you from wanting one.)

My need was amplified when I started giving away free books at ComputorEdge E-books. It's simple enough to offer the books for zero dollars on the [ComputorEdge E-Books GoDaddy Quick Shopping Cart](#), but there is no way to make the download immediately available without the customer entering a credit card (which would make no sense for $0). (Paid orders get the download e-mail almost instantly.) I opted to use "Print and Call" payment method with the idea of processing each order by hand. This works out okay, but if I happen to be out for the day it can be quite a wait between someone placing a free order and the sending of the download e-mail. If I could get a notification and activate the download e-mail on a smartphone, then I could process the orders from anywhere—even if I happened to be at Costco. This capability alone was enough of an excuse for me to go ahead with a new Samsung Galaxy S4.

Samsung Galaxy S4

Choosing the smartphone that's right for you is no easy decision. If you already own a particular brand of phone, you are likely to go with the same type, but a newer model. This is because any investment in apps and systems (including the learning curve) tends to create a level of loyalty to what you already own. That's why Apple iPhone 6 sales are exploding right now. Old iPhone owners had been sitting on their hands waiting for a new model which would compete with the Samsung Galaxy series of smartphones. In the meantime, Samsung had garnered a huge share of the smartphone market by offering products with bigger screens at a lower price. The iPhone 6 is Apple's response and has its users excited again.

But if you don't own a smartphone, then there is no brand loyalty to sway you in a particular direction. I could have gone with Apple. My daughter decided that she wanted the iPhone 6 ($200 with a contract). Her husband already had the iPhone 5S, so she didn't want to stray too far. (He's now envious of her new phone.) I went with the Samsung Galaxy S4 because it was cheap ($50 with contract) and reviewed well. Samsung has the S5 out, but the reviews were not that much better than the S4. (See Figure 1 for a visual comparison of the iPhone 6 and Galaxy S5.) I'm sure that the S4 has many bells and whistles that I'll never use.

Figure 1. The Apple iPhone 6 pictured next to the Samsung Galaxy S5. The Galaxy S4 is slightly smaller than the S5 with almost the same size screen. The S4 has a larger screen than the iPhone 6 with a higher resolution.

The screen on the Galaxy S4 is slightly larger than the iPhone 6 display with a higher resolution, although I'm not sure any of the technical differences will have much impact on most smartphone users. It's easy to find sites which compare the specs. Even though the specifications shown for the Galaxy S4 look significantly better than those for the iPhone 6, the technology has come so far that there is very little to complain about when it comes to most smartphones. Remember that they are just phones which do other things like accessing the Internet and taking pictures. If you listen to music, you can dump your MP3 player, but almost any of the smartphones will be an adequate replacement. For most people, their smartphone will take "good enough" photos and become their regular camera.

One advantage to the Galaxy S4 is its expandable storage capacity. I was able to add a 64GB Micro SD chip for about $50. This might make a difference for people who use numerous apps and want to store music and videos on their phone. The basic iPhone 6 comes with 16GB built-in and no expansion capacity. If you're planning to use it as an MP3 player or video playback device, then you may want to spend the extra $100 and get the 64GB model. (There's nothing in between.)

One of the major changes in the smartphone usage market is the almost universal availability

of free Wi-Fi—whether at home or in local businesses. This allows people to save money by taking the Internet load off of their cell phone plans. Generally, if a smartphone is connected to Wi-Fi, it will not use the metered data from the wireless company. This is a boon to the use of the devices because a person has unlimited Internet access at home or in the office as long as there is a Wi-Fi connection. That means it's possible to go with cheaper data plans—only using them when there is no Wi-Fi available. Apps that upload data to the Web such as Dropbox and Google Drive can be set to wait until Wi-Fi is available before starting the process.

Processing Free Books at ComputorEdge E-Books

The first thing that I did after activating my smartphone was to check out how I could process orders for free e-books. First I set up the *ComputorEdge* e-mail server to forward any ComputorEdge E-Books New Order Notices from the GoDaddy Shopping Cart to the address I use with the smartphone. I needed a cue to get my attention when there was a new order—no matter where I was at the time.

After hearing the audio notification, I open the GoDaddy mobile Web app on the smartphone in Google Chrome and log into the shopping cart. While the mobile Web app doesn't have all the features available on a computer, it does what I need—which is list the orders and allow me to process them (see Figure 2).
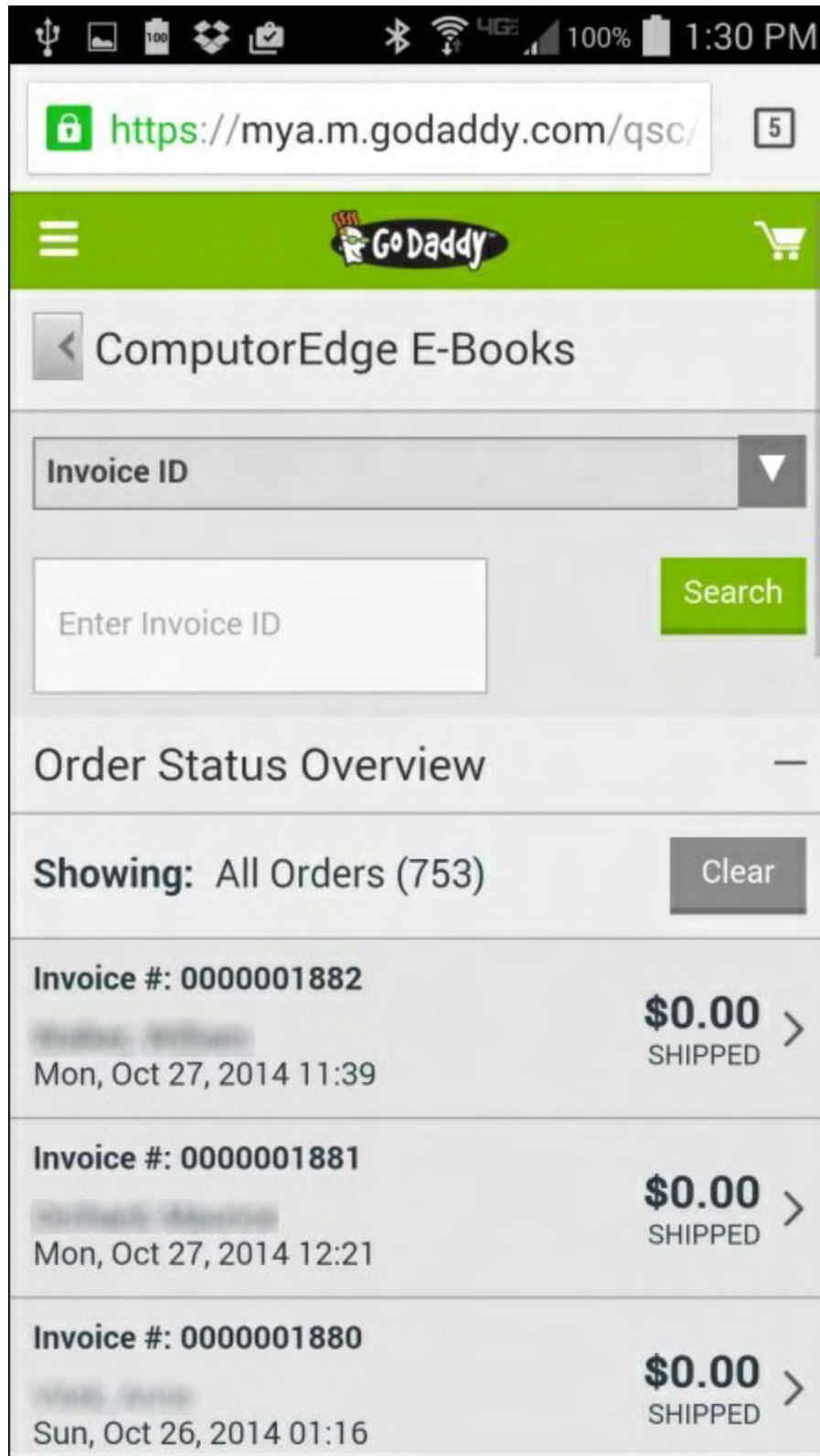
Figure 2. Loading through a Web browser on the smartphone, the GoDaddy site tailored for mobile screens lists the current orders.

The process for releasing the free book download e-mail from ComputorEdge E-Books is as simple as tapping the new order on the smartphone. The order loads (see Figure 3). Once the

new order is displayed, I can scroll through its various sections. I open the payment portion of the order and tap "Completed" to signal that the download e-mail should be sent.

Figure 3. The new ComputorEdge E-Books' order is easy to view on a smartphone.

On a smartphone, the GoDaddy Web site looks nothing like it does on a computer. The Web site recognizes when it's being accessed by a smartphone and offers a stripped down version for easy use on a small touchscreen. The full computer version would be extremely difficult to use on a smartphone. (Interestingly, when I load the same site on my iPad, I get the full computer version—which is fine for the larger tablet screen.)

If I access the *ComputorEdge* Web site with the smartphone, the view is essentially the same as on a computer—except the navigation pane on the left side is stripped off. This change was added a number of years ago. The *ComputorEdge* server recognizes most types of devices by parsing certain words in the operating system and delivering the appropriate version. However, this view is a little small on a smartphone. Turning the phone sideways and using a reverse pinch to enlarge the screen helps, but it is no substitute for reading the page on a larger screen.

The Smartphone as Replacement Technology

There are many devices which can be replaced with a smartphone. In all cases, they are portable items that people carry with them. It certainly might replace the music player. I see few advantages that an iPod offers over a smartphone, except maybe storage capacity for songs. There are Internet options such as Pandora for playing music, but unless you're using Wi-Fi, it will be at the expense of your data plan.

Certainly the smartphone is likely to replace the separate camera for the casual photographer. The quality of photos has certainly improved and most smartphones now take HD video. It wouldn't make much sense to carry a camera as well as a phone unless there are features on the camera which are not available on the phone.

With the exception of tromping through the woods, I can see the standalone GPS being replaced by the smartphone. Of course every smartphone will give you the time, so you might not need a watch. This is one of the factors that makes me skeptical about the new smartwatches. Does something attached to your wrist really add that much to your experience? In most cases, you're just going to pull out the phone anyway.

I don't see the smartphone or tablet replacing the computer—at least not for people who use the computer for more than just playing games and browsing the Internet. Screen and keyboard size do make a difference. Each device has a place in the market and they only act as a replacement if the other was never really needed by its owner. The answer to the question of what you should buy, a computer, tablet, or smartphone, is the same answer as 30 years ago when we first decided what type of computer to buy: "It depends upon how you plan to use it." As it turns out, many people are buying and using all three.

Jack is the publisher of ComputorEdge Magazine. He's been with the magazine since first issue on May 16, 1983. Back then, it was called The Byte Buyer. His Web site is

www.computoredge.com. He can be reached at ceeditor@computoredge.com. Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:

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Turning a Simple Date Trick into an Easy AutoHotkey Function

"If You Need to Do It Over and Over Again, Make It an AutoHotkey Function" by Jack Dunning

> *Last week's tip for finding next Friday's date is turned into a function for inserting the date of any coming weekday. Plus an update on the SendMode problem and another reason to use RegEx in AutoHotkey.*

If you're brand new to AutoHotkey the check out our [Introduction to AutoHotkey](#)!

Last week I introduced a simple routine for [inserting the date for the next Friday](#) into any document. But what if you want a hotstring for each day of the week? You could copy the code seven times creating a hotstring for each day, but that creates a lot of code for very little work. A better way to go is to modify the code and create a function which will return the date for any day of the week.

This is the beauty of [User Defined Functions](#). Snippets of code can be used over and over again without reinserting it into the script. Once a function is created, it can either be called directly:

```
Weekday(1)    ; insert next Sunday's date
```

or as part of another subroutine:

```
:c*:ASun::   ; hotstring to insert next Sunday's date
  Weekday(1)
Return
```

Function are distinguished by the set of parentheses *()* found at the end of the function name. These
parentheses may be blank if no data is passed to the function or may contain parameters needed to complete the subroutine. In the case of our new *WeekDay(Day)* function, the target

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day of the week (Sunday is 1, Monday is 2, …, Saturday is 7) in numeric form needs to be sent to the function. The code from last week has been modified to pass the numeric weekday to the *Weekday(Day)* function:

```
Weekday(Day)
{
   Today := A_Now
   If A_WDay > Day
      Today += Day + 7-A_WDay, days
   Else
      Today += Day-A_WDay, days
   FormatTime, Weekday, %today%, M-d-yy
   SendInput %Weekday%
}
```

This function figures out the date for the coming weekday in the same manner as described last week except the number of the weekday is now a variable (*Day*) rather than a constant hard coded into the script. This means we only need to write the code once inside the function. Anytime we want the date inserted for a coming weekday we merely call the same function with the number of the weekday (*Weekday(4)* for next Wednesday's date).

Tip: Anytime you find that you are using the same (or similar) snippet of code over and over —commonly associated with copying-and-pasting same lines of code multiple times, then you should consider turning it into a function. It may take a little longer to write in the beginning but will save you time (and code) in the long run. Plus, when debugging or modifying a script, you will only need to change that code in one place—within the function.

In the function above the value of the variable *Day* is sent to the function by placing the number or another variable within the parentheses when the function is called. *Day* is then compared with today's weekday number (*A_WDay* which is a built-in variable). *If A_WDay* is greater than *Day*, then we know that the weekday we want will occur in the following week (seven days later). Seven days are added to *Today*, plus the difference in days between the target weekday number and today's weekday number (*Today += Day + 7-A_WDay, days*).

Otherwise (*Else*), the next weekday is found with simply the difference in days between the target weekday number and today's weekday number (*Today += Day-A_WDay, days*). See the EnvAdd command or last week's discussion for details of this time calculation.

The day is then formatted with the FormatTime command. Use any format you prefer. If you want alternative date formats available, then you can add a second parameter to the function and make it conditional:

```
Weekday(Day,Format)
{
   Today := A_Now
   If A_WDay > Day
      Today += Day + 7-A_WDay, days
   Else
```

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```
      Today += Day-A_WDay, days
   If Format = 1
      FormatTime,  Weekday, %today%,  M-d-yy
   If Format = 2
      FormatTime,  Weekday, %today%,  , LongDate
   SendInput %Weekday%
}
```

As many date formats as you want can be added to the function. If you add the second parameter, both will be required anytime the function is called.

Adding the Hotstrings

The nature of hotstrings is that you need to set one up for each result. Since this script in not a direct replacement and calls a function, the code needs to start on the first line after the hotstring definition:

```
:c*:dsun::
  Weekday(1)
return
```

While this is short snippet, it needs to be repeated for each day of the week for the original *Weekday(Day)* function:

```
:c*:dsun::
  Weekday(1)
return

:c*:dmon::
  Weekday(2)
return

:c*:dtue::
  Weekday(3)
return

:c*:dwed::
  Weekday(4)
return

:c*:dthu::
  Weekday(5)
return

:c*:dfri::
  Weekday(6)
return

:c*:dsat::
  Weekday(7)
```

```
return
```

Note that I have switched the hotstrings to *dsun* (date Sunday) from *ASun* (for Add date Sunday) used [last week](). I did this because I felt that using the SHIFT key was awkward, plus, unlike *AF*(rica) the *ds* (or *dm*, *dt*, *dw*, and *df*) was unlikely to be the start of any word. When adding hotstrings, it's important to use character combinations which are easy to remember without causing other conflicts.

If I wanted to use the second two parameter *Weekday(Day,Format)* function, then I would need a separate hotstring for each day of the week and each format:

```
:c*:dsun1::
  Weekday(1,1)
return

:c*:dmon1::
  Weekday(2,1)
return

:c*:dtue1::
  Weekday(3,1)
return

:c*:dwed1::
  Weekday(4,1)
return

:c*:dthu1::
  Weekday(5,1)
return

:c*:dfri1::
  Weekday(6,1)
return

:c*:dsat1::
  Weekday(7,1)
return

:c*:dsun2::
  Weekday(1,2)
return

:c*:dmon2::
  Weekday(2,2)
return

:c*:dtue2::
  Weekday(3,2)
return

:c*:dwed2::
```

```
  Weekday(4,2)
return

:c*:dthu2::
  Weekday(5,2)
return

:c*:dfri2::
  Weekday(6,2)
return

:c*:dsat2::
  Weekday(7,2)
return
```

The number of hotstrings (14) may seem cumbersome, but they are necessary since there is no provision for using variables in hotstrings. With a number added to the end of each hotstring, there is less chance of a conflict with real words while the hotstrings are still easy to remember.

To insert this Friday's short date, I type *dfri1* to get *10-31-14*. For the long date I type *dfri2* and *Friday, October 31, 2014* is inserted. This technique can be applied to any type of auto replacement with repeating patterns.

SendMode Input Update

I just tried compiling the above code with the *SendMode InputThenPlay* line (discussed last week) at the beginning of the line. It completely screwed up the hotstrings. My recommendation is now to remove any *SendMode* commands from your scripts unless you have a compelling reason to keep it. (I'm not sure what that would be.) If I get more information on the *SendMode* command and how to prevent the associated problems, I'll pass it along.

Another Use for a Regular Expression (RegEx)

In a effort to show the practicality of RegEx in AutoHotkey, I'm always on the lookout for ways to improve a script. I was on the AutoHotkey Forum interacting with someone who wanted to parse a number out of the title of a window. He needed the number to match a condition. He finally settled upon:

```
StringTrimLeft, window, window, 69      ;deletes 69 characters from the left of what t
StringTrimRight, window, window, 43     ;deletes 43 characters from the right of what
```

for removing a specific number of characters from both sides. He could have done it in one line with *RegExMatch()*:

```
FoundPos := RegExMatch(window, "\d+" , window)
```

This yields the same result (any digits found in a row), but you wouldn't need to know how many characters to trim front and back. This assumes that there are no other digits appearing in the title before your target numeric string. FoundPos returns the starting point of the number in the string and is probably not needed.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

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.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

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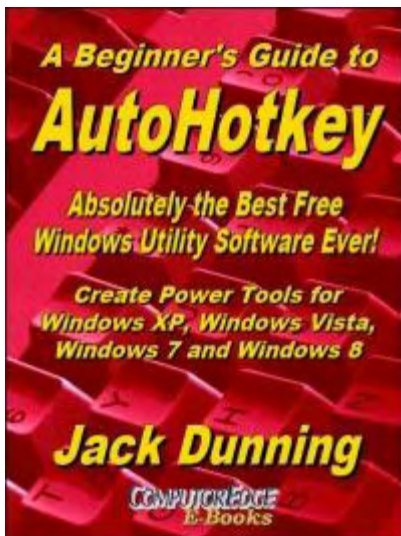
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Based upon the series of articles in *ComputorEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets,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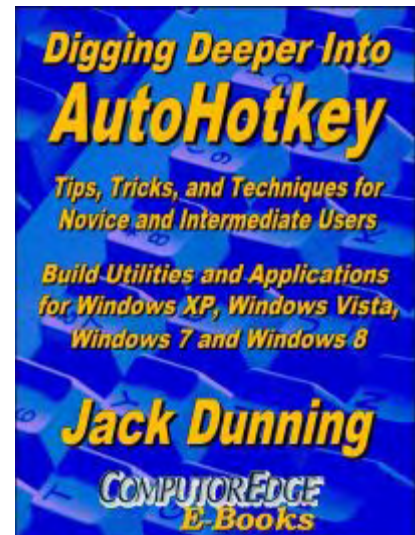
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Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

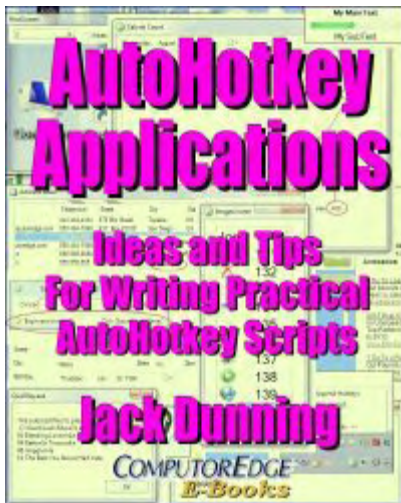Jack's second AutoHotkey book, *Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey* (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputorEdge* is now available. Since the columns were not all written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

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

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

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

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

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

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

[Windows 7 Secrets Four-in-One E-Book Bundle](#),
[Getting Started with Windows 7: An Introduction, Orientation, and How-to for Using Windows 7](#),
[Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7](#),
and [That Does Not Compute!](#), brilliantly drawn cartoons by Jim Whiting for really stupid gags by Jack about computers and the people who use them.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

"Small Thinking" by Wally Wang

Small Thinking; Chess Engines; Timing Your Apple Purchases; Microsoft Exceeds Wall Street Expectations; Shooting Themselves in the Foot; Rapid Change Right Before Your Eyes; The Nature of Mobile Apps; Customize How your Macintosh Handles Software Updates.

In his book *Thinking for a Change* author John C. Maxwell talks about his first job as a pastor in a small town in rural Indiana. This was in August 1969 when NASA was about to put a man on the moon for the first time in history. Yet when John tried to get his church excited about the prospect of a man landing on the moon, the congregation just sat there completely unmoved by his speech.

Afterwards, John learned that his new congregation didn't respond to his excitement about the NASA moon landing because they did not believe that a man could land on the moon. One man even told John, "If God had wanted a man on the moon, He would have put him there." As John writes in his book, "I realized then that many of the town's residents had a very small view of the world. They had not altered their narrow thinking in years and they did not want to expand it."

In the computer world, you can see how many new opportunities have suddenly appeared. Back in the 90's, the only real option for a computer was relying on Microsoft Windows because Apple priced their Macintosh computers way too high and there were no real alternatives to Windows. As a result, practically everyone who used a computer at work or at home used Windows.

Today, the world has completely changed. While many people and corporations still rely on Windows, Windows is no longer a requirement. In the old days, you had to buy the latest version of Windows to run the latest version of Office. Nowadays, Microsoft has shifted to the cloud so people are no longer tied to a specific operating system to run Microsoft Office since Microsoft Office 365 supports Windows, OS X, and even the iPad.

With Windows no longer a requirement to run specific software, people are now free to choose between Linux, Android, OS X, iOS, or ChromeOS in addition to Windows. With so

many choices, you can weigh the pros and cons of each option to find the best choice for you.

For people to denigrate any particular option without using it first is like someone telling you that French food is awful without ever having tasted or eaten any French food in their lives. Yet people who have little experience with iOS, OS X, Android, Linux, or ChromeOS have no problems telling you the superiority of their operating system without having similar knowledge of the options they so heavily criticize.

If you used a computer in the past decade, you've probably used a Windows PC. As a result, many people who use Linux, Android, OS X, iOS, or ChromeOS have plenty of experience also using Windows. On the other hand, the vast majority of people who use Windows often do not have the same knowledge and experience using Linux, Android, OS X, iOS, or ChromeOS. How can these people claim that these rival operating systems must be inferior if they've never used them to the same extent as most people have used Windows?

As John C. Maxwell discovered when confronted by a congregation in rural Indiana, the answer lies in their thinking. When people narrow their world to only what they already know, they resist believing anything different. That rural Indiana congregation didn't think it was possible for a man to land on the moon, so even the idea that it could be possible failed to move them. When your thinking remains small, your options remain just as small.

The answer is simple. Open your mind and explore your options. Linux is best known for its speed and reliability at the sacrifice of commercial software support and the need for a fairly high degree of technical knowledge to feel comfortable modifying it.

OS X is best known for its simpler user interface and reliability at the sacrifice of a higher cost due to its coupling with Macintosh computers. ChromeOS is better known as a low-cost alternative for simple tasks that any browser could handle, but cannot do more specialized tasks like desktop publishing or video editing on a professional level.

Windows is best known for being a corporate standard with plenty of software available for it, but at the sacrifice of confusing commands and illogical user interface changes. Android is most popular for mobile devices, but has been coming to several PCs so it may be an option for someone who needs simpler computing tasks and may already own an Android smartphone or tablet.

Open minds will see the advantages and disadvantages of all options. Closed minds will only see the advantages of their own choice and see nothing but disadvantages of anything else. It's easy to have a closed mind. Just stop thinking. Unfortunately for the world, far too many people are all too willing to make small thinking their only choice in life.

Chess Engines

In the old days, people believed that computers could never beat human experts in chess.

Chess was considered such a difficult game that computer scientists even thought that if they could create a chess-playing computer program, they could gain valuable insights into artificial intelligence.

Today computer scientists have created chess programs that can routinely beat all but the strongest human chess players, and even then computers have defeated human experts on multiple occasions. After creating powerful chess-playing programs, computer scientists realized that all they had accomplished was in creating powerful chess-playing programs with no hint of developing true artificial intelligence whatsoever.

Despite the failure of chess-playing programs to advance the science of artificial intelligence to the level of human intelligence, chess-playing programs still remain fascinating to study. Most video games use different artificial intelligence techniques to mimic intelligent behavior.

For those who truly want a challenge, consider examining the source code to Stockfish, a complete chess-playing program. Not only is Stockfish completely open source and available on Windows, OS X, Android, Linux, and iOS, but Stockfish is also the top-ranked chess-playing program in the world.

Studying the source code of Stockfish can give you insights on how to implement artificial intelligent behavior in your own games. In case you don't care to study source code, you can still download the Stockfish OS X and iOS apps so you can play chess against your Macintosh, iPhone, or iPad.
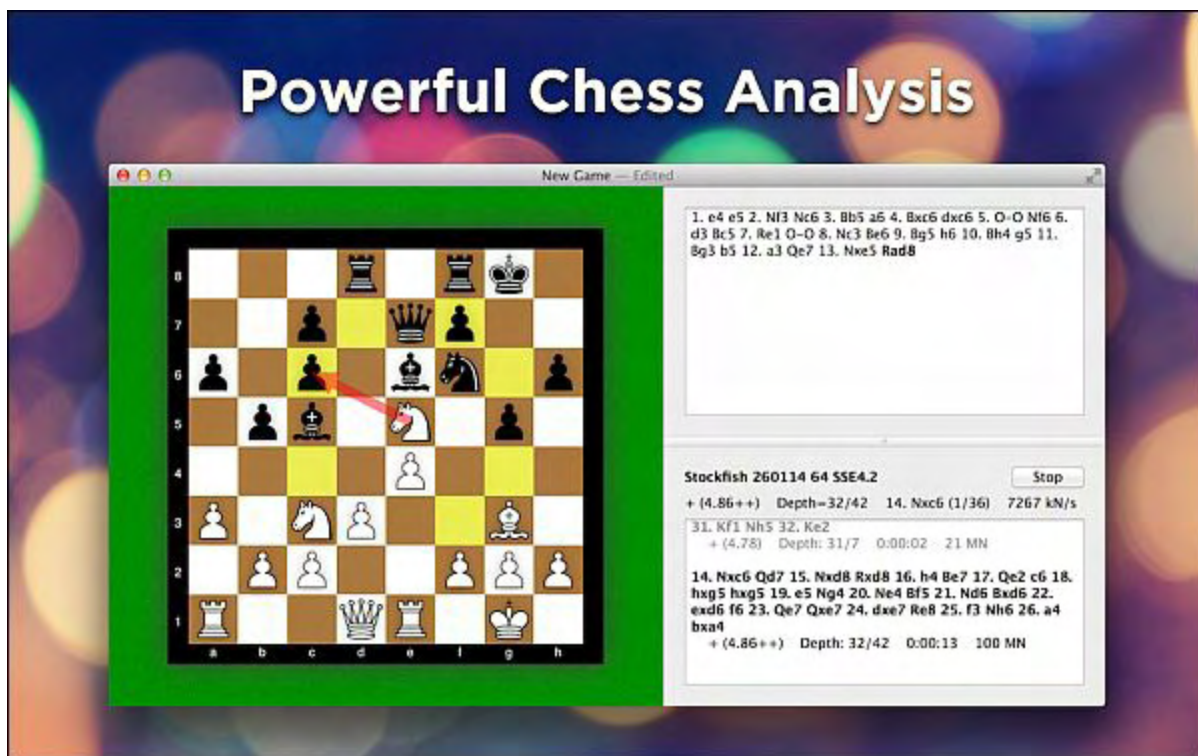

Figure 1. Stockfish can teach you to play a stronger game of chess.

Like most chess programs, Stockfish can teach you how to play and suggest the best moves. By learning from Stockfish, you can improve your own chess-playing abilities. If you're a programmer, you can study the source code to improve your own programming skills as well.

One unique feature of Stockfish is that you can optimize the program for minimum resource usage or maximum performance. You can give the program access to 1 to 4 of your CPU cores and change the amount of memory the program uses to analyze each game move. Such tweaks let you experiment with how Stockfish changes its game-playing abilities in ways that other chess programs may not offer.
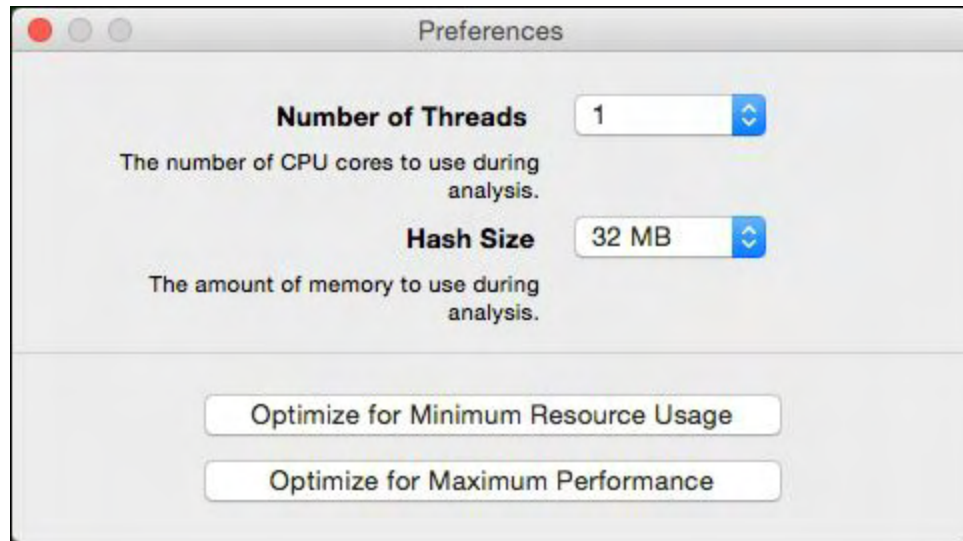
Figure 2. Stockfish lets you customize its use of your computer's hardware.

Without the world of open source, opportunities like Stockfish could never exist. Open source has opened the world of computers to more people in ways that proprietary software could never do. There's nothing wrong with proprietary software when it solves your problems, but there are plenty of advantages of open source as well. With open source projects like Stockfish, you can let your computer help expand your mind in more ways than one.

Timing Your Apple Purchases

Now that Apple just released new versions of the iPad, you might be tempted to buy the latest model. However, Apple not only dropped the price of the previous model by $100, but they also sell refurbished versions of some of those older models so you can save even more.

Apple Certified Refurbished
We test and certify all Apple refurbished products and include a 1-year warranty.   Free shipping on all refurbished products. Free returns.
All refurbished iPad models also include a brand new battery and outer shell.
Limited supplies, but updated frequently. Availability is guaranteed upon receipt of full payment.

Refurbished iPad Air Wi-Fi 16GB – Space Gray
Originally released October 2013
Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
Bluetooth 4.0 technology
9.7-inch Retina display
5-megapixel iSight camera
FaceTime HD camera
1080p HD video recording
A7 chip with 64-bit architecture
10-hour battery life
Smart covers (sold separately), instant on
Multi-Touch screen
1 pound and 0.29 inch

$339.00
Save $60.00
15% off
Select

Refurbished iPad Air Wi-Fi 16GB – Silver
Originally released October 2013
Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
Bluetooth 4.0 technology
9.7-inch Retina display
5-megapixel iSight camera
FaceTime HD camera
1080p HD video recording
A7 chip with 64-bit architecture
10-hour battery life
Smart covers (sold separately), instant on
Multi-Touch screen
1 pound and 0.29 inch

$339.00
Save $60.00
15% off
Select

Refurbished iPad Air Wi-Fi 32GB – Space Gray
Originally released October 2013
Wi-Fi (802.11a/b/g/n)
Bluetooth 4.0 technology
9.7-inch Retina display
5-megapixel iSight camera
FaceTime HD camera
1080p HD video recording
A7 chip with 64-bit architecture
10-hour battery life
Smart covers (sold separately), instant on
Multi-Touch screen
1 pound and 0.29 inch

$389.00
Save $60.00
13% off
Select

Figure 3. Apple sells refurbished iPads for a greater discount.

Obviously a refurbished version of last generation's iPad won't be as fast as the latest model, but if you're more interested in saving money than having the latest technology, Apple's refurbished store is the best place to visit each time Apple releases new products.

Best of all, refurbished products come with all the same warranties as new products. The next time you want a new Apple product, time it so you start looking after Apple introduces new products. You may not always find exactly what you want in Apple's refurbished store, but if you keep looking, chances are good you'll find what you want at a much lower price than buying new.

Microsoft Exceeds Wall Street Expectations

Last week Apple exceeded Wall Street expectations when they sold far more iPhones and Macintosh computers than before. This week, Microsoft also exceeded Wall Street expectations based on the strength of their cloud computing efforts.

The New York Times reports that "Microsoft's resilience stems in part from the reluctance of corporate customers to abandon their deep investments in the company's products."

Most likely after Microsoft became the computing standard during the 90's, there's little reason for companies to abandon Microsoft unless it completely doesn't work for them. As long as it continues to work, there's no reason to switch to anything else to gain marginal or possibly even worse results.

Munich even took ten years to finally break away from dependence on Microsoft software and shift to Linux. It's not that Microsoft software couldn't do the job, but that Munich wanted to free themselves from dependence on a single vendor and the proprietary file formats of Microsoft Office.

Most companies won't want to go through the long-term hassle of shifting away from Microsoft software, which means Microsoft should continue raking in the money every quarter. As Vista, Kin, Zune, and Windows 8 shows, the only thing really hurting Microsoft is Microsoft themselves.

Shooting Themselves in the Foot

Just to show that Microsoft isn't the only company willing to shoot themselves in the foot by frustrating their customers, both RiteAid and CVS Pharmacy had NFC (Near Field Communication) terminals set up that could accept both Apple Pay and Google Wallet. However both companies are backing a rival payment standard called Merchant Customer Exchange (MCX), which won't be ready until next year. Until then, both RiteAid and CVS Pharmacy turned off their NFC terminals to prevent people from paying using Apple Pay or Google Wallet.

As a business, you want to make it as convenient as possible for customers to pay you. After all, the whole purpose of any business is to make money so if you make it difficult for customers to pay you, they'll likely stop and pay someone else. To have the capability to accept Apple Pay and Google Wallet, then deliberately turn it off is like refusing to accept VISA credit cards because you prefer MasterCard instead.

Not to be outdone in the short-sighted vision department, the state of Michigan recently passed a law banning car manufacturers from selling direct to customers. Instead, car manufacturers must sell through a dealer.

Considering that the whole world is eliminating the middleman and selling directly to customers, this is a giant step backwards, but mostly a bill meant to restrict the sale of Tesla cars in Michigan to protect the main auto makers already there (Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler).

In the future, watch for RiteAid and CVS Pharmacy to reverse their decision when rivals like Walgreens accept Apple Pay and Google Wallet along with more retailers every day. Watch for the Merchant Customer Exchange (MCX) standard to stagger out to lukewarm acceptance since the merchants backing this standard will need to give customers an incentive to use it.

Then watch Michigan and the Big Three auto makers continue their downward spiral that has turned Detroit into a Third World nation with little hope of improving within our lifetime. When companies focus only on short-term gains that ignore and actively resist long-term trends while frustrating their customers, you can sit back and watch them smash into a brick wall at high speed and then beg for a bail out after wondering what happened.

Rapid Change Right Before Your Eyes

Anyone remember when music came on vinyl records? Then CDs came along and killed the vinyl record and tape cassette. Within a few short years, digital downloads suddenly made CDs obsolete as iTunes became the dominant music distributor on the planet. Now just as suddenly, streaming audio has cut into digital download purchases, [dropping sales at iTunes](#) by 14 percent.

Anyone who still believes that rapid change can't make current technology obsolete hasn't been paying attention. At one time, iTunes dominated the digital music industry. Now streaming audio threatens to kill iTunes just like iTunes killed CDs. That's why Apple bought Beats Music for their subscription music service.

Notice that in the old days, you purchased individual products (songs, software, movies) on a disc. Then you could download those same products as digital files. Now you can simply pay a subscription fee and get the exact same experience without cluttering up your hard disk.

The world is changing rapidly so it's up to you to keep up. For people who don't want to keep up, a strategy of denial may let you fool yourself momentarily, but in the long run, the world will move on anyway whether you like it or not.

The Nature of Mobile Apps

Companies like Microsoft, AutoDesk, and Apple keep putting out more sophisticated iOS apps that rival desktop programs. However, the real advantage of mobile apps is that they let you perform a task quickly and easily wherever you happen to be. The most popular apps are

games, but there's plenty of room for creativity with other types of apps as well.

If you're learning music, you may want to get Music Tutor, a simple app that tests you on sight reading musical notes. Whenever you have a spare moment, start Music Tutor, quiz yourself on a few notes, and then put your iPhone or iPad away again.
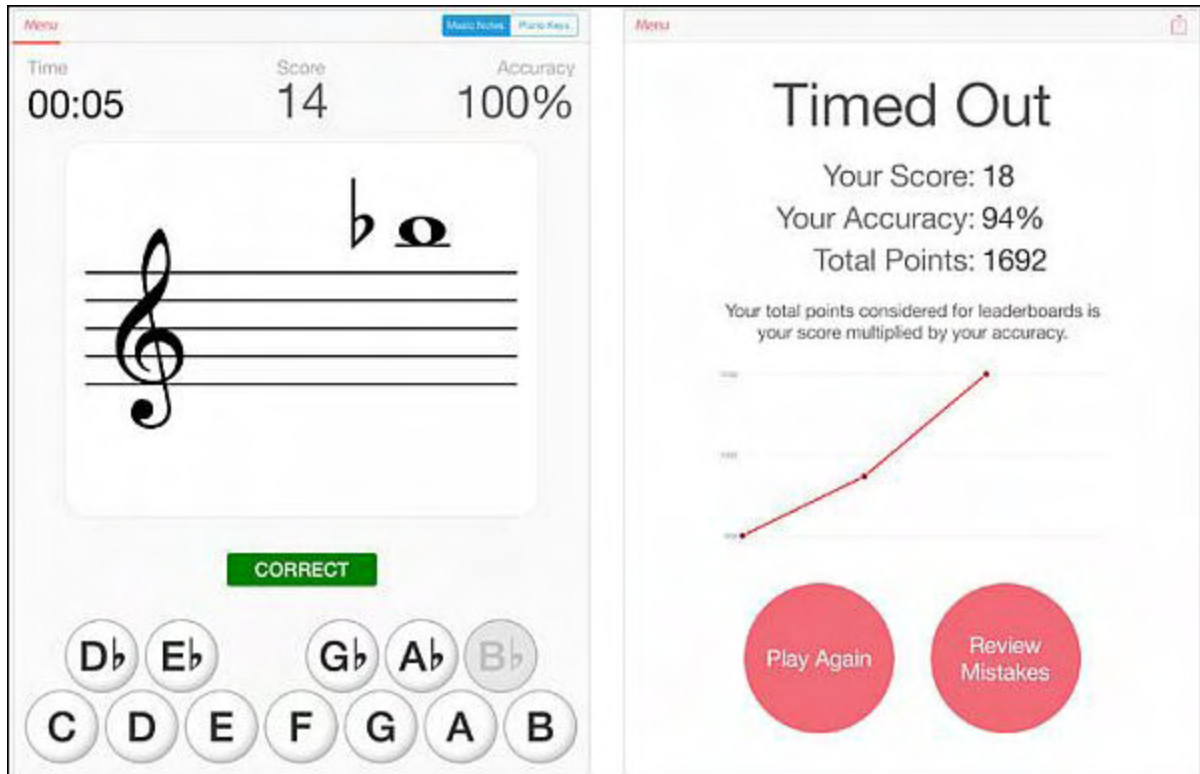

Figure 4. Music Tutor helps you learn how to sight read sheet music.

A mobile app doesn't have to be complicated. Just as long as it solves a problem, it can be useful. If something isn't useful, it doesn't matter how sophisticated or expensive it might be. The purpose of software is to make people's lives easier by solving problems, not creating more problems and confusing people.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In theory, you should install software updates as soon as possible. In the real world, sometimes the latest software updates screw up your computer. To control how your computer handles software updates, you can automatically download and install them, or just have your computer notify you when updates are available so you can decide whether to install them or not.

To modify the way OS X Yosemite handles software updates, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences to open a System Preferences window. Now click the App Store icon and select or clear the options available.

Figure 5. OS X Yosemite lets you customize how your Macintosh handles software updates.

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.

Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

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

Unedited editorial added

Tomorrow's Modern Boxes: Today's Trick, or is it an Innovative Treat?


Radiohead's Thom Yorke and Nigel Godrich have a digital bundle for your Halloween this year, but whether it's a trick or a treat is of course up to you.

Although just over a month has passed, it seems appropriate to seize this moment, my favorite holiday, to discuss. Yorke took fans aback—pleasantly so, I believe—with a rather sudden release of his sophomore album, "Tomorrow's Modern Boxes." The eccentric Radiohead frontman had posted an image of a white vinyl record on his site as a sort of visual tease.

But what might be most surprising, perhaps, is that anyone would be surprised by such a move. Rather, the release is characteristically unorthodox given, for instance, Radiohead's hugely successful and widely emulated 2007 name your price "In Rainbows" experiment.

The latest undertaking involves a pay gated BitTorrent mode of digital distribution. "It's an experiment to see if the mechanics of the system are something that the general public can get its head around," according to "a message" from Yorke and Godrich posted online.
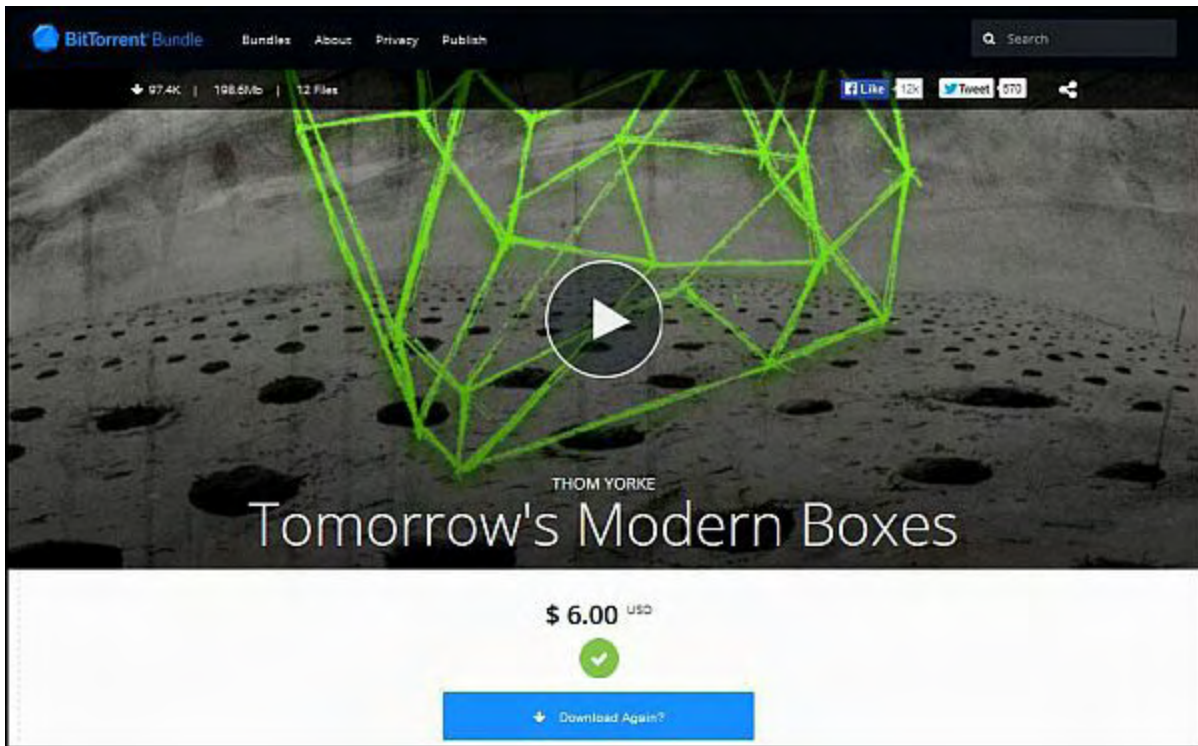
Here's a bit more of the statement, and I'll let the lads speak for themselves: "If it works well it could be an effective way of handing some control of internet commerce back to people who are creating the work. Enabling those people who make either music, video or any other kind of digital content to sell it themselves. Bypassing the self elected gate-keepers. If it works anyone can do this exactly as we have done." (Other previous stars of this column are using BitTorrent, including Amanda Palmer, who recently held an "Internet Town Hall.)
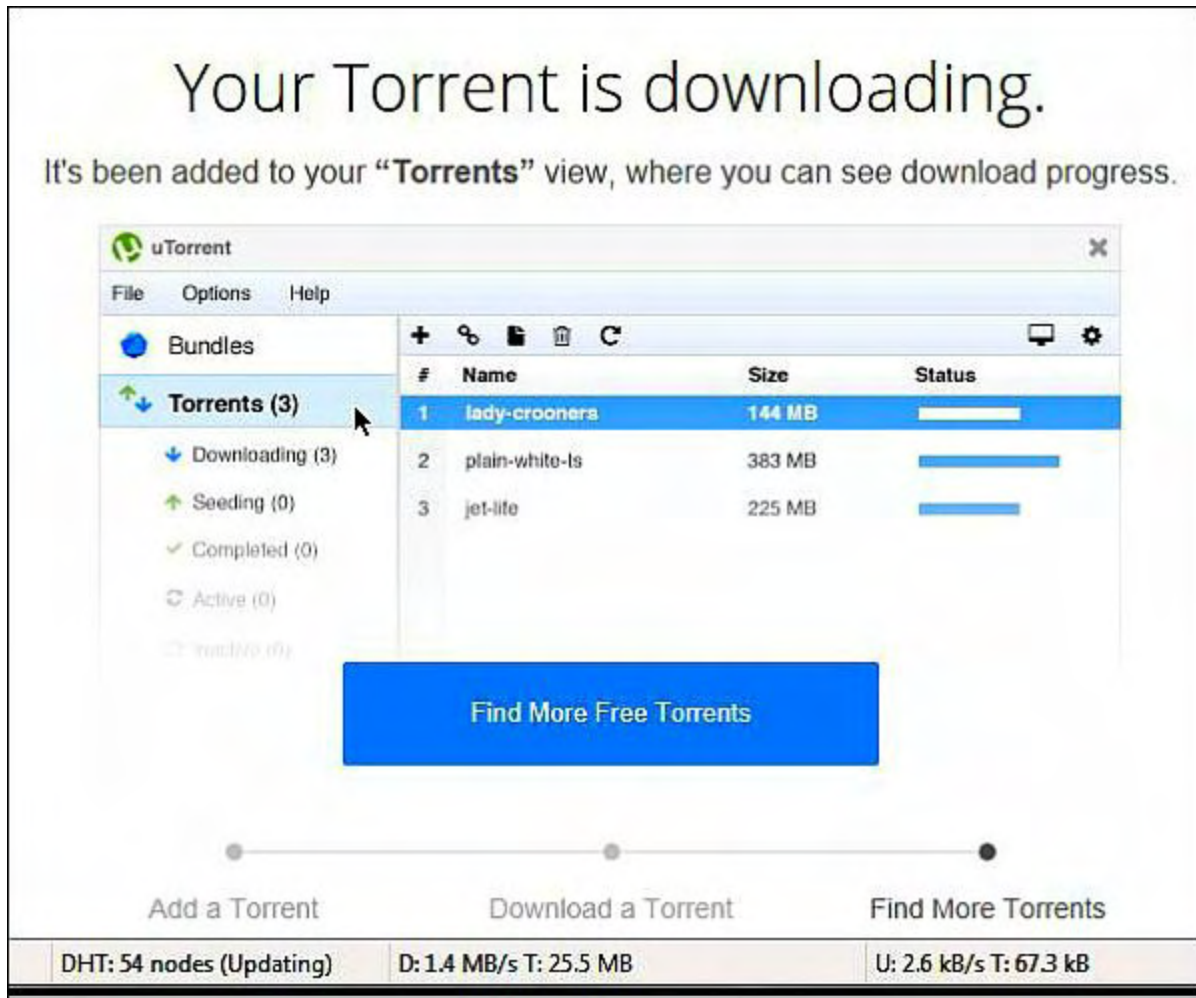
Discussions immediately started about some obvious points, such as the idea that most artists without Radiohead's name recognition might have a tough sell using such an approach. This is probably missing the point. A critical component of this discussion is that the move is still a rather provocative, engaging experiment in circumventing the traditional record label system, something that was—and it's sometimes easy to forget this—a significantly more daunting mission for previous generations of recording artists.

Traditional record labels have in the past gotten in the way of the artists—even gotten in their own way, (in)famously so—and any success made without them should be seen as a victory for other indie-minded musicians.

Yorke additionally collaborated with graduate students from the Oxford Business School on the release strategy. "The MBA students were able to put their learning into practice on the project, analyzing fan and market data, and bringing together new technologies to generate new ideas challenging conventional content distribution mechanisms," said Oxford in a statement.

So, is this the next "In Rainbows?" Even if it isn't, there's evidently enough ideas and substance there to intrigue the public. The torrent was reportedly downloaded 116,000 in the

first 24 hours alone. The current tally is unavailable, but BitTorrent has at least let it be known that over 1 million users have tried "Tomorrow's Modern Boxes."

So for Halloween, should you choose to try this yourself, it will involve visiting BitTorrent's online door. Once there, you can either try a couple of files for free or pay $6 (US) to fill your trick or treat bag with the complete Yorke "Boxes" bundle—and please feel free to write in with reactions to the distro model, or even the music itself.

Of cooking, scoring, &... Hannibal

When it comes to Halloween music, John Carpenter's now classic OST is always a fave and a highlight on the playlist for trick-or-treaters brave enough to knock on our door. But I'm always looking for new soundtracks to add, something haunting, odd, with the right atmospheric resonance to keep me (or them) off or slightly ill-at-ease. Hans Zimmer's wonderfully eerie score for "The Ring" is another choice in (relatively) recent memory, but this year I've found myself listening to OST releases for the Hannibal TV series.

Brian Reitzell has created a beautifully eerie sound palette equal to the often grisly visuals, along with the physically and psychologically horrific things the characters are going through in the show.

"Visually it's so artfully done and quite fantastical, so I see it like an opera staging, otherwise I might be more disturbed," said Reitzell of Hannibal. "Listening to the music alone is scarier than in the context of the show."

"Scoring is very similar to cooking," added Reitzell, of the experience working on Hannibal. If that statement doesn't creep you out, this might be the Halloween soundtrack for you, too. Seasons 1 and 2 are available now, with each season being released in 2 volumes.

Apple beats Beats

Huh? Oh, I probably should have said "incorporates," but I needed a lame subhead. Right. Apple, which recently celebrated the 13th anniversary of its first iPod, has experienced a 13% decline in its ubiquitous iTunes business. Does this contrast to the numbers from recent years reflect further incursion by the streaming industry, or U2-related backlash? (We've all heard about, or, in all probability, experienced, "Songs of Innocence.")

Apple doesn't seem worried, and has been a small part of the streaming market as of last year, trailing behind giants Pandora and Spotify. But Apple Radio — now iTunes Radio — announced on October 24 that it will incorporate the Beats Music-based service into a future iTunes release. No surprises. In all candor, I'm not a streaming convert... yet. It remains to be seen if Apple has what it takes to woo people like myself who are download addicts.

Pono Music! Pono Music! Pono Music!
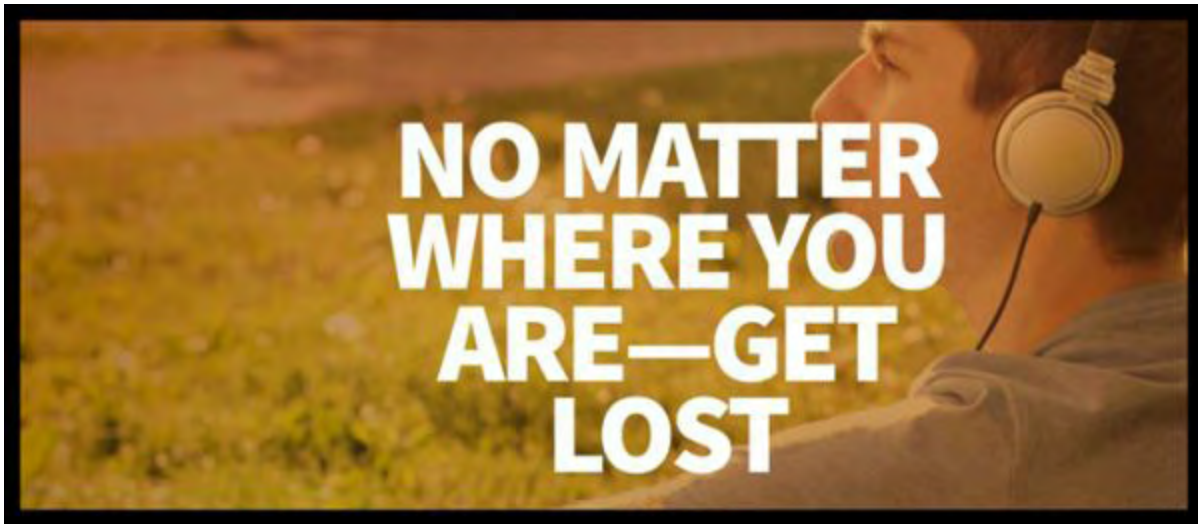
Say that to a mirror and perhaps Neil Young will appear. Apologies. My Halloween obsession is kicking in. Ok. Back to digital music-related news for the moment. The Pono music player will finally be in the hands of backers of the fledgling company's Kickstarter campaign, something that should happen perhaps by the time this column is published. Since I interviewed CEO John Hamm earlier this year, he's been replaced by Pono visionary/leader Neil Young — a move that makes sense since the project is Young's passion.

Am I... um, less than pleased that Colbert (among other celebs) already has a Pono toblerone-shaped player? Rhetorical questions! But, I should be receiving one (finally!), and will discuss my experiences, reactions, et al., in a future column.

Pono is "about the people who make the music and the way it sounds to us when we're in the studio making it," said Young in March. "It's about you hearing what we hear." We'll finally get to hear for ourselves.

 "Oíche Shamhna … Shona Daoibh," or, "Happy Halloween" (in Irish, appropriately)! "Is taibhse mé! Tabhair féirín dom, nó buailfidh mé bob ort!" (or, "I'm a ghost! Give me a gift, or I'll play a prank on you!") Perhaps an iTunes gift card? Sláinte!

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 .

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

"Computer and Internet tips, plus comments on the articles and columns." by ComputorEdge Staff

"RegexTester.ZIP Getting Flagged as Malicious," "Mark Kowal's Printer Problem," "Sorting Photos," "System Restore," "Saving a JPG as a PDF, Why?"

RegexTester.ZIP Getting Flagged as Malicious

[Regarding the October 3 A Cool Tool for Writing Regular Expressions in AutoHotkey column:]

In Google Chrome 37 when I go to download the zip file [at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey download site] a reload page appears. Clicking the reload link prompts for download of file, but Chrome blocks it as malicious and stops the download.

When I use IE10 to download the file I block downloads, then gets "page cannot be displayed."

Just wondering if you have other people reporting the problem.

-Walt, Eastlake, OH

Generally, this problem has to do with the security settings on your Web browser. Since some ZIP files may contain malicious software, you only want to download from sites you trust. If you trust ComputorEdge *then you can lower your settings temporarily to download the files.*

-Jack Dunning

Mark Kowal's Printer Problem

[Regarding the October 10 Digital Dave column:]

Some printers have a fall-back black ink feature for when the printer thinks that the black ink cartridge is out or defective. It mixes the other colors to create a "faux" black. This may be the case since text is usually black and he just changed the black ink cartridge.

I was a printer repair technician many years ago.

-Jim Amos, Denver, CO

Hi, Digital Dave,

Assuming Mark has a recent popular HP printer his printer might have 2, 4 or 5 ink cartridges. Since the print heads on these printers are in the printer and not in the cartridge it is easy to misdiagnose a missing color problem as a depleted cartridge while in fact the problem is a clogged or damaged print head. Also for many of the printers having more than two cartridges there might be two black cartridges, one utility black used in providing black for document text, tables and line drawing and the other, photo-black cartridge used to contrast and add additional saturation for pictures. In general, HP printer installations provide tools/utilities for diagnosing and remedying most printing ink problems. Here is a link to an HP forum support document that might help discover the problem.

If the printer is still under warranty I would not hesitate to simply call HP printer support. I have found, in general, all the support people can easily diagnose a printer ink problem. If the printer is not under warranty you'll have to weigh whether it's worth escalating to paid support or just run down to the nearest big box store and pick up a brand new printer cheaper than it costs to replace all the cartridges in the broken printer.

-Don Rader, Poway, CA

He doesn't say what printer model he has, as it can make a difference, but, and this may sound stupid, remove the cartridge and ensure the plastic tape covering the heads and connections was removed entirely.

If that's OK, usually an inkjet printer will do an "alignment" when a new printer cartridge is installed, what was the result of that, if done? What happens when he uses the utility to show ink levels?

Lastly, hoping he still has the old cartridge, try putting that back in and seeing if it will print text.

The printer doesn't generally (with some exceptions) know, or care, if you're printing text. However, unless you're actually printing black/black graphics (vs. simulated), the printer may just use the colors to give the dark backgrounds, not the black ink cartridge. He could use Windows Paint program to create a small set of solid colored circles or something, with red, yellow, and blue, as well as black, to test to see if the black is working at all.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Dear Dave, I just wrote to you about my HP printer not printing text. As a last resort (without buying a new printer) I ordered a new black cartridge from HP. This was my last hope.

Upon installing the new cartridge from HP, the darn thing worked! The cartridge that I used before was bought at a supermarket, although it was an exact HP cartridge, it would not print text. Even though by all tests it was working.

Anyway, I still do not know why the other cartridge would not work. It is working now with the new cartridge from HP. The only thing that I can think of is that the other cartridge was somehow defective. Anyway, the new one works and that is all that concerns me.

Thank you for the time to read my other note, and your help, as always, is really welcome.

-Mark Kowal

Sorting Photos

[Regarding the October 10 Digital Dave column:]

I've used the following format for the last 10 years. (hopefully the text format comes through), but essentially, I create each year (2014), inside are the Months, (01-Jan, 02-Feb, 03-Mar...) and within each month if the photos are from an event I use a sub-folder named for the event (Birthday_Dinner). Works really great, especially as you edit the photos and some of the original EXIF data gets lost or changed.

2014
+01-JAN
+02-FEB

-Stephen, San Diego, CA

System Restore

[Regarding the October 3 Digital Dave column:]

A bit dismayed to read that Win7 lacks restore.exe. I once had malware on an XP system that had simply deleted restore.exe. Fortunately I was able to "sneakernet" it back on from another, known clean XP system. Problem solved! But if I should ever encounter a similar problem on my Win7 system, what would the fix be? How does system restore even operate without a restore.exe file?

-Werner Maurer, Vancouver BC

Restore.exe was a hangover from the old MSDOS days, although obviously still in XP. Windows 7 uses a system of restore points which can be accessed by typing "restore" in the Search field of the Start Menu.

-Digital Dave

Saving a JPG as a PDF, Why?

[Regarding the October 10 Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column:]

I convert JPGs to PDFs all the time. Usually the PDF will be a combination of text, spread sheet and scans of documentation. I use the PDF format because it keeps everything in one file and will be printed on standard letter with everything sized as I composed it. PDF readers are fairly ubiquitous so most people will be able to read it.

I use LibreOffice Writer. I'll type the text, paste a portion of a spread sheet, the insert the JPGs. I edit the size and place the JPGs where I want. Then I export it to a PDF from the File menu.

-Dennis, San Diego, CA

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