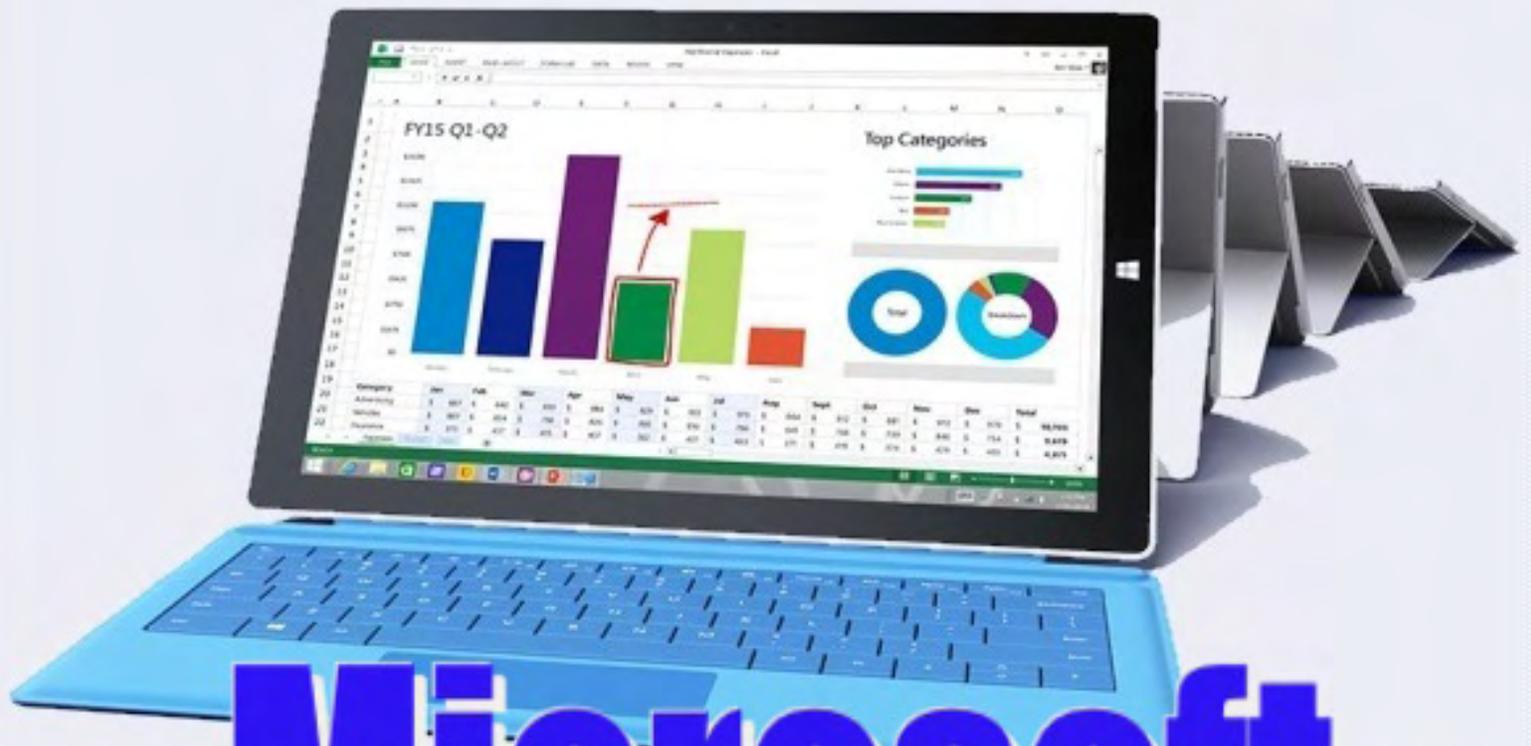


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Microsoft Surface Pro Not Done Yet!

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Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

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by Jack Dunning

Has Microsoft Figured Out the Ultra-Portable/Tablet Market, or Is It a Blip?

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by Jack Dunning

Both Real-Time CPU Power Graph and Web Link Extractor AutoHotkey Scripts

Want to know if your processor is overloaded? Need to save Web links from Web pages? Here are two AutoHotkey scripts which do the job.

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The Next PC Revolution is Mobile; Another Missed Opportunity; Novels About Cryptography; Fumbling the Future; Safe Mode.

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by Matthew W. Beale

or, On the Evolution of Online Music Distribution

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by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"What Not To Buy as a Present for Someone Else," "Autologin for Windows," "Microsoft Login For Windows 8.1 - One Vote Against," "Windows 8.1 Autologon"

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Digital Dave

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

Browser(s) Will Not Let Me Back Out; Printing a PDF; SoftEther VPN only for Intel CPUs?; Wi-Fi Signal Strength.

Browser(s) Will Not Let Me Back Out

Dear Digital Dave,

Okay, let me explain. I will use Yahoo as an example. Say I go to yahoo.com and click back arrow it keeps taking me back to yahoo.com. How do get back to the original site such as Google Web site without having to close down the entire browser and what is causes that.

I have used Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer certain Web sites will not let me back out and if they do I have to click the back button fast and several times. Are they programmed that way and how do I change the settings if possible so that does not happen.

Thank you as always,

*Mr. Carroll Ware
San Diego, CA*

Dear Mr. Ware,

This is not unusual behavior when the loaded site is the result of a redirection page. A redirection page is usually an older URL which is no longer in use. It is set up to send the user to the correct page. However, the redirect page gets saved in the browser history. Thus every time you hit the back option it lands on the original redirect page—which in turn sends you back to where you started.

You're right that the most common fix is a rapid click of the back button, but this doesn't always work. You can generally expect the back button to be problematic. If it works, great. If not, just navigate to where you want to go. More and more sites are now broken up by page loads and so the back button will be less and less useful.

The easiest way to return to a specific page is to right-click on the back arrow (<=>) button in

the upper left-hand corner of most browsers. A list of previous pages will pop-up. Pick the one that you want.

In the worst case you could open the browser history to get the page you want, but normally the above technique will work.

It is true that some Web sites are designed to make you continually reload the same page. This is counterproductive since you're likely to avoid those sites completely in the future.

Digital Dave

Printing a PDF

Dear Digital Dave,

You have helped me out before and I hope you can help me again.

I need a program that will "add" a printer to my select a printer menu that will "print" a PDF. I have a version of PDF Complete on my desktop that did that, but after five years I am getting a message that my trial period is up. I primarily use it to print receipts when I buy something or pay a bill on the Internet.

I am looking for software that will do this, open source, free, or inexpensive one. Do you have any ideas?

Thanks,

*Jay Rickert
Denver, CO*

Dear Jay,

There are many solutions to this problem, but the one that most *ComputerEdge* readers recommend (and I use it myself) is [Foxit Reader](#). It's free and adds "Foxit Reader PDF Printer" to your print dialogue. Just select it whenever you want to print a PDF file. Or, you can open any PDF in Foxit Reader and print directly from the program.

Digital Dave

SoftEther VPN only for Intel CPUs?

Dear Digital Dave,

I was checking out the [SoftEther VPN](#) Web site and download section, but I keep seeing the specific downloads referring to OS: Windows, CPU: Intel (x86 and x64). Does this mean this software isn't for the AMD CPU?

Thanks for your time. I didn't want to try and go through the set up if this is Intel specific software.

Respectfully,

P.S. I used to be in San Diego now transplanted to WV.

*Mark
Clarksburg, WV*

Dear Mark,

I'm sure that the software works equally well with AMD processors. The key is that it is Windows software. The x86 and x64 generally refers to whether the software was written for 32-bit computing or 64-bit computing, respectively. Intel x86 and x64 are instruction set specifications. Intel and AMD both design processors that implement those instruction sets. The AMD CPUs running Windows are almost always compatible with the same software as Intel. I have seen occasions where there was a problem with AMD processors, but that was many years ago.

You should have no problem setting up and running the software.

Digital Dave

Wi-Fi Signal Strength

Dear Digital Dave,

My Comcast Arris modem/Wi-Fi is located in the lower level of the house. On the second level of the house at the opposite end shows a - 65 dB signal strength. What is considered a good signal? Also, what app, if any, is an accurate tool?

*Michael
Denver, CO*

Dear Michael,

A measurement of signal strength alone is not enough to determine what is acceptable. The antenna capability at each end is a major factor in how well a Wi-Fi connection will work. Plus, the location of metal in the walls, dead spots from RF interference patterns, and other magical factors feed into the readings. I've read that "Poor" Wi-Fi quality is between -100 and -85dBm, "Good" quality between -85 and -60dBm, and "Excellent" between -60 and -40dBm. However, even the orientation of one of the antennas can affect these numbers—vertical versus horizontal.

Your best test is "Does it work?" Use any Wi-Fi device to check your signal levels. Virtually all of them have some form of bar system which indicates the strength of the signal from the source. Realistically, this is about as accurate as you will get because for various reasons mentioned above, the DB level can vary considerably with even the slightest movement.

I'm sure there are apps which interpret your incoming signal strength, but unless you're doing an engineer analysis I'm not sure they are much more useful looking at the number of bars.

Digital Dave



The Microsoft Surface Pro 3 Is Selling

“Has Microsoft Figured Out the Ultra-Portable/Tablet Market, or Is It a Blip?” by Jack Dunning

After sitting on the shelves for the last two years, the Surface Pro tablet/laptop is finally making a profit. What's changed?

It's been recently noted that the [Microsoft Surface Pro 3 is selling](#). This is a bit of news since earlier models languished on the shelves losing Microsoft "a reported \$1.7 billion since its Surface products launched in 2012." The Surface has occupied an awkward and confusing position in the computer market—neither a tablet nor a laptop. Plus, the mixed operating systems problems of Windows 8 only added to the drag. Surprisingly, "it was the Surface Pro 3 that pushed Microsoft over the top last quarter, finally showing a profit from its Surface line." What's changed?

When I first talked about the Microsoft Surface computer in June 2012 ("[A Peek at the Coming Microsoft Surface Tablet](#)"), I found it a fascinating combination of the tablet with laptop potential—although it seemed a little expensive. That there was a "real Windows" model (Pro) and a "not real Windows" model (RT) was a major source of confusion for many potential buyers. Plus, the Surface computer became mired in the entire Windows 8 identity fiasco. It was not quite good enough as a tablet computer, and no one was sure that they wanted to deal with the Windows 8 issues. In the coming months I wrote off the Microsoft Surface as another failed entry into the market. When news reports were released about the success of the Surface Pro 3, I had to investigate.

Eliminating Confusion

Microsoft now bills the Surface Pro 3 as a notebook killer: "The tablet that can replace your laptop." Rather than playing into its weaknesses as a tablet computer, the Surface's ability to

act as an ultra-portable computer is highlighted (see Figure 1). It weighs less than most laptops (2.4 pounds with the cover keyboard attached). While there are many comparisons with the latest iPads, it's generally acknowledged that the iPad is better at being a tablet, than the Surface.



Figure 1. The Microsoft Surface Pro 3 is touted as a laptop replacement, rather than the ultimate tablet.

It looks like Microsoft is slowly killing off the "not real Windows" version of the Surface (RT). Being a major source of confusion, people often felt tricked when they found that the Windows 8 on their RT tablet wouldn't run Windows programs. Microsoft has not released a "no real Windows" RT version of the Surface 3. That means people don't need to deal with this confusing issue when looking at the Surface Pro 3. It has "real" Windows in the form of Windows 8.1.

Microsoft continues to offer the Surface 2 (RT), but not the Surface Pro 2 "real Windows." (You can still buy the Surface Pro 2 through retailers.) My guess is that Microsoft will let the "no real Windows" (RT) tablets die off. Who needs one of those?

Bigger is Better

The major difference between the Surface Pro 2 and Surface Pro 3 is the screen size (see

Figure 2). Apparently, businesses told Microsoft that the work area on the original Surface was just too small. It may have been the ideal size for a tablet (à la the iPad), but companies wanted to use the Surface as a laptop. The smallest laptops usually come with least a 13" display. Microsoft went with a 12" screen for the Surface Pro 3.



Figure 2. The Surface Pro 2 has a 10.6" screen whereas the Surface Pro 3 includes a 12" screen.

The larger 12" screen may not seem like much of a change from a 10.6" display, but it adds 38% to the working space. When comparing all of the changes between the Surface Pro 2 and Surface Pro 3, the larger display is the most significant. Surprisingly this change was made while reducing the weight of the computer by $\frac{1}{4}$ pound. However, if you add the larger type keyboard/cover to the Surface Pro 3, the weight between the two models comes out about the same. Not bad for a larger machine.

There is little evidence (so far) that larger screens will change the tablet market, but it certainly seems to be working for Microsoft Surface's attack-the-laptops strategy.

Is the Kickstand the New Cup Holder?

It seems like a mundane innovation, but the kickstand on the Surface may be one of its best features. The problem with tablet computers is they need to be supported—even if only a little bit. The Surface Pro 3 has a multi-positional kickstand. At home, we use a screen cleaning cloth folded over to a thickness of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to tilt up the old iPad 1 at the breakfast table. That's enough and preferable to laying it flat. Without that little bit of angle, reading the newspaper on the tablet would be annoying.

In his article "[Surface Pro 3: Six Months Later](#)", Paul Thurrott states, "This isn't unique or new to Surface Pro 3, but now that I've experienced a kickstand, I hate not having this nicety on other tablets. No, not nicety. It's a requirement. Love this." The tablet kickstand is like cup holders in a new car. Will the day come when we refuse to buy a tablet without a built-in kickstand? Even the iPad has an optional cover/keyboard stand available for \$39.

The Stylus

The stylus is not new to the Surface or for that matter tablet computers. At home, we use a passive stylus with our old iPad 1 because even its eraser-like contact is more accurate than fat fingers. The Surface stylus has more active features and could be an excellent replacement for a mouse—especially when using the Surface as a tablet (see Figure 3). It certainly gives more accuracy and precision than your finger.



Figure 3. The new stylus has "over 250 levels of pressure sensitivity and Palm Block technology, write and draw as you're used to."

One of the problems with using a touchscreen with Windows 8.1 is that the programs are not designed for finger interaction. The buttons, links, and fields are often too small for accurate navigation. But with the use of a more accurate stylus, using a touchscreen becomes much more like a mouse and cursor. There are certainly advantages to using a stylus when drawing and taking hand written notes, but whether it will become popular for computer navigation is an open question.

The Keyboard Cover

Since Microsoft is going after the laptop market, it seems that the cover keyboard (\$129) would be included with the purchase of a Surface Pro 3—it's not. I suppose this is a good thing if most of your use will be as a tablet, but I don't think I would bother to buy one without a keyboard. Since the computer is small the keyboard is respectively limited with many keys missing (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. The Surface Pro 3 keyboard is limited by the size of the computer.

This takes us back to the time of the Netbook with less than fully functional keyboards. The reviews are mixed for the Surface Pro 3 keyboard/cover. Some people love it while others find it cheap. There are always some trade-offs when buying an ultra-portable computer. Since there is no built-in number pad, this would be a good place for the free [AutoHotkey onscreen numeric keypad](#) which I highlighted a couple of weeks ago. Good thing it's a Windows computer.

It's Windows!

The light weight and larger screen seem to be critical to the success of the Surface Pro 3, but more importantly it's a Windows computer. Despite all of the issues with Windows 8 over the last couple of years, the operating system continues to own 90% of the world's PCs. Even if Linux and Apple's OS X are better operating systems, very few people seem to care. As shown in Figure 5, Windows XP users are moving to either Windows 7 or Windows 8.1.



Figure 5. In spite of the Windows 8 fiasco, Microsoft Windows continues to dominate the PC market.

My guess is that Windows 7 users will wait for Windows 10 (or later versions) while Windows 8.1 has seen an uptick since it received the coveted "good enough" label from reviewers. What isn't happening is a mass departure from Windows for other options. That bodes well for the Surface Pro 3 because it is a "real Windows" computer.

Intel Computer Processors

The options for the Surface Pro 3 includes the three most popular CPUs from Intel: [64GB](#) solid state drive with Intel i3, 4th generation Intel Core i3-4020Y 1.50 GHz with Intel HD Graphics 4200 (\$799); [128GB](#) or 256GB solid state drive/Intel i5, 4th generation Intel Core i5-4300U 1.90 GHz (with Turbo Boost Technology up to 2.9GHz) with Intel HD Graphics 4400 (\$999 and \$1299 respectively); and 256GB or 512GB solid state drive with Intel i7, 4th generation Intel Core i7-4650U 1.70 GHz (with Turbo Boost Technology up to 3.3 GHz) with Intel HD Graphics 5000 (\$1549 and \$1949 respectively). (All prices do *not* include the keyboard/cover at \$130.)

These are the same CPU options which are available when buying Intel type laptops and desktops. The amount of RAM also increases with each option: 4GB RAM with 64GB or 128GB version and 8GB RAM with 256GB or 512GB version. These are the minimum amounts that I would recommend for "real Windows" computing. The 4GBs is enough, but 8GBs is better—if you can afford the higher price. (The iPad Air 2 tablet includes 2GB RAM.)

More Computer Parts

The Surface Pro 3 includes one USB 3.0 port (add a hub if you need more), microSD card reader for expansion of storage up to 128GB, and Mini DisplayPort to hook up an external monitor.

The Surface Pro 3 has two 5MP and 1080p HD cameras, one front-facing and one rear-facing. Cameras have become a requirement for both tablet and laptop computers. I'm only likely to use a camera for Skyping. It's rare to see someone taking photos or video with a tablet. That's usually when they pull out their smartphone. But what are you going to do? They're both included.

As with any device which must act like a tablet computer, the accelerometer, gyroscope, and magnetometer are built-in. However, there is no GPS which for some people could be a deal breaker. I don't know how important GPS is to a laptop, or for that matter a tablet—a smartphone, yes.

There is no cellular hookup capability, but as I've noted in the past, very few people look for this in either a tablet or laptop computer.

Compare to the iPad Air 2

It's not a fair comparison between the [Surface Pro 3 and the iPad Air 2](#). If you're looking for an ultra-portable laptop, then the iPad doesn't claim to be in that market. If you're looking for a tablet that is solidly a tablet, then the Surface doesn't compare. However, you can snap off the keyboard and use the Surface on your lap while watching television or sharing photos just like an iPad.

The above linked article does a good job of graphically comparing the two. The only let down is the price comparison. The starting price for the iPad Air 2 should compare the \$600 64GB model to the \$800 64GB Surface model. The \$500 iPad only offers a paltry 16GBs—barely adequate. The other \$200 for the Surface gets you a larger screen, two more gigs of RAM, the USB 3.0 port, and a microSD card expansion slot...oh, and a stylus. Don't forget the \$130 for the Surface add-on keyboard/cover.

It will be interesting to see if the momentum that Microsoft has built up with the Surface Pro 3

will continue or if it will flounder in the next couple of years. Maybe it's just a passing phase or niche market which will never really challenge the laptop market. It certainly is not likely to become the tablet of choice—but who knows?

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

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

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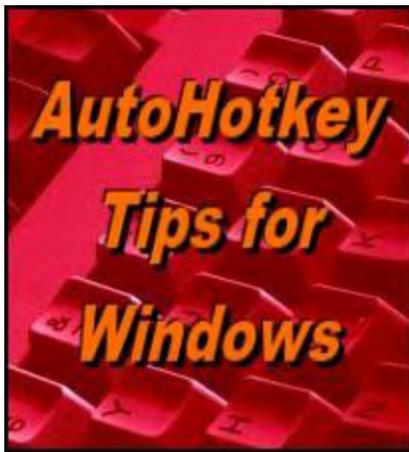
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[Sticking with Windows XP—or Not? Why You Should or Why You Should Not Upgrade to Windows 7,](#)

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



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

**A Gadget to
Check CPU
Power Usage
and an App
for Extracting**

Web Links

“Both Real-Time CPU Power Graph and Web Link Extractor AutoHotkey Scripts” by Jack Dunning

Want to know if your processor is overloaded? Need to save Web links from Web pages? Here are two AutoHotkey scripts which do the job.

The Third Edition of [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey](#) is now available. The entire book has been scoured for accuracy with many new tips added. If you previously purchased an earlier edition from ComputerEdge E-Books and have run out of downloads, contact us at [ComputerEdge E-Books](#) with your invoice number and we will give you new downloads for the current edition.

* * *

If you want a real-time pop-up that monitors your CPU activity, then here is a free AutoHotkey app which does just that (see Figure 1). *CPULoad.ahk* is intended as a demonstration script using the AutoHotkey function ([CPULoad\(\) : CPU usage percentage \(Demos for XGraph \)](#) Sample #2 - Grid version) for the [XGraph v1.1.1.0 : Real time data plotting tools](#) by SKAN.

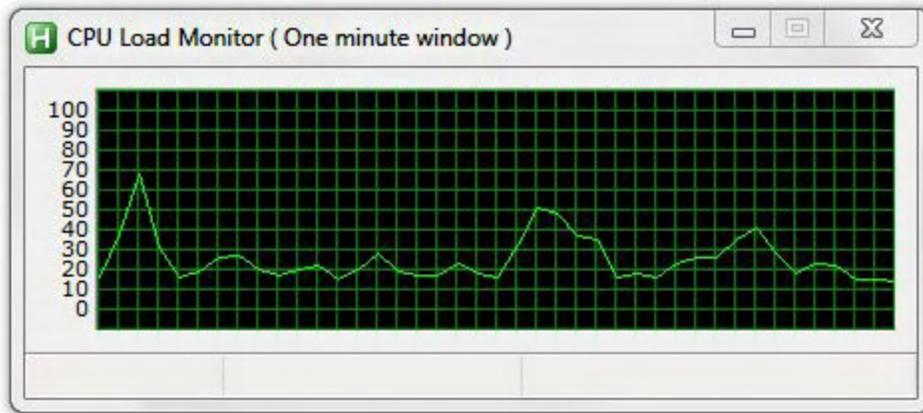


Figure 1. CPU Load is an always-on-top graph of the last minute of CPU usage

If you want to make graphs with AutoHotkey, XGraph is one way to do it. (Another set of graphing tools is [BarChart](#) posted by Learning one. I've played around a little with BarChart and plan to discuss it sometime in the future.)

I've included *CPULoad* here because it is a quick loading gadget that can be used without any knowledge of AutoHotkey. I compiled the AutoHotkey script into an executable file (EXE) which will run on any Windows computer. If you want to use it without modification, then download *CPULoad.zip* from the *ComputerEdge* [AutoHotkey download site](#). Extract the file *CPULoad.exe* and double-click to load it. (No AutoHotkey required!)

If you want to tinker with the script, then both *CPULoad.ahk* and *XGraph.ahk* (the required *#Include* file) are found in the same *CPULoad.zip* file.

New to AutoHotkey? See our [Introduction to AutoHotkey!](#)

Pulling External Links from Web Pages

If you would like to use this link extracting app, but don't know the first thing about AutoHotkey (and don't want to learn), then you can download the LinkFind.zip file at the ComputerEdge [AutoHotkey download site](#). In the ZIP file you will find a program (EXE file) which will run directly on any Windows computer from a hard drive or thumb drive. Merely extract LinkFind.exe to another folder and double-click to load. Follow the instructions below to extract and save the Web links.

If you're not familiar with AutoHotkey RegEx, but would like to learn more, it may be worthwhile to start at the beginning with the column "[Easy Regular Expressions \(RegEx\) in AutoHotkey](#)" for a simplified introduction to AutoHotkey Regular Expressions, then work your way [forward from September 12 to this column](#).

Have you ever wished that you could download all the Web links from a Web page without

right-clicking on each link and individually copying each URL? Now you can with AutoHotkey and Regular Expressions (RegEx)! In our continuing saga which explores the mysteries of RegEx, we turn to parsing URLs for external Web links from any page and saving them to a file. All that's required is the highlighting of the URL in the address field of a Web browser (see Figure 2) and using the hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+L (^!l in AutoHotkey code).

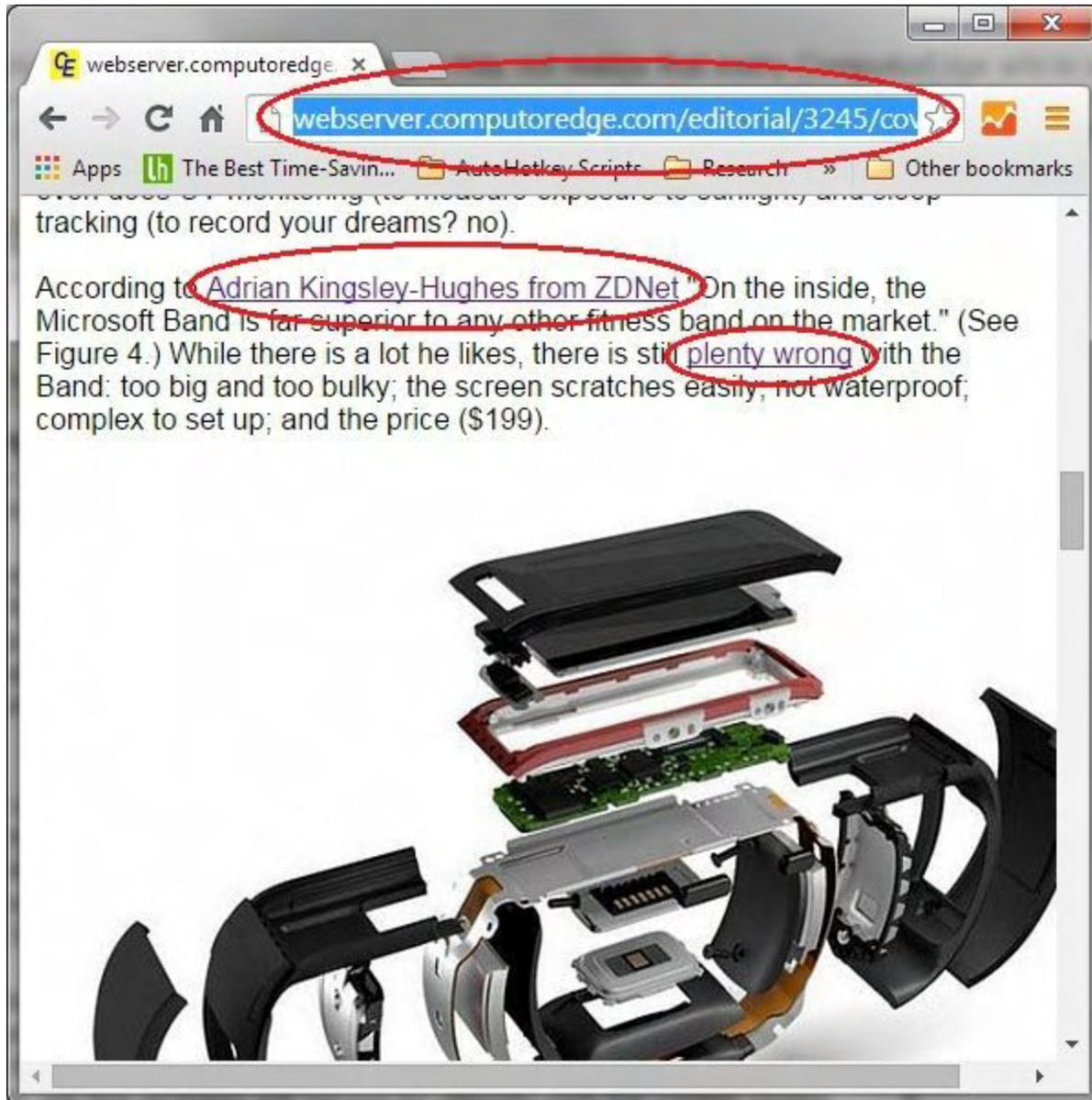


Figure 2. Highlight the URL in the address field of the target Web page and the external links will be written to a file.

The AutoHotkey script *LinkFind.ahk*, reaches out to the Web page, downloads the source code, then extracts the links from the code using an AutoHotkey RegEx. The data is then written to a text file and opened in Notepad (see Figure 3). You can either use the data directly or save it with another file name.

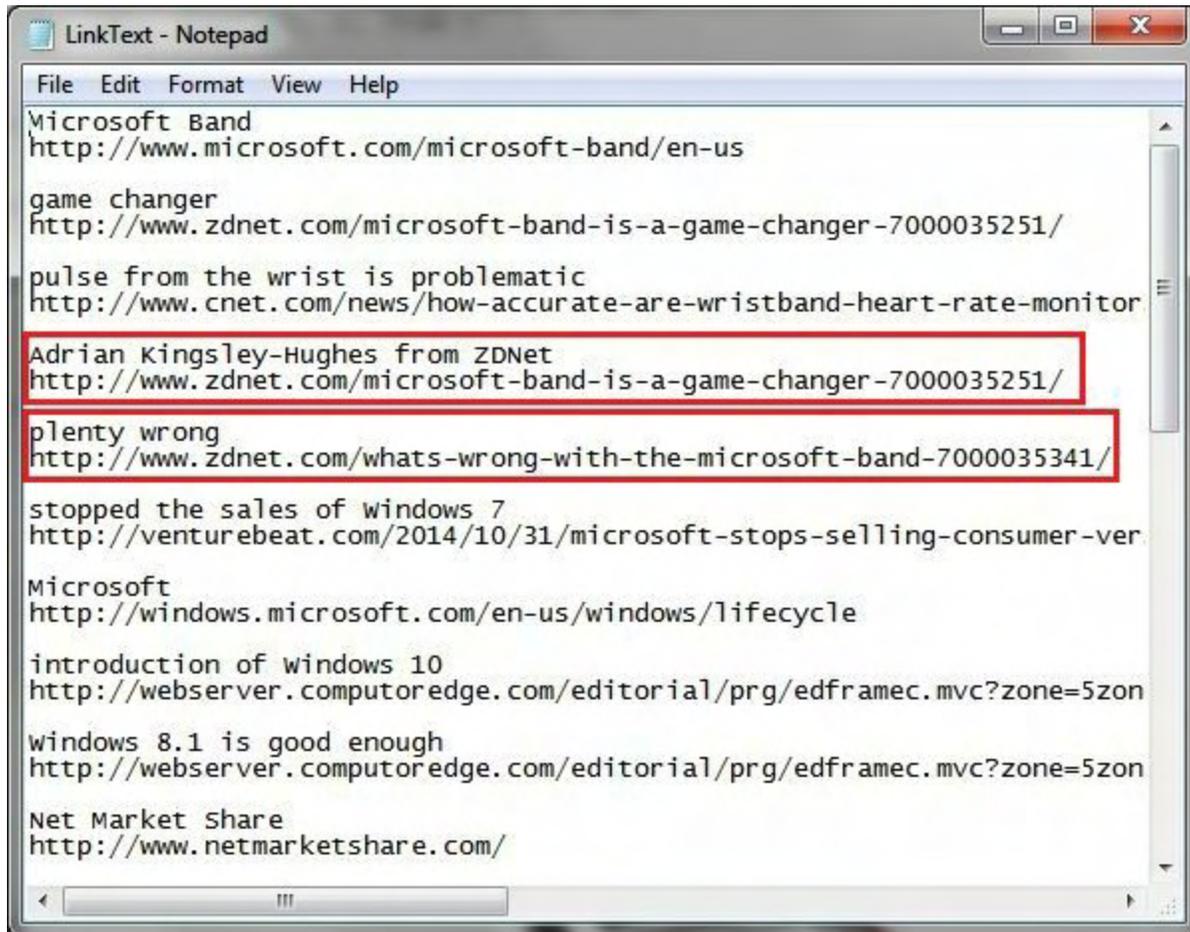


Figure 3. The extracted links are written to a text file then opened with Notepad.

Note: The effectiveness of this app depends upon the formatting of the Web page. Some Web pages use frames or call external files which won't appear in the source code. In those situations, the results will be limited to those links which appear at the top level.

The LinkFind AutoHotkey Script

This script is in some ways similar to the one two weeks ago where we [stripped all the HTML tags](#) from a Web page creating a text file, as well as, the column in which the script [extracted IP addresses](#) and looked up their geographic location. Here is the entire *LinkFind.ahk* script:

```
^!l::
; Section 1: highlighted the URL copied and downloaded to URLtemp
Clipboard =
SendInput, ^c
ClipWait
UrlDownloadToFile, %Clipboard%, URLtemp
FileRead, URLtemp, URLtemp
; Section 2: Loop extracting and writing links to variable LinkList
LinkList =
Next := 1
```

```

Loop
{
    FoundPos := RegExMatch(URLtemp, "<a.+?href=\"" (https?.+?) "\".*?>(.*?)</a>" , Link, 1
    If FoundPos = 0
        Break
    Else
    {
        LinkList := LinkList . Link2 . "`n" . Link1 . "`n`n"
        Next := FoundPos + StrLen(Link)
    }
}
If LinkList !
    LinkList := "No External Links Found!"
; Section 3: delete old file, write new file, and open with Notepad
FileDelete, LinkText
FileAppend, %LinkList%, LinkText
Run, Notepad LinkText
Return

```

Programming Note: When I originally wrote this snippet I used two Loops. One for parsing the links into a pseudo-array of variables, then another to write all the variables to a text file. While this was good for debugging and worked fine, the code became much more convoluted than necessary. In this version, the second Loop is combined with the first, immediately writing all the data to one variable LinkList. This effectively eliminated the need for the pseudo-array of variables and cut the number of lines of code by two thirds. The snippet above could be further reduced by eliminating the interim variable LinkList and writing directly to the file within the Loop with the FileAppend command. As a matter of good script writing practice, minimize the number of Loops and eliminate intermediate steps whenever possible. Often how to clean up and reduce code is not obvious until after you have your first working script.

There are three basic sections to the script which is initiated with the hotkey combination CTRL+ALT+L (^!l). In the first section, the highlighted URL is copied to the Windows Clipboard (*SendInput*, ^c), the script pauses until data is detected in the Clipboard (*ClipWait*), then the Clipboard contents is used to download the source code of the target Web page to the file *URLtemp* (*UrlDownloadToFile*, %Clipboard%, *URLtemp*).

In the second section, a *Loop* uses a RegEx to extract the links. This *Loop* is very similar to the one used to extract IP addresses in the [IPFind.ahk script](#). (The *IPFind.ahk* script is an example of code which uses two Loops which could most likely be combined into one.) Of primary interest here is how the RegEx works.

The HTML tags for Web links are `Link Text`. That means all the HTML links found in the Web page source code will be surrounded with the tags shown. Plus, external links will include either `http://` or `https://` within the quotes after the `href=`. To match those links the following RegEx is used:

```
FoundPos := RegExMatch(URLtemp, "<a.+?href=\"" (https?.+?) "\".*?>(.*?)</a>" , Link, Next)
```

This RegEx does a pretty good job of finding external links within the Web page source code. To breakdown the RegEx, we always start at the left end.

The first two characters `<a` tell RegEx to start matching whenever these characters are encountered.

The following `.+?` is the wild card meaning at least one or more of anything `.+`, but in the non-greedy mode `?` consuming only enough to find the first possible match rather than all possible matches (as [discussed last week](#)). This wildcard is necessary since HTML doesn't care which order parameters occur inside the two arrow brackets. While the `href` for the link will normally occur right after the `<a` and a space, this is not always the case. Any other intervening parameters must be ignored until the first `href` is encountered.

That first match at the occurrence of `href=""(https?.+?)""` continues the process. If there is no `href` or `http(s)` then the match fails since there will not be an external link. Using `https?` (the `s` is optional when followed by a question mark `?`) ensures that the link found is not merely an internal Web page jump. Note that the double quote mark is escaped in AutoHotkey functions with another double quote mark (`""`). The URL is located between the two double quotes and saved as the first sub-reference as indicated by the set of parentheses. The first sub-reference is saved in the variable `Link1`. Again the `.+` in the non-greedy mode `?` consumes all characters until the next double quote is encountered (`""`).

Since there may be more HTML parameters inside the arrow brackets after the URL, the `.*` wildcard is used in the non-greedy mode `?` this time matching *none* or more characters until the closing arrow bracket `>` is encountered. This illustrates the importance of the difference between the `.+` wild card which demands one or more characters and the more lenient `.*` wildcard which will also match no character at all. In many HTML tags the closing arrow bracket might occur immediately after the second double quote for the `href`—not even a space. In that situation, using `.+` which demands at least one character could cause the match to fail.

The second sub-reference `(.+?)` is the text (link label or name) between the first HTML tag `<a ...>` and the closing HTML tag `` and saved in the variable `Link2`. Again the question mark `?` is used to activate the non-greedy mode which will stop matching when the first `` is encountered.

`Link` is the variable where the entire match is saved. The sub-references are saved in `Link1` and `Link2` respectively. If there were more sub-references (RegEx operators within parentheses) they would be saved in additional array variables (`Link3`, `Link4`, ...).

The extracted link names and URLs are added to the variable `LinkList`:

```
LinkList := LinkList . Link2 . "`n" . Link1 . "`n`n"
```

The newline character ``n` is used to separate the links in the final list.

See the column on [IPFind.ahk](#) for more details on how the remainder of this section of the script works including the use of the variable *FoundPos* for breaking out of the *Loop*.

In section 3 of the script, the old file is deleted (*FileDelete, LinkText*), the new file is created (*FileAppend, %LinkList%, LinkText*), then opened with Notepad (*Run, Notepad LinkText*). If you want to keep the data, save it with a new file name.

As I kept working on this RegEx, I found more ways to improve it. Of critical importance is understanding the difference between greedy and non-greedy when using wildcards.

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Next PC Revolution is Mobile” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The Next PC Revolution is Mobile; Another Missed Opportunity; Novels About Cryptography; Fumbling the Future; Safe Mode.

When PCs first appeared, mainframe and minicomputer enthusiasts scoffed and claimed PCs were nothing but toys. Then PCs went on to dominate the computer market and practically wiped out the mainframe and minicomputer market. Completely forgetting the past, PC enthusiasts initially derided smartphones and tablets as nothing but toys until smartphones and tablets defined the entire mobile computing market to the point where more people access the Internet through a mobile device than a PC.

The problem with PCs is that they require space and an electrical outlet. In many parts of the world, people don't have a reliable source of electricity or space to put a PC. That's why in Africa, which lacks a robust electricity grid like the United States, most people rely on mobile phones that can be charged using batteries, the sporadic electricity network, or even through wind-up devices that can charge simple mobile phones just by cranking a handle.



Figure 1. Hand cranks let you charge devices in an emergency.

Without a reliable infrastructure for electricity, standard PCs are nothing more than paperweights without power. Without a reliable infrastructure for telephone service, getting on the Internet is nearly impossible. That's why mobile phones have proven so popular in Third World countries because they give everyone access to the Internet along with communicating with others without the need for an expensive telephone network that attracts thieves stripping telephone lines for the copper.

Since Africa and other impoverished areas also lack reliable electricity, the fast charging and long battery life of most mobile phones means that people don't need to be near an electrical outlet most of the day. Given these handicaps, it's easy to see why mobile phones are far more popular in Third World countries instead of traditional desktop or laptop PCs. Unless Africa and other Third World areas miraculously develop a reliable infrastructure, PCs will likely remain scarce among the general public.

Without an infrastructure to support and maintain PCs, Africa and other Third World nations struggle to keep PCs working. "You have maintenance problems, you have to constantly upgrade your systems," [said Theo d'Souza](#) of the Dar es Salaam headteacher's conference. For many Third World nations, PCs are too costly and bothersome to maintain, especially compared to the dramatic simplicity of a mobile phone.

Despite their technological limitations, Africa actually leads the world in mobile payments.

Because Africa lacks banks and because so many people have mobile phones, many Africans have turned to mobile money services like [M-PESA](#), which effectively eliminates reliance on banks to run an economy. Over [25 percent](#) of Kenya's gross national product flows through M-PESA, making Kenya the world leader in mobile money usage.

By using mobile phones as digital wallets, people can keep their money safe from thieves while avoiding the problem of carrying enough coins or paper money to pay for their purchases. While Americans still shop with plastic credit cards lacking security measures and relying on the security of merchant computer networks that attract computer hackers looking to steal thousands of credit card numbers, the Third World has eagerly embraced the far more secure world of mobile phone payments.

The mobile phone will continue dominating the computer market with tablets and wearable computers further pushing the boundaries of computing that ordinary desktop and laptop PCs could never do. If you pine for the good old days when everyone had to use PCs and Windows, you might as well pine for the good old days when everyone still used quill pens and rode horses. It's nice to remember the past, but it's pointless to maintain the status quo simply because you're not willing to learn anything new.

Kenya and the rest of Africa has already seen the benefits of using mobile phones as a digital wallet so it's time for the rest of the world to abandon their obsolete solutions (plastic credit cards and actual money) and catch up with the Third World.

The Third World is simply finding ways to eliminate the middleman more effectively than the rest of the world out of sheer necessity. Because they lack access to a dependable banking system and a telephone and electrical infrastructure, Third World nations actually have more of an incentive to embrace the future than many people in more advanced countries.

Advanced nations don't always push technology to its limits because they're too often emotionally committed to maintaining their current way of life. When you don't have a current solution that works, you'll be far more eager to embrace future improvements in technology, which goes to show that sometimes advanced nations may not be so advanced after all.

Another Missed Opportunity

Ten years before Apple introduced the iPad, Microsoft had already created the first tablet computer. Ten years before Apple introduced the Apple Watch, Microsoft had already [created a smartwatch](#) dubbed SPOT. Ten years ago before Apple introduced CarPlay, Microsoft had already created [AutoPC](#) to run a computer-controlled automotive platform.

Microsoft has been ahead of Apple by a decade in three major markets and despite their ten year head start, they did nothing with their technology until rivals passed them by. Beyond their lack of vision, Microsoft seems to consistently ignore the real purpose of technology,

which is to make it easy to perform a useful task.

After relying on Microsoft technology for years, Ford finally gave up and switched to the [BlackBerry QNX](#) operating system instead. As [ExtremeTech noted](#), "Ford Sync 3 takes a needed step toward simplicity with bigger fonts and less clutter on the home screen." Engadget said Ford wanted a system that was "more responsive and less clumsy to use."

In other words, Microsoft's solution did not focus on simplicity or responsiveness because it was too cluttered and clumsy to use. If a product isn't easy to use, it doesn't matter which company makes it.



Figure 2. MyFord Touch's touchscreen interface.

Why Microsoft consistently clings to complexity is a mystery. Rather than make products that are easy to use, Microsoft seems to prefer throwing advanced technology on the market and hoping someone will find a practical use for it despite its complexity. In the meantime, they let their technological lead slip away from them and then wonder what happened.

Microsoft's Xbox killed Sony's Playstation 3 and Nintendo's Wii when they introduced the Kinect, which could track movement without requiring people to hold a wand like the Playstation or Wii required. Microsoft then introduced a [software development kit](#) (SDK) for connecting a Kinect to a Windows PC and even worked with hospitals as early as 2011 to use

[Kinect in operating rooms](#). Unlike touchscreens, the Kinect allows surgeons to manipulate a computer without the risk of contaminating their hands by touching anything.

Yet despite their early lead with gesture recognition, has Microsoft developed software to exploit the Kinect with Windows? Imagine a Surface tablet with built-in Kinect capabilities that would let you control the tablet without touching it. Put the Surface on a table, display a virtual keyboard on the flat surface, and let the Kinect detect where your fingers are typing. Certainly with all of Microsoft's billions and head start in gesture recognition, they could create Kinect-dependent software that could demonstrate a productive use for their technology. Or they could simply ignore their technological lead once more and then wonder what happened.

From Visual Basic 6 and Internet Explorer to the Kinect, Microsoft proves they can develop advanced technology. Then they quickly prove that they don't care about the user experience or their customers until another company shows them how to do it. With Ford [abandoning Microsoft technology](#) in their cars, it's unlikely that any other car manufacturer will suddenly flock to Microsoft after seeing the problems Ford had using Microsoft technology. As more car manufacturers rely on Blackberry QNX, Apple's CarPlay, or Google's [Android Auto](#), you have to wonder if this is yet another missed opportunity by Microsoft despite another ten year head start.

Novels About Cryptography

Cryptography is the art and science of scrambling data to hide it from prying eyes. No matter how sophisticated encryption might get, it's never unbreakable. If someone can scramble data, someone else can always find a way to unscramble it.

The most straightforward way to crack any form of encryption involves a brute force attack. That means you exhaustively try every possible password key that can pry the encryption wide open. To defeat brute force attacks, most modern encryption algorithms create so many possibilities that even today's supercomputers won't be able to crack today's encryption algorithms for thousands of years, which effectively makes the encryption secure.

Realistically, cryptographers can break encryption that's been poorly implemented (meaning the algorithm has flaws) or by examining known messages (called plaintext) and comparing it to the encrypted form. In case you're interested in learning more about implementing and creating encryption algorithms, you should read [Applied Cryptography](#) by noted security expert Bruce Schneier.

If you'd like a simpler introduction to the world of encryption, try reading [Digital Fortress](#) by Dan Brown, the author of [The Da Vinci Code](#). *Digital Fortress* is a thriller about an encryption algorithm that the National Security Agency's supercomputer can't break. The hero has to find the person who wrote the encryption algorithm to protect national security. Like any Dan Brown novel, you can expect plenty of twists and turns with non-stop action and

puzzle-solving.

In case you'd like a more technical novel that delves deeper into cryptography, read [Cryptonomicon](#) by Neal Stephenson. This massive 1,100 page novel weaves World War Two history into modern day cryptography as treasure hunters look for a cache of gold that the Japanese military hid from the Allies during World War Two.

Unlike *Digital Fortress* that treats cryptography with superficial descriptions, *Cryptonomicon* delves deep into explaining encryption from a mathematical level that may be too overwhelming for anyone without a mathematical background. To explain how the German Enigma encryption machines worked, "Cryptonomicon" uses the analogy of a bicycle chain that falls off only when it hits a certain bent sprocket. To further explain the German Enigma machine, *Cryptonomicon* also introduces plenty of mathematical equations that model the movement of the bicycle wheel and the chain.

In another scene in *Cryptonomicon*, two men in jail exchange messages using an ordinary deck of playing cards. This encryption method, called "Solitaire," was created by [Bruce Schneier](#) as a way for people to exchange coded messages without the need for computers.

Cryptonomicon will definitely appeal to anyone interested in an in-depth, mathematical description of encryption placed within the context of a historical thriller that explains how encryption worked in World War Two. Much of the reason why the Germans and Japanese lost the war occurred because the Allies cracked their encryption methods.

Admiral Yamamoto, the reluctant architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, warned the Japanese military that Japan could only win a war against the United States for six months before the industrial might of the United States would turn the tide against the Japanese. After the Americans cracked the Japanese encryption code, they were able to ambush the Japanese Navy in the Battle of Midway, which turned the tide of the Pacific war exactly six months after Pearl Harbor.

Because the Americans could read the Japanese encoded messages, they later used this knowledge to assassinate Admiral Yamamoto by directing long-range P-38 fighters to intercept Admiral Yamamoto's plane as it was arriving at a Japanese military base. By killing Japan's best military leader, the United States reduced Japan's ability to fight since most of the other Japanese military leaders clung to the delusion that they could win the war despite their lack of resources. The Japanese refused to believe that they could lose any war to people they believed were beneath them, so they never modified their encryption codes or changed their military strategies.

By explaining actual historical events with the fictional actions of the book's characters, *Cryptonomicon* makes encryption interesting and appealing. If you find *Cryptonomicon* interesting, you'll likely have the desire and background to tackle the much more complicated *Applied Cryptography* book loaded with C source code examples. If you'd rather not learn about encryption from a mathematical point of view, then you might prefer the more

accessible but less mathematically detailed *Digital Fortress* instead.

Encryption is basically a mathematical game. If this type of mental challenge sounds interesting, you might want to keep learning more about encryption on your own so you could one day work with codes and exercise your intellect for fun and money.

Fumbling the Future

The biggest obstacle to progress is the present. Borders Books made plenty of money selling printed books through retail stores, so when the idea of selling books over the Internet appeared, Borders decided they didn't want to bother with it. Instead of selling books over the Internet, Borders actually directed their customers to shop at Amazon instead.

At one time, Best Buy had a massive presence in the electronics industry. To get iTunes accepted by more people in a hurry, Steve Jobs offered Best Buy 50 percent of all sales made through iTunes. All Best Buy had to do was promote iTunes in their stores. Thinking that their current business model was just fine, [Best Buy refused](#) Apple's free offer. By 2008, iTunes would make more money than Best Buy and Walmart combined.

Kodak invented the digital camera and ignored it to focus on their lucrative film processing and film camera business. Xerox invented the graphical user interface and gave it away. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak offered the first Apple personal computers to Hewlett-Packard who turned them down.

When opportunity knocks, most people not only ignore it, but actively drive it away as fast as possible. When people and companies succeed, they falsely believe the conditions of their success will continue for eternity as the world freezes in place so their current business model will never be obsolete.

The time to look for new opportunities is when you're currently struggling to succeed and after you've already succeeded. When you cling to what used to work and deride anything new as irrelevant, that's the first step to greasing your own inevitable decline.

Will people ever learn from the past? Probably not. Just look at the current batch of people ignoring the future by clinging to the past and the present. The moment you ignore the future, you've already condemned yourself to failure. All you have to do is wait.

* * *

If you're familiar with Windows, you know you can boot into Safe Mode where the operating system only loads the bare minimum. This lets you troubleshoot problems without the interference of other programs.

If you want to boot into Safe Mode with a Macintosh, just restart your computer and hold

down the Shift key. To exit out of Safe Mode, just restart the computer again.

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 dangleing 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*](#)

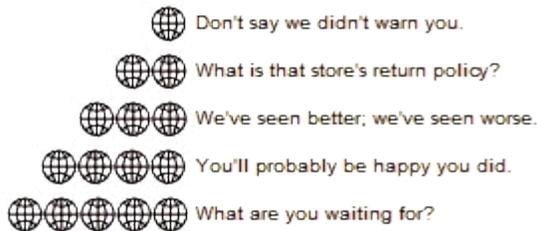
[*The 15-Minute Movie Method*](#)

[*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](#).



Worldwide News & Product Reviews

“The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.” by Charles Carr, News and Reviews Editor

Ten Hot Consumer Trends for 2015; Sickweather App Provides Prevention and Early Diagnosis This Flu Season; Expert: Data Breaches Will Persist in 2015 Unless Companies Move Beyond 'Superficial IT Security Solutions; Verizon's Samsung Galaxy Note 3 Smartphone Phablet.

Ten Hot Consumer Trends for 2015

Ericsson ConsumerLab's [global research program](#) reports the 10 hot consumer trends for 2015 and beyond:



1. The streamed future. Media use patterns are globalizing. Viewers are shifting towards easy-to-use on-demand services that allow cross-platform access to video content. 2015 will be historic as more people will watch streamed video on a weekly basis than broadcast TV.

2. Helpful homes. Consumers show high interest in having home sensors that alert them to water and electricity issues, or when

family members come and go.

3. Mind sharing. New ways to communicate will continue to appear, offering us even more ways to keep in touch with our friends and family. Many smartphone owners would like to use a wearable device to communicate with others directly through thought—and believe this will be mainstream by 2020.

4. Smart citizens. The idea of smart cities is intriguing—but a lot of that intelligence may actually come about as a side effect of the changing everyday behaviors of citizens. As the internet makes us more informed, we are in turn making better decisions. Consumers believe traffic volume maps, energy use comparison apps and real-time water quality checkers will be mainstream by 2020.

5. The sharing economy. As the Internet enables us to efficiently share information with unprecedented ease, the idea of a sharing economy is potentially huge. Half of all smartphone owners are open to the idea of renting out their spare rooms, personal household appliances and leisure equipment as it is convenient and can save money.
6. The digital purse. 48 percent of smartphone owners would rather use their phone to pay for goods and services. 80 percent believe that the smartphone will replace their entire purse by 2020.
7. My information. Although sharing information when there is a benefit is fine, smartphone owners see no point in making all of their actions open to anyone. 47 percent of smartphone owners would like to be able to pay electronically without an automatic transfer of personal information. 56 percent of smartphone owners would like all Internet communication to be encrypted.
8. Longer life. Smartphone owners see cloud-based services of various kinds giving them the potential to live healthier and longer lives. Jogging apps, pulse meters and plates that measure our food are believed to help prolong our lives by up to two years per application.
9. Domestic robots. Consumers are welcoming the idea of having domestic robots that could help with everyday chores. 64 percent also believe this will be common in households by 2020.
10. Children connect everything. Children will continue to drive the demand for a more tangible Internet, where the physical world is as connected as the screens of their devices. 46 percent of smartphone owners say that children will expect all objects to be connected when they are older.

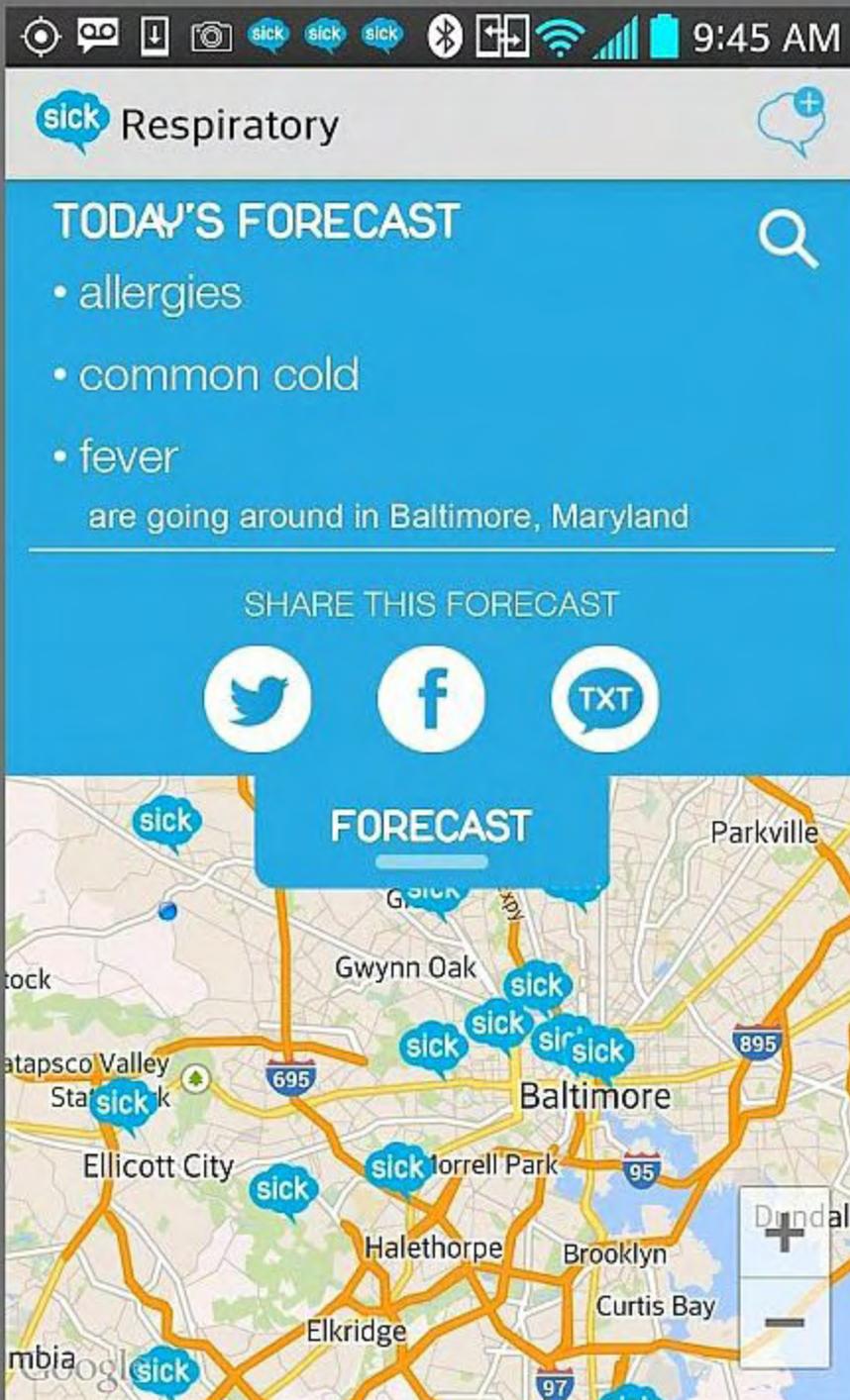
Sickweather App Provides Prevention and Early Diagnosis This Flu Season

According to Graham Dodge, representing Sickweather.com:

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) have said that the current flu vaccine may only be effective against less than 50% of the flu strains that have been detected so far this year, and emphasized the need for prevention and early diagnosis within 48 hours (for anti-virals to be effective).

Sickweather is a free smartphone app that alerts users in real-time when they enter active flu zones, and provides illness forecasts at the community level anywhere in North America; allowing parents, caregivers, and business travelers to take early, informed action at the onset of symptoms or to take extra precautions for avoidance and prevention.

Check your local Sickweather forecast to see which illnesses are currently trending in your area:



When someone publicly posts "My kids have flu" on Facebook or Twitter, Sickweather qualifies that report using a patent-pending process and then plots it on a map. When a Sickweather user travels near that report they will get a real-time alert on their iPhone or Android device warning them of their proximity to flu and 22 other illnesses.

Report illnesses directly and anonymously to Sickweather:



"When people know which illnesses are active in their area, they can use that information to take steps in prevention and early diagnosis" says Graham Dodge, CEO of Sickweather. "For example, one of our users told us that she had her son tested for strep at the first signs of a fever because she had recently received alerts from our app that she was in a sick zone for strep throat. She took him to get a throat culture and he tested positive for strep. She was then able to get him on the antibiotics he needed to go back to school sooner, so she could get back to work sooner."

The Sickweather app is available as a free download at the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

For more information, please visit www.sickweather.com.

Expert: Data Breaches Will Persist in 2015 Unless Companies Move Beyond Superficial IT Security Solutions

Dr. Barbara Rembiesa, CEO of the International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers (IAITAM), writes:



One year ago, the personal financial data of millions of Target's customers were made vulnerable by a malware-laced e-mail attack on the company. Though that high-profile case set off a \$70 billion "IT security" spending wave among major companies hoping to avoid similar catastrophes, 2014 has so far seen more customer data stolen than in any previous year.

Executives and shareholders should be aware that this troubling pattern is likely to continue in 2015 as long as companies focus on window-dressing IT security "solutions" that fall short by failing to include a solid foundation of IT Asset Management (ITAM), according to Dr. Barbara Rembiesa, CEO of the International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers (IAITAM).

Dr. Rembiesa said: "The Target debacle triggered an 8 percent increase in spending on 'IT security' but did very little to slow down the tide of major data breaches. The reality is that companies that have taken these steps are treating the symptoms but not the underlying problems. By focusing only on narrowly focused and superficial IT security 'solutions,' companies are putting the cart before the horse and they're going nowhere."

Expert: Data Breaches Will Persist in 2015 Unless Companies Move Beyond Superficial IT Security Solutions

She added: "When you look closely at the biggest data breaches of 2014, even the best IT security solutions alone could never prevent them. This has been the biggest ignored lesson of the year. If companies are to stop these attacks in 2015, they must first recognize that the true source of nearly all major breaches are more foundational and stem from nonexistent or inadequate IT Asset Management procedures."

Dr. Rembiesa urges companies intent on more fully protecting themselves from data breaches to consider several key IT Asset Management principles:

- **You Cannot Secure What You Don't Know You Have.** One of the greatest breach risks to all enterprises lies in the large number of IT doorways and gateways. No amount of sophisticated security software on earth will protect a company from the computer it didn't know it had operating on its network, or the dangerous software that was downloaded by an employee on an undetected basis. Companies must know and actively manage what is in their IT environment if they are to secure it. In 2014, a case study on the dangers of mismanaging IT hardware was seen at Coca-Cola, which revealed that an employee had, without detection, stolen 55 laptops over a six-year period. Those laptops, Coca-Cola later acknowledged, contained tens of thousands of social security numbers and other sensitive data.
- **Threat Communication Is As Important As Threat Identification.** What happens after a threat is discovered is as important as the discovery itself. Communications management accelerates the speed at which a discovered threat can be locked down and addressed. The Home Depot data breach of 2014 was a perfect example of how this plays out. That breach occurred during a patch on Microsoft Windows, which hackers exploited to steal and sell data from 56 million credit cards. Effective communications practices ensure that as threats are identified, they are not just addressed, but immediately communicated institution-wide in a way that allows for immediate quarantine.
- **Manage Your IT Vendors As You Manage Your IT Assets.** Several of the large 2014 data breaches flowed from improper IT vendor management. A company's IT management policies are only as good as the weakest link in the system. If an IT contractor is operating at a company, its IT management policies need to be as good or better than the company employing it. The US Department of Veterans Affairs was burned in 2014 for failing to recognize and address this. An IT contractor carelessly mishandled a computer containing sensitive material on 70 million U.S. Veterans. That computer was stolen at the personal peril of millions of U.S. Vets.
- **IT Security is not *the Same as IT Asset Management ... and Both Are Critically Important.*** *IT Asset Management underpins all IT security. Information technology environments operate in dynamic and fluid ways, and IT Asset Management is the discipline that helps companies navigate and understand this process. Focusing on IT security without addressing IT Asset Management may provide some degree of comfort in board rooms and C suites looking for a quick fix, but it is an illusion. A recent example of how a breakdown in IT Asset Management could thwart the best IT security policies occurred at the National*

Health Service (NHS) of the United Kingdom. A significant data breach took place there after an NHS IT vendor sold several hard drives on EBay instead of destroying them, as instructed. Highly sensitive information on tens of thousands of patients ended up in the hands of the purchasers of the drives. If proper IT Asset Management procedures were followed, this type of vendor mismanagement would never occur: the drives would have been thoroughly wiped before ever being sold, and only certified IT Destruction vendors would have been contracted for the actual hard drive disposal.

Rembiesa pointed out that most companies face on a daily basis a range of critical IT decisions. They need to decide what IT products to buy (hardware and software), how to track those devices and their licenses, how and when to service them, what to do if one of their IT assets goes missing or comes under attack, and more. Mishandling or misappropriating at any key IT junctures exposes companies to data breach risk.

Rembiesa noted: "It is critical to have IT Asset Managers that are certifiably up to speed on best IT Asset Management practices, and in the 2014 data breach deluge, this has been the glaring gap. Until companies do more to support their IT security operations with proper and effective IT Asset Management, you can expect data breaches to continue largely unabated."

Verizon's Samsung Galaxy Note 3 Smartphone Phablet

Product category: Phablet

Manufacturer: Samsung

Model: Galaxy Note 3

Web site: www.att.com

Price: as low as \$18.84 for 30 months with additional monthly charges for Verizon's Mobile Share Value Plan and smartphone access charges

So, what's a phablet? Well, if you're sipping your morning Starbucks and overhear someone at a nearby table point at your smartphone and say, "Is that a phone or a tablet?" you probably own a phablet (phone + tablet).

The Samsung Galaxy Note 3 is a great-looking device with an even larger 5.7" 1080p Super AMOLED HD display than the Note 2, a faster processor, and a longer-lasting battery, while keeping but refining the built-in S-Pen for note taking and control of many Note 3 features and functions.

The Galaxy Note 3 also features touch-free voice control and a 13-megapixel rear-facing camera with an extremely bright and responsive LED flash.



The Galaxy Note 3 runs Google's Android 4.3 (Jelly Bean) operating system and sports a blazing-fast 2.3 GHz quad-core processor and 32GB of internal storage. Not enough? Expand it whenever you need to using the microSD memory card slot giving you up to 64GB more.

The 3200mAh battery is a welcome addition, easily lasting an entire day pretty much no matter what you're doing with the phone—short of, perhaps, playing video games or movies for 12 hours.



Multi Window is one of my favorite Note 3 features, allowing you to open two windows of the same app. It's great because you can have two areas of an app open side-by-side and simply drag and drop text and info from one area to the other. No endless cutting and pasting.

S Pen lets you not just jot notes and pics, as you would expect, but can also convert your handwriting into text for e-mails, calendar entries, and tons of other supported apps and the Note 3's new voice control feature is waiting for you to simply say "Hi, Galaxy" to start making calls, sending messages, and more. It actually works.

Tired of having to go through lots of menu trees to send videos, photos, tunes and other data to friends and family? If they've got an S-Beam compatible device, you just need to tap them together to make the transfer.

Pics look absolutely fantastic on the Galaxy Note 3's 13-megapixel camera. Color is rich and vibrant. One thing I wish it had was the ability to easily turn the flash on and off with a button rather than having to dig through menus.

Got an iPhone or other device with tons of music, pics, contacts and other stuff on it that's keeping you from making the switch? A feature called Samsung SmartSwitch does all the work for you. It can even track down your favorite Apple apps on Google Play or suggest close matches if one is not available.

The Samsung Galaxy Note 3 runs on Verizon's 4G LTE network which the company says covers over 90 percent of the U.S. population (287 million people across the country) and provides average download data rates of 5-12 megabits per second (Mbps) and upload rates of 2-5 Mbps in real-world, loaded network environments.

Actually, your only problem with the Samsung Galaxy Note 3 might be its size. A phone this large is not for everyone. Go down and spend some time holding and using it. On the plus side: If you like it, you might be able to say goodbye to your tablet.



Review contributed by Alex Caratti

Specs (from Verizon):

Rear-facing camera
13MP autofocus with LED flash

Zoom
4x digital

Live video capture and playback
1080p HD

Front-facing camera
2MP

Camera
Shooting Options

Dual Camera
Combine photos and video from front and rear cameras into one.

Drama Shot
Take series of action shots and put them together in one photo.

Sound & Shot
Capture audio with images to help you relive the moment.

Beauty Face
Brighten or darken skin tones or hide portrait imperfections.

Best Photo
Shoot multiple photos of your subject and choose the best shots.

Panorama
Create a single widescreen photo from consecutive shots.

Rich Tone (HDR)
Switch to Sports Mode, Night Mode, and more for dramatic shots.

Eraser
Erase unwanted people or objects in pictures with just one touch.

Slow-motion video capture

Music
Music

Music player
Google Play™ Music

Supported music formats
MP3, AMR-NB/WB, AAC, AAC+, eAAC+, WMA, Vorbis (OGG), FLAC, AC-3

Web browser
Google Chrome™, native Android™

Battery capacity
3200mAh

Talk time (hours)
Up to 25

Standby time (days)
Up to 22

Size (inches)
5.9 x 3.1 x 0.3"

Weight (ounces)
5.9

Qualcomm® MSM8974 Pro 2.3GHz quad core processor

Internal memory storage
Up to 32GB

Expandable memory storage
Up to 64GB

Memory format
microSD™

RAM
3GB

Wireless Technology

4G-LTE
Band 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 17

4G
HSPA+ with enhanced backhaul

UMTS/HSPA+
850/1900/2100MHz

GSM/GPRS/EDGE

850/900/1800/1900MHz

Wi-Fi® connectivity
802.11 a/b/g/n/ac

Near Field Communication (NFC)
Open, secure

Bluetooth® technology
4.0 LE

Mobile hotspot

* * *

Up to 8 devices

FOTA capable - upgrade Firmware OverThe Air

Operating System

Android™
v4.4 (KitKat)

Display size (inches)
5.7

Resolution (pixels)
1080p full HD Super AMOLED™ (1920x1080)

Multiple award-winning author Charles Carr has written more than two thousand newspaper articles, magazine stories, and columns for many publications including the San Diego Union Tribune, The Californian, The North County Times, Parent Magazine, ComputerScene, and ComputerEdge Magazine where he has been an editor for more than two decades. He is also a television producer/director with shows both currently airing and in production on Cox Cable and elsewhere.

In the 1990s, Charles wrote 3DHouse, a complete inside-and-out virtual reality tour of his family's log home in Southern California. One of the first virtual reality programs ever created, 3DHouse enjoyed tens of thousands of shareware downloads on all major portals. He also sold the rights to Radio Shack and Egghead Software. 3DHouse has since been featured in many books and articles about VR.

Carr has also been commissioned to write and/or directed many of his own stage plays. Several years ago, Carr and others looking for ways to help organizations struggling in difficult economic times, founded Art Animates Life (www.artanimateslife.org).

To date, Art Animates Life, a CA incorporated, federal non-profit, has raised tens-of-thousands of dollars for San Diego area disaster relief, an arts non-profit and municipal gallery, a community outreach center, and several struggling community theaters.

Several years ago Carr was commissioned to adapt and direct the beloved Dickens classic, A Christmas Carol. The play, titled "Mr. Scrooge & Mr. Dickens," has sold out So Cal theaters for the past several years. Six shows will take place Dec. 2013 to benefit the San Marcos Historical Society.

Another original play, "All the Time in the World," has been performed many times and garnered broad acclaim from audiences and critics alike. Carr is working on a brand new adaptation of the classic Hitchcock thriller, "The Lady Vanished," to be performed spring 2014.

Carr has won many writing accolades, including San Diego Press Club awards for Best Column Writing, Best Consumer Writing, and Best Arts and Entertainment. He has repeatedly taken top honors in San Diego Songwriter's Guild competitions for his original musical compositions.

Carr is also a noted producer, director, and videographer. Several of his documentaries can currently be seen on So Cal's Cox Cable. Since its inception he has produced the Fallbrook International Film Festival's red carpet event and panel discussions.

Charles receives dozens of requests each year to appear on Southern California television and radio stations to talk about important tech events. He also speaks from time-to-time to high schools and organizations about his eclectic life in the arts.

Learn more at www.charlescarr.com.



***Without
Digital Music,
Life Would
Be an Error***

Without Digital Music, Life Would Be an Error

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

Another Crass Gift Guide

To commemorate the fact that tomorrow will quite possibly be the biggest shopping day of the year, I had this amazing idea. Ok. I'm going to compile a list—yes, a sort of guide—intended to assist with ideas for holiday gifts, and what I've done is going to be puzzled over and studied and followed... for minutes.

Um, it's possible I'm confusing David Fincher movies with reality again, but I think this gift guide could work. Plus, it could be even more original if I talked about tech gadgets, possibly even focusing on those related to digital music. This certainly won't be a self-indulgent mishmash used as an excuse to obtain presents for myself. That would be cynical—and wrong. (Psst. Since "Gone Girl" won't be out on Blu-Ray until January, I'll accept an IOU, 20CF.)

I'm being completely sincere, incidentally. Tomorrow should be nuts. So my last-minute gift guide is more timely and appropriate than my procrastination realized. The first rule of gift guides is... right.

Vinyl Nostalgia



Despite its decline in popular culture by 1991 (a process propelled by the record companies' withdrawn support), vinyl has enjoyed a rather celebrated resurgence demonstrated, for instance, by the annual Record Store Day events.

High-end (or audiophile grade) turntables are still produced, as are lower priced, USB units that additionally can, of course, plug into a computer to digitize songs. Crosley is one of the companies active in this market, and has released Revolution, an extremely lightweight and portable turntable that's a great gift item (especially for someone younger who might not believe there was any means of distributing music before MP3s).

Revolution doesn't broadcast. In other words, it isn't designed to do Bluetooth, although an appropriate adapter would probably work if that's an issue. (crosleyradio.com)

Bluetooth Tough



When the decision is made with regard to which junk to include in Cyber Monday/Week, someone evidently assumes there's a segment of the online bargain scrounging bleary-eyed masses who will always go for the hybrid survival gear for the emergency that never comes (but thanks to Y2K, or at least the fun in going OCD shopping for it, a lot of people ate for months from cans and dried food mixes, and possibly went off the grid for a while with all the batteries, candles, et al.). Yes, I'm that sucker, and if you slap a solar panel on it, and perhaps a hand crank power option, too, it's in my cart already.

So for this guide, how could I pass up the Eton Rugged Rukus All-Terrain Portable Solar Wireless Sound System? I have at least one of their weather radios, and quite a few nightlights that become emergency lights in the event of a brown/blackout. Also, I had already been looking for an emergency power supply for iPhones & iPads (that actually works), and since it added the uber-hip Bluetooth speaker option, voila. Sound is less critical, obviously, than durability. There's distortion at the high end, no surprises, but it functions competently.

In the sun, you can whistle while it works (or listen to a recording of someone else whistling as the Rukus charges up). Beyond the solar panel, features include an internal lithium battery, an ac adapter, and, of course, USB. It's not an X-Mini rival in terms of size, but at 5.9 x 1.8 x 6.5 inches, and with its "carabiner-ready loops," it's easy enough to drag around wherever you roam. (The minor durability caveat is that the Rukus is "splashproof" not "waterproof." Right.) Regularly priced at \$100, it's been common to find these half off this holiday season.

(etoncorp.com)

Bluetooth Performance



Logitech has a contender that seems to be a direct challenge to the Pill speaker brought to the market courtesy Beats By Dre. The Ultimate Ears BOOM stands on its own, however, and masters what's best about Bluetooth speakers: simplicity. Seriously. Charge via USB, pair, and enjoy. Oh yes, and it's water and stain resistant (and packaged in a nice range of colors, too—mine is green and blue). This "water bottle shape" device boasts and delivers some solid 360 sound, is completely controlled by way of a smartphone, for instance, and is also NFC-enabled. An amazing smaller speaker and gift idea. (ultimateears.com)



On the monster end of the spectrum, Big Blue Party was an unexpected but pleasant surprise entrant. I imagined—in my rush gathering items for this—something the size of a camping lantern. When the box arrived, I assumed someone had gotten confused and sent me a dozen. At almost 16 inches (& 15 lbs.), this is a serious speaker—well, 4 speakers in one, actually, and the 360 sound (as mentioned with the BOOM) is pretty impressive. I'm always looking for something tough, and this certainly seems durable, and is waterproof to boot. This is closer to \$300, and the BOOM, incidentally, is approx. \$200. So for social gatherings, inside or out, Big Blue Party is solid indeed. (brookstone.com)

Last year, I mentioned the Oontz series of speakers from Cambridge Soundworks. The Oontz Angle, for instance, is 5.31 x 2.67 inches, weighs 9.1 ounces, fits in your hand, has a rechargeable 12-hour battery, and is still more impressive than it looks, nicely handling the range of classical, jazz, and pop I threw at it. Likewise The Oontz XL, at just over 10 inches long (and under 2 lbs) is a very portable item, great for small gatherings. It's nice solo, too,

used while composing a digital music column late at night, as an example. (cambridgesoundworks.com)

Bluetooth Fun



Each year now, I've had some item with a connection to the seemingly antiquated audio cassette. This year, it's the JAM Rewind, and it's an unabashed homage (done as if there's a serious crush involved) and a lot of fun. Simple to use, as most of these are (even the quick start guide becomes more of a souvenir), and it announces each step in the process ("paired," etc.). As you can see, the speaker itself is designed to look like a cassette, and likewise the product package functions as the tape case. On top of all this, the sound is decent. Forgetting about personal music players for the moment, this is easily my favorite item. The price range I've seen has hovered in the \$50-70 range, and is well worth it. (jamaudio.com)



At the other end of the "Party" spectrum is X-Mini's latest: WE. I had fun testing WE for Halloween this year, helping me to sort of recreate Poe's grave. At a tiny 1 x 1.4 x 1 inches, this tucked away nicely, playing Christopher Walken's performance of The Raven (sounds like I extracted that from an SNL sketch, but no, quoth the columnist). I perhaps had the most fun going through a crowded supermarket carrying this, randomly placing it out on various department countertops, and watching the bemused, searching glances (as "suddenly there came a tapping ..."). I don't think anyone actually spotted the X-Mini, but each person I've handed or thrown this to has been surprised by the volume (although I'm not as enthused by the form—it looks like a tiny beer keg, as was pointed out when I gave my family a shot). Under \$30, this is just a fun, fantastic gift item. (x-mini.com)

Skull Candy!



Time for headphones! Although I now own a pair of Beats By Dre, I'd like to sort of revisit Hesh 2, the headphones that I discussed in my first gift guide two years ago. This time, however, Skull Candy is offering (you got it) a wireless model. Sure, it's easy to joke about how Bluetooth is being added to virtually every product, but I certainly won't deride my Bluetooth tea infuser, and seriously, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross' OST work sounds great from the bottom of a cup of Barry's. Oh yes, and wireless headphones are a great idea, too.

I'm really impressed by Ear Candy. I previously said, come for the style, and stay for... that's right. The company had offered multiple design variations based on a skull motif. My wireless model is a bit more austere (black, with small silver company logos on each side), but has everything you need, including an almost hidden USB port, pairing button, and volume control. You can also deal with phone calls, a common feature that I personally have little interest in. We're here for the music, and these headphones deliver high quality—via the wired or wireless model. You can probably best approximate my feelings on the matter based on the fact that I'm only discussing one headphone item. (skullcandy.com)

MP3 Nostalgia...



If Pono has their way, you might one day (soon) be nostalgic for MP3 files. Pono, covered in this column in March, is Neil Young's high resolution digital music project. At the moment, after loads of hype and a record-breaking Kickstarter campaign, the Pono Player is finally making its way out into the world.

But I do need to again mention the idea of a dedicated music player, and that there really is or should be a place for such a thing. To go back a bit further, this reminds me of why I don't feel the incessant need to update smartphones. Yes, my older iPhone has a camera that's inferior to newer models. Ok. I actually have a digital camera, an item that serves a specific purpose, and that purpose only. I know that we're in a culture currently infatuated with merging everything into a single device, and even though I understand and participate in this to a degree, the seemingly contrarian perspective makes some sense. The argument centers around the ability to optimize playback capability with such a focused gadget.

I've had some time to test my Pono Player, and it sounds great. My headphones, it must be said (tester's note) are only "OK" according to the accompanying documentation (the spectrum is "good," "OK," and "bad"). Beyond that, I like the simplicity of design. Three buttons on one side of the Toblerone-shaped player offer volume control, power, and pause. Beyond that, there are ports on the top and bottom, a touchscreen, slot for a Micro SD card, and that's it (the player is delivered with a USB cable in a sleek bamboo box).

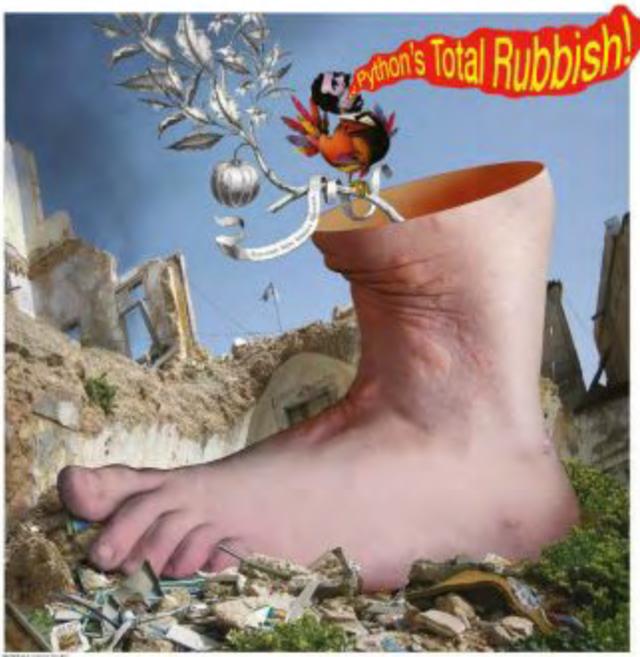


The day I received my visitor from the mysterious, mythical planet Pono, Windows refused to play nice and recognize it, which was fun (no surprises). After some simple troubleshooting, I found the correct secret handshake. Pono proceeded to make friends with Dre (Skull Candy, too), and tried to recreate a scene from *Scanners* with my head. Nice to be loved. Right. The company is still very young, so to speak, and will hopefully improve its software in future releases. It would additionally be helpful to have more music available for purchase and download from its Web site (although HDTracks is a good option for now). Minor issues.

Do I feel as though I'm in the studio with r.e.m. when I listen to E-Bow The Letter, or I Remember California? Unsure. I can say, however, that Pono is simplifying things in several ways, selling a complete player (so you're not buying a sort of starter kit that demands additional purchases). The player's in the box, and you of course choose how to listen.

There are amazing players available that would appeal more to the audiophile, such as the HifiMan, but that runs approx. \$900. The Pono Player is half that at \$399. At the same price or lower, you can also try FiiO X1, and Sony's new Hi-Res Walkman (which was supposed to be the costar here, but the prima donna failed to make an appearance). I personally haven't tested those options, but I can say that Pono would be a great bigger ticket gift for the music lover on your list. Sure, it won't be deliver on time, but that gives some room for creative card presentation, anticipation, and so forth. (ponomusic.com)

The Music Itself



Without digital music, a digital music-related gift guide would be... just silly. So, let's start with something completely different. Perhaps not. What are you talking about? (Talking to myself, as always.) This isn't an argument! It most certainly is. Yes, this is "Total Rubbish," the Monty Python box set, that is.

Ok. Box sets are certainly not an original gift idea, but a collection of all nine of the legendary comedy troupe's albums (physical or digital) in one set is SPAM-tastic (the positive end of the Spamverse). "Nudge, nudge, wink, wink. Know what I mean?"

There's a new box set of live recordings of The Miles Davis Quintet, "All of You: The Last Tour 1960." Although it has definite low-fi moments, this lineup (featuring John Coltrane) was legendarily amazing. Obviously, a great gift for the jazz aficionado. Also, the Essential Albums set has been out for a few years. A 4-CD set, which includes *Cookin'*, *Relaxin'*, *Steamin'*, and *Workin'* with The Miles Davis Quintet, documenting a great moment in jazz and music generally.

"He's so tied up in his music that even his friends don't understand what he's trying to do." (Davis on Coltrane) Another wonderful item is Coltrane's "Offering: Live At Temple University." Released on September 23rd of this past year, Coltrane's birthday, this is a legendary 1966 performance that captures the jazz band leader still pushing/reaching (in his final year) in a quest that was more spiritual than anything else perhaps. Since "a portion from every sale (goes) to the John Coltrane House, an organization devoted to the preservation of Coltrane's former home in Dix Hills, New York," this would be wonderful gift for the Coltrane fan in more than one way.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that this will be the last holiday season with a Peter Jackson-directed Middle Earth story opening on big screens everywhere. Such an event means a soundtrack by Howard Shore. The Special Edition features bonus material such as "The Last Goodbye" by Billy Boyd. Highly recommended. Other noteworthy OSTs available for the holiday season include "The Imitation Game," "Interstellar," and "Into the Woods."

Also, "REM by MTV" was released this autumn, a wonderful pick for the r.e.m. fan (completist/enthusiast/freak). MTV chronicled the life of the band in key ways, including documentaries, concerts, interviews, et al. Rhino Records has collected all these materials — that also include award show performances, et al. — into a physical box DVD set and a download available via Vimeo On Demand. Very cool stuff.

A Lump of Coal for a Good Cause



The (RED) organization remains active in their fight against AIDS. (RED) music-related products are always available, as are the annual benefit releases by The Killers. This year, the band collaborated with Jimmy Kimmel to record "Joel the Lump of Coal," available for download from iTunes.

As I say each year, for the season, whatever you celebrate, and however you choose to do so, I hope that you're able to enjoy the music and other intangibles that bring people together, everything that has real meaning in your life. Prost.

My first published work focused on music, and related obsessions pushed me to become a DJ, Producer, and Music Director in college radio. With this column, I feel as though I'm sort of returning to something I love (although I've never left, really). I've been tracking the evolution of online music distribution since the days of Napster, and obsessively follow music releases across a range of genres. One of my music players (on each of my devices) is going from the time I wake up until the end of the day, lulling me to sleep (or what little I actually grab). "Without music, life would be an error." ~ Fred, the mad German

Significantly, I'm returning to work after a prolonged personal leave, functioning in the capacity as a caregiver. Please feel free to contact me with story ideas or suggestions about digital music releases at withoutmusiclifewouldbeanerror@hotmail.com.



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"What Not To Buy as a Present for Someone Else," "Autologin for Windows," "Microsoft Login For Windows 8.1 - One Vote Against," "Windows 8.1 Autologon"

What Not To Buy as a Present for Someone Else

[Regarding Jack Dunning's November 28 [article](#), "High-Tech Not to Buy Holiday Shopping Guide":]

Great article and I agree with just about everything.

Except, the thumb drives. As a computer guy, I have a bunch, but having a couple extra is a great idea for lots of folks. Taking pix with them (if they haven't been given a smartphone), etc.

Many of mine are the same in look, I really dislike the ones with removable caps, they get lost or I can't find the cap that fits the drive I'm interested in capping... :)

Mostly, I label each of my thumb drives, that's how I keep track of them. Sharpie is excellent and they even make a silver one that works great on black or other darker colored ones. I also change the name of each drive (like any other drive, you can "label" it) to match what it's used for.

Personally, I keep two in my pocket, one for personal stuff, one for techie stuff/utilities, etc.

And, a computer I recently set up (Gateway, now owned by Acer), while was a really nice system, it had no *option to create recovery DVDs any more, you had to use a thumb drive (and I've had them fail/get corrupted), and it had to be >32 gig, which is pretty big and still relatively expensive, especially compared to DVDs.*

Lastly, if you aren't sure which files you want on which computer, check out Bittorrent's Sync Beta. I've had no issues with it and it keeps your choice of folders in sync on two or more computers. Assuming you don't want to use Dropbox for that, it works great. If computers are on local LAN, it just syncs that way. If not on local LAN, it does sync via the Internet connection, but doesn't store anything in the Cloud. Hence the only drawback is that both must be online at same time, if that's not feasible, I use Dropbox. But still very slick

and free and no size limits!

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Autologin for Windows

[Regarding the November 28 [Digital Dave column](#).]

This has worked since at least XP, not sure before that, and continues to work even to the Windows 10 beta.

Start/Run (or Windows key + R) and enter:

```
control userpasswords2
```

Yes, it's plural and the number 2.

If more than one account listed, be sure to select the account you want to automatically log in before unchecking the option requiring folks to log in.

I suspect the Sysinternals Autologin just gives a quicker/easier interface to same setting in the registry.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

As I understand it the main difference is Sysinternals Autologin encrypts the password in the Registry. I don't know how much difference that makes since someone would need to get onto your computer to read the Registry.

-Jack Dunning, ComputerEdge

Microsoft Login For Windows 8.1 - One Vote Against

[Regarding the November 28 [Digital Dave column](#).]

As I don't use MS's Skydrive/Onedrive or whatever they call it this month, I always skip the Microsoft login option. I use Dropbox and Google Drive (but nothing personal on Google Drive). I do not want Microsoft to know anything about me.

Call me paranoid, but I don't get much Spam, nor have I ever had any malware. If you really need access to apps not available otherwise, you can always create another account on your computer and link it to a throwaway/junk e-mail account for that access. But I've not run

into any apps that weren't available even without a Microsoft login.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego, CA

Windows 8.1 Autologon

[Regarding the December 5 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]

I found this one in Windows 7 and it also works in Windows 8.1.

Open a command window and type "netplwiz" (without the quotes). A "User Accounts" dialog appears. Select the UserName you want and un-check the box at the top that says "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer"

You'll have to re-enter the User Name and Password (twice) and then Apply, but it works.

-Dan Covill, San Diego, CA

Yes it works in Win 10 preview, after you have done the uncheck the box at the top that says "Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer" thing. Then at start up when the log in screen pops up just hit enter, works every time.

-Bucko, El Cajon, CA

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