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Windows 10
Free to Windows 7 PCs!

March 6, 2015

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Windows 10, Free to Windows 7 PCs!

For the first time, Microsoft will give away the new Windows 10 to the vast majority of Window users. Is Microsoft crazy? Like a fox!

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Digital Dave

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

Net Neutrality in Switzerland.

Net Neutrality in Switzerland

Dear Digital Dave,

After Jack Dunning's article on Net Neutrality last week, I was wondering what your opinion is?

Joe Morgan

Dear Joe,

I did take the time to read [Jack's article](#) and for the most part I agree. The problem is that we have a government that thinks it can and should fix everything. Ironically, they usually make the situation worse. This time the FCC has bitten off more than it can chew—or even comprehend. The best that they will ever be able to do is nibble around the edges (and probably raise havoc in those narrow areas). Just hope that you're not in one of those geographic locations where the FCC feels a need to "protect" you.

The problem for governments throughout the world is the Internet's bigger than any one of them—including the United States. If they truly understood what they were dealing with it would be called a monster out of control. (People who do understand call it an "uncontrolled" monster.) No matter what any government does, there are ways for the many people "uncontrolling" the Internet to get around the feeble rules and regulations imposed by individual authorities. The Internet is not only bigger than the politics, but it's smarter.

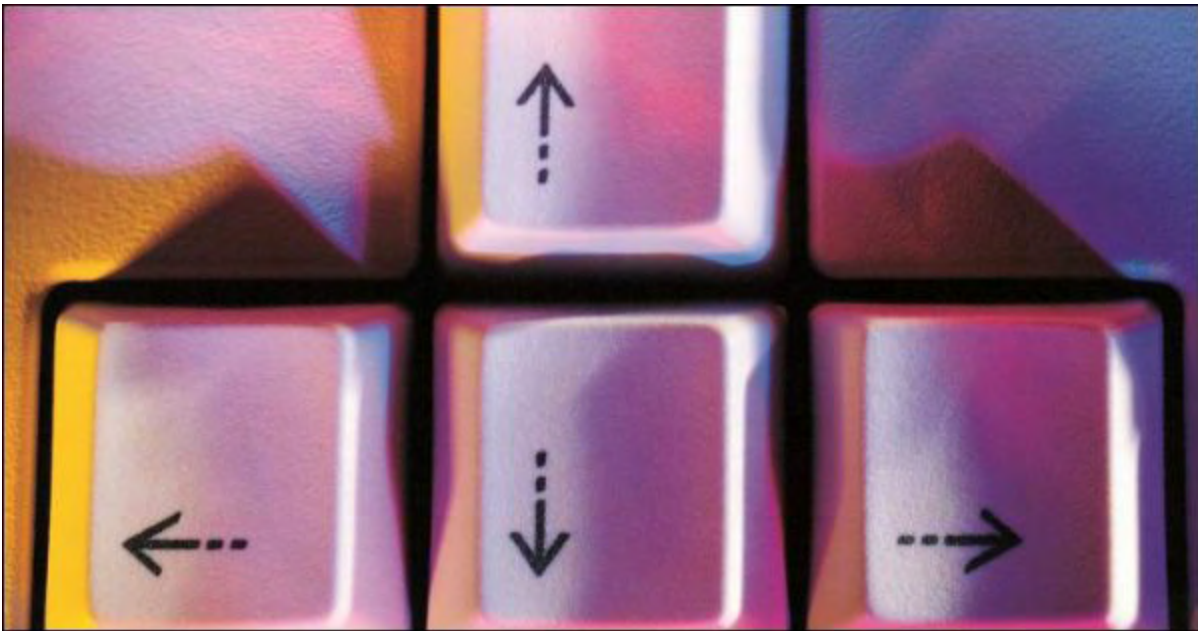
For example, no government has figured out how to put the kibosh on the [Darknet](#). People continue to find ways to use the Internet to "illegally" communicate despite the best efforts of bureaucrats. The backbone of the Internet will not be affected by any government—including the United States.

I'm not nearly as concerned about the FCC rulings as many others are. My guess is that they

will be distracted by some side issue or get tied up in court again. I tend to agree with Jack that most people agree on the concept of Net Neutrality. The argument is over whether government or the marketplace will make the rules. My guess is the marketplace will win out since the government is almost always way behind reality. (Just look at the 1930's law that the FCC had to use to impose its new regulatory structure.)

Most people will never see any impact from the FCC ruling. However, it is pretty good as a job's bill ... for lawyers.

Digital Dave



Microsoft's Surprising Windows Move

“Microsoft Announces It Will Give Windows 7 Users a Windows 10 Upgrade Free!” by Jack Dunning

In the short term Microsoft stands to lose billions by not charging Windows 7 users for Windows 10 upgrades. But is this a piece of a larger strategy which could mean much greater returns in the future?

Now Under New Management

There are changes going on at Microsoft and they may just be an improvement. It's too soon to tell and there will be many nay sayers, but the new CEO [Satya Nadella](#) is causing a stir at Microsoft—in a good way. After the myopic, blundering approach to technology taken by Steve Balmer, the former CEO, Nadella seems to have a lighter touch making some subtle (and some not-so-subtle), yet deliberate moves which could have tremendous positive impact on the company. So far he is getting rave reviews for the coming Windows 10 release. The clunky split personality of Windows 8 has been turned into an almost seamless system which acts like Windows 7 for the desktop and a tablet interface when used in one-handed computing.

One would expect that a new CEO would dump the failed themes of the past, but not Nadella. It seems that he's saying that the tactics and implementation were flawed, but not the overall strategy. It's as if during his 22 years at Microsoft, he was quietly making notes of what he would do differently while watching the ham-fistedness of his predecessor. After one year, he appears to know exactly what he's doing and he may be [getting good results](#). While reported without much comment, a decision that he's made in regard to Windows 10 may be his most

important. When Windows 10 is released, the [upgrade will be free](#) for one year for users of Windows 7 and Windows 8.1.

It was always thought that Windows 8.1 users would be eligible for a free upgrade to Windows 10. (If you're still a Windows 8 user and you want Windows 10, then this is the time to consider taking a necessary step by upgrading to Windows 8.1.) It hasn't been around that long and is the source of a lot of confusion and dissatisfaction, plus another stain on Microsoft's reputation. But Windows 7, a Microsoft success, was first released six years ago and runs on 56% of the world's desktops. It's unprecedented that such a successful staple of the Windows brand which has been around for so long would be eligible for a free upgrade. No such deal was offered to Windows 7 users for Windows 8 (considered fortunate by most current Windows 7 users).

Windows Still Rules the Desktop

Despite yielding significant ground to smartphones and tablet computers, Windows continues to dominate desktop and laptop computers. As shown in Figure 1 from [Net Market Share](#), Windows 7, Windows 8, and Windows 8.1 combine to make up over 70 percent of the PCs throughout the world. If the diehard Windows XP users are thrown in the Windows figure represents close to 90 percent. (Sorry, no free Windows 10 upgrade for XP computers.)

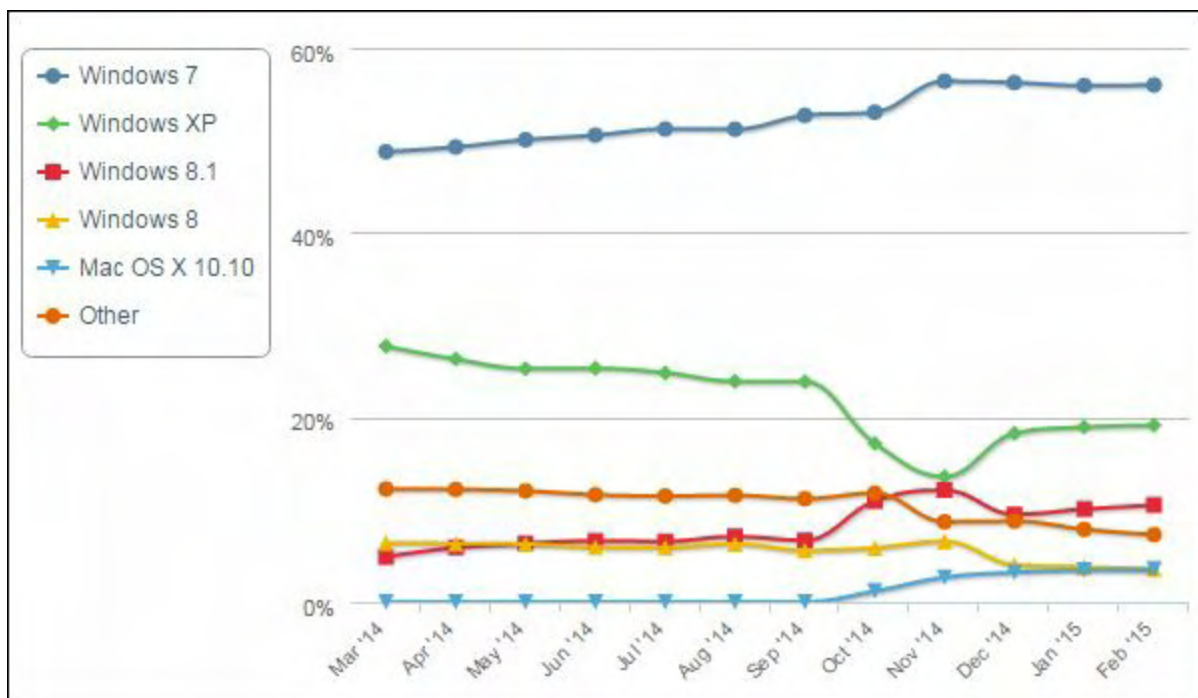


Figure 1. Windows desktop and laptop users represent close to 90 percent of the world's desktop and laptop computers (Net Market Share).

With the exception of the drop of support for Windows XP (and some strange numbers in the October/November timeframe) Windows has remained relatively stable. No one is in a panic


to go anywhere—whether upgrading to another version of Windows or switching to an alternative operating system. As long as a computer still runs there is little incentive to go out and buy a new one. This has become a major roadblock for Microsoft. It isn't helped by the fact that Microsoft often puts out duds as new Windows releases.

Even with the release of Windows 10, a product that most reviewers rate as excellent, to manufacturers in June or July and to consumers in the fall, there is no guarantee that there will be a general rush to upgrade or buy. It's likely that the Windows 8.1 crowd will jump on it since it was always expected that these users deserved a no cost upgrade, but they only represent 11 percent of the users. The real trick would be to get the Windows 7 (the old Windows XP) owners to switch to Windows 10. Not likely—especially if there's a fee.

There are two things required to get the mostly satisfied Windows 7 users to upgrade. First there must be a compelling reason to give the new operating system a try. Second, the price must be right.

Windows 10 for Windows 7 Users

Some reviews feel that Microsoft may have reached the goal of [appealing to Windows 7 users](#). "Microsoft went back to the drawing board with Windows 10 to develop an operating system that will be familiar to Windows 7 users but doesn't compromise on modern features." Unlike Windows 8, it's possible to use Windows 10 as if it were Windows 7 without ever interacting with the Modern interface—unless you want to.

The familiar Start Menu is back. It has integrated some of the Modern look by adding tiles (see Figure 2), but the basic form and function is the same as the original. I must admit that even though I've been using Windows 8 (now 8.1) from the beginning, I still find myself looking for the Start Menu from time to time. Working on the Windows Desktop, I almost never use the Modern interface. I look forward to upgrading to Windows 10 which hopefully will not jump to the Modern interface whenever I accidentally hit the Windows key ().

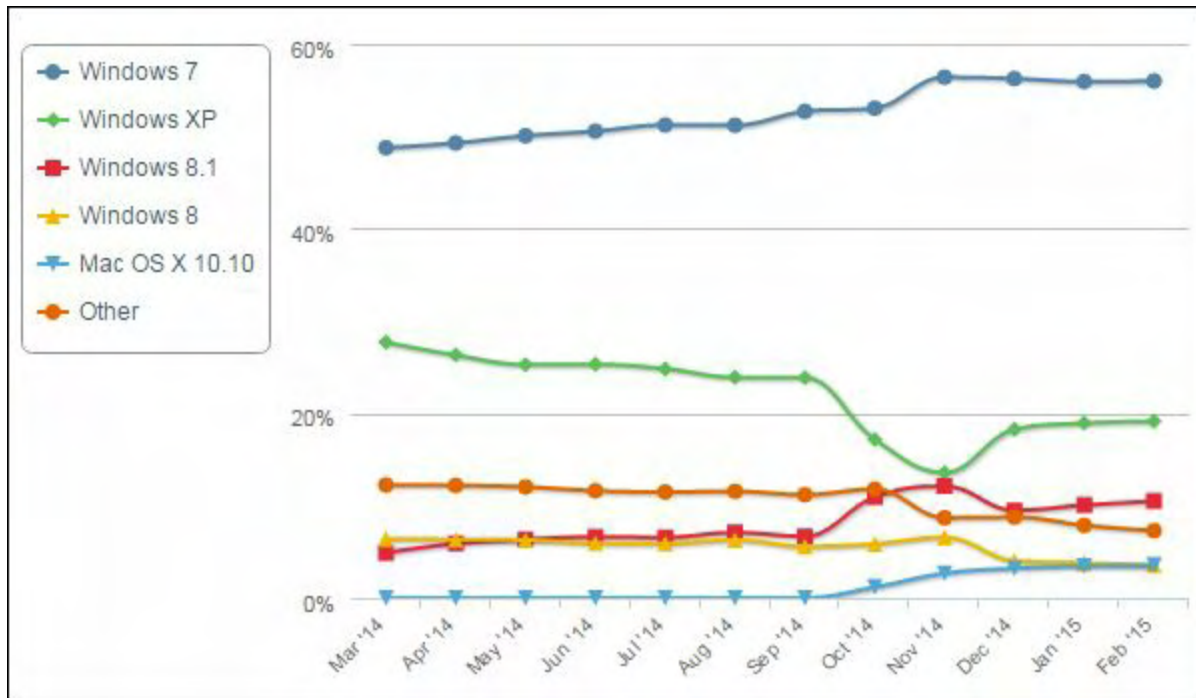


Figure 2. The Start Menu is back in Windows 10.

Another major change in Windows 10 is that all programs and apps will open in individual windows—just like in old days, Windows 7 and before. This will save much of the confusion caused by Modern apps opening in full screen in Windows 8 and 8.1 and blocking out the Desktop. While I haven't tested Windows 10 myself, by all accounts these changes are major improvements.

One advantage that comes with the Modern apps in Windows 10 is that many of the features once built into Windows are now available through the app store, loading and updating separately from the operating system. This has allowed the reduction of the system clogging bloat found in earlier Windows versions which bogs down the system.

Windows 10 will include the speed and power of Windows 8.1 (faster boot times and program loading). With all of the other retrofits, Windows 10 will have more of the look and feel of Windows 7 than Windows 8 ever did. From the performance aspect, it seems that Windows 7 users will have plenty of reason to upgrade—especially if it's free.

Windows 10 Free for Windows 7 Users

At first glance, it seems odd that Microsoft would offer a free upgrade to Windows 7 users. These are loyal Windows users who are likely to choose Windows in the future when they do decide to upgrade or buy a new computer. In the past, there was no way that Microsoft would allow these prime users would get away without paying. However, times have changed.

One thing proven by the recalcitrant Windows XP users is that a new version of Windows no

longer inspires an immediate move. PC users who like their computer will not easily change. Throw in any other obstacles whether product issues or pricing and they are content to sit and wait indefinitely. The introduction of Windows 10—even if it is a better operating system—is no guarantee that Windows 7 users will switch. Offering a free upgrade for one year will get the attention of 1.5 billion current Windows 7 users and cause hundreds of million upgrades. But, that doesn't tell us why Microsoft is willing to forego the immense revenues that could be generated by those who do want the new version of Windows in favor of giving it away.

There is more than short-term earnings at stake with the release of Windows 10. While Microsoft rules the PC market, it has barely made a dent in the smartphone and tablet arena. As these two devices are siphoning off many of the old PC uses, Microsoft is losing total share in the high-tech economy. Microsoft wants into the mobile market and sees its dual use Windows 10 as the route. If an almost seamless PC/smartphone/tablet operating system can get installed on hundreds of millions of the estimated 1.5 billion Windows computers in the world, then suddenly those users will all be looking at Modern apps which can run on not only PCs, but Windows smartphone and tablets. If the prospects like the apps they see on their computer, then they may just want the same universal app on their handheld devices.

Plus, hundreds of millions of new Windows 10 computers will spark the growth of third-party app development. Get people to switch to Windows 10 and there are more incentives for developers to get to work on Modern apps—which will incidentally also run on Windows phones and tablets. That means more Windows app developers, more phone users and more tablet users.

The key to this free Windows 7 upgrade to Windows 10 is the quality of the new product. If Windows 10 is just another version of the same old thing (yawn), then it will be a costly mistake for Microsoft. On the other hand, if the new product is as good as many reviews claim, then Nadella may have changed the game for decades to come.

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

Controlling More Windows Paint Tools with

AutoHotkey

“Yet, One More Reason to Use AutoHotkey Free Software!” by Jack Dunning
Another step is taken toward making AutoHotkey tools for controlling Windows programs.

A few weeks ago I wrote an AutoHotkey function which draws a [straight line in Windows Paint](#) using the Pencil tool. It was a little slow but it did the job (as long as the mouse isn't moved while the script is in action). Just for fun, I tried out the same function with different drawing tools in Windows Paint with some interesting results. We'll take a look at some tools, modify the function to speed up operations, and show how to block any interference from an inadvertent manual movement of the mouse.

Other Windows Paint Tools

There are quite a few drawing tools which make a variety of shapes. The problem with many of them is their operation is enigmatic. Click and hold to start, then drag. Then click again and drag for the next part. There may be three, four, or more clicks necessary before the shape is completed. Even then it is very difficult to manually replicate a particular shape. The advantage of using a script is exact shapes can be made (once the tool is understood) and repeated as often as necessary. (This is similar to the type of programming needed in any machine control.)

[To review how the scripts in this column work click the ["View Columns Last Six Month"](#) link at the top of this column. The discussion starts with the January 30 AutoHotkey column.]

Making Squiggles



I started with the Curve tool which is the second selection in the shapes palette. Using the same script code which introduced the drawing function, the script is modified to use the Curve tool. The resulting image is displayed in Figure 1. It was fascinating to watch the AutoHotkey script do its work as the Curve tool moved and manipulated the image it was drawing. The slow moving tool demonstrated how it responded to the data in the script providing more insight into how it may be used in drawing creations.

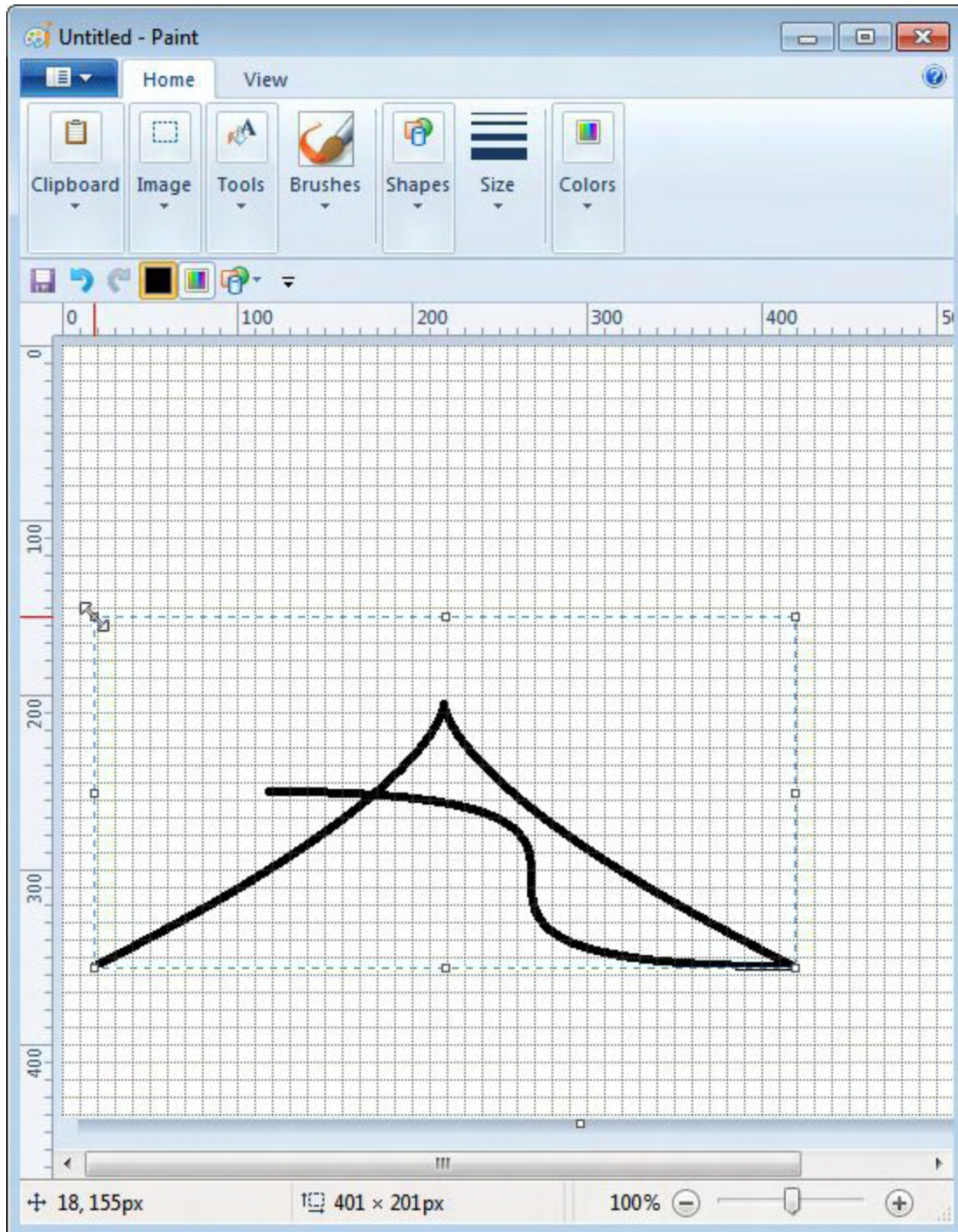


Figure 1. The curve tool is capable of making squiggles and other irregular shapes.

The original script is rewritten to use the Curve tool:

```
!d::
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 1, 1, 200)
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 1, 0, 200)
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 0, 1, 200)
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, -1, 0, 200)
  DrawSquiggle (50, 350, 1, 1, 100)
  DrawSquiggle (50, 550, 1, 0, 400)
  DrawSquiggle (450, 550, 0, -1, 200)
  DrawSquiggle (50, 550, 0, -1, 200)
Return

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

Since the Curve tool is just to the right of the Line tool in the shapes palette, it was only necessary to move 1 to the right (*SendInput {Home}{Right}{Enter}*). The function name was changed to *DrawSquiggle()*.

Speeding Up the Function

As with the original function, *DrawSquiggle()* only moves one pixel at a time making the process pretty slow. But unlike the Pencil tool, the Curve tool will always respond in the same manner without using the *Loop*. Therefore the function can be rewritten to eliminate the Loop and use the endpoints (*MoveX, MoveY*) directly:

```
!d::
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 200, 200, 200) ;Diagonal right down
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 200, 0, 200) ;Horizontal right
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, 0, 200, 200) ;Vertical down
  DrawSquiggle (250, 350, -200, 0, 200) ;Horizontal left
  DrawSquiggle (50, 350, 100, 100, 100) ;Diagonal right down
  DrawSquiggle (50, 550, 400, 0, 400) ;Horizontal right long
  DrawSquiggle (450, 550, 0, -200, 200) ;Vertical up
  DrawSquiggle (50, 550, 0, -200, 200) ;Vertical up
Return

DrawSquiggle (XPos, YPos, MoveX, MoveY, LineLength)
{
```

```

SendInput {Alt}hsh
Sleep 200
SendInput {Home}{Right}{Enter}
Sleep 200
Click Down %XPos%,%YPos%
MouseMove %MoveX%, %MoveY%, , R
Click Up
}

```

This script runs much faster since with the *Loop* removed it does not need to increment through each pixel. Rather than *MoveX* and *MoveY* containing single pixel increments (or 0), they now are changed to represent the endpoints. As the *Loop* is removed from the function, the variable *LineLength* is no longer used. It could be removed as a function parameter, but it is harmless to leave it in as long as the number of parameters passed to the function match with the number required by the function. It is possible that in another modification of the function *LineLength* will be needed again.

Temporarily Deactivating the Mouse

If you've run any of these AutoHotkey snippets, you may have noticed that actual mouse movement can cause a problem. If the mouse is accidentally moved manually during the script routine, it can cause the shape to be distorted. The best way to prevent this is to deactivate the mouse while the script is doing its work. This is done with the [BlockInput command](#).

By adding the `BlockInput` command at the appropriate places in the *DrawSquiggle()* function, the mouse is deactivated only in the script that is actively drawing:

```

DrawSquiggle (XPos, YPos, MoveX, MoveY, LineLength)
{
    BlockInput, MouseMove
    SendInput {Alt}hsh
    Sleep 200
    SendInput {Home}{Right}{Enter}
    Sleep 200
    Click Down %XPos%,%YPos%
    Move %MoveX%, %MoveY%, , R
    Click Up
    BlockInput, MouseMoveOff
}

```

In the beginning of the function, the mouse is turned off with *BlockInput, MouseMove*. At the end of the function the mouse is turned back on with *BlockInput, MouseMoveOff*. The problem of accidental manual mouse movements messing up the image is eliminated.

A Couple More Tools

Out of curiosity I tried the same function (renamed) with a couple of the other tools. I only needed to change the input data a little and the line of code in the function which selects the tool. The first test was run with the Polygon tool (see Figure 2).

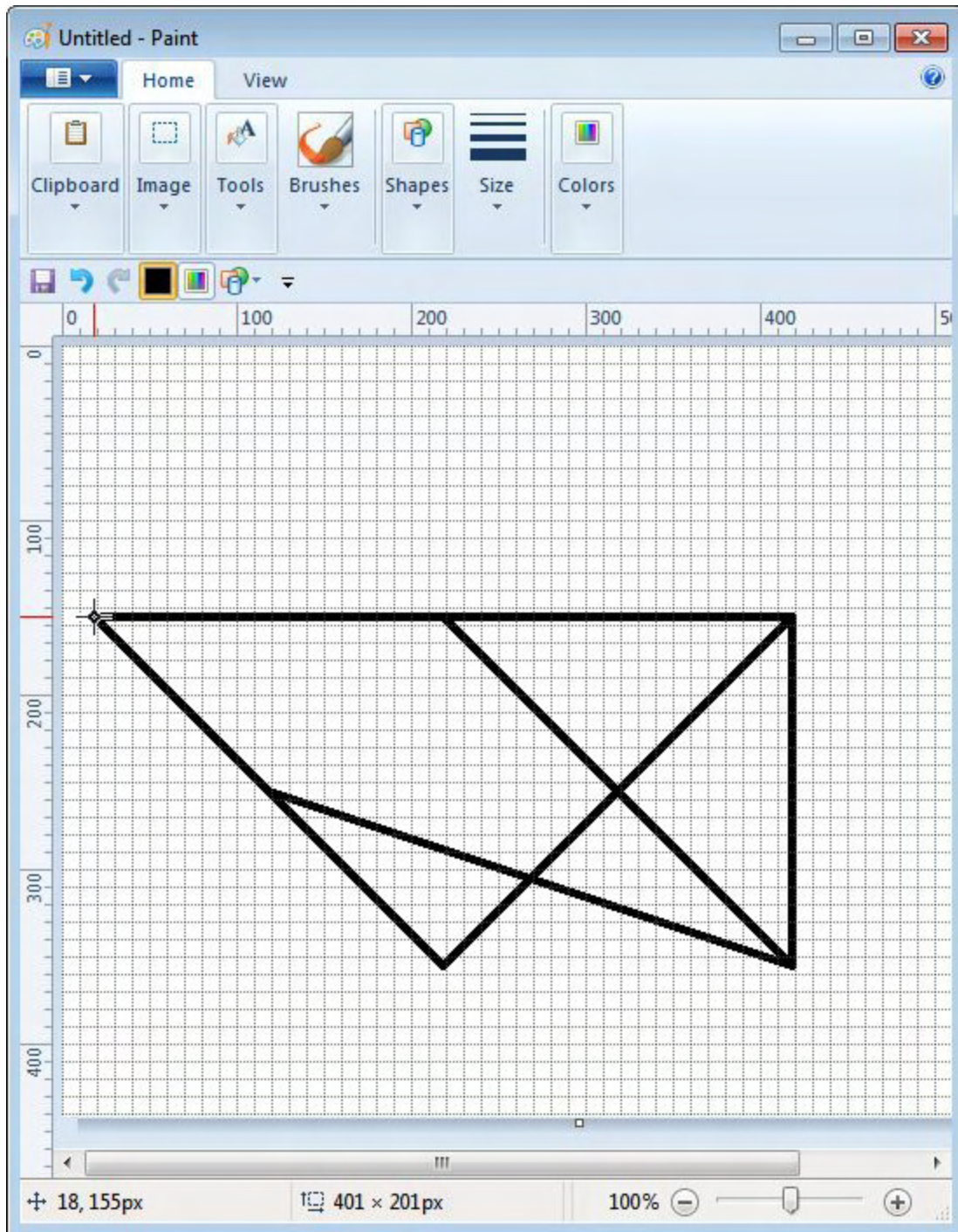


Figure 2. An AutoHotkey script which uses the Polygon tool in Windows Paint.

The input data used with the original script (including the *Loop* in the function) is as follows:

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

```

DrawPolygon(250,350,1,0,200) ;Horizontal right
DrawPolygon(250,350,0,1,200) ;Vertical down
DrawPolygon(250,350,-1,0,200) ;Horizontal left
DrawPolygon(50,350,1,1,100) ;Diagonal right down
DrawPolygon(50,550,1,0,400) ;Horizontal right long
DrawPolygon(450,550,0,-1,200) ;Vertical up
DrawPolygon(50,550,0,-1,200) ;Vertical up
Return

```

The tool selection line in the function was changed to select the Polygon (*SendInput {Home} {Right 5}{Enter}*). Note that the name of the function was change to *DrawPolygon()*. This renaming is important for eliminating conflicts if you plan to include all of the various drawing functions in one AutoHotkey script. Ultimately, I plan to make the various routines selectable with a pop-up window—pick the shape, enter size and location, and submit.

The other tool tested was the four-point star where I called the function *DrawNova()* (see Figure 3). Using the same input data as above the selection line was changed to *SendInput {Home}{Right 1}{Down 2}{Enter}* since the tool appears in the third row *{Down 2}* of the shapes palette.

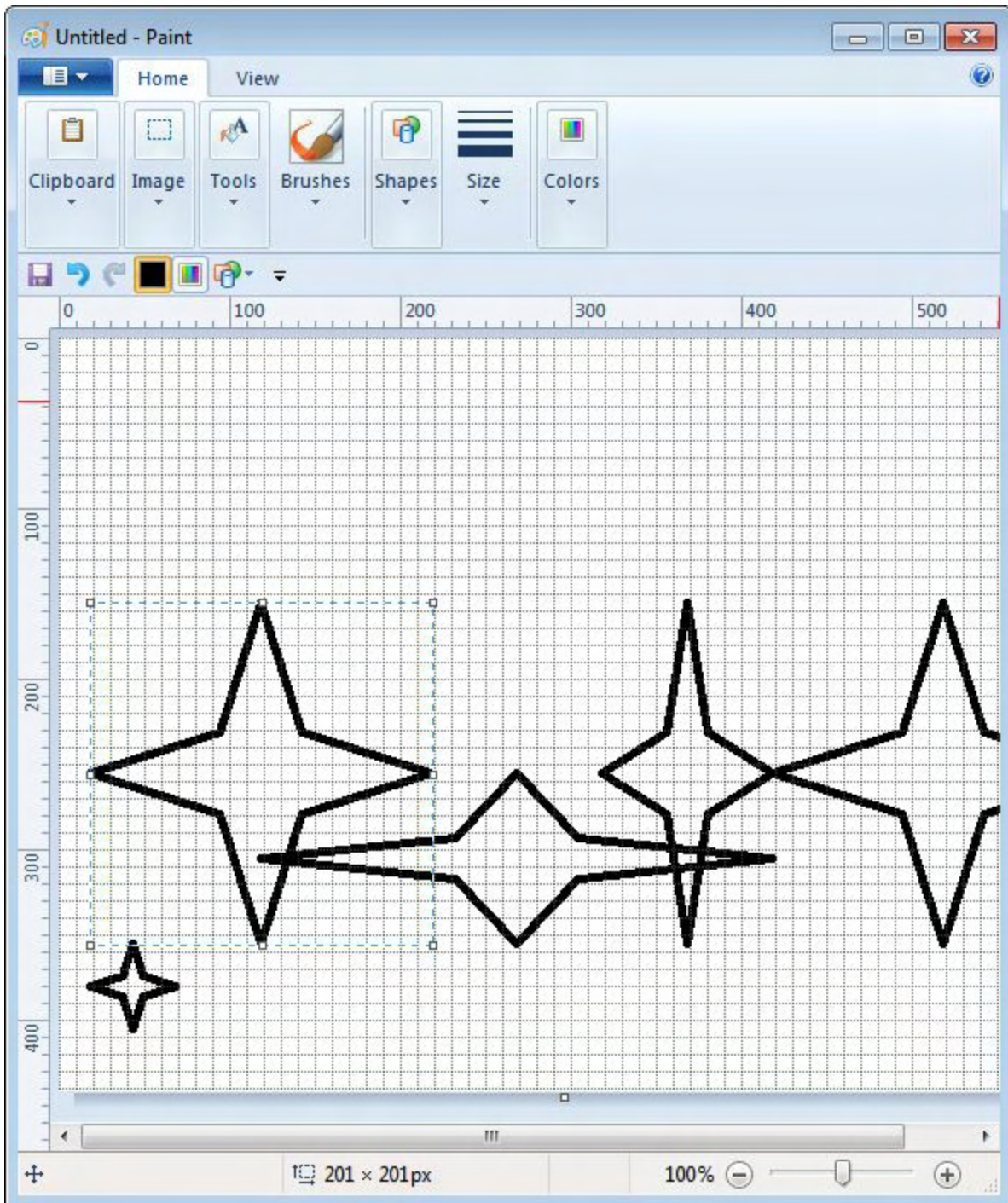


Figure 3. Four-point stars drawn with an AutoHotkey script.

The more I work with controlling programs with AutoHotkey, the more I see the possibilities. One problem with Windows Paint is that it always opens with some of the same saved settings from the last session (font, font size, bold, italics, etc.), but resets other settings to defaults (linewidth, colors, etc.) when the program is reloaded. By using a short AutoHotkey script, the settings can be automatically reset for a particular use after opening Paint. This would save the manual selection process required to reset numerous options with the mouse. These techniques would apply equally to almost any other Windows program which requires a different setup

for different projects.

* * *

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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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Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Price of Complacency” by Wally Wang

Wally Wang's Apple Farm

The Price of Complacency; David and Goliath; Profit vs. Market Share; Apple's March 9 Event; OS X Anti-Virus Programs; The Future for Developers is Mobile; Block Cookies.

At one time, practically every corporation passed out Blackberry smartphones like a badge of honor. If your company gave you a Blackberry, that meant you had finally made it. With a firm grip on the corporate market, Blackberry was the undisputed leader.

While Blackberry focused on minor improvements and remained fixated on the importance of physical keyboards, the iPhone and Android phones soon exploded in popularity. Blackberry tried to compete with their own touchscreen interface in the [Blackberry Storm](#) but it didn't work as well. One problem Blackberry faced was that they were touting the superiority of physical keyboards, then they were offering a touchscreen Blackberry Storm that didn't have a physical keyboard.

First, Blackberry failed to see that touchscreen interfaces were far superior to physical keyboards that took up space and couldn't change like a virtual keyboard could do. Second, Blackberry offered an inferior touchscreen interface. With Blackberry spitting out mixed messages about physical keyboards and then offering an inferior touchscreen interface, customers simply abandoned Blackberry.

At one time, nearly every corporation in the world used Blackberry smartphones. Now [less than one million](#) Blackberry users are left in the United Kingdom and they're losing customers faster than they can gain them. When was the last time any company issued a Blackberry smartphone to an executive?

The problem with most people is that they believe the future will be exactly like the present so there's no reason to do anything differently or even plan ahead (Kodak, Borders Books, Blockbuster Video, Blackberry, Montgomery Wards, CompuServe, etc.). A better solution is to remain paranoid that the future will eventually be vastly different from the present and make plans accordingly.

Look at the [original companies](#) that made up the Dow Jones. Anyone recognize names like the National Lead Company, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, and the U.S. Leather Company?

What happened to these other companies? Times changed and someone came along with a different product that these once larger companies failed to recognize until it was too late. One reason for Apple's success is what [Tim Cook said](#), "Our core philosophy is to never fear cannibalization. If we don't do it, someone else will."

The iPhone cannibalized sales of iPods, but that's because the market for portable digital music players is long gone. The iPad cannibalized sales of Macintosh laptops, and now the larger screen of the iPhone 6 Plus is cannibalizing sales of the iPad and iPad mini. After getting blind-sided by the shift from digital downloads in the music industry to streaming audio, Apple had to drastically shift their focus from iTunes as a music store to a streaming audio radio station, but it cost them \$3 billion dollars to do this by [acquiring Beats Music](#).

The wrong approach is to protect a dying product like Kodak tried to protect their once-profitable film business, Blackberry tried to protect their physical keyboard smartphone monopoly, and Microsoft tried to protect Windows. The right approach is to assume whatever you're doing today to make money will be gone tomorrow. Assuming this, what will you do now?

Most people will take the flippant attitude of "I'll worry about that when it happens." Then when it happens, they're devastated and wonder why. This is like standing on a busy railroad track and then wondering why you're eventually hit by a train. The time to save yourself is before you see the train roaring down the tracks, not after the train has already splattered you into a million little pieces.

If you cannibalize your own products before anyone else can, you can stay relevant and profitable. Just look at how much [Apple's quarterly revenue](#) is compared to its closest rivals, which also translated into greater quarterly profits than any of its closest rivals.

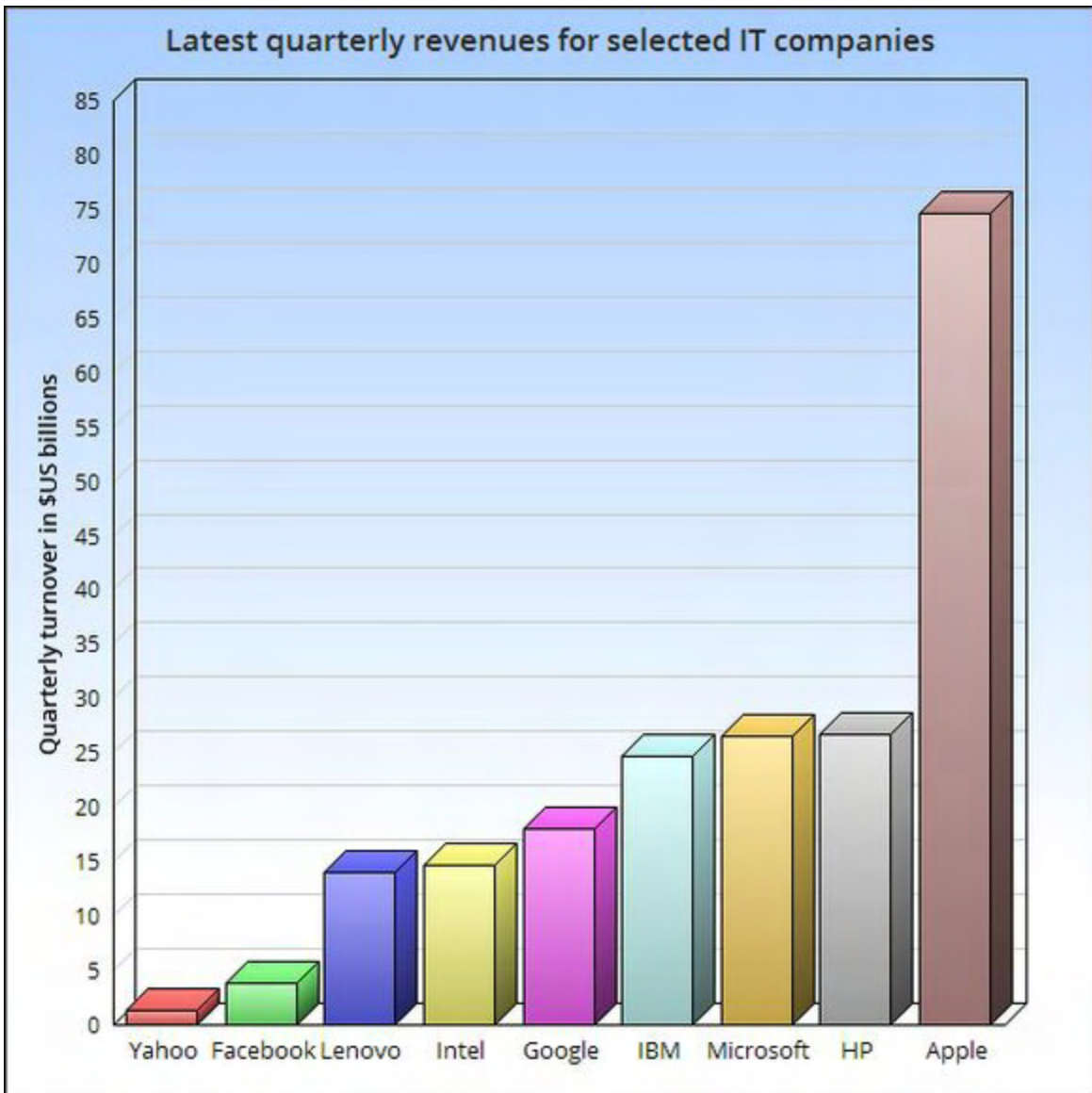


Figure 1. Compare Apple's quarterly revenue to its competitors.

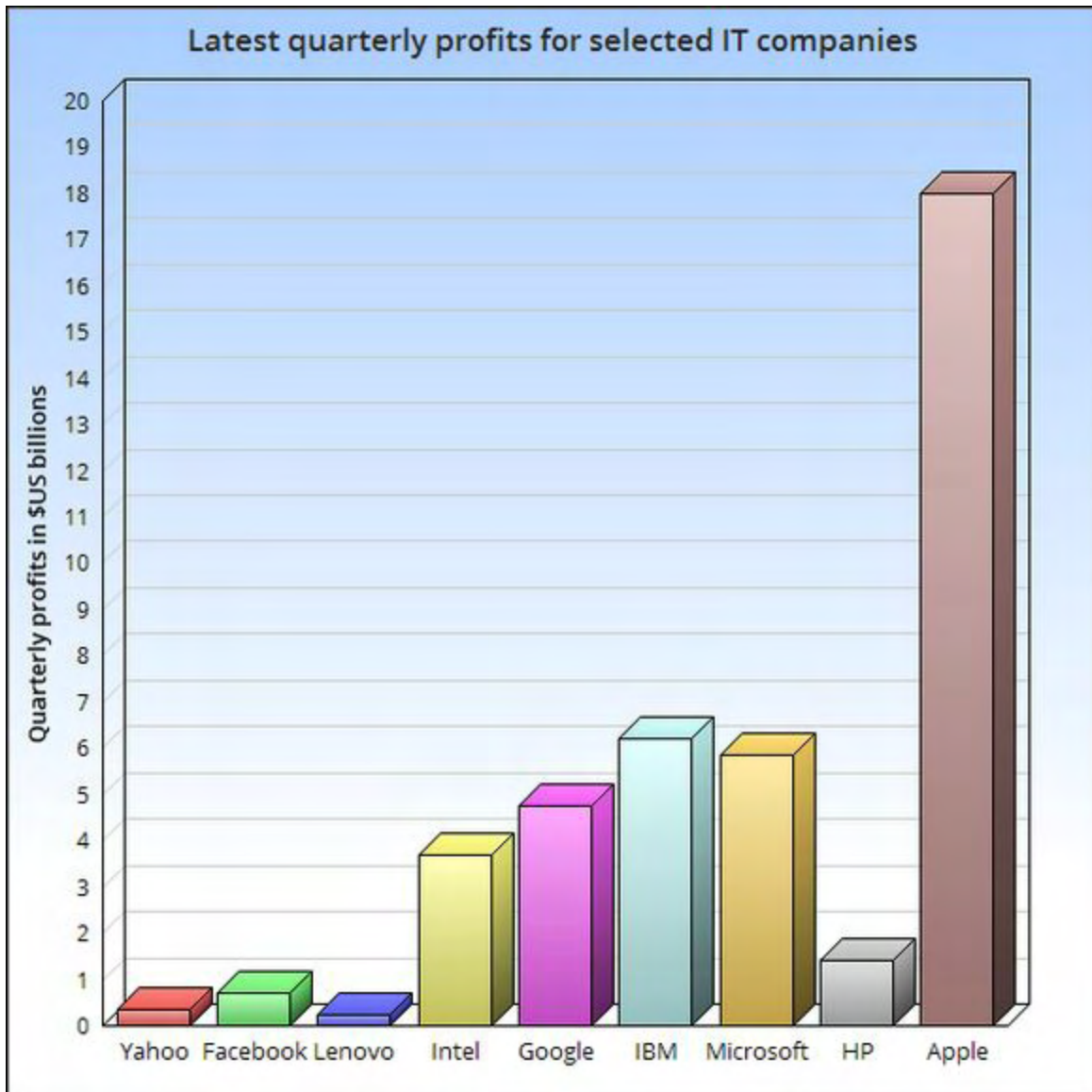


Figure 2. Apple's quarterly profits dwarf its rivals.

If you want to stay profitable and relevant, always assume everything you're doing today will be wiped out tomorrow. If you want to get blind-sided and have your world thrown into sudden chaos and panic that you could have seen coming from a mile away if you had only looked, just stay complacent that nothing will ever change in your life again. After all, you can always worry about the worst-case scenario when it actually happens. Just ask Blackberry how well that strategy is working for them.

David and Goliath

In the book [*David and Goliath*](#), author Malcolm Gladwell talks about how underdogs defeat giants. How did Amazon beat Borders Books and Netflix beat Blockbuster Video when both Borders Books and Blockbuster Video were so much more powerful than Amazon and Netflix

at one time?

David and Goliath explains how underdogs win by turning a giant's strength into a weakness. Starting with the original story of David and Goliath, Goliath relied on strength and heavy armor to defeat an enemy in close quarters. David couldn't fight against such immense size and strength, so he relied on quickness and distance. Back in those days, a well-trained slinger could knock birds out of the sky using a rock as a projectile that hit with the force of a bullet. So it's no surprise that David simply knocked Goliath out with a rock from a distance, and then killed him with his own sword.

How did blacks gain their civil rights in the 1960's? When they tried to protest in some Southern cities, they were tolerated and left alone, which defeated their whole protest. Only when they ran into Bull Connor in Birmingham, Alabama did they find someone who thought he could use fire hoses and police attack dogs against the black protesters to kill their civil rights movement for good.

The problem was that by using his strength of the police force, Bull Connor highlighted the problems of segregation and racism for the world to see in newspaper and magazines pictures and television broadcasts. Bull Connor's power ultimately led to his downfall in much the same way that Goliath's reliance on strength and close combat fighting with a sword led him to be vulnerable to a rock hurled by a slinger.

Companies fail when they don't recognize that their strength could also be their major weakness. In the computer world, Microsoft completely overlooked mobile computing and let iOS and Android take over the operating system market share. Now Microsoft has to struggle from behind when they were once on top and dominant. Can Microsoft regain their dominant operating system market share again? If history is any indication, just ask Blackberry if they can regain their dominant smartphone market share again, and that should tell you what the odds might be.

Profit vs. Market Share

For some odd reason, Wall Street analysts seem fixated on market share. Their idea is that the higher the market share, the better while totally ignoring profit share. Ideally you want the highest profit share possible and that usually means getting a higher market share. However, the iPhone has shown that it's possible to have a lower market share and a higher profit share.

According to a report from [Strategy Analytics](#), Apple took nearly 89 percent of the smartphone profits while Android took the remaining 11 percent. Yet Android has a much higher market share than the iPhone with 76.6 percent of the market compared to the iPhone's far smaller 19.7 percent of the market.

Would you rather have the largest profit share or the largest market share? Even worse,

Android's profit share gets divided among several Android device manufacturers while Apple takes all of the iPhone's profits. So Android device manufacturers are working harder to make less money.

What's their solution? Switch to another operating system like Tizen, Windows Phone, Ubuntu Touch, or Firefox OS. Of course if they switch to another operating system, they'll just replace their commodity business of selling Android devices with a new commodity business selling the same devices running a different mobile operating system. Any executive who thinks this will lead to completely different results doesn't deserve a job.

If you want to see what real innovation looks like, look at the [Blackphone project](#), which focuses on security. By targeting the niche market of security-conscious users, Blackphone will take over a large market that everyone else won't even bother acknowledging until Blackphone gains a dominant position. If companies want to compete, do it by solving a pressing need like security rather than copying a rival and hoping for the best.

Apple's March 9 Event

Apple announced an event scheduled for March 9, which will likely reveal more details about the Apple Watch that should redefine the wearable computing market. Already you can see Swiss watchmakers [preparing to battle](#) the coming smartwatch revolution so expect to see many watch leaders of today become the bankrupt companies of tomorrow.



Figure 3. Apple has announced a March 9 event called Spring Forward.

Apple has already started positioning the Apple Watch as a [fashion accessory](#) by showing models wearing it in fashion magazines like *Vogue*. As both a fashion accessory and a productive wearable computer, how will rivals compete? Microsoft has their Microsoft Band and Google has Android Wear. While it's easy to copy technical features, it's far more difficult to copy fashion elements.

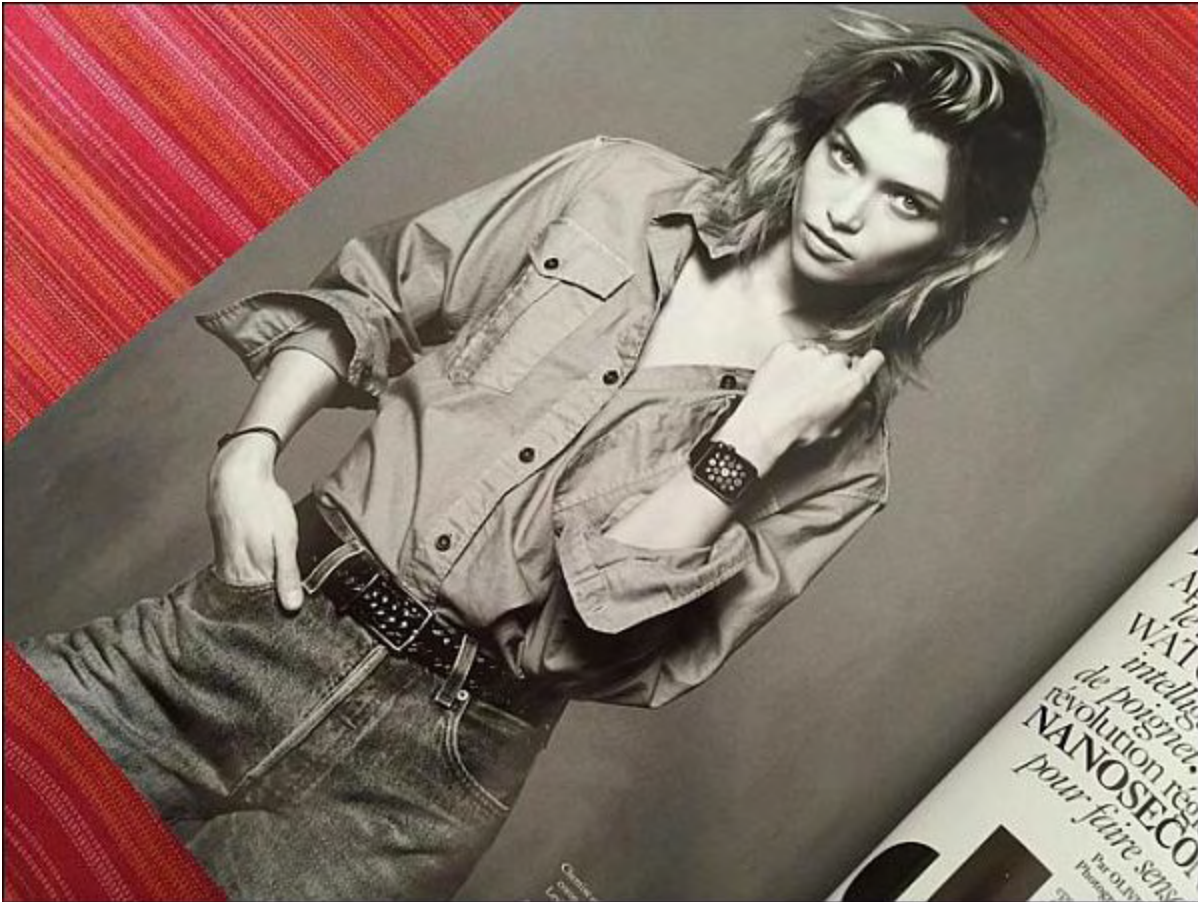


Figure 4. Apple has already started promoting the Apple Watch in fashion magazines.

If people think an Apple Watch looks attractive while also being useful, rivals will face the dual pressure of making their smartwatches just as easy to use and productive while still being just as fashionable as an Apple Watch. People respect a Maserati or Lamborghini, but they'll never respect a blatant copycat car the same way if it's simply a fiber glass replica bolted onto a Volkswagen frame.

When the Apple Watch finally arrives in April, watch how rivals try to slavishly copy its features while still pretending to be original and just as fashionable. Then watch today's leading watchmakers struggle with the smartwatch revolution and wonder what happened as their business plummets with no sign of hope.

Do today's watchmakers really need to learn the lesson of Blackberry all over again? The answer is probably yes because the leaders in any industry believe they're always invincible until reality proves otherwise. March 9, 2015 will likely spell the beginning of the end for today's watchmakers in the same way that the introduction of the iPhone spelled the end of Blackberry and the introduction of the iPad spelled the end of Microsoft's dominance with Windows.

History repeats itself because people keep forgetting how their own inaction and hostility to changing trends always puts them in trouble time after time. If you want to see an example of

collective amnesia, just ask all those people who once claimed that Flash was a critically important feature for smartphones and tablets to justify their stances today. Their silence will be overwhelming.

OS X Anti-Virus Programs

Just as there are plenty of free and decent anti-virus programs for Windows, there are a growing number of free and decent anti-virus programs for OS X. The big problem is that there aren't that many viruses for OS X. That's not because OS X is necessarily more secure than Windows, but that hackers have turned away from creating viruses that cause problems and give the creator no monetary reward, to hacking corporate networks that don't cause computer problems but give the perpetrator massive monetary rewards.

If you're still paranoid about viruses coming from the Windows world, download a free OS X anti-virus program like [Avast](#). When you run it, you'll find that it can often catch Windows malware that people may have tried sending you through spam. Now if you regularly send files to Windows users, you can make sure you don't spread viruses that could infect a Windows PC.

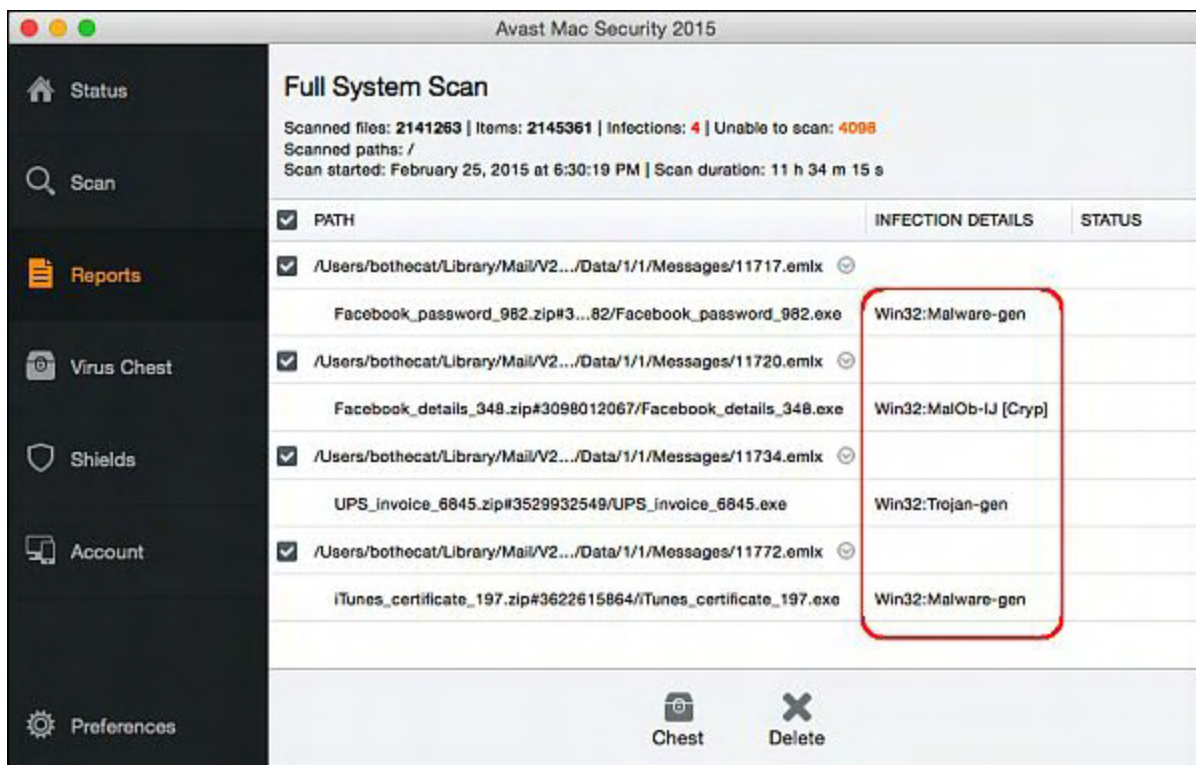


Figure 5. Avast is far more useful at preventing a Macintosh from spreading Windows malware.

The Future for Developers is Mobile

InfoWorld [ran a survey](#) to determine what mobile developers are pursuing. While most developers realize that mobile computing is the future, most developers are focusing on Android and iOS with rapid adoption of Swift for iOS.

Surprisingly, many mobile developers are using cross-platform tools. While almost everyone wants an iOS app, they also want an equivalent Android app as well. While some programmers may prefer to create iOS apps in Objective-C or Swift, they have to create Android apps using Java. The alternative is to focus on cross-platform tools that let you create both iOS and Android apps at the same time.

Not surprisingly, only 8 percent of developers are working with Windows Phone. Despite being a decent mobile operating system, Windows Phone has such a small market share and with Windows 10 coming out soon, developers will likely need to learn new skills to create Windows 10 apps for mobile phones instead of relying on Silverlight, which was the old way to develop Windows Phone apps.

It's always easy to see the trend by watching where the developers are going. When developers started focusing on Windows instead of MS-DOS, that was a clear sign that MS-DOS's days were numbered. Now as you see so many developers focusing on mobile platforms, it's easy to see that mobile is the new future even if many others stubbornly believe that the world will remain stuck in the 90's forever.

* * *

One way that Web sites track you is through cookies, which are simple text files that get stored on your computer. In case you don't want unknown sites tracking you, you can block cookies. To do this in Safari, click the Safari menu and choose Preferences. Now click the Privacy icon and choose your options for how Safari should handle cookies.

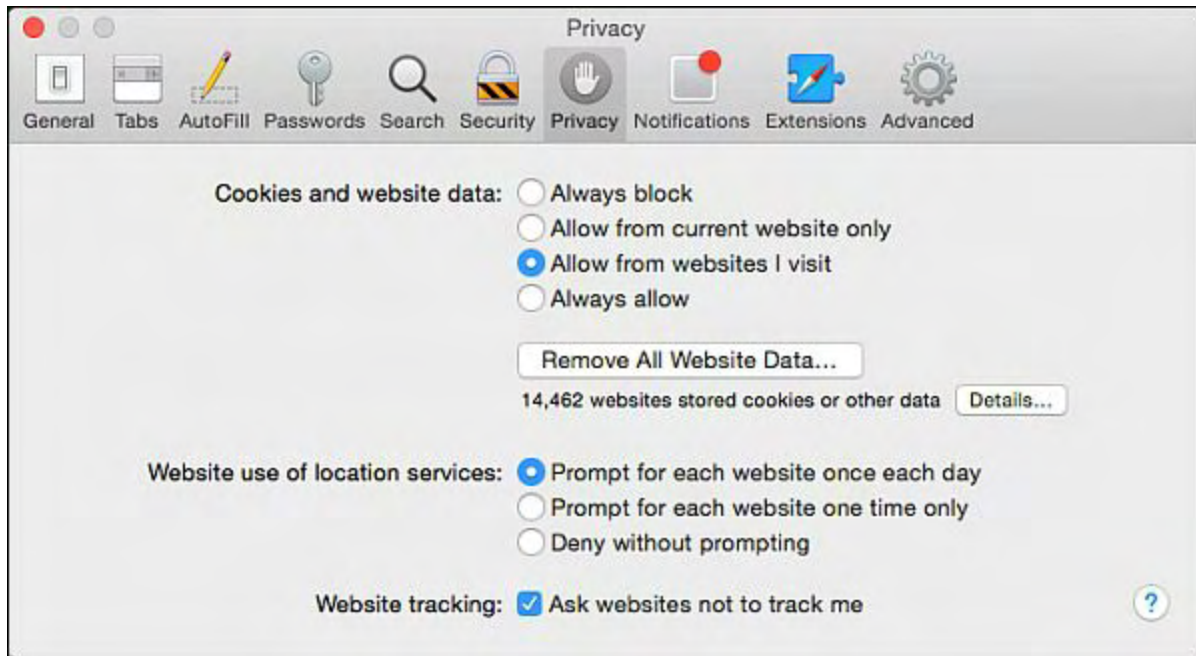


Figure 6. Defining how Safari deals with cookies to protect your privacy.

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

Wally is responsible for the following books:

[*Microsoft Office 2013 For Dummies*](#)

[*Beginning Programming for Dummies*](#)

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

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

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

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

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

[*Mac Programming For Absolute Beginners*](#)

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

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

[The 15-Minute Movie Method](#)

[Math for the Zombie Apocalypse](#)

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

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

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



Editor's Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers

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

"Doesn't Work with 'Sandunguera,'" "TurboTax," "Denver Mike's CD/DVD Drive Won't See DVDs," "Failed DVD/CD Writer," "Optimal Battery/Charger Usage, Black Screen"

Doesn't Work with "Sandunguera"

[Regarding Jack Dunning's February 13 [article](#), "Universal Language Translation—Almost":]

That's a real Spanish word, that I could only find at spanishdict.com It's interesting to listen to both the Spanish word and its English version on that site.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego

TurboTax

[Regarding Jack Dunning's January 30 [article](#), "TurboTax Turmoil":]

I'm a long-time TurboTax user, but am beginning to get fed up with their policies and pricing. Did you try importing TurboTax previous year's data into TaxACT? I couldn't see anywhere on the TaxACT site where they addressed that ability.

-Ed, Chula Vista, CA

It looks like you may have to re-enter your basic information and last year info, but that would only be for the first year.

-Jack Dunning

Denver Mike's CD/DVD Drive Won't See DVDs

[Regarding the February 13 [Editors Letters: Tips and Thoughts from Readers column](#):]

First question is did it *ever* see DVDs? Can you write a CD as well as read them?

My first impression is the drive has a partial failure, I've seen CD/DVD drives that will read and write a CD but no longer read, or write, or both, DVDs.

I don't think this is a software issue, but hardware, there isn't much you can do to fix it other than get some alcohol wipes and carefully wipe the optical part of the drive itself. I'd suggest not only having the machine off but unplugged and the battery removed as well just to be sure. I did just fix a laptop drive by doing this.

You can always buy an external/USB drive to do DVD things, or check eBay for a replacement if the laptop isn't too old. With Windows 8.1 laptops selling for \$250 (including taxes) at Fry's here in San Diego, it is hard to justify a lot of expense on a failing/failed DVD drive.

Ah, one other thought, not likely to fix, but wouldn't hurt, try physically removing the drive, then re-inserting (usually just a single screw and possibly a latch on the bottom of the laptop to remove) to ensure all contacts are connected well.

-Rich Ernst, San Diego

Thanks for your response, Rich. I'll try out your suggestions before giving up and replacing the drive with a new one. I appreciate your willingness to share your expertise. Very cool.

-Mike, Denver

Failed DVD/CD Writer

[Regarding the February 13 [Digital Dave column](#):]

Sent note to Digital Dave about three weeks ago.

I finally took my PC back to Fry's and a tech ran diagnostic which showed DVD/CD writer was at fault. I disconnected it and bought an external USB writer.

-James Adair

Optimal Battery/Charger Usage, Black Screen

[Regarding the February 13 [Digital Dave column](#):]

I never miss this column, love it!

1) Going back to the '60s I have been servicing rechargeable battery devices. My experience has been that both using the device until the battery is low mixed with running it on AC gives

the best results. Dave has it right: using it all the time on AC gives the worst battery life.

2) Just had the black screen, but cursor arrow visible problem yesterday. The problem was remnants of two malware programs: Binkiland (browser hijacker) and Strong Signal. Malwarebytes Anti-Malware got rid of both of them and Windows startup is back to normal after several cold restarts.

-Jim Amos, Denver, CO

50% Battery Charge: I use a Lenovo Z370 laptop. Used mainly plugged in to AC. It has a setting for "Best battery life." This keeps the battery charged at about 50% and states' "not charging." My battery is three years old and in good shape.

-Name Not Given

I have an AU C300 Chromebook (less than \$200). I charge it during the night and it runs all day, never needing a top off. When I plug it in at night it normally indicates that I have about two hours of use still available.

-Bill Gilbert, Melaque, Jalisco, Mexico

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