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**Breaking Down
Language Barriers**

February 13, 2015

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Breaking Down Language Barriers

While the language interpreter built into Google Chrome and Google search isn't perfect, it's "good enough." Plus, smartphones with voice activated Google Translate are coming very close to the ultimate universal translator.

Magazine Summary

[List of ComputerEdge Sponsors](#)

[Digital Dave](#)

by Digital Dave

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

Best Way to Use Laptop with Battery; Black Screen with Cursor Only; Google Chrome Spell Check.

[Universal Language Translation—Almost](#)

by Jack Dunning

You Don't Need to Speak or Read a Foreign Language to Understand One

With the language translation tools from Google, reading, writing, and speaking foreign tongues becomes much easier—whether using your computer or smartphone.

[Make Your Own Drawing Tools for Windows Paint with AutoHotkey](#)

by Jack Dunning

Build Functions With AutoHotkey to Create Controls for Windows Paint (Or Any Other Program)

Learn how to use the same line drawing code over and over again by putting it in an AutoHotkey function. Then

draw a line anywhere in Windows Paint of any length at any angle using only one line of code.

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

by Wally Wang

Tools Define Your Thinking

Tools Define Your Thinking; More Confusion From Abstract Ideas; Complacency Can Kill; Adobe Replacements; Search Results SnapBack.

Worldwide News & Product Reviews

by Charles Carr, News and Reviews Editor

The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.

Cheapskate! If You Really Loved Your Her/Him You'd Give Him/Her This!; Compass Intelligence: Top Three IoT (Internet of Things) Predictions for 2015; Techland Invites Gamers to Help Create Modding Tools for Dying Light; Dying Light (PC, Steam).

Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

by ComputerEdge Staff

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

"Digital Signatures," "Drivers/Scan System," "Addition to Smartphone Captioning Article Above," "App Development Reality Check," "Strategic Business Choices"

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Digital Dave

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

Best Way to Use Laptop with Battery; Black Screen with Cursor Only; Google Chrome Spell Check.

Best Way to Use a Laptop with Battery

Dear Digital Dave,

I've been reading ComputerEdge for almost 30 years now, and finally have gotten up the courage to ask a question.

What is the best way to use a laptop computer in regards to the battery?

I use a laptop as my primary computer and run it 10-12 hours a day—two or three rechargings on some days. I'm wondering if there is a better practice:

- 1. Charge the battery and then run it using the battery until it needs recharging and repeat this cycle? This is my current practice.*
- 2. Leave the battery in the computer, but plug it into the wall and run it off the house current all day long?*
- 3. Remove the battery and run it off the house current?*

Thanks,

*B. O'Fallon
Denver, CO*

Dear B,

While there is no perfect way to maintain today's Li-ion battery in a laptop, your method is probably optimal. The problem is that what's best for battery life is not always best for how we need to use the laptop (or other devices such as a tablet or smartphone). Li-ion batteries have the longest life when they operate in a cool environment and are charged between 40% and 60% of capacity. But keeping one half charged defeats the purpose of the battery by

cutting down its running time.

If we leave our laptop plugged in most of the time with the battery in it, the charge will always be at 100 percent. The optimal charge for long Li-ion battery life is about 50 percent. But no laptop is designed to keep the battery charge at 50 percent. That wouldn't make any sense from the perspective of longevity while running the computer on battery power. Therefore we sacrifice longer life by keeping the battery fully charged.

Laptops that sit at home plugged in with the battery in it have the shortest battery life. Those computers that are continually on the move and with battery power being used regularly generally will live and last longer. If you fall into the former category and don't want to lose the battery backup by removing it, you'll find that you need to buy a new battery a little more often.

The problem I have with running a laptop on battery is that whenever I unplug the laptop to run off the battery, I tend to forget it. Then I get annoyed when I later return only to find that the laptop has powered down due to low battery. It can be a lot of work to keep a battery in shape.

Removing the battery and running off the house current is an option, (the battery should be at about 50% capacity when removed for longer life), but you lose the battery backup aspect for a laptop. If you lose house power, your laptop will go down. If the battery is in, you have an uninterruptable power supply.

If you own an Apple product where it is difficult to change the battery, you should definitely use method one—charging the device (laptop, iPad, etc.) whenever it needs it. This will optimize the time between needed battery replacements. This is easier to do for tablets and smartphones because it's rare that you would need to charge one of them more than once a day. But for workhorse laptops, it's unlikely that you will get through more than four or five hours (if that long) before the battery needs recharging—which is why we tend to leave them plugged in.

Digital Dave

Black Screen with Cursor Only

Dear Digital Dave,

Love your Web site. Dave, Help!

It might be a coincidence, but I downloaded Windows updates. Four days later I turned on computer and got a black screen. I can see a mouse arrow and move it. I did CTRL+ALT+DEL and I could see the box with the information I then turned the computer

off and I saw my screen as usual, but before it shut down I hit cancel and my computer stayed on.

It's not the monitor because it stayed on after that. When I shut down and turn the computer on again, it goes to black screen again. I also did a System Restore as far back as I could... still same problem.

*Miguel Flores
San Diego, CA*

Dear Miguel,

It sounds like your computer is failing to load the rest of the Windows system software. I would guess that if you Run (🌈+R) => *explorer* that the Desktop would load, although you will still not have all your startup programs loaded.

The problem is that there are many possible causes for this from a cranky USB drive to a virus infected system. I found [this page](#) which shows numerous different attempts at resolving the problem. Many of them worked for various people. It looks like you've already tried at least one of them (Restore Point). I would read through the suggestions and try the ones that make the most sense.

Worst case you may need to reinstall Windows.

Digital Dave

Google Chrome Spell Check

Google Chrome has an excellent spell check built in which will work in any Web editing field. Whenever it detects a misspelled word, Google spell check underlines the word in squiggly red. Right-click on the word and suggestions are offered. If you know it's a word (or an acronym that you use all the time), then you can add the word to your dictionary with the same right-click on the word. It even does some grammar checking such as the usage of "your" and "you're" (underlined in squiggly blue).

The problem is that people don't always know it exists or how to activate it. Plus, occasionally the feature will turn itself off. ("It can't be anything I did that caused the spell check to disappear.")

To activate the spell check in Google Chrome, right-click on any text editing field and select Spell-checker options (see Figure 1). Check "Check the spelling of text fields" and "Ask Google for suggestions."

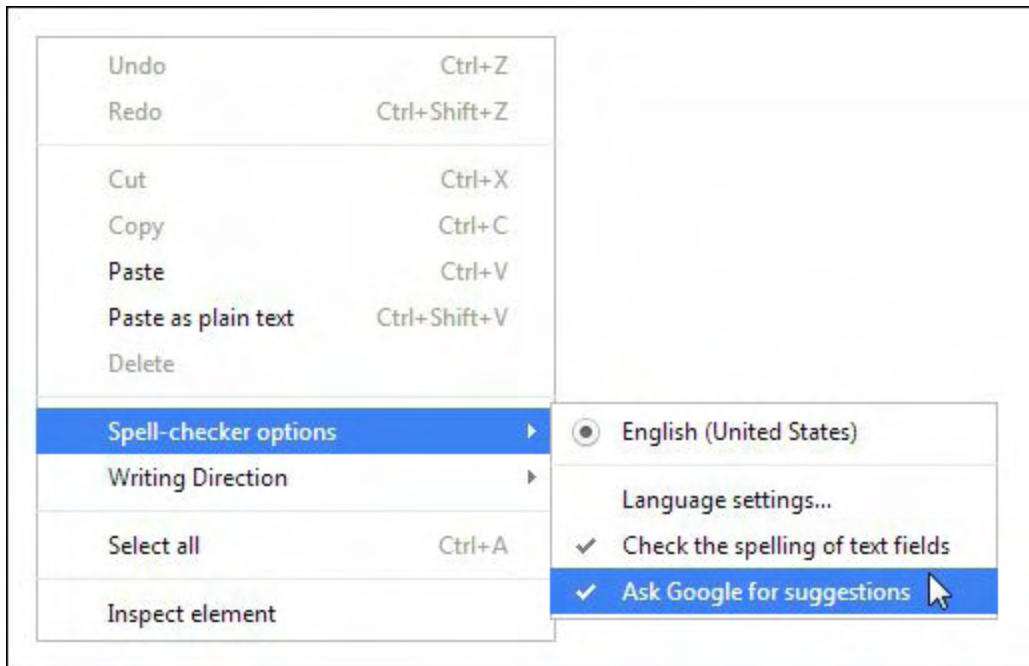


Figure 1. For automatic spell check in Google Chrome, right-click in any text editing field.

To use the Ask Google engine, you should open Setting => Privacy in Chrome and check "Use a Web service to help resolve spelling errors."

While many of my mistakes might slip into this column, there are vastly more caught by Google Spell Checker.



Universal Language Translation--Almost

“You Don't Need to Speak or Read a Foreign Language to Understand One” by Jack Dunning

With the language translation tools from Google, reading, writing, and speaking foreign tongues becomes much easier—whether using your computer or smartphone.

Science fiction has long been intrigued with the idea of a universal language translator. In [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#) there is a [Babel fish](#) which when put in one's ear makes it possible to understand any spoken language. In *Futurama*, Professor Hubert Farnsworth invents a Universal Translator that [only speaks gibberish](#). What once seemed a nearly impossible dream is now becoming a reality through Google. In essence the Universal Translator is here—although not perfect and occasionally producing gibberish.

Google has a set of language translation tools which runs through nearly all of its apps. (If you find the first translation feature in Google Chrome interesting, wait until you see the apps which follow.)

Read Any Language on the Web

A number of years back a friend of ours had a tragic event occur to her son in Guadalajara, Mexico. She was so devastated and the circumstances were so mysterious that we didn't feel right about asking her what happened. Since her son was Mexican there was no news to be found in US papers. My best option was to read a Guadalajara newspaper. Fortunately, even way back then, Google was working hard to provide language translations to Web sites. After

pulling up a Mexican newspaper in Spanish, a click of a button turned it into English. While the translation was not perfect, it was good enough to for me to get the facts...at least according to the newspaper.

The Google translation capabilities have improved and even ventured into the realm of the Babel fish. I can give it my official blessing as "good enough!"

If you're using the Google Chrome browser or Google search, reading a foreign newspaper is remarkably simple. (I checked Firefox and Internet Explorer, plus Yahoo and Bing search engines, and I didn't find any easy language translation capabilities. There may be extensions—especially from Google—but Google and Chrome seem to dominate this market.)

The first step is to load a Web page in Chrome which was originally created in a foreign language (see Figure 1). Right-click on the page to access the translation capability. Chrome recognizes the language and offers to convert the page to English (or your default language).

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Spanish newspaper **INFORMADOR.MX**. The top navigation bar includes categories like **Primera**, **Jalisco**, **México**, **Internacional**, **Economía**, **Deportes**, **Tecnología**, **Cultura**, and **Entretenimiento**. A secondary bar lists **Rotonda**, **Tertulia**, **Columnas**, **RSS**, **Informatel**, **Hemeroteca**, and **Portada de la Versión Impresa**. A prominent advertisement for a **CHEVROLET TRAVERSE® 2015** is displayed, with a price of **DESDE \$598,500**. Below the ad, a list of **Temas importantes** includes **HSBC**, **Aristóteles Sandoval**, **Panorama estudiantil**, **Reina del Pacífico**, and **Caso Ayotzinapa**.

The main content area features several news items. The top article is titled **Agenda metropolitana, el pendiente de Aristóteles**, with a sub-headline **El aterrizaje de las ideas planteadas al inicio de administración coinciden**. Below it is **Detención de Pérez Pozos es shock mediático, apunta diputado**, with a sub-headline **El legislador de MC, Víctor Sánchez dice no ver interés de la Fiscalía en el fraude**. A right-click context menu is open over the **Translate to English** option, which is circled in red. Other menu items include **Back**, **Forward**, **Reload**, **Save as...**, **Print...**, **View page source**, **View page info**, and **Inspect element**.

On the right side, there is a **DEPORTE** section with an article titled **Selección mexicana más barato para ver** and a sub-headline **cuesta 503 pesos**. Below this is a photo of a soccer player and a caption: **Será la primera vez que la Selección mexicana juegue en Kansas. MEXSPORT / ARCHIVO**. Another article below is titled **Fidel Martínez y Héctor Reynoso, dudas para jugar ante León**, with a sub-headline **Fidel recibirá doble rehabilitación por un problema inicial de esguince de rodilla**.

Figure 1. A screenshot of the Web site for a Spanish language newspaper loaded in Google Chrome. Right-click to access "Translate to English".

After selecting "Translate to English", the page reloads converting all of the foreign text into English (see Figure 2). While there might be a few grammatical errors, the translation is usually "good enough" to get the facts...as stated by the newspaper.

The screenshot shows the Informador.MX website interface. At the top left, it displays the location "Guadalajara, Jalisco" and the date "Monday, February 9, 2015". A weather icon shows a sun with "25°". The main header "INFORMADOR.MX" is prominently displayed. Below the header, there are navigation links for "First Jalisco Mexico International Economy Sports Technology Culture Entertainment" and "Notice chance". A secondary navigation bar includes "Roundabout", "Salon", "Columns", "RSS", "Informatel", "Hemeroteca", and "Home of the Printed Version". On the right, there are buttons for "Autos" and "Real Estate".

The main content area features a large advertisement for Chevrolet with the text "CALOR PARTES". Below the ad, there are "Important Issues" listed: HSBC, Aristotle Sandoval, Student Panorama, Queen of the Pacific, and Case Ayotzinapa. The date "Today 14:22 hrs" is shown above the first article, "Metropolitan Agenda, the slope of Aristotle". The article text reads: "The landing of the ideas raised at the start of administration, coincide". It includes two bullet points: "Executive ensures that governs with austerity and transparency" and "Aristotle Sandoval pays Second Government Report".

The second article, dated "Today 13:59 hrs", is titled "Pérez Detention Pozos is media show, says MP". The text states: "MC lawmaker Victor Sanchez says not see real interest" and "Prosecutor fraud". It includes three bullet points: "Wells Pérez, arrested for failure to property declaration: Attorney", "Disrupt press conference to apprehend Pérez Wells", and "Freed liable López Castro". Below this article is a photograph of a man surrounded by media.

The "DEPORTE" section is dated "Today 14:24 hrs" and features the article "Cheaper ticket to see the Tri costs 503 pesos". The text says: "Thursday starts the presale of tickets for the friendly against Paraguay in EU". It includes three bullet points: "Tri lists for drinks after friendlies: Herrera", "Mexico has more than 46 quality players mundialista: Herrera", and "The Mexican team leaves the green". Below the text is a photograph of a soccer player in action. A caption below the photo reads: "It will be the first time the Mexican team plays in Kansas, MEXSPORT / FILE".

The final article, dated "Today 14:09 hrs", is titled "Fidel Martinez and Hector Reynoso, doubts to play against Leon". The text states: "Fidel receive double rehabilitation for an initial problem sprained knee".

Figure 2. When the converted page is loaded into the browser, it appears in readable English.

You don't need to switch to the Chrome browser to get this capability, but you will need to use at least the Google search engine. When doing a Google search, Web pages which are recognized as non-English display a "Translate this page" link (see Figure 3). Even when using Firefox, Internet Explorer or another browser, you can use the translation capability by running Google search.



Figure 3. When using the Google search engine, pages in a foreign language display a "Translate this page" link.

Firefox appears to have a number of language translating extensions—at least one based upon Google Translate—and Internet Explorer seems to be stuck with one add-on, Microsoft Translator, which doesn't have strong reviews.

Create Your Own Translations

A young man in Spain has taken up the task of translating the e-book [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey](#) into Spanish. My communications with him have been easy because he writes perfect English. But what if someone wanted to communicate with a Spanish associate, but neither one of them spoke the other's language?

By typing "Spanish translation" into a Google search, a translation box appears for entering English text on the left and viewing the converted Spanish version on the right (see Figure 4). This is way cool! Now, if you receive an e-mail in Spanish or another language, you can cut-and-paste the text into this window. When I first started investigating the problem of breaking down language barriers, I didn't even know that this existed. It was a great surprise when it popped up.

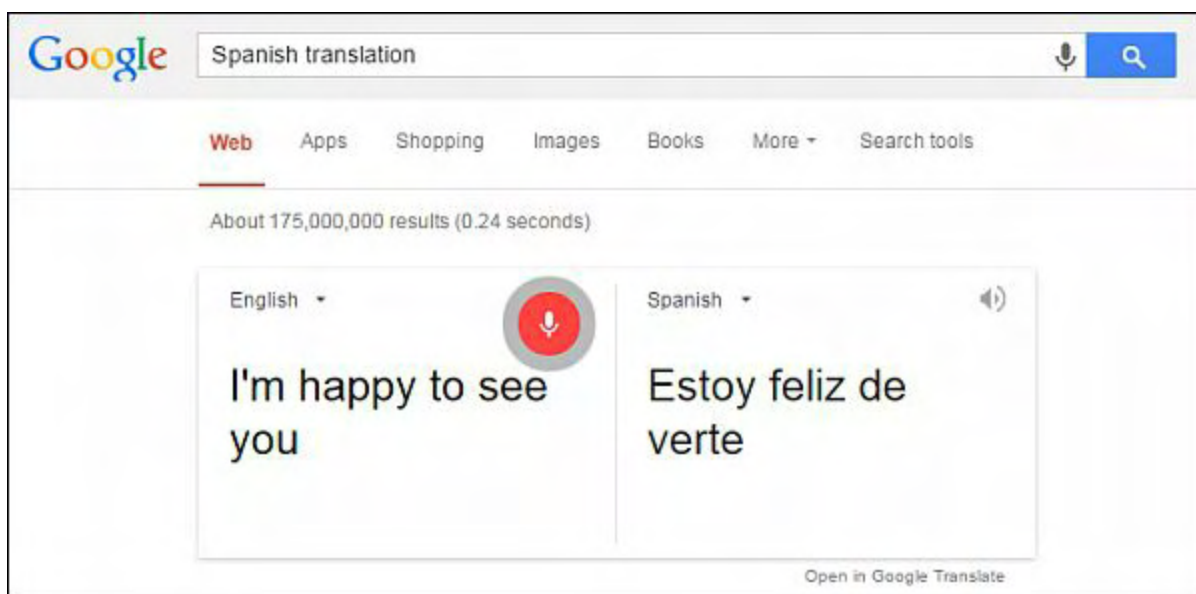


Figure 4. When doing a Google search for "Spanish translation" a window for converting the default language to Spanish

opens.

As you type English into the left side, the likely equivalent in Spanish is displayed on the right side. Even better, if you have voice recognition setup on your computer, you can click the little microphone and speak in English. It talks back in converted Spanish, as well as, giving the text for both. (This could be a quick way to take dictation—even if you don't need the Spanish translation.)

If you want to do even more, then click "Open in Google Translate" in the lower right-hand corner of the Web search feature. The complete Web based translation app opens (see Figure 5). While this app has all the same features as the quick app on the Google search page, it can be particularly useful for translating large blocks of text. The language can either be selected for each box or the box on the left can be set to Detect. Don't know what language your looking at? Cut-and-paste and Google will figure it out for you.



Figure 5. The beginning of a Spanish version of *Tom Sawyer* is translated back into English.

In Figure 5, the beginning of a Spanish language version of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* is pasted into the Spanish box. On the right is the English translation. If you know the story you will immediately see some of the issues which may occur. ("Silencio" should be "Silence," not "Be Quiet.") The capabilities of the software may not be perfect for complete accuracy and grammar, but you can certainly get the gist of what's being said. It seems to work better for common phrase and sentences usage. If you're not too particular, this tool is "good enough."

Google Translate can be exceptionally useful when you have no clue at all about the content of

the mysterious writing. In Figure 6, I pasted some text from a Chinese version of *Tom Sawyer*. The exercise causes a great deal of confusion demonstrating the difficulties of the translation problem. The app is at its best when simple, common phases are used. But anything with nuance or hidden meaning might produce unpredictable results or gibberish.



Figure 6. A section of *Tom Sawyer* is translated from Chinese to English.

While not perfect, Google Translate can be very useful.

The Universal Language Translator

Have you ever dated someone who doesn't speak your language and you fumble in theirs? The communication can be so poor that often the conversation includes one or two words about the weather and music before the uncomfortable silence sets in. The only solution might be to go to a club where the music is so loud that it's impossible to hear or be heard. That situation has changed dramatically with voice recognition and a smartphone—the new Universal Language Translator.

While working on the first part of this article I decided to check out what could be done with my Android smartphone. I was amazed at what I found. If I had owned this technology almost forty years ago when I was stationed in Rota, Spain, it would have greatly helped in my tour of duty. The app is called Google Translate and it comes about as close as I've seen to breaking the language barrier.

It's simple to operate. Touch the microphone and start talking. The app uses voice recognition to convert your words to text, then translates it into your language of choice. But that's not all! After translating, it speaks the translated text out loud in the new language (see Figure 7). (Professor Hubert Farnsworth eat your heart out!)

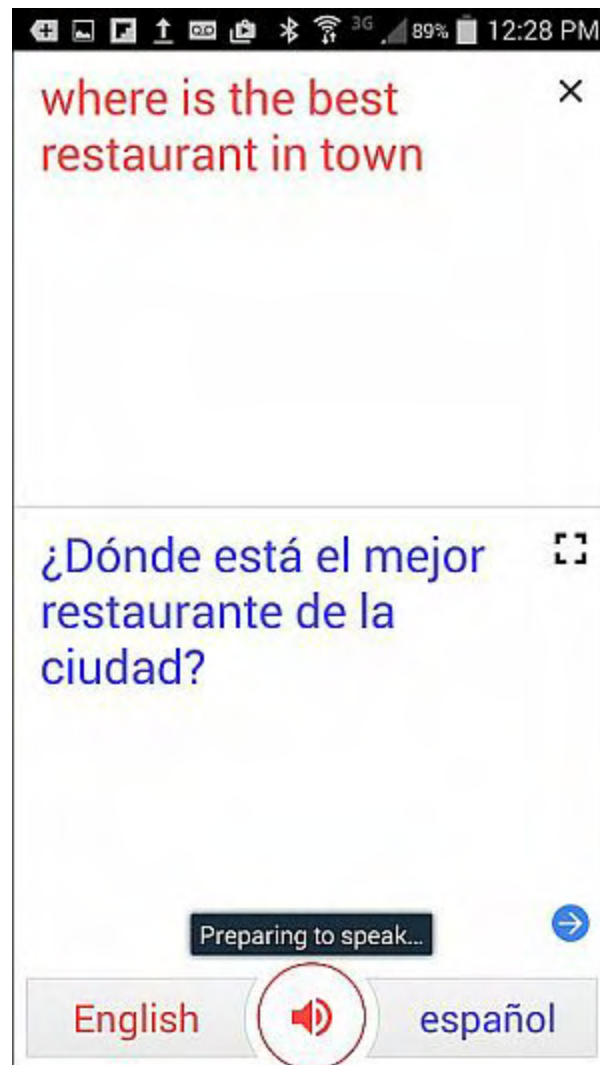


Figure 7. Speak into Google Translate to convert your words to text, translate them, then read the new words out loud.

That means you can ask virtually any question in almost any country, then point your smartphone at a person standing nearby and expect that you might be understood. (Of course, there is always a chance that the interpretation could make matters worse.)

That's not all. Checking out the Help screen, you see that there are a number of other features

(see Figure 8). You can use the camera to capture text from virtually any source. The images will be translated on the spot or from the saved images. It looks like you can hold a bilingual conversation with someone while the smartphone acts as interpreter. If you create useful phrases, they are saved in the history or to your phrasebook.

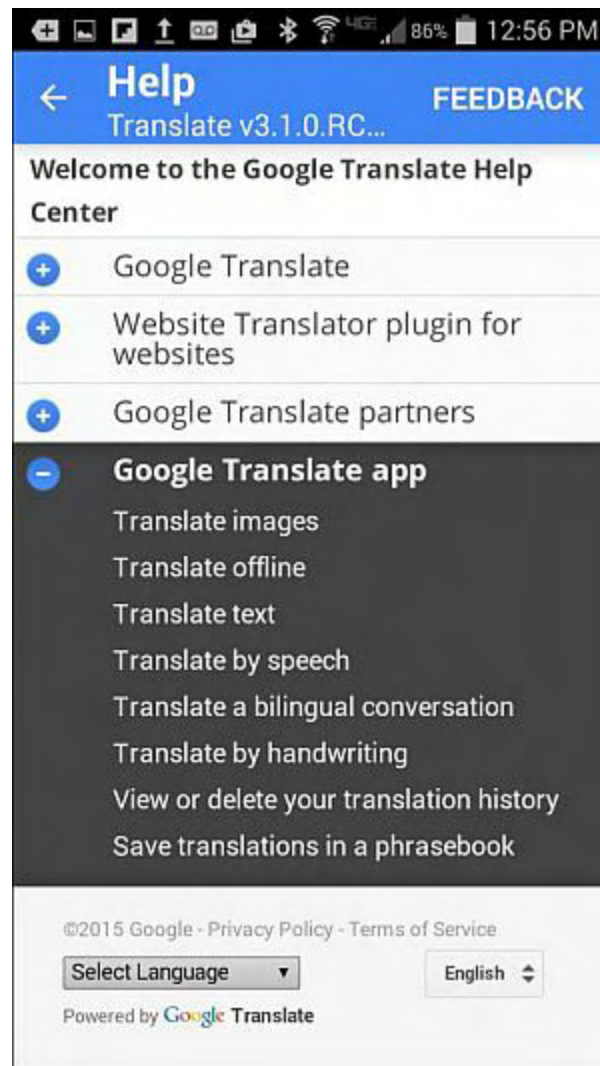


Figure 8. There are many more useful features in Google Translate.

While kids growing up today will take these language interpretation features for granted, I'm still amazed. It almost makes me wish I lived in a non-English speaking country...almost—except for the one time I spoke into the phone ("Hello!") and got back gibberish ("Bonjour!").

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:

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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!**

**Make Your
Own Drawing
Tools for
Windows
Paint with**

AutoHotkey

“Build Functions With AutoHotkey to Create Controls for Windows Paint (Or Any Other Program)” by Jack Dunning

Learn how to use the same line drawing code over and over again by putting it in an AutoHotkey function. Then draw a line anywhere in Windows Paint of any length at any angle using only one line of code.

Last week I discussed a short AutoHotkey script which uses the Pencil tool in Windows Paint to [draw a straight line](#) by moving the tool a pixel at a time inside a *Loop*. This is not the best way to draw a line in Windows Paint. The Line tool is easier to use and much quicker. However, the goal here is to learn techniques for controlling programs which can be used in other applications, not always find the one best way to do something in Windows Paint.

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

This week that same drawing technique will be turned into its own tool by putting the AutoHotkey code inside a function. This makes it possible to draw various straight lines without rewriting the code for each instance. Once the function is written, a straight line of any length and orientation can be drawn at any location on the grid with only one line of code. Writing AutoHotkey [user-defined functions](#) is a great way to build an app toolkit.

Tip: While testing the line drawing script, I turned the test code into a hotkey by enclosing it between ALT+D (!d) and the Return command. This way the script stays loaded and ready to run whenever ALT+D is used. After I make a change to the script, I save the file and right-click on the System Tray icon selecting Reload This Script. This makes it easy to alter and test the script.

Creating the DrawLine Function

User-defined functions are one of the best ways to build modular scripts while limiting the amount of code needed. If you find yourself writing the same code over and over again, then it may be time to consider writing it only once and putting it in a function. It is usually as simple as creating variables for the code, putting them in the function as parameters, then calling the function while including values for the parameter.

The short line drawing script from last week uses program shortcuts and mouse cursor control techniques to move the Windows Paint Pencil tool in a straight line (as shown in Figure 1). But it only draws one line in the same location. Let's turn it into a function which can be used an unlimited number of times with many variations.

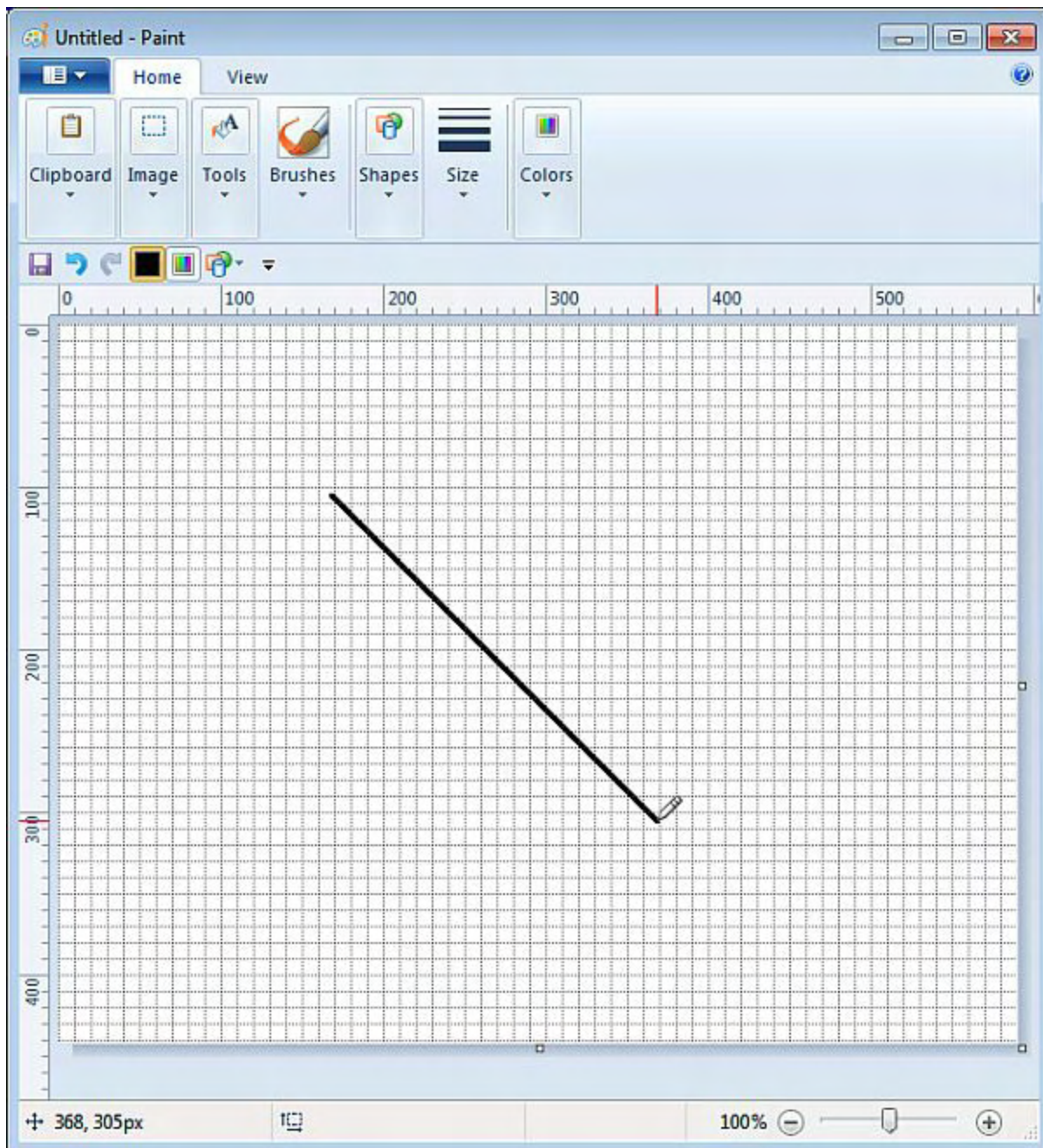


Figure 1. A straight line is drawn in Windows Paint with an AutoHotkey script.

Enclosing the code from last week with ALT+D (!d) and the *Return* command creates a hotkey for easy testing:

```
!d::
  SendInput {Alt}hp
  Sleep 100
  SendInput {Home}{Enter}
  Sleep 200
  Click Down 200,300
  Loop, 200
  {
    MouseMove 1, 1, 50, R
  }
  Click Up
Return
```

(This AutoHotkey script is discussed in [last week's column](#).)

An AutoHotkey function is a subroutine which can be run at any time by simply calling the function with the appropriate parameters. Functions are distinguished by the set of parentheses () which always directly follows (no space) the name of the function, i.e. *DrawLine()*. The set of parentheses may or may not contain parameters (values) which are passed to the function to use. If parameters are defined in the function, then the calling function must account for them—even if they have a zero or null value.

In this case, the function *DrawLine()* is defined with five parameters:

```
DrawLine (XPos, YPos, MoveX, MoveY, LineLength)
```

XPos is the starting position x coordinate, *YPos* is the starting position y coordinate, *MoveX* is the end point x coordinate, *MoveY* is the end point y coordinate, and *LineLength* is how many pixels or *Loop* iterations to move the cursor. The entire section of code in the function is placed between two curly brackets {} with the parameter variables placed at the appropriate spots in the script:

```
DrawLine (XPos, YPos, MoveX, MoveY, LineLength)
{
  SendInput {Alt}hp
  Sleep 200
  SendInput {Home}{Enter}
  Sleep 200
  Click Down %XPos%, %YPos%
  Loop, %LineLength%
  {
    MouseMove %MoveX%, %MoveY%, , R
  }
  Click Up
}
```

Note: Where the script previously included constant numeric values, it now uses the parameter

variables enclosed with the percent sign `%`. When AutoHotkey encounters variables enclosed with two percent signs, e.g. `%XPos%`, the value of the variable (which is included in the calling function) is substituted for the variable. This can be a little confusing in AutoHotkey since within most evaluated expressions the percent signs are not normally used for variables. As a rule, when adding variables to an AutoHotkey command, they are enclosed with two `%` symbols, but within expressions with operators, they are not.

A function can appear almost anywhere in an AutoHotkey script, although it is usually best to locate them toward the end of the file or in a separate file which is loaded with the [#Include command](#). To use the function simply add it to the script as a command:

```
DrawLine(200,300,1,1,200) ;Diagonal right down
```

AutoHotkey sees `DrawLine()` with the proper number of parameters separated by commas between the parentheses, recognizes it as a valid previously loaded function, and immediately runs it. The values found within the parentheses are matched respectively to the variables in the functions and used to perform whatever the code directs.

The following script draws the same line as that drawn by the original script above:

```
!d::
  DrawLine(250,350,1,1,200) ;Diagonal right down
Return
```

```
DrawLine(XPos,YPos,MoveX,MoveY,LineLength)
{
  SendInput {Alt}hp
  Sleep 200
  SendInput {Home}{Enter}
  Sleep 200
  Click Down %XPos%,%YPos%
  Loop, %LineLength%
  {
    MouseMove %MoveX%, %MoveY%, , R
  }
  Click Up
}
```

Pressing the ALT+D key combination while Windows Paint is the active window draws a line down and to the right. It starts at `XPos,YPos` (250,350) per the `Click Down` command. Then it uses `MouseMove` command inside a `Loop` to move the cursor `MoveX` pixels to the right and `MoveY` pixels down (1,1) `LineLength` (200) times. The mouse button is then released.

Now it is possible to draw any number of lines with the same function by merely adding a function call for each new line—just changing the parameters:

```
!d::
  DrawLine(250,350,1,1,200) ;Diagonal right down
  DrawLine(250,350,1,0,200) ;Horizontal right
```

```

DrawLine (250,350,0,1,200)    ;Vertical down
DrawLine (250,350,-1,0,200)  ;Horizontal left
DrawLine (50,350,1,1,200)    ;Diagonal right down
DrawLine (50,550,1,0,400)    ;Horizontal right long
DrawLine (450,550,0,-1,200)  ;Vertical up
DrawLine (50,550,0,-1,200)   ;Vertical up
Return

```

```

DrawLine (XPos, YPos, MoveX, MoveY, LineLength)
{
  SendInput {Alt}hp
  Sleep 200
  SendInput {Home}{Enter}
  Sleep 200
  Click Down %XPos%, %YPos%
  Loop, %LineLength%
  {
    MouseMove %MoveX%, %MoveY%, , R
  }
  Click Up
}

```

This short script draws the image shown in Figure 2, one line segment for each function call.

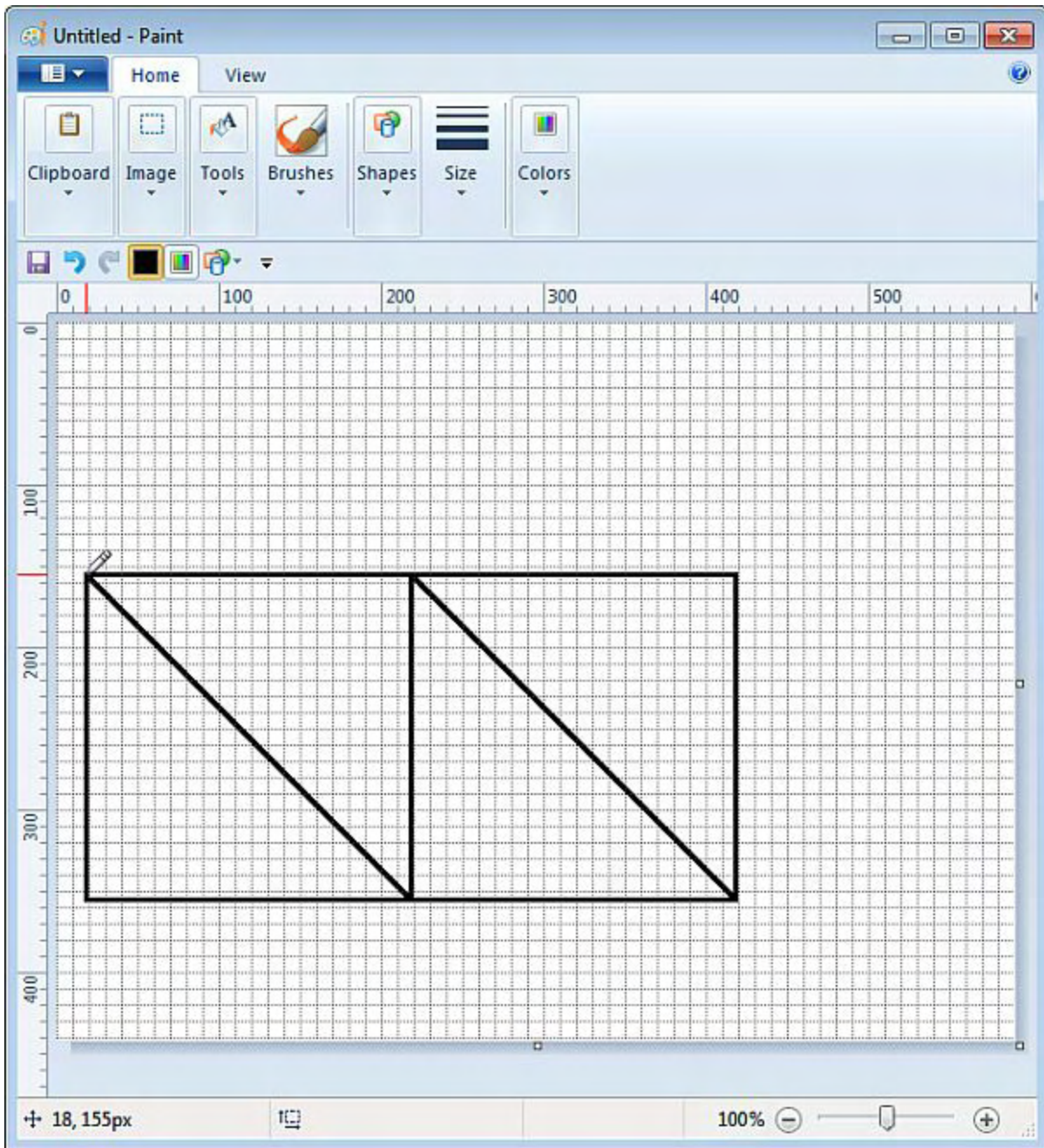


Figure 2. Multiples lines can be drawn with the same code by placing it within a function.

Using functions is one way that AutoHotkey script writers start to build libraries of tools. When properly designed they are easy to use and make apps more powerful with less code. If you find yourself writing the same code multiple times or continuously cutting and pasting code to other sections of the same script, it's time to consider whether you should be using a user-defined function.

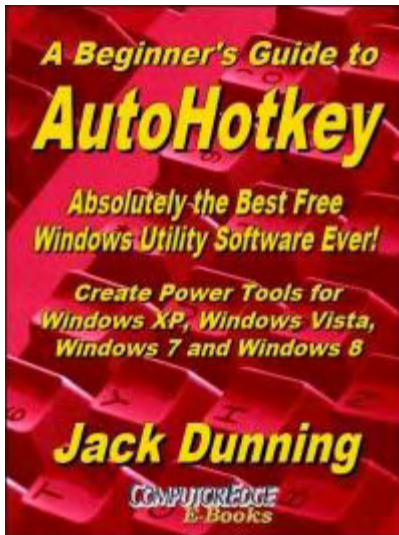
* * *

Check out many of the way AutoHotkey can be used! See these [Free AutoHotkey Scripts and](#)

Apps.

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

* * *



The second edition with more chapters and an index to the AutoHotkey commands found in the book is available in e-book format from Amazon (and other formats—EPUB and PDF— at the ComputerEdgeBooks Web site linked below). Jack's [A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey. Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8](#) (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey. (Also available from [Amazon](#) for the Kindle and Kindle software on other devices.)

Building Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8, AutoHotkey is the most powerful, flexible, *free* Windows utility software available. Anyone can instantly add more of the functions that they want in all of their Windows programs, whether installed on their computer or while working on the Web. AutoHotkey has a universality not found in any other Windows utility—free or paid.

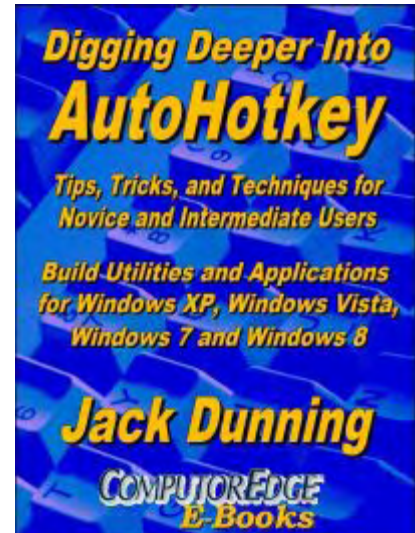
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of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

[For an EPUB \(iPad, NOOK, etc.\) version of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey click here!](#)

* * *

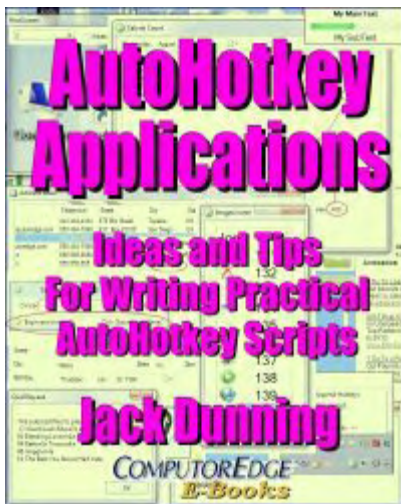
Jack's second AutoHotkey book, [*Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey*](#) (preferred, EPUB format for iPad, Android, and computers; MOBI for Amazon Kindle; and PDF for printing) is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputerEdge* is now available. Since the columns were not all written in a linear fashion, the book has been reorganized and broken up into parts by topic. The book is not for the complete beginner since it builds on the information in [*A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey*](#). However, if a person is reasonably computer literate, they could go directly to this book for ideas and techniques without the first book. (Also available from [Amazon](#) for the Kindle and Kindle software on other devices.)



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

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* * *



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

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

[For a PDF version for printing on letter size paper for inclusion in a standard notebook of AutoHotkey Applications click here!](#)

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

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

ComputerEdge E-books 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

“Tools Define Your Thinking” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

Tools Define Your Thinking; More Confusion From Abstract Ideas; Complacency Can Kill; Adobe Replacements; Search Results SnapBack.

Chinese is a pictorial language where the basic characters are simplified images of the items they represent. For example, the Chinese character for "mountain" is derived from a simple picture of three mountain peaks, the Chinese character for "sun" is derived from a circle, and the Chinese character for "land" looks like a plot of farmland.

	Ancient	Modern	Print
Sun			
Mountain			
Farmland			

Figure 1. Chinese characters represent pictures of items.

Pictorial languages like Chinese have one huge problem. Just by looking at a character, you have absolutely no idea how to pronounce it or what it might mean. Two characters can look nearly identical yet be pronounced completely differently and mean entirely different things.

That's why most languages are phonetic languages like English, Spanish, and French. Even if you don't know what a word means, you can often sound it out using common pronunciation rules. It's far easier to memorize an alphabet of phonetic characters that represent sounds than to memorize thousands of different Chinese characters with no clear pronunciation guide. Typewriters can easily handle phonetic characters, but cannot possibly offer all Chinese characters you might need to write.

Yet Chinese has one huge advantage over phonetic languages. In Twitter, you're limited to

sending 140 characters or less. In phonetic languages, saying "hello" takes five characters, so people often shorten it to "hi" to use just two characters.

To save even more space, common phrases get abbreviated as well such as LOL and IMHO. Of course, if you don't know what these acronyms mean, you have no clue what someone is trying to say.

Yet in Chinese, words often consist of one, two, or three characters, so typing 140 characters is equivalent to typing more than half a page in English. As a result, Chinese speakers can type complete paragraphs in Twitter while speakers of other languages can barely write a single sentence.

Basically, the tools you use to communicate influence how you can express yourself. Use the wrong tool and your task gets harder. Use the right tool and you can create superior results faster and easier. The key is simply knowing the right tool to use for a given task.

Yet the real world seems to care less about results and more about the tools people use. A programmer who knows C typically earns more money than an equivalent programmer who uses Visual Basic. The theory is that C is a harder language to use so C programmers deserve more. Yet creating programs in C will take longer and be more prone to errors than an equivalent program written in Visual Basic.

Given a choice between paying less for reliable programs created in a shorter amount of time using Visual Basic, or paying more for unreliable programs that take longer to write and debug using C, the corporate world prefers the inefficiency of C over the efficiency of Visual Basic.

The C programming language is probably the best language to create programs that need to control computer hardware such as operating systems, games, and antivirus scanners. However, if you want to create an office management program for dentists, using C would unnecessarily complicate your task, yet you would have to pay more for the privilege of hiring C programmers to take more time to create your program that risks being less reliable when it's finally done.

In the word processing world, the corporate standard is Microsoft Word, yet many corporate workers could perform their tasks using simpler word processors. Unless you absolutely need the advanced features of Microsoft Word, it's far more efficient to use an easier and less expensive word processor. For many people, Google Docs works just fine without the cost or complexity of Microsoft Word. Yet corporations insist on paying money for Microsoft Word and forcing workers to waste time wrestling with the complexity of learning Microsoft Word just to write ordinary business letters.

Why do so many people prefer complexity over simplicity? Perhaps complexity makes people feel like they've accomplished something, even if they haven't. When you value unnecessary complexity, you probably don't care if you can't produce any useful results since wrestling with complexity is the result in itself.

Most people prefer the illusion of importance without the risk of responsibility. Just study people in any business and see if they value producing useful results or if they prefer generating activity for the sake of looking busy and feeling important. Chances are good you'll find far too many people prefer to hide behind complexity specifically so they don't have to produce any useful results beyond showing up every week to collect a paycheck.

More Confusion From Abstract Ideas

Juan Pablo Vazquez Sampere, a professor of business administration at IE Business School in Madrid, wrote an article for Harvard Business Review titled "[We Shouldn't Be Dazzled by Apple's Earnings Report.](#)"

His basic theme is that Apple's record quarterly profits actually masks their inability to innovate. Juan asks at the end, "...by dazzling us with dollars, it seems that Apple's leaders are deliberately trying to divert our attention. By making such a communication effort to let us know how much money they've made—instead of what they've done to change the world recently—they are inevitably forcing us to ask ourselves, is this what we get from the new Apple?"

The crux of Juan's argument is that Apple hasn't done anything recently to change the world. Of course, this criteria could be applied to practically every company in the Fortune 500. What has ExxonMobil done recently to change the world? Nothing, so therefore they must be doomed. What has Home Depot done lately to change the world? Nothing, so they must be doomed as well. What has Johnson & Johnson done lately to change the world? Nothing, so their future must look bleak as well.

Juan's problem is that he doesn't define what it means to "change the world." He also ignores the fact that when Apple introduced the iPod, critics claimed it was just another MP3 player. When Apple introduced the iPhone, critics claimed it couldn't succeed because it didn't have a physical keyboard. When Apple introduced the iPad, critics complained that it was just a bigger iPod touch.

So when Juan complains that Apple has done nothing to change the world recently, he ignores the fact that Apple changed the world several times in the past with the Apple II, Macintosh, iPod, iPhone, and iPad, yet most companies never change the world once. He also ignores ways Apple is preparing to change the world again with Apple Pay that has spurred interest in mobile payments, Apple Watch that will spur interest in wearable computers, and HealthKit that will spur interest in real-time health monitoring.

Many hospitals are [adopting HealthKit](#) because "It's simple for hospitals to connect Apple's HealthKit to their Epic electronic health-record systems, said Dr. Shafiq Rab, chief information officer at Hackensack University Medical System. And it's simple for patients to connect their phones' data through HealthKit to their hospitals, and it's simple for them to connect their

Fitbits and their Withings scales to their phones, he added."

Apple also recently introduced their [Swift programming language](#) to make creating OS X and iOS programs faster and easier than using Objective-C. Earlier they introduced the first mobile 64-bit processor that rivals like Qualcomm and Samsung still haven't matched. With a laundry list of recent Apple innovations that also includes CarPlay, the MacBook Air, and Mac Pro, iBeacon, TouchID fingerprint sensors, and iBooks Author, how can Juan claim that Apple isn't innovating?

The next time someone claims that Apple isn't innovating, ask them to clearly define what innovation means. Chances are good they can't, which makes you wonder why they bother using the term so freely anyway. Perhaps they like sounding important and insightful without actually having to produce any facts in the process because, after all, that would require some innovation.

Complacency Can Kill

The key to innovation is creating something new and constantly improving that item until your product takes over the market. When Apple introduced the iPad, they quickly took over the tablet market. Despite slowing sales, the iPad is still the tablet leader. Beyond creating a partnership with IBM to boost enterprise sales of iPads, Apple is also rumored to be developing a larger iPad Pro.

Now look at how Microsoft deals with innovation. During the browser wars, Microsoft created Internet Explorer to wipe out Netscape Navigator. After they succeeded and dominated the browser market, Microsoft failed to update Internet Explorer for years until Firefox took a large chunk of the browser market.

In the game console market, Nintendo's Wii dominated the market with their unique wand control for manipulating games. Sony created a similar wand device, but Microsoft innovated by introducing their motion gesture Kinect that quickly propelled the Xbox over the Nintendo Wii.

Yet after dominating the video game market with the Kinect, Microsoft seems to have [lost interest](#) in the Kinect. Despite their still dominate lead in gesture-recognition technology, Microsoft doesn't seem to release new ways that take advantage of the Kinect which will likely open up an opportunity for a rival to take over the market that Microsoft ignored.

For years, Microsoft has offered their Kinect [software development kit](#) for creating Windows programs that could take advantage of Kinect technology. Yet Microsoft doesn't take advantage of their own technology to demonstrate the possibilities of using Kinect with Windows.

When Apple introduced the iPad, they demonstrated their iWork office suite to help sell more

iPads. When Microsoft introduced their Kinect for Windows software development kit, they seemed to throw it on the market and then shift their attention to anything but the Kinect. Then Microsoft wonders why they keep losing their lead in every market they once dominated.

When Apple innovates, everyone ignores it until they can't any longer. Then they complain that Apple doesn't innovate.

When Microsoft innovates, they take over a market and then do nothing until rivals take back that market.

Microsoft can innovate. They just fail to take advantage of their innovation until rivals show them how. Microsoft's long list of innovations is actually impressive. What's alarming is that every time Microsoft innovated, they got bored with their own product and let it languish (Tablet PCs, Kinect, Internet Explorer, SPOT Watch, Windows XP, etc.). Microsoft's biggest enemy is their own complacency and lack of a long-term vision beyond following others.

Adobe Replacements

Graphic artists need Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator, despite their high cost. If you're not a graphic artist or if you don't absolutely need the advanced features of Adobe Illustrator, it's far cheaper to get the much less expensive, but still powerful [Affinity Designer](#) instead for \$49.99. Like Adobe Illustrator, Affinity Designer includes most of the major tools you'll need to create and manipulate vector-based drawings.

Now the company that introduced Affinity Designer to challenge Adobe Illustrator has announced a free beta copy of [Affinity Photo](#), designed to challenge Adobe Photoshop. Like Affinity Designer, Affinity Photo will be far less expensive than Photoshop while still offering the majority of the tools you need to create and edit bitmap or raster graphics.



Figure 2. Affinity Photo offers a low-cost alternative to Adobe Photoshop.

Since Affinity Photo is still in beta, expect a few bugs and rough edges. Just try the program for free and send your feedback to the company so they can improve Affinity Photo. By the time Affinity Photo is ready for its official release, it should be stable enough for most graphic artists to use instead of Photoshop.

For anyone who needs to edit photographs or create raster graphics, you can spend a lot of money wrestling with the complexity of Photoshop, or you can spend far less money using a simpler but still powerful program like Affinity Photo. Once you try Affinity Designer and Affinity Photo, you might not need to use Illustrator or Photoshop after all.

Don't Forget the Macintosh

For the past 34 out of 35 quarters, Macintosh sales have [increased faster](#) than similar PC sales. With so few people buying computers for the first time, what's likely happening is that many PC owners are buying a Macintosh as a second computer. A much smaller minority is likely abandoning PCs completely and switching to the Macintosh altogether.

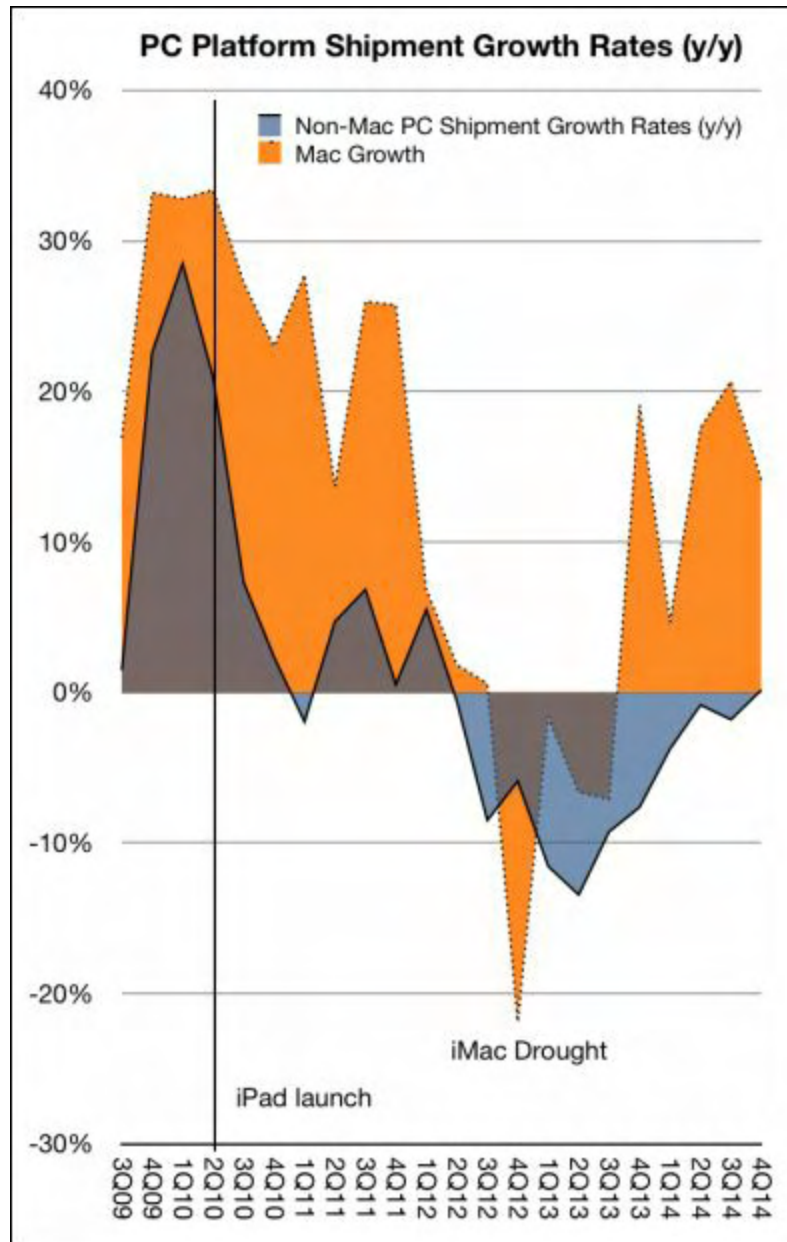


Figure 3. Macintosh sales have outpaced PCs sales.

The least expensive Macintosh is the Mac mini costing \$499, and you still need a monitor, keyboard, and a mouse. For \$499, you can get a Windows PC laptop with change to spare. So given these differences, why are Macintosh sales increasing and PC sales decreasing?

Judging on price alone, PC sales should be increasing, but they aren't. There are more Windows PC users so it's logical to assume anyone currently using a Windows PC would want to buy and use another Windows PC. Yet somehow, Macintosh sales keep increasing.

Obviously people who like Macintosh computers aren't rushing out to buy more every quarter just to keep Apple's sales up. What's likely happening is that many Macintosh buyers already have a Windows PC, so former Windows users are the ones buying Macintosh computers every quarter. The big question is why?

If you want to create iOS apps, you need a Macintosh. If you want the choice to run either OS X or Windows programs, you need a Macintosh. Other than iOS developers and people who need to run both OS X and Windows programs, why would a Windows user want to switch to the Macintosh? After all, that requires learning an unfamiliar user interface, but OS X isn't as alien to most Windows users as learning the Windows 8 user interface. So it's likely some people are avoiding Windows 8 by switching to a Macintosh.

Then again if people dislike Windows 8, why not just buy a Windows 7 PC, or use an add-on like Classic Shell or Start8 to make Windows 8 look and behave more like Windows 7?

If so many former PC users are buying Macintosh computers, perhaps there's a real compelling reason for doing so that has nothing to do with price. Maybe PC users simply want to try something different that might actually be easier than what they're currently using.

For these first-time Macintosh buyers, the appeal of the Macintosh combined with the confusion of Windows 8 is enough to motivate them regardless of cost. When considering any computer, look at both monetary costs and time costs. Is it worth saving a few hundred dollars initially if you may face years of frustration and confusion? A bargain isn't a bargain if you spend more time trying to get your computer to work than actually working on it.

* * *

If you search for something in Safari and then start wandering off to follow other links, you may suddenly want to go back to your original search results. To do that, just choose History > Search Results SnapBack. This will snap you back to your last search query.

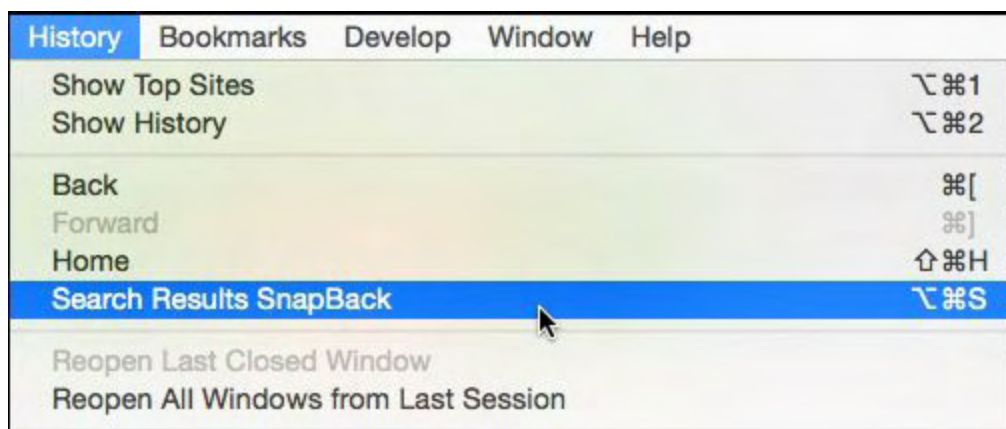


Figure 4. The Search Results SnapBack command appears on the History menu.

In the early days, before Wally became an Internationally renowned comedian, computer book writer, and generally cool guy, Wally Wang used to hang around The Byte Buyer dangling participles with Jack Dunning and go to the gym to pump iron with Dan Gookin.

Wally is responsible for the following books:

[Microsoft Office 2013 For Dummies](#)

[Beginning Programming for Dummies](#)

[Beginning Programming All-in-One Reference for Dummies](#)

[Breaking Into Acting for Dummies with Larry Garrison](#)

[Strategic Entrepreneurism with Jon and Gerald Fisher](#)

[How to Live with a Cat \(When You Really Don't Want To\)](#)

[The Secrets of the Wall Street Stock Traders](#)

[Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners](#)

[Republican Fairy Tales \(Children's Stories the 1% Tell About the Rest of Us\)](#)

[The Zen of Effortless Selling with Moe Abdou](#)

[The 15-Minute Movie Method](#)

[Math for the Zombie Apocalypse](#)

[How to Write a Great Script with Final Draft 9](#)

[Making a Scene: The Science of Scene Structure.](#)

In his spare time, Wally likes blogging about movies and writing screenplays at his site "[The 15 Minute Movie Method](#)," finding interesting news stories about cats at his site "[Cat Daily News](#)," giving advice to authors who want to self-publish e-books at his site "[The Electronic Author](#)," and providing the type of advice he wishes someone would have told him when he was much younger at his [personal Web site](#). Wally can be reached at wally@computoregde.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

Cheapskate! If You Really Loved Your Her/Him You'd Give Him/Her This!; Compass Intelligence: Top Three IoT (Internet of Things) Predictions for 2015; Techland Invites Gamers to Help Create Modding Tools for Dying Light; Dying Light (PC, Steam).

Cheapskate! If You Really Loved Your Her/Him You'd Give Him/Her This!

Goldgenie sent us this info about some new trinkets just in time for Valentine's Day. Drop that \$8.99 box of Walmart chocolates and start some *serious* shopping!:

Goldgenie proudly presents the Diamond Ecstasy Collection; a range of dazzling iPhone 6 smartphones, which are finished in a choice of 24K Gold, Rose Gold or Platinum and embedded with hundreds of light-catching diamonds.

Each phone from the Ecstasy collection will be unique and customized to the client's wishes, from the choice of precious metal finish and stones to the exact style of embellishment and personal engraving.

The Ecstasy stone palette can include traditional white diamonds alongside their colored counterparts in pink and black, sapphires, corundum, topaz, emeralds, rubies, tourmalines and tanzanite.



Clients are encouraged to participate in the design process to ensure their phone is bespoke exactly to their preferences and guarantees that the end creation will be truly unique. Personal sentiment may also be added through a laser engraved message, name or symbol. Prices for iPhones from the Ecstasy range start at just £10,000 and rise to £2.3 million depending on specifications and value of stones used.

Goldgenie pioneered the art of gold-plating smartphones in 2007 and...the brand has grown its international presence and recognition for quality and craftsmanship. Goldgenie are well known for their luxury embellishments on technology and lifestyle products and their unique touch and services hold great allure throughout the world.

Goldgenie counts blue chip corporations such as Blackberry, Aston Martin, and Rolls Royce and celebrities including Elton John, the Beckhams, Roman Abramovich, and P. Diddy as loyal clients.

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For further information, please visit www.goldgenie.com.

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Compass Intelligence: Top Three IoT (Internet of Things) Predictions for 2015



Keith Robinson, senior-level market researcher and strategy executive at Compass Intelligence has the following predictions for the so-called Internet of Things—probably the biggest buzzword I heard at CES last month:

Prediction 1 - The Connected Car Market is Primed for Robust Growth in 2015

4G/LTE is going to be the key enabler of new and exciting solutions being offered to customers. Compass Intelligence is also predicting that 2015 will be the year companies crack the code on how to maintain Internet enabled service renewals after the initial trial period. This has been a major challenge in the past with other services such as satellite radio. The value proposition is very robust with in-vehicle wireless broadband, and companies are developing new business models to increase renewal rates.

One question that was asked: "Why do we think the market is going to grow this year"? If we examine the sales of GM vehicles (GM is considered the pioneer in telematics/connected vehicles) in 2014, the company had a record year with 9.9 million vehicles sold. Out of this figure, the U.S. represented 2.9 million. It is anticipated that GM will have strong growth in 2015 and China will provide numerous opportunities. Furthermore, China is expected to provide solid growth for car manufacturers that participate in the country, and China represents one of the largest IoT regions globally.

From a wireless carrier standpoint, AT&T is at the fore to capture this growth in the U.S., because it won the contract with GM along with several other car manufacturers that are delivering innovative solutions. Not only is AT&T in a great position, so is Verizon and Ericsson. Verizon has developed strategic relationships/partners in this market such as Mercedes Benz, and is also expected to have solid growth in China in 2015. Ericsson, which provides the platform for the connected vehicle, is well positioned. Vodafone's acquisition of Cobra is expected to help accelerate the company's position in this space. The chart below provides a snapshot of GM sales.

The key factor that we see driving the demand for the connected vehicle is consumers. This is something that they want. The chart below displays feedback from a recent Compass Intelligence survey on in-vehicle broadband services. The study also breaks down this demand by age group. For example, the statistics are very telling with millennials because they want this technology more than any other age group. We expect this age group to be at the center of the battleground for attracting new customers for car manufacturers.

Prediction 2 - Security

The second major trend to look for in 2015 is security. We expect security to take center stage in IoT adoption. One of the key factors limiting growth in the IoT market has been security. With so many security breaches taking place, the subject is top-of-mind for governments, consumers and enterprises. With more devices being connected to the Internet, people are

really concerned. We see this in enterprise and especially in several consumer markets such as the connected home. We are predicting that 2015 will be the year that several companies throughout the IoT ecosystem will make serious strides in closing the security gap.

Prediction 3 - Increasing Competitive Pressures in all Levels of the M2m & Iot Ecosystem

The market for M2M and IoT has long been the focus of investment from the mobile network operators. Over the years, an ecosystem of MVNOs has created a niche for themselves in different application areas. Hype in the market has been high and the focus has been on the number of M2M/IoT connections. The investment community has been excited about the tremendous connection growth but now the conversation has shifted to "Where is the money?"

Compass Intelligence is predicting that 2015 will be a very competitive year throughout the IoT ecosystem. As companies position themselves as market leaders around the world, we are expecting increased M&A activity in the market. Last year we saw some great deals such as the acquisitions made by PTC, Vodafone and Kore to name a few. We are anticipating companies such as Kore to continue with its activity as it grows globally. Not only are we expecting to see deals in the IoT market, we are predicting that several industries will have deals, which will impact the ecosystem, customer base and partnerships.

GAMERSEGE

Techland Invites Gamers to Help Create Modding Tools for Dying Light

Evolve PR's Tom Ohle writes:

The release of Dying Light [see review, below] has already been met an amazing positive response from gamers around the globe. In their excitement, many PC players have already been creating mods that alter and revamp the game.

At Techland, we want to see more! As a sandbox game, Dying Light is a perfect material for modding. This is why we are currently working on free and extensive modding tools for the game. And we want players to tell what they would like to see.

We're inviting all Dying Light players to visit our official discussion board and share their mod ideas—no matter how crazy—with us here

Modders were a massive part of our gaming community since Call of Juarez 2 and Dead

Island—and we wish to continue that with *Dying Light*. This invitation is only the first stage of our cooperation with the gaming community. After the modding tools are released, we plan to actively support the coolest mods created by players.

We want to give creative freedom to the players to help keep *Dying Light* fresh and interesting even many years after their release. We want to thank players for the support they have shown us and are looking forward to their ideas where *Dying Light* can go from here.

Dying Light (PC, Steam)

Title: *Dying Light*

Developer: Techland

Publisher: Techland

Web site: dyinglightgame.com

Price: About \$60

Also available on: PlayStation 4 and Xbox One

Rating: M for Mature

Just when I thought that the "plague-outbreak-causes-a-zombie-apocalypse-and-now-the-fate-of-the-world-rests-on-your-shoulders" genre had finally hit the point where all games were just plain boring ... *Dying Light* decides to show up.

Dying Light is the newest game on the block to the aforementioned genre, and so far it looks to have taken the crown as the most fun one to be released yet.

Set in the city of Harran where recent virus has caused the population to turn into zombies, you take on the role of a GRE (Global Relief Effort) operative Kyle Crane to handle the situation. You are sent in to find a confidential file on a politician of the city by the name of Kadir Suleiman, in order to use it as blackmail to gain leverage on him.



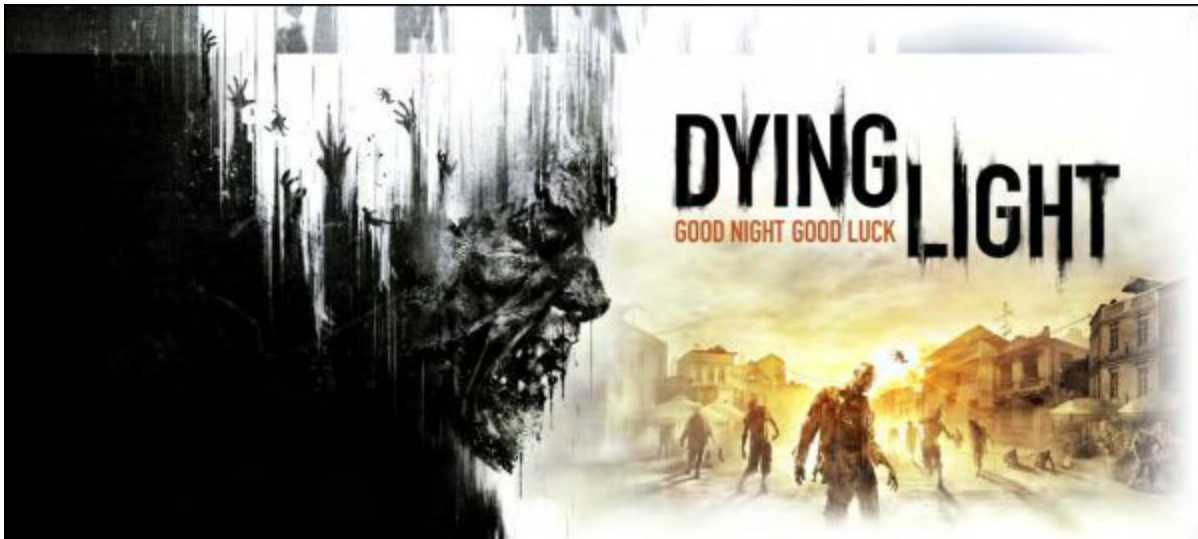
As you play through the game you are tasked with helping the survivors of the city, as they fight for survival against the horde and gangs of bandits that roam the lands.

I've only played this game for a little while, so this by no means is my final view of the game, but so far I am absolutely loving it.

It is set in an open world, where you complete your missions by roaming around the quarantined city. What this game has that I haven't found in any other game of this genre is a level of creepiness. Usually in this style game, you have your weapons and you basically are a one man army running through the undead like a hot knife through butter. In *Dying Light*, however, that approach is merely going to get you killed.

The game features an extremely innovative parkour that lets you scale the buildings and environment around you in order to get out of reach of the zombie horde. This is the only true way to stay alive, as everyone knows zombies have no concept of stairs, elevation, or upper body strength.

The thrill of this game comes from getting into fights that end with you being chased through the city, until you are finally able to get up and out of reach from sure death.



Aside from one of the most awesome feeling movement systems I've seen in a while, Dying Light also brings all of the genre standards to the table as well. It features weapon and item crafting, an RPG-like skill point and experience system, and an endurance/stamina aspect.

All these things, added together with a combat system that doesn't favor you running head on into battle, create a seriously fun experience that will have your adrenaline pumping more often than you think.

Like I said, I've only had my hands on this game for a few hours so I can't give you my full overall opinion just yet, but as of right now I can say that it is definitely worth picking up.

One thing to be aware of if you're a PC user is the minimum specs your system will need to keep Dying Light. I'm running an i7 with 12GB of DDR3 ram and a dated GTX570m and I'm able to get a steady 30fps at all low settings.

This game is a resource hog, so make sure if you want to have the full experience that you have some serious juice in your machine.

Dying Light is available for PS4, Xbox One, and PC for \$60.



Review contributed by Jeremy Halligan

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.



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Digital Signatures," "Drivers/Scan System," "Addition to Smartphone Captioning Article Above," "App Development Reality Check," "Strategic Business Choices"

Digital Signatures

[Regarding Jack Dunning's January 23 [article](#), "Scanning Makes Us Paperless—Almost":]

I used this technique to sign a Schedule Form on my taxes. But unfortunately I was too quick and applied the signature several times. Now I can't figure out how to erase a signature in Foxit. I wonder if it's even possible.

-Mike, Denver

You should be able to start over with the original document—if you didn't save over it. I should have said that the signed version should be saved with a new filename i.e. oldname_signed.doc. The manual says you can't delete a signature once it's applied.

I was able to delete the signature in Adobe Acrobat. I would guess any PDF editor would do the job. For now, I recommend you recreate the tax forms with your software and sign them again.

-Jack

Drivers/Scan System

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

James Adair's question reminded me that I also have a non-recognition issue. My (Win 7) device manager tells me I have a SONY DVD RW DW-D22A ATA Device. It reads CDs just fine, but tells me I have no disc inserted when I put a DVD+RW disc in. The DVD player on my laptop recognizes these discs.

I tried telling disk manager to update drivers by searching my computer and the Web but it said my drivers are up-to-date. When I type my device name into a search engine it comes up

with all kinds of Web sites offering to scan my computer and update my SONY drivers. I'm a little leery about letting them do that. Any advice?

-Mike, Denver

Short answer to letting programs you "find" on the Web scan your system is a hearty *NO!*, *NO!*, *NO!*

-Rich Ernst, San Diego

Right, got it. Meanwhile, what do I do about my half-blind SONY CD/DVD player?

-Mike, Denver

Hi Mike,

The best (and safest) place to get drivers and firmware updates is always at the manufacturer's Web site. In your case, the drive is in the form of [firmware for the DVD drive](#).

-Digital Dave, ComputorEdge

Addition to Smartphone Captioning Article Above

[Regarding the January 30 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]

Here's an update to the smartphone captioning letter I sent you earlier: This company CaptionCall has a nationwide distribution of captioned landline telephones for the hard of hearing. *Free!*

It is now rolling out a free app for iPads only—for selected states, including Florida—(an Android app is expected in the next six months or so), which will turn a tablet into a captioned telephone, using a Wi-Fi connection. Even for folks without telephones.

One half of the screen (probably a 7" screen would be minimal) is a keypad and buttons to command the operation, and the other half is a screen displaying the captions of incoming speech! I'll be looking in the Android app when it becomes available.

-Steve Johnson

App Development Reality Check

[Regarding the January 23 [Wally Wang's Apple Farm column](#):]

The topic of generating revenue by becoming a software developer has always intrigued me. Getting that software out to market is another challenge. The App Store certainly assists with that (albeit at a price to get in and a percentage price to sell). I always wondered how "likely" it is that any particular developer can make any money worth that initial investing. This [article](#) might offer some answers. It basically compares one popular app's revenue against its ranking in the store and estimates where you have to be to make money.

With about 1.2 million apps in the App store (according to a Google search), the top 6000 make about \$25K/year as calculated by daily revenue (which may continue after a year or fade after a few months). So if you think you can get into the top 10,000, and produce a few apps, it could very well be worth your effort to build the next big thing. If you're part of the other 1.19 million, you may make a few bucks or lose your initial investment of a few \$100 to "play" the app-dev game.

-Rob Spahitz, San Diego

Strategic Business Choices

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

Wally Wang's best column so far, despite his Apple centric bias. It's a synopsis for his book which is worthy of insertion in an MBA program. How do I know that? I have an MBA and had to read many case studies similar to the examples he cites.

-James Taylor, San Diego

ComputerEdge always wants to hear from you, our readers. If you have specific comments about one of our articles, please click the "Tell us what you think about this article!" link at the top or bottom of the specific article/column at [ComputerEdge.com](#). Your comments will be attached to the column and may appear at a later time in the "Editor's Letters" section. If you want to submit a short "ComputerQuick Review", or yell at us, please e-mail us at ceeditor@computoredge.com. If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit [ComputerEdge E-Books](#).

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Table of Contents

List of ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
San Diego ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
Colorado ComputerEdge Sponsors	2
ComputerEdge™ Online — 02/13/15	3
Breaking Down Language Barriers	3
Magazine Summary	3
Digital Dave	5
Best Way to Use a Laptop with Battery	5
Black Screen with Cursor Only	6
Google Chrome Spell Check	7
Universal Language Translation--Almost	9
Read Any Language on the Web	9
Create Your Own Translations	13
The Universal Language Translator	16
Make Your Own Drawing Tools for Windows Paint with AutoHotkey	20
Creating the DrawLine Function	20
Wally Wang's Apple Farm	29
More Confusion From Abstract Ideas	31
Complacency Can Kill	32
Adobe Replacements	33
Don't Forget the Macintosh	34
Worldwide News & Product Reviews	38
Cheapskate! If You Really Loved Your Her/Him You'd Give Him/Her This!	38
Compass Intelligence: Top Three IoT (Internet of Things) Predictions for 2015	39
Techland Invites Gamers to Help Create Modding Tools for Dying Light	41
Dying Light (PC, Steam)	42
Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers	46
Digital Signatures	46
Drivers/Scan System	46
Addition to Smartphone Captioning Article Above	47
App Development Reality Check	47
Strategic Business Choices	48