# ComputorEdge Online

## My Apple Disappointment

December 12, 2014

# List of *ComputorEdge* Sponsors

## San Diego *ComputorEdge* Sponsors

### Colocation and Data Center

### [redIT](#)

With approaches like smart security, customized colocation and an extensive range of managed services, redIT helps you intelligently leverage IT.

### Macintosh Specialists

### [Maximizers](#)

Serving San Diego County Since 1988 * Onsite Macintosh Service for Home and Small Office Needs * ACSP: Apple Certified Support Professional ACTC: Apple Certified Technical Coordinator Apple Consultant's Network
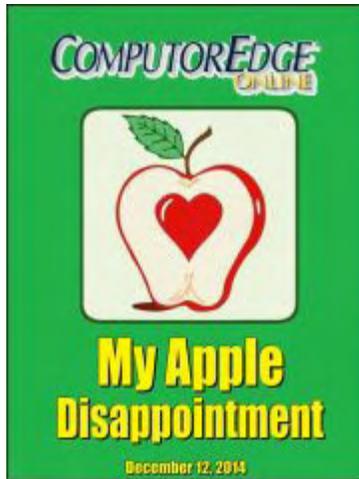
### Repair General

### [Hi-Tech Computers](#)

Notebooks, Monitors, Computers and Printers We Buy Memory, CPU Chips, Monitors and Hard Drives Windows 7 Upgrades Phone (858) 560-8547

## Colorado *ComputorEdge* Sponsors

# *ComputorEdge™ Online* — 12/12/14

[Click to Visit *ComputorEdge™* Online on the Web!](#)

# My Apple Disappointment

## Or, why I'm not in the market for an iPad.

# Magazine Summary

### List of *ComputorEdge* Sponsors

### Digital Dave
### *by Digital Dave*

**Digital Dave answers your tech questions.**
Deleting Folders in Windows 8.1; Why Get Windows 10 When It Is Finally Released?; Windows Live Mail on XP.

### Tablet Sadness
### *by Jack Dunning*

**How Apple Disappointed Me!**
I may buy another tablet computer someday, but it's not likely to be an iPad.

### A Quick and Dirty Windows Stopwatch, Plus Greedy Regular Expressions
### *by Jack Dunning*

**Your Minute Is Up! And Another Solution to Gobbling RegExs**
Sometimes all you want to do is time how long it took. Here is a free AutoHotkey app that does that and only that! Plus, more explorations into the mysteries of RegEx in AutoHotkey.

### Wally Wang's Apple Farm

## by Wally Wang

**Good Enough Technology**

Good Enough Technology; Lucrative Niche Markets; The Future is Yesterday; Artificial Intelligence; Apple Recognizes Affinity Designer; Dark Menu Bar.

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

## by ComputorEdge Staff

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

"Simple?" "WordSwap on Web Page Forms," "Re: Paul's Observation"

Send mail to *ceeditor@computoredge.com* with questions about editorial content.
Send mail to *webmaster@computoredge.com* with questions or comments about this Web site.
Copyright © 1997-2014 The Byte Buyer, Inc.

ComputorEdge Magazine, P.O. Box 83086, San Diego, CA 92138. (858) 484-1998

Click to Visit *ComputorEdge™* Online on the Web!

# Digital Dave

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

*Deleting Folders in Windows 8.1; Why Get Windows 10 When It Is Finally Released?; Windows Live Mail on XP.*

# Deleting Folders in Windows 8.1

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*My Libreoffice folder has become corrupted. I uninstalled it and when I tried to reinstall Libreoffice, it wouldn't allow me to use that folder or any other folder. Do I have mess with RegEdit to correct this problem?*

*Art Bowen*
*San Diego CA*

Dear Art,

Maybe the uninstall didn't work properly and some process still has a lock on that folder. You should certainly be able to delete it (unless it's permissions). You didn't specify the error messages which are generally useful for Googling their precise phrasing.

In any case, there is probably something related to LibreOffice sitting in the Registry that's causing it to hang up. However, you may not need to go to the extreme of searching the registry to remove remnants. Try the free version of [Revo Uninstall](#) (The free download is at the bottom of the page.) I've heard lots of good things about Revo, although I have not used it myself.

If that doesn't do the job, then you may find the right answer at the [LibreOffice forum](#). It could be a peculiarity in how LibreOffice installs and I'm sure you're not the first one with the problem.

Digital Dave

# Why Get Windows 10 When It Is Finally Released?

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I have heard and seen the hype about Windows 10. I have used the technical preview. I see no real compelling reason to upgrade. Am I missing something here?*

*Start menu is back okay. Well I have Start menu on Windows 8 thanks to a third party program.*

*Virtual desktops sounds complicated could be more trouble and problems than it is worth. Copy and paste in command prompt is nice, but most people will most likely never use it, care about it or know about it.*

*I like the tiles. You're not forced to use them, can use them, or use the desktop mode. I love the Charms menu.*

*I guess my thing is I am tired of spending money on nothing that big to me. Going from Windows 8 to 10 is like going from Windows 95 to 98. I see no big difference. I guess will wait and see what the final product will be. I know there might be more features, but guess I will wait for Windows 10.1 or Windows 11 or whatever it will be called.*

*James Bross*
*National City, CA*

Dear James,

If you're already using Windows 8.1, then moving to Windows 10 is not likely to be a big deal. However, the rumors are that your upgrade will be free.

There is nothing wrong with your wait and see attitude. When Windows 10 does come out, check out your eligibility for a free upgrade. Then wait long enough to see if other people are having problems with it. If it looks like all is going well (and it's free), then make the change. You should lose nothing that you have right now—including the Modern interface tile apps and Charms menu. Worse case there may be a way to turn them on and off.

In spite of the name, Windows 10 is not really a revolutionary step up from Windows 8.1. It is more what Windows 8 should have been when first released and a proper successor to Windows 7.

Digital Dave

# Windows Live Mail on XP

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*Do you know how to make Windows Live Mail retain addresses when running on XP? Some Web sites say it is possible and people can do it, but I could not follow their instructions and do it.*

*Also, do you run a computer repair shop?*

*John Campbell*
*Escondido, CA*

Dear John,

I hope I can do a little better job of explaining the steps needed to move your address book to Windows Live Mail. The trick is to get the addresses from your old program into the new program. The technique that I always look for works in many different types of programs.

There is a universal standard called Comma Separate Values (CSV) files. They are merely text files which use quotes and commas to mark the ends of data. Many programs include ways to create and read CSV files—including most e-mail programs.

In your old XP mail program find Export in the Files menu. Look for an option to Export Address Book to CSV. This should create a file with all of your old e-mail addresses.

Now in Windows Live Mail open Contacts. (Click the little icon of an address book in the lower left corner of the Windows Live Mail window.) Open the Import menu and select Comma separated values (.CSV) from the list (see Figure 1). If you have an export option in your previous program similar to one of the other listed options, then you can also use that technique for export from the old program.
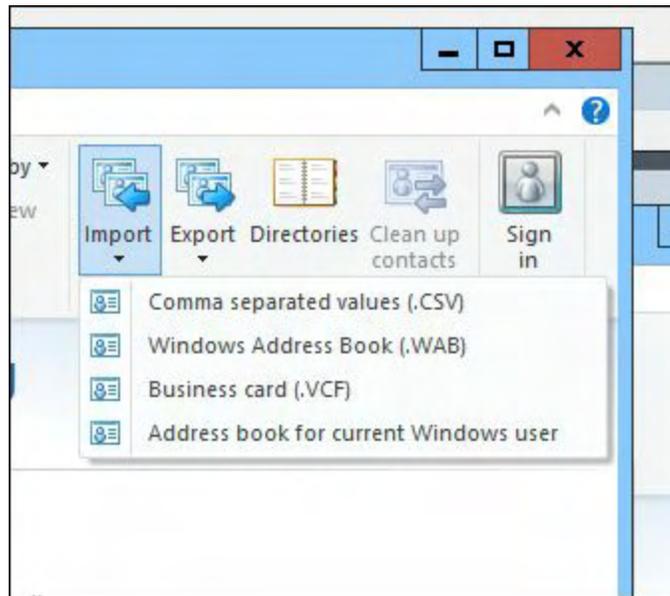
Figure 1. Using Comma Separated Values (CVS) gives a universal way to transfer data.

Locate the newly created file with the CSV Import window Browse… and click next. The key is to transfer the old data in anther format to Windows Live Contacts in its format.

Digital Dave

# Tablet Sadness

**"How Apple Disappointed Me!"** by Jack Dunning
*I may buy another tablet computer someday, but it's not likely to be an iPad.*

I have a bone to pick with Apple. It may not be a big deal to many people, but it may prevent me from buying another Apple tablet again. (It may also be a factor in my avoiding Apple when I recently upgraded to a smartphone.) Maybe it doesn't bother the 15 million other people who were in a similar situation, but I'm not likely to forget. That's just the type of person I am.

I'm usually a little late when it comes to adopting new technology. That's why in 2011 I was fine with buying the iPad 1 as the iPad 2 was just coming out. It was a little cheaper, I didn't need a camera, and wasn't forced to wait in line. I assumed that the iPad 1 would be around for a long time—as least when it comes to support. Was I ever wrong? As soon as iOS 6 was introduced in September of 2012, Apple considered the iPad 1 dead. My iPad 1 could not be upgraded to iOS 6.

You may suspect that there were technical issues which prevented the upgrade of the iPad 1, but older iPhones were included in iOS 6. As more and more apps came out, I started getting the message that I needed to upgrade the iPad to iOS 6. The only problem was I couldn't. It seemed odd that after only a little over a year, my device was deemed obsolete. There are certainly others who agreed (see "[No iOS 6 for my original iPad? Now, I'm an Angry Bird](#)."). The question posed was "Do you really want to alienate 15 million customers?" Apparently so.

In 2012 Apple caused a similar uproar by introducing the iPad 4 six months after the iPad 3.

People who invested in the iPad 3 mistakenly thought they would get at least a year out of it before being displaced by a newer model. ("[To Apple: Thanks for making my 'new iPad' obsolete](#)") While it's true this situation was not nearly as bad as my iPad 1 being metaphysically sent to the landfill, the iPad 3 buyers certainly were upset by the lack of faith from corporate Apple.

I'm not saying that this poor planning by Apple has much to do with their current declining iPad sales—there are many other factors at work—but it certain adds fuel to the fire. Even if I hadn't felt dumped by Apple, I probably wouldn't be buying another tablet computer very soon. I still use the old iPad 1 on a regular basis and have no compelling reason to either upgrade or change to another brand.

# Out-of-date, But Not Useless

Where I now live, the local newspaper only delivers four days a week (Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday). One of the morning rituals my spouse enjoys is reading the newspaper with a cup of coffee. With the announcement about the cutback in newspaper home deliveries, I feared the worse. However, the newspaper began producing a reasonable digital edition which, fortunately, could be read on the old iPad (no app required—just a Web browser). Three days a week, my wife now reads the newspaper on the iPad. (I'm not sure what she will do when the paper does finally goes belly up—which is the ultimate fate for all news printed on real paper.)

The other major use we make of this old iPad is while visiting our kids and grandkids. Watching any form of entertainment on TV is virtually impossible at any of their homes. Between the incessant activity and continual noise level an attempt at viewing television or a DVD is a waste of time. The only thing that works is watching Netflix by propping up the iPad with a pillow while we lay in bed. Netflix doesn't care which model iPad I own. We effectively bring our own television with us on every trip out of town.

I also occasionally use the iPad to access certain *ComputorEdge* Web pages for administration, plus we can pass Dropbox photos around when people are visiting. So you see, the iPad 1 is not useless, even though Apple doesn't care about it anymore.

# The Life of a Tablet

One of the huge miscalculations made by Apple regarding the tablet computer was its useful life. (This is understandable since Apple invented the tablet market—at the time—there was no way to know.) Many assumptions were made thinking a tablet would be similar to a smartphone. Those assumptions were gross errors and the results are coming in now in lower sales due to competition and a saturated market.

Smartphones are upgraded approximately every two years building in a market for new models of phones. But these upgrades are subsidized by the cost of the cellular plan—which also runs for two years. There are incentives in data plan renewals for the cell companies to offer low cost upgrades which are passed along to their customers. These incentives don't exist for tablet computers. (To be fair the wireless companies did offer incentives with tablets, but nobody wanted the data plans.)

Theoretically, a person can buy a cellular data plan with a tablet and get a subsidized device, but almost no one does. It seems that people don't want to turn their tablet into a personal phone. With Wi-Fi at home there is no need for a cellular data plan. People don't use tablets the same way they use their phone. Why upgrade to a new tablet when there is no incentive to do so? If there is no data plan to buy, then there is no discount on the tablet.

Plus, people are not as impressed when the next model tablet arrives. Despite claims to the contrary, the new technology is not that much better than last year's model. The truth is that tablets have not been around long enough for anyone to know their most likely life cycle. I'll be using this iPad 1 model until it breaks or the battery dies. When that day comes, I'll ask myself how important it is to own a tablet computer at all.

That brings up the question "Even when a tablet stops working, do people rush out to get it repaired or replaced?" How many dead tablets are sitting in a closet with no replacement in sight? Even if it's replaced, do people opt for a cheaper model? I noticed my grandkids watching Netflix cartoons on inexpensive [Kindle Fires](#) (least expensive model $99). That places the tablets in the same category as toys. (Not that there's anything wrong with toys.) The dramatic slowdown in the sales of tablets shows no doubt that the market is becoming saturated.

# The Tablet Fails as a PC Replacement

One of the predictions for tablets was that the tablet computer would replace the PC. For many lighter applications such as browsing the Web or playing music and videos, the handheld devices were often an adequate replacement. However, while tablet sales are ebbing, PC sales (desktops and laptops) are on the rise again. The general PC slowdown may have had more to do with the slow economy and a lame Windows 8 launch.

# Is Bigger Better?

It's rumored that the iPad Mini (7" screen) tablet days are numbered. With the introduction of the larger smartphone iPhone 6 Plus, there is a collision between the two products. People have wondered why they are carrying both a smartphone and a mini tablet. Or maybe the real problem is that a tablet can be too small. I find that using my old iPad to surf the Web is adequate, while using a smartphone (even with a 5" screen) is annoying. Using a smaller tablet

or even a bigger smartphone may not be the best compromise. My fingers are not getting any smaller. It will be more than ironic if it turns out that the ideal size for a tablet computer is the same as that of the original iPad.

But wait, there's more coming. It now looks like Apple may be betting on an even larger tablet called iPad Pro (or Plus). The iPad Pro is rumored to offer a 12.9" screen. Samsung has the Galaxy Note Pro 12.2" on the market and claims that sales are brisk. However, the question is how many people are really looking for a larger tablet.



Figure 1. The iPad Pro is rumored to have a 12.2" to 12.9" screen.

There are niche markets for larger tablets where greater detail and screen accuracy are useful, but the general market may not be excited about a more cumbersome tablet. The question "Is Bigger Really Better?" is at the forefront. Making the screen larger is not enough. Fingers need to be smaller, thus the Samsung S-pen makes using a tablet more like pencil and paper—greater accuracy and precision. "The apps that matter, though, for the Galaxy Note Pro, are the Samsung S-pen apps. There are a bunch of apps designed specifically to capitalize on the S-pen functionality, and show off all that it can do: Action Memo, Scrapbook, Sketchbook, and S Note."

If Apple does offer a larger tablet "the gigantic iPad Pro will have significant competition." Even the Surface Pro 3 sports a 12" display. Could that have anything to do with the improved sales?

It could turn out that the larger tablet market is entirely different from the regular size tablet market—which is turn is divergent from the mini tablet market—although, as predicted, the cheaper iPad Mini did cannibalize regular iPad sales for a period of time.

# iPads, Business, and Education

It seems that the keyboard and mouse may be making a comeback in computing. After years of having tablet advocates telling everyone that they don't need a keyboard or mouse, it turns out that in most cases the business community prefers them. Tablets are great for what they do, but the movement is toward attaching at least a keyboard. Microsoft's Surface Pro 3 has had some recent success while iPad sales have lagged. (Of course, it must be noted that even now iPad sales numbers dwarf those of the Surface Pro.)

Remember when iPads were going to own the education market? People are realizing that there are other [players in the field](). "In perhaps a more ominous sign, IDC reported that Google's Chromebook has overtaken the iPad as the number one computer in the U.S. education market. This is especially troubling for Apple—because what students become familiar with in school often determines their purchasing preferences for the rest of their lives." Perhaps the fact that the Chromebook has a real keyboard has something to do with this shift.

It's difficult to compare a hybrid device such as the Surface Pro 3 with the iPad ("[Surface versus iPad: A tale of two tablets?]()"). While the most significant difference is the keyboard on the Surface (oh…and it runs Windows), the iPad has always been a tablet—not designed to go after the laptop market. The Surface is a direct assault on both the laptop and tablet market. Whether it will succeed in either or just become the next Netbook, it up in the air.

The tablet choices have become more confusing than ever. Fortunately, I'm not in the market. If I were an artist, then I might consider a larger tablet with a stylus pen. (Fingers have been found to be too clumsy for anything other than finger painting.) The larger size smartphones seem to be displacing the mini tablets. Price is a huge issue since the cheap devices can be used to distract the kids. I suppose that the optimum tablet for me might be an old iPad which I can get a deal on—but I already have one of those.

---

*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 is offering 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.

# A Quick and Dirty Windows Stopwatch, Plus Greedy Regular Expressions

**"Your Minute Is Up! And Another Solution to Gobbling RegExs"** by Jack Dunning

*Sometimes all you want to do is time how long it took. Here is a free AutoHotkey app that does that and only that! Plus, more explorations into the mysteries of RegEx in AutoHotkey.*

Have you ever had someone ask for a minute of your time only to find they eat up the entire afternoon? Where does the time go?
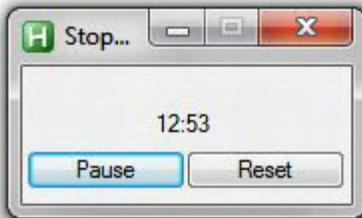
Now with this simple little AutoHotkey stopwatch script we can quickly track how long something takes (see the image at left). There are no bells and whistles (unless you decide to add some)—only pause and reset. Once loaded the time starts ticking away. Now you can say with certainty, "Your minute is up!"

The files for this little app are in a ZIP file called *StopWatch.zip* available at the *ComputorEdge* AutoHotkey download site. Included in the ZIP file is both the script (*StopWatch.ahk*) originally posted by "tally" and a compiled version (*StopWatch.exe*) which is a standalone program. Extract the EXE file and double-click the filename—no AutoHotkey required.

*To learn more about AutoHotkey see our Introduction to AutoHotkey!*

The StopWatch code runs fine on its own or can be included in another script. If you want it always available, put it into a hotkey combination. You never know when you need to time something.

## Hungry, Hungry RegEx

Last week when [removing HTML tags](#), I ran into the problem of RegEx greed. When I used the RegEx <.*> it wiped out all of the HTML tags and everything in between. Yes, it found the first > closing tag, but ignored it and all of the other > signs until it reached the last one. Referred to as greed, this is the way RegEx is supposed to work, but was not what I wanted.

From the AutoHotkey [RegEx Quick Reference](#), "By default, *, ?, +, and *{min,max}* are greedy because they consume all characters up through the last possible one that still satisfies the entire pattern." While often not coming into play, greed is an important concept. It only applies to those modifiers which repeat previous matches.

Last week, I resolved the problem by continuing the matching as long as one of the characters was *not* the > sign (*<[^>]+>*). Then it picked up that same > sign not matched as the last character. This works to eliminate the problem of greed (gobbling up everything between the two signs < and >), but there may be times when this negative approach is not an option.

To eliminate the greed behavior follow the affected operator (*, ?, +, or *{min,max}*) with the question mark (*?*). Then, rather than finding the last possible match, the first possible match is used. For example the RegEx <.*?> eliminates the greed in .* and returns the first match. That means the line of code:

```
NoHTML := RegExReplace(URLtemp,"<[^>]+>")
```

from last week's script can be replaced with:

```
NoHTML := RegExReplace(URLtemp,"<.*?>")
```

returning the same result by removing all HTML tags.

Part of what makes Regular Expressions confusing is that the same symbol may have a different meaning depending upon how it's used. The question mark based upon its location in the RegEx may indicate that a character is either optional *a?* or that greed should be turned off *a+?* to match the first occurrence.

Note: You may have notice that sometimes I use the asterisk * to continue matching while other times I use the plus + sign. The two are practically interchangeable except in one way. The asterisk * will always match at the beginning of a string (zero or more), even if there is no matching character. The plus + sign only matches if the character is found (one or more). Put another way the plus + sign demands a match while the asterisk * isn't so picky. In most cases it probably won't make much difference which you use, but there are times when it will matter. For example, when matching a row of letters in the string *baaaa*, *a** matches at the first character even though there is no *a* thus returning nothing, while *a+* matches at the second character returning *aaaa*. There are times when whether you use * or + will make a difference.

<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.

---

*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 is offering 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

**"Good Enough Technology"** by Wally Wang

*Good Enough Technology; Lucrative Niche Markets; The Future is Yesterday; Artificial Intelligence; Apple Recognizes Affinity Designer; Dark Menu Bar.*

Many people believe that the human race rationally analyzes their technology choices, logically chooses the best one, and progresses steadily forward. While this may happen on occasion, most of the time having the best technology is no guarantee that it will triumph in the end.

Back in 1985, Commodore released the Amiga, which BYTE Magazine said "was so far ahead of its time that almost nobody—including Commodore's marketing department—could fully articulate what it was all about. Today, it's obvious the Amiga was the first multimedia computer, but in those days it was derided as a game machine because few people grasped the importance of advanced graphics, sound, and video. Nine years later, vendors are still struggling to make systems that work like 1985 Amigas."

In 1996, John Dvorak of PC Magazine said "[AmigaOS] remains one of the great operating systems of the past 20 years, incorporating a small kernel and tremendous multitasking capabilities the likes of which have only recently been developed in OS/2 and Windows NT. The biggest difference is that the AmigaOS could operate fully and multitask in as little as 250 K of address space."

With the world's first multimedia, multitasking, color graphical user interface computer, how did the Commodore Amiga fail with such advanced technology to the far more primitive, monochrome, command-line interface of MS-DOS? If superior technology won out every time, then the world should have shifted to AmigaOS decades ago. Just because far more people used MS-DOS than AmigaOS doesn't make MS-DOS superior in any way other than selling in far greater numbers.

The truth is that once the world adopts certain technology for whatever reason, that technology tends to triumph even if better options are available. Apple enthusiasts can point to the Macintosh as superior to Windows, but the business world had already settled on Windows so Windows remained the dominant PC operating system.

Only later when Apple and Google dominated the mobile computing market with iOS and Android did Microsoft find its Windows Phone operating system in the same predicament as the Macintosh against Windows. Windows Phone is actually a decent operating system but its market share remains in the single digits and may actually be dropping.

The problem is that Windows Phone arrived too late. Anyone with an iPhone or Android phone has little reason to switch to Windows Phone. Even Microsoft can't point out a dramatic advantage Windows Phone offers over iOS or Android. If they could, it still wouldn't matter in much the same way that the Commodore Amiga may have been the most advanced computer at the time, but MS-DOS users had little reason to switch because all the software they wanted to run needed MS-DOS. Even though MS-DOS was clearly technologically inferior to AmigaOS, the world chose inferior technology over superior technology out of inertia.

In the mobile computing market, the world has chosen iOS and Android. Whatever you think of either operating system, it's difficult to find a reason to abandon either one in the near future for anything else whether it's Windows Phone or something as dramatically superior as AmigaOS was to MS-DOS.

The world doesn't want the best technology. The world wants to choose the path of least resistance. In the 80's that happened to be following IBM's lead, which promoted MS-DOS and made it a corporate standard. Today, that corporate standard happens to be iOS and Android in the mobile market, Windows in the PC market, and Linux in the supercomputer and server market.

As Commodore Amiga owners learned long ago, the best technology is no guarantee of dominating the market. What defines the market is whether technology offers the best solutions to immediate problems. MS-DOS offered businesses the best solutions to their problems with programs like Lotus 1-2-3, dBASE, and WordStar/WordPerfect. AmigaOS did not.

The purpose of technology is never to be the best, but to solve pressing problems right now. If new technology fails to do that, it doesn't matter how good it might be. The world will pass it by like they did with the Commodore Amiga.

# Lucrative Niche Markets

One delusion that many entrepreneurs cling to is the belief that they need to appeal to everyone. As a result, they dilute their marketing message so it appeals to no one in particular. Smart entrepreneurs follow the saying "There's riches in niches." That means you start with a small market that you can dominate, and then you grow outward from there.

Facebook originally started out solely for Harvard students. That's such a small market that Facebook had few competitors at the time, which gave them a chance to become the dominant

social network for Harvard students. (In the meantime, the rival social network Friendster tried to appeal to everyone.)

Once Facebook dominated Harvard students, they expanded to include other Ivy League schools. Again, targeting Ivy League students is still a small market that Facebook had it all to themselves. After dominating Ivy League schools, Facebook expanded to other universities around the country. Finally they opened up Facebook to the rest of the world, but they had already built a solid foundation. Even if they never succeeded with the general public, they still had dominated the university markets.

When people questioned the iPad, they ridiculed it as nothing more than a bigger iPod touch. What they didn't realize was that the iPhone established the appeal of a mobile computer and the iPad continued that idea by giving you fast and easy access to a mobile computer that a traditional laptop could never give you. The iPad was never meant to replace laptops but to target problems that laptops couldn't solve easily.

That's why all the early criticism about the iPad made no sense when critics focused on the lack of USB ports or replaceable batteries. Instead of looking at what the iPad could do, critics chose to look at what the iPad was missing, which is like ridiculing an airplane as inferior to a horse and buggy because the airplane lacks a harness for connecting it to a horse.

In the wearable computing market, people question the Apple Watch. Does anyone need a wearable computer? When you look at a solution like Google Glass, the answer is no. Not everyone needs the ability to film what they see without using their hands, but certain niche markets need that such as police (to record arrests) or soldiers (to transmit what they're seeing to their commanders).

With the Apple Watch, nobody really needs to make a phone call or send a text message using a wearable computer instead of a mobile phone. What makes the Apple Watch useful to a niche market is its health recording capabilities. If you don't need to monitor your health, then there's no point in criticizing people who do need that function, and that represents a huge, niche market of aging people all over the world.

Apple Watch isn't just a hardware device for monitoring health data, but also includes software (HealthKit) for storing and sharing that data. This combination of both hardware and software makes Apple Watch especially attractive for the health industry.

By tackling the health care market, Apple Watch may seem like a niche product, but it's really not. Health care is just the obvious use for monitoring a body, but it could expand into other fields just as easily. Strap a bunch of Apple Watches on people watching a movie and you can monitor in real-time an audience's reaction to a film. Put an Apple Watch on a toddler and you'll not only be able to make sure that child's health is fine, but also keep track of when that toddler might wander a fixed distance away from where you're at.

With a little imagination, you can see that the Apple Watch and wearable computers in general

can tackle niche markets first before spreading to the rest of the world. If you lack any imagination whatsoever, you can claim that wearable computers are destined to fail because they need a full size keyboard and a USB port along with the ability to run Adobe Flash and ancient software from 1993.

# The Future is Yesterday

For all those Windows enthusiasts who avoided Windows 8's confusing tile interface, they can be happy that Windows 10 may arrive as early as the summer of 2015. Some of the biggest changes that [Windows 10 offers](#) will be, as Yahoo Finance puts it, "bringing things back from Windows 7."

Beyond bringing back a user interface suitable for keyboard and mouse users, Windows 10 will also offer [Universal Windows Apps](#). Theoretically, the idea is that the bulk of your code will run on computers, tablets, and smartphones so all you need to do is write [platform-specific code](#). What Universal Windows Apps won't do is make today's Windows programs run seamlessly on tablets and smartphones. Windows 8 made non-touch programs like Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Excel run on touchscreens, but not as well as programs designed specifically for touch in the first place.

To make a Universal Windows Apps run seamlessly on both big PC monitors and small smartphone screens, you'll need to create custom user interfaces for each device. A user interface suitable for large PC monitors won't work on tinier smartphone screens and vice versa. Microsoft already learned this lesson when they tried to migrate the desktop user interface metaphor from Windows to Windows Mobile. Then they learned this lesson a second time when they tried to migrate the smartphone user interface metaphor from Windows Phone to Windows 8.

For developers, Universal Windows Apps promise to give them a wider market by writing a single program once and modifying it slightly to work on multiple devices. The key is how much modification you may need to make it work on different devices. For users, Universal Windows Apps promise to give them the software they want on whatever device they want to use it on.

Universal Windows Apps sounds promising, but then so did the UCSD Pascal system that was meant to create cross-platform software. Java's idea of virtual machines running on different operating systems also sounded promising, but reality never quite lived up to its potential either. Microsoft's .NET framework also theoretically made it possible to run software on multiple operating systems, but .NET has been mostly limited to Windows. That's because porting and debugging .NET on other operating systems means dealing with the quirks of those other operating systems.

When you put an extra layer between the operating system and a program, you risk

inefficiency compared to optimizing a program for a particular operating system and device. That's why Apple created [Metal](#) to give developers access to the graphics processor of iOS devices so graphics-intensive programs can run as fast as possible. When you rely on a compatibility layer such as a Java virtual machine or .NET framework, you risk trading maximum efficiency for portability. In some cases that may be acceptable but in other cases it may not.

The grand fantasy has always been to write software once and run it everywhere. The harsh reality has always been that getting software to run seamlessly on other operating systems or devices isn't easy. Look how difficult it is to get software to run on different versions of the same operating system, let alone different operating systems or different devices running the same operating system.

If you're willing to wait for promises, feel free to wait for Windows 10 to arrive by the end of 2015. Until then, you can get a glimpse of the future just by sticking with Windows 7.

# Artificial Intelligence

Stephen Hawking recently warned that artificially intelligent computers could spell the end of the human race. Of course, long before we have to worry about artificially intelligent computers killing us, we've had to worry about artificially intelligent politicians and governments killing us.

Artificial intelligence basically means giving a computer intelligent behavior, which is especially useful in games to make computer-controlled opponents appear intelligent. Since artificial intelligence is so common in games, it makes sense to learn about artificial intelligence by making a game.

That's why [Ray Wenderlich](#) created a simple game to demonstrate the principles of artificial intelligence while letting you tinker with the actual Objective-C source code of the game as well.
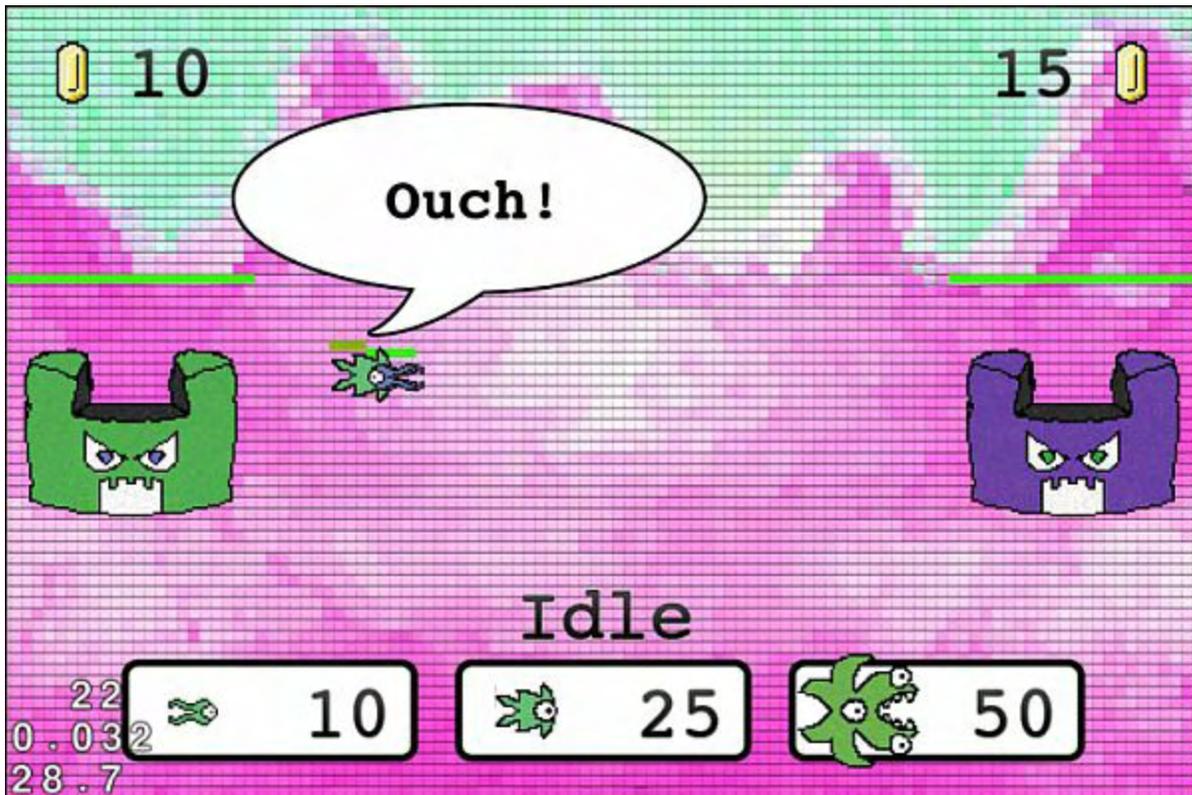
Figure 1. Monster Wars is a simple game to show the principles of artificial intelligence.

First there's the question of how to move or steer an object so it appears to be intelligent. Second are finite state machines, which lets an object determine its current conditions such as whether it's damaged or whether an enemy is weakened nearby. Based on an object's finite state, it can choose different types of behavior such as attacking a weak enemy nearby while avoiding a much stronger enemy further away.
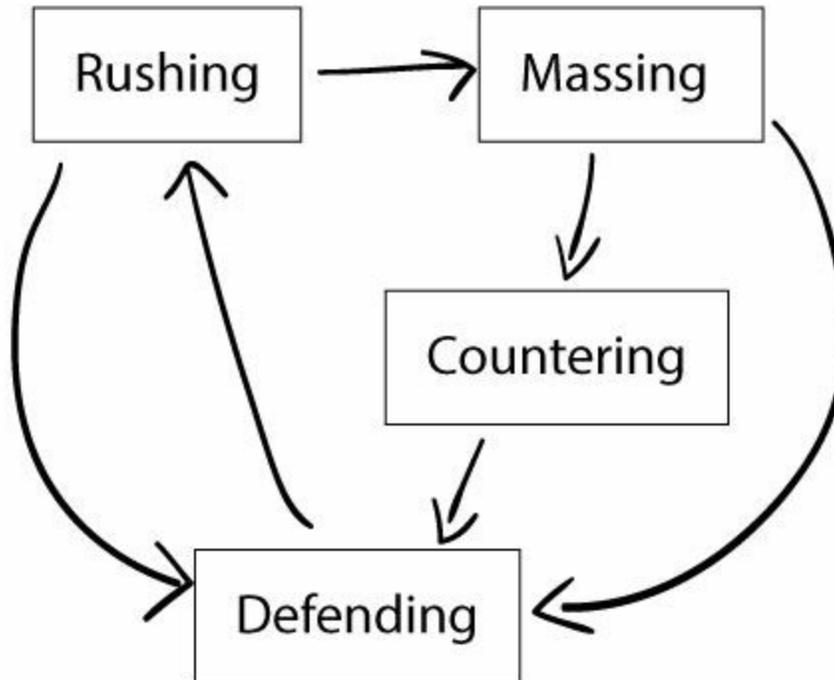
Figure 2. Finite states for Monster Wars.

Ultimately artificial intelligence is about mimicking intelligent behavior through a series of rules and guidelines with some randomness thrown in to make behavior unpredictable. By digging through this source code to Monster Wars, you can learn more about Objective-C programming and artificial intelligence at the same time.

For extra fun, try modeling a particularly dense person you know as a series of artificially intelligent commands. Chances are good you won't have to worry about mimicking intelligent behavior at all.

# Apple Recognizes Affinity Designer

With so many programs available for OS X and iOS, Apple recognizes the best ones every year. This year, [Affinity Designer](#), a vector drawing program, won runner-up in Apple's Best of 2014 awards.

Affinity Designer is basically a less expensive version of Adobe Illustrator so if you're an aspiring graphics artist without a huge budget, take a look at Affinity Designer. For a limited time only, Affinity Designer even has a 20 percent off discount in recognition of its runner up status as Apple's Best of 2014 award.
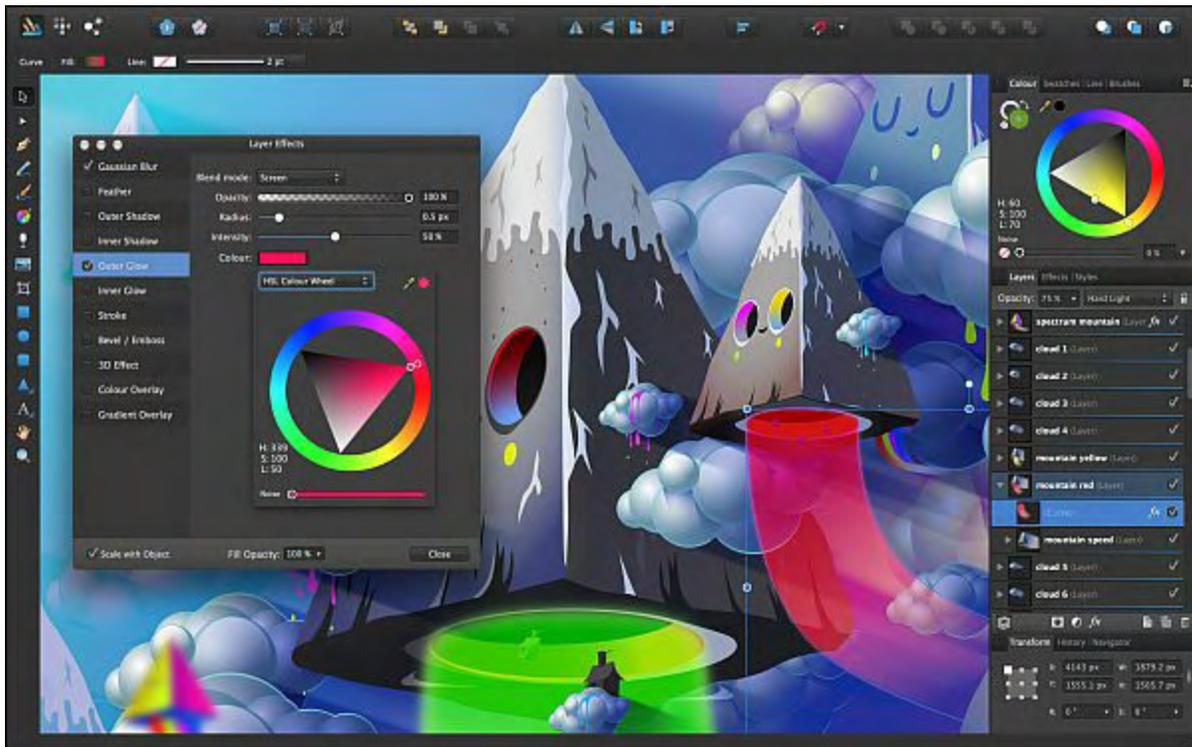
Figure 3. Affinity Designer makes it fun and easy to create sophisticated vector-based drawings.

If you're an aspiring developer, study the programs that Apple honors every year to see how a well-designed program should look and behave. When you see the clunkiness of other programs compared to Apple's award-winning programs like Affinity Designer, you'll better understand what makes software a joy to use and what makes software an obstacle to getting anything done.

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

If you think the Dock and menu bar of your Macintosh looks too hard to read, try switching to a darker appearance. The darker contrast might make the menu bar and Dock icons easier on your eyes.

To make the menu bar and Dock darker, click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. When the System Preferences window appears, click General and then select the "Use dark menu bar and Dock" check box.
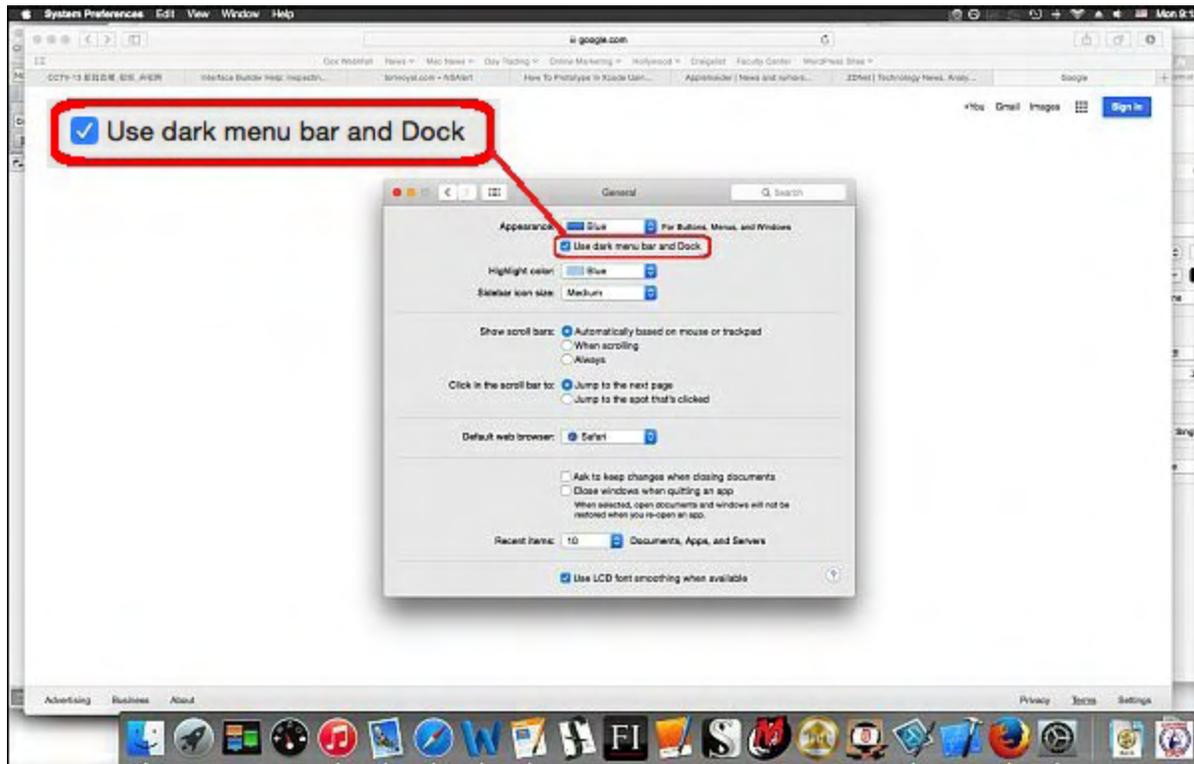
Figure 4. The dark menu bar and Dock might be easier on your eyes.

---

*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*

*Math for the Zombie Apocalypse*

*How to Write a Great Script with Final Draft 9*

*Making a Scene: The Science of Scene Structure*

*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 ComputorEdge Staff

*"Simple?" "WordSwap on Web Page Forms," "Re: Paul's Observation"*

## Simple?

[Regarding the November 28 <u>A Simple Way to Find Out Where in the World That IP Address Is Located column</u>:]

"A Simple Way to Find Out Where in the World That IP Address Is Located"
Simple?? Give me a break and get your meds adjusted.

-Arthur, San Diego, CA

Oops! See the urgent update at the top of the column.

-Jack Dunning

## *WordSwap on Web Page Forms*

*[Regarding the November 21 A Simple Beginners Trick for Swapping Letters and Words column:]*

*Unlike Autocorrect, WordSwap doesn't work in my browser or in my HTML e-mail client. It does work in the e-mail client's header fields, Wordpad, and Notepad. Is there any way to make it work in the same places as Autocorrect? I've even tried adding the WordSwap script to the Autocorrect script so they are both available under the same SysTray icon, but it makes no difference.*

*-Ron Cerrato, San Diego*

It could be that the ALT key is activating the quick keys in the other programs. I noticed this in Windows Mail Live. Change the hotkey combination to something like CTRL+ALT+W or something else which does not cause a conflict.

Update: I checked out the problem in Windows Live Mail and apparently Live Mail won't

accept the paste from AutoHotkey when something is selected. I used CTRL+X (cuts the selection) rather than CTRL+C and it started working.

For Windows Explorer, it seemed to be the use of the ALT key. I switch to SHIFT+F2 (+F2) and it started working.

Here is my script which works for me:

```
$+F2::
  Clipboard =
  SendInput, ^x
  ClipWait
  Clipboard := RegExReplace(Clipboard,"([\w']+\w)(\S?\S?\S?)(\s.*\s|\s+)(""?'?)([\w']-
  SendInput, ^v
Return
```

I don't remember when I switched from Sleep 100 to the ClipWait combination, but I'm guessing that was part of the problem. The $ shouldn't be necessary in this one.

-Jack Dunning *, ComputorEdge*

# *Re: Paul's Observation*

*[Regarding the November 28 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]*

Since everyone's time is limited, it's impossible to read everything so it's wise to focus only on what interests you. The only danger is when people choose not to read anything that contains facts that challenges their way of thinking. Such deliberate ignorance allows people to maintain their delusions by simply pretending facts that contradict their beliefs don't exist at all. Obviously such deliberate and willful ignorance helps no one.

Ideally people should be willing to examine all sides of an issue as objectively as possible, even experiencing another point of view so they can better understand the opinions of others. When people can freely discuss facts and debate issues without rancor, that will help promote greater understanding and learning for everyone.

-Wally Wang

*I rest my case.*

*-Ron Cerrato, San Diego*

Hello Ron,

What case are you resting? That people should or should not be willing to examine all sides of

an issue as objectively as possible using facts?

-Wally Wang

---

*ComputorEdge 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 ComputorEdge.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 "ComputorQuick 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 ComputorEdge E-Books.*

Click to Visit *ComputorEdge™ Online* on the Web!

# Table of Contents