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**January 3, 2014**

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## Just Out Hot Tech for 2014 and More!



**Apple's New Mac Pro Desktop; 2013—Big Year for Game Consoles; Video Game Sales Rise with Console Sales, Amid New Programs for Indie Developers; High Tech Fashion; The Latest in Military/Space Tech; Catching China's Weapon-Snatchers; The Dark Side of Data-Lists; Patent Wars: A Major Victory, Better Descriptions, and a Unified European Patent Court.**

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*by Digital Dave*

Digital Dave answers your tech questions.

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# Digital Dave

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

*Mix and Match Apple Chargers; What Features Are Needed in a Digital TV?; Lost Windows 7 Desktop Gadget.*

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## Mix and Match Apple Chargers

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*In a growing collection of Apple products over the years, I'm finding some conflict using certain chargers that must not be compatible with other products, e.g. iPod, iPad (original), iPad2, iPhones (two). I noticed on the difficult-to-read charger output info that voltage and current specs are not all the same. Is there a way to tell which charger can be used with which device?*

*Dave Stang  
San Diego, CA*

Dear Dave,

It can be pretty difficult to read the specs on some of those chargers without a magnifying glass. Generally, a device can handle up to the amount of Wattage found on its associated charger. It is usually safe to use a lower power charger with the same device.

It is possible to do damage to a device if it is not built to handle higher power levels than the charger which comes with it. Also, depending upon the design of the charging circuits, if a device is exposed to higher level of charging power than required it may affect the life of the battery. As a rule I would generally use the charging adapter which comes with the hardware. However, there are certain exceptions.

If the USB charger delivers the same or a lower level of power than the charger provided with the device, then it should be safe to use, although the charging time will be longer.

If you don't mind the longer charging time, you should be able to plug any device into the USB port of a computer and recharge it. For example, when plugging in an iPad to a computer, it may indicate that it is not charging at all, but it is—however slowly. The USB ports offer a

relatively low level of power compared to charging adapters, but they will still deliver power at the proper voltage.

Another exception is the [Apple 12-Watt adapter](#) which is designed to work with other Apple products requiring a lower power level. If the charger senses a non-12-Watt Apple device it automatically adjusts to the appropriate level. If it doesn't recognize the device (Android?), then it will adjust to its lowest level 5-Watts. This should be safe for virtually any device—although not guaranteed. Some non-Apple devices may charge at slower rate than using the charger provided.

Another option is the [PowerGen 3.4-Amp \(17 Watt\) Dual USB Wall Charger](#) which includes both Apple and non-Apple ports (different power levels available). The 17-watts is shared between the two ports which means charging times may be slower when both ports are in use. However, in most cases there will be plenty of power. While it is compatible with many non-Apple devices (Amazon Kindle, Kindle Fire, and Samsung Galaxy Tab), the earlier 15-Watt version did not work with everything (HP TouchPads, ASUS Transformers, Motorola Xooms or the Blackberry Playbook). This may have been resolved in the latest model, but check reviews to be sure.

The main hassle will be keeping track of the various USB cables needed for all the different connectors found on the different devices, mostly Apple.

Digital Dave

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## What Features Are Needed in a Digital TV?

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*What features are needed in a digital TV to receive the display from my XP SP3 desktop? Is an upgrade to Windows 7 necessary? Do I need Apple TV or Google Chromecast?*

*Thanks,  
James Taylor  
San Diego, CA*

Dear James,

Today's digital televisions have so many features that there is less and less reason to access a TV with a PC. However, there are still a few good reasons to connect your computer to the television today. One is to play digital video from the hard drive, but anything that you would play could be transferred to a DVD. Another is to play PC games on a big screen. [Steam](#) has a mode specifically for this called [Big Picture](#) and [SteamOS](#) is all about streaming game content to a TV. The third is if your television doesn't have built-in access to the streaming Internet

services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. (and you don't have a Roku, Xbox, PlayStation, Wii, DVD player, or other device which can stream to your television), then a computer will do—although it will probably be a little more awkward.

If you want to use the television as a monitor, then most likely you will be able to plug into the TV directly as long as you have the proper hardware connection (HDMI). If you don't have the right connection on your computer, then upgrading to Windows 7 will make no difference. You may need to add an [HDMI card](#) to your computer. (If you do add a new graphics card to your computer to get the HDMI port for connecting to the television, make sure that it has the proper connector for your motherboard.)

Today's new TVs can do almost everything without the help of a computer. The main feature that you want in your digital television is a network connection for accessing the Internet. To do this you need to get the television on the computer network. That means either a Wi-Fi connection or hardwired Ethernet connection to your home router. If you just want to connect your computer without a network, then the television will have an HDMI connection—it's pretty standard.

If you want to turn your computer into a television for receiving local broadcasts, your system needs a television receiver (or tuner). Some laptop computers are sold with built-in tuners, but most need to have them installed after purchase. For desktop computers, you can buy television receiver cards at most electronics stores or online for installation into your computer. They are installed the same way as any other computer expansion card and usually come with some type of TV software. The [Hauppauge 1196 WinTV-HVR-1250 PCI-E x1 TV Tuner 1196](#) is a popular card for adding free broadcast television to a computer.

Once installed, a television antenna or basic cable can be plugged directly into the TV card. If using broadcast (over the airways) television, then antenna placement is critical. Signals that are encoded by the cable companies will not be viewable directly from the cable, so many cable channels may not be available unless they come from a cable box.

You most likely won't need either Apple TV or Google Chromecast. Many of the digital televisions have those features for accessing all types of Internet content built-in. If you see the Netflix logo on the TV's specs, then you probably will have most of the features from other services also built-in.

[Google Chromecast HDMI Streaming Media Player](#) is a convenient cheap way of adding the Internet streaming service to televisions with a USB port, but no (or few) built-in services. Anything that you can do with the Chromecast device can be done directly on a computer, tablet, or smartphone with free apps, so I would only get Chromecast if I was plugging it directly into a TV. (You will still need to pay for any subscription services such as Netflix.) But, I would go with the Chromecast (or [Roku](#)) route before I would mess with hooking up a computer to my television just for streaming Internet video.



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## Windows 7 Desktop Gadgets

*Dear Digital Dave,*

*I just accepted the latest Windows 7 operating system update and all of a sudden my analog clock gadget disappeared. I went to the gadgets window and attempted to add the clock and guess what? The clock gadget did not go to the desktop. I've been to the Microsoft Web page for gadgets and "gadget has been discontinued." I've sought clock gadgets from third-party sites and got all kinds of add-ons that I didn't want for Internet Explorer. Any suggestions on how to get an analog clock gadget on my desktop?*

*Mike F*

*Denver, CO*

Dear Mike,

It's true that Microsoft has discontinued gadgets for Windows 7 due to security vulnerabilities, but this is the first I've heard of gadgets previously installed disappearing. In July of 2012 Microsoft put out an advisory for everyone to disable their gadgets. The concern was that hackers could take control of your computer, although I doubt that the original gadgets (clock, weather, etc.) that came with Windows were the problem. It is possible that a security update did disable your analog clock, but I haven't run into that. If you really want the clock back, there are a couple of things that you can try.

I don't think that this first option is likely your problem, but it is worth a look. In Programs and Features, click Turn Windows features on or off in the left-hand navigation panes. The Windows Features window will load (see Figure 1). Make sure that Windows Gadgets Platform is checked.

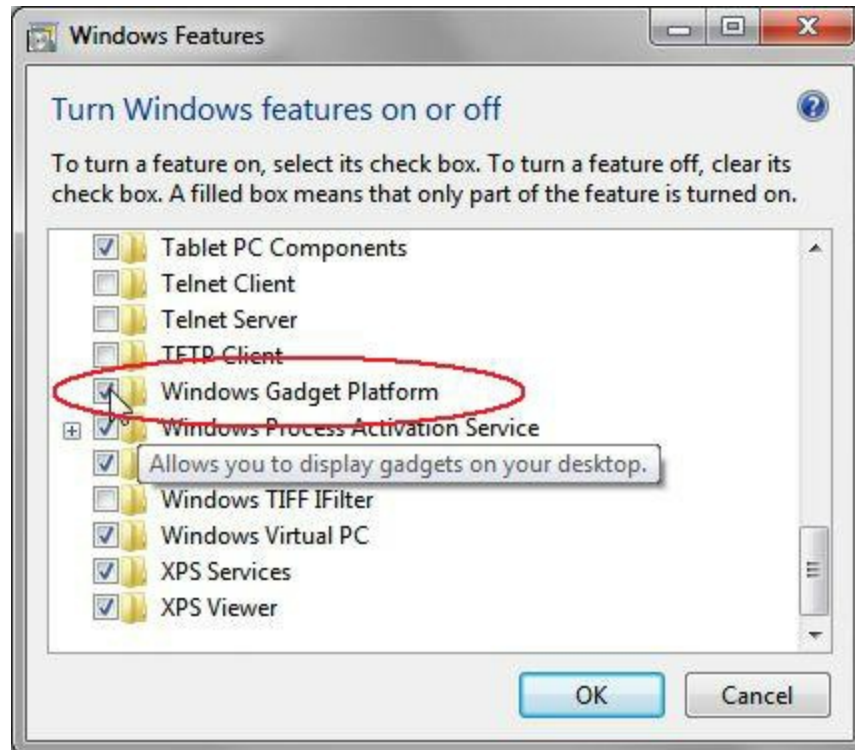


Figure 1. Windows Gadget Platform should be turned on in the Windows Features window.

I don't think this is your problem because you wouldn't have access to the gadgets window if Windows Gadgets Platform is not enabled.

It is also worthwhile to temporarily turn off User Account Controls and try dragging the clock to the desktop.

Personally, I would just stick with the analog clock that pops up when you click on the time/date in the lower right-hand corner (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. The built-in clock displays an analog clock.

I advise people to remove gadgets from both Windows Vista and Windows 7 computers. Not only are they vulnerable, but many of them can severely slow down the computer—especially in Vista.

Digital Dave

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# Hot Tech For 2014 and More Little Known High Tech Stories

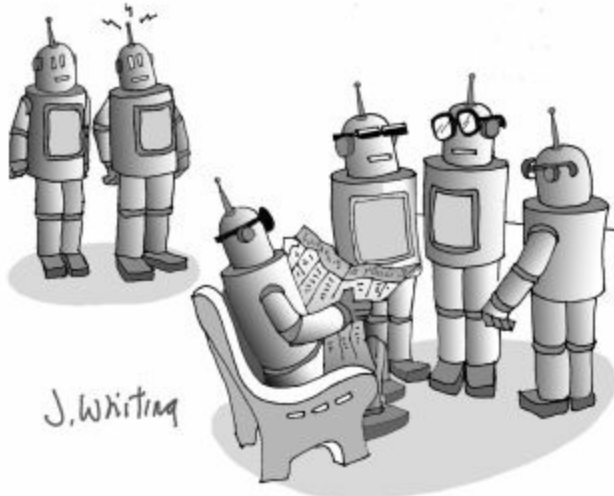
**“2013 Ends with New Game Consoles and Apple's New Mac Pro, Hot Tech For 2014, Military Tech and More”** by Marilyn K. Martin

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## Just Out Hot Tech for 2014

I've already written about what experts consider Hot New Trends for 2014. But with 2014 only a few weeks away as I write this, some rather startling tech developments have just been unveiled. *The Verge* reported in December 2013 that Microsoft has added a unique [tablet feature](#) to its Skype Android app. Version 4.5 of the app now has a way to "float" calls on top of other apps, called Picture-in-Picture, that shows Skype video calls in a small corner window even when the user switches to another Android app. The update is available at [Google Play Store](#).



“Robbie invented these new high-tech devices for protecting the light sensors in our vision chips from solar radiation. He calls them sun glasses.”

In December 2013, ArsTechnica introduced the [first smarty ring](#). A recent [Indiegogo campaign](#) asked for \$40,000—and actually raised almost \$300,000. It is a 13mm-wide stainless steel ring with an LED screen, Bluetooth 4.0, and an accompanying smartphone app. The ring pairs with a smartphone and acts as a remote control and notification receiver. The ring can display the time, accept or reject calls, and control music, and has light-up icons for texts, e-mails, Facebook and Twitter, among others. Oh, and it also has time-apps, like a countdown timer, stopwatch and alarm. The creators promise the smarty-ring will have 24 hours of battery life from a 22 mAh battery, with charging via a wireless induction pad. Orders are being taken now

for the price of \$175 per ring, for delivery in April 2014. The retail price will be around \$275.

BGR (through Yahoo!News) in December 2013 reported on Google's growing ['bot brigade](#), or the eight robotics companies Google has bought up in just the last six months. Their latest acquisition is the cutting-edge robotics firm [Boston Dynamics](#), who has worked with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) for military transport robots. Another Google company, [Meka Robotics](#), provides hardware and software systems for robotics researchers. They also specialize in "compliant robotics," such as the Dreamer Sociable Head with a diverse range of facial expressions, in collaboration with the HRC Laboratory at the University of Texas, in Austin, Texas. Another Google robotics company is [Schaff Robotics](#), featuring a robot designed by engineers at the University of Tokyo to be "the world's strongest robot."

## Apple's New Mac Pro Desktop

*Engadget* announced toward the end of December 2013 that Apple's newest Mac Pro (either the leading edge of future business computers—or a personal supercomputer) is now available to order through its [online store](#). Shaped like a trashcan, the desktop is available in quad-core (\$3,000) and six-core (\$4,000) models. The base model has a 3.7 GHz quad-core Xeon CPU, 12GB DRAM, two AMD FirePro D300 GPUs and a 256GB SSD. *TechCrunch* reports that custom options maxed out specifications and a couple Sharp 4K monitors could set you back almost \$17,000. Stock configurations should be in the mail by December 30th, with delivery listed as January.

Apple is advertising their new Mac Pro mainly to [professional filmmakers](#), as "a video editing

powerhouse" that can run 8 picture-in-picture streams of 4K video at once, or "drive up to three 4K displays and process multiple layers of complex effects in real time." It also has six Thunderbolt2 ports for expansion, although both generations of Thunderbolt technology are compatible with this new Mac Pro. It also offers ultrafast rendering for 3D modeling and animation, with PCIe-based flash storage and 1866MHz memory.

It also has significant science and technology functions, since "you can stream even the largest datasets with the Intel Zeon E5 processor." In late December 2013, Zacks Equity Research (through Yahoo!Finance) reported that Micron Technology's [Crucial brand](#) is responsible for the Mac Pro's [specialized memory](#), allowing the Mac Pro to work at an optimum level even while running data-intensive software programs.

By December 20th, *The Motley Fool* reported that Apple's Mac Pro was [already sold out](#). Apple has [backed up their delivery](#) to February (from January). And while the Mac Pro won't contribute much to Apple's overall sales in 2014, it should ratchet up Apple's post-Jobs reputation as a top-tier hardware innovator.

## 2013—Big Year for Game Consoles

Both Microsoft and Sony introduced new game consoles this year, previewed in the Spring and finally available in November 2013. Since neither company had put out new consoles since 2006, both gamers and retailers were anticipating strong sales. By late November 2013, *Forbes* reported that sales of the Xbox One and PS4 were [neck-and-neck](#) in the US, with the PS4 selling better everywhere else. And a recent online survey had turned up some surprising results, like the fact that 34% of those polled had never played video games, while true "gamers" (39%-40%) admitted that they played at least once a week.

According to a story in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (through the *Seattle Times*) in mid-December 2013, retailers were hoping the new consoles would also boost disc video game sales, which have been [declining steadily](#) in the past few years, dropping 34% between 2009 and 2012. Both Best Buy and Target have reported strong gaming sales, including related merchandise like speakers, headset and controllers. MasterCard Advisors reported that electronic sales on Thanksgiving alone were more than triple the sales of Thanksgiving 2012.

By late December 2013, [VGChartz](#) reported that globally WiiU continued to outsell both the Xbox One and PS4 with 51.6% of the market. PS4 came in second with 27.3% of global sales, and Xbox One with 21.1% of sales. Despite huge sales of the new consoles worldwide, questions linger if any more new game consoles will ever be made, as gamers continue switching to downloadable games and mobile gaming.

## Video Game Sales Rise with Console Sales, Amid New Programs for Indie Developers

VGChartz reported that the US [pre-order chart](#) for new games on December 14th showed "Watch Dogs" (Ubisoft) the number one seller, followed by "Destiny" (Activision) and "Final Fantasy X/X-2" (Square Enix). Globally, VGChartz reported that "Gran Turismo 6" and "Call of Duty" (both for older consoles, PS3 and X360) were the [top sellers](#) in early December 2013.

In mid-December 2013, Yahoo!News offered personal reviews of the [top ten video games](#) of 2013, topped by "The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds" (Nintendo). Also in mid-December 2013, the *New York Times* reported on a [new exhibit](#) at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, Queens. "Indie Essentials: 25 Must-Play Video Games" gives video game history buffs a chance to interact with the older "local multiplayer video games," which are played with a few friends in the same room, rather than with mega-players online.

Yahoo!News also reported in mid-December 2013 that Sony's PlayStation 4 took an early start with indie game developers, but that Microsoft's new indie development plan, ID@Xbox, is causing the most buzz. The [first indie games](#) for Xbox One will start arriving in early 2014. Microsoft had unveiled its indie development program for Xbox One in August 2013, and Chris Charla, director of the MS Indie program, reported that they currently have 32 studios working on games for the new Xbox One. Microsoft is also going to expand the program up the platform by trying to attract gamers who want to create their own games, through [Project Spark](#).

## High Tech Fashion

Technological innovation came late to Fashion, but the *CS Monitor* reported in April 2013 that three fashion designers have found a way to make [wearable tech](#). A Mexico City based design group, Machina, used Kickstarter to raise more than \$77,000 to manufacture the Mjv1.0, a jacket that lets the wearer control music with taps, raised arms and swipes. And designer Alison Lewis has created a Presence of Heart dress that shows the wearer's heartbeat in real time, made with 28 LED lights.

Designer Diana Eng blends clothing and technology that are "Fashion engineered from daydreams," according to [her Web site](#). Her Fairytale Fashion designs use LEDs and electroluminescent wires, with sensors to change color, for example, if sound is detected. Her older lines incorporated Nature into her laser-cut t-shirts modeled after the cellular structure of plants. She's also designed a science-math Fibonacci scarf, knitted in the style of the Fibonacci sequence. And her Jack Frost scarves show snowflakes when the weather turns cold.

I've already written about how some designers are crafting plastic fashions from 3D printers. But the *CSMonitor* in April 2013 ran a story how designers like Janina Alleyne are also [3D printing stiletto heels](#) out of white nylon. Made from nylon, these new designs are easy to clean, by just popping them in a dishwasher instead of a washing machine. Other 3D designers are experimenting with 3D fashion shoes like [Continuum Fashion](#). And [Nervous System](#) is

working on 3D fashions like algorithmic jewelry that mimics Nature, and 4D printed kinematics with "foldable forms composed of articulated modules."

## The Latest in Military/Space Tech

With more military tech aimed upward (atmospheric, orbital or near-Space), both US technological innovation—and stopping foreign thieves—should continued to ramp-up in 2014. *Intelligence Community News* reported in late November 2013 that the Naval Research Lab is evaluating a new tactical line-of-sight [optical communications system](#). Developed in collaboration with [Exelis](#) and Innovative Technology Solutions, Inc. (or [NovaSol](#)), an extensive series of evaluations have successfully demonstrated the "ruggedized system's capability to wirelessly transmit 100 megabits per second of high-resolution imagery and video over a distance of 31 miles."

"The system also acquired and maintained a data link between two U.S. Marine Tactical Elevated Antenna Mast Systems." This free-space system can provide fighting forces with a high-capacity data link that's not reliant on hardline connections. (This may also be a partial answer to Pentagon concerns of total reliance on GPS/satellites in the event of a serious conflict. Especially since many satellite electronic parts come from China—which may have secret back doors they could access in an emergency to shut down the satellite.)

According to *Intelligence Community News* in September 2013, the Department of Transportation awarded a contract to [Semantic Research, Inc.](#) to provide software, maintenance, engineering and hardware to replicate a developmental system known as SkyMaster. SkyMaster is a program that allows a governmental agency to track aircraft within its area of responsibility, which will involve multiple federal agencies to implement.

## Catching China's Weapon-Snatchers

*Reuters* (through Yahoo!News) in mid-December 2013 offered insight into how China's "weapon snatchers are [penetrating US defenses](#)," especially military-and-space technology like radiation-hardened microchips or rad-chips, that China desperately wants but can't (so far) replicate. These dime-sized chips are critical for everything from satellites to ballistic missiles, as well as protecting military hardware from nuclear and solar radiation.

China's \$200 Billion military budget is second only to America's, and their accelerated defense buildup parallels their intense efforts to acquire US military technology. *The Washington Post* reported earlier this year that Chinese hackers have already gained access to plans for two dozen weapons systems, as well as created a spike in buying "dual use" US technology (civilian and military), according to a classified Pentagon report. China's efforts at smuggling out US technology is too large to totally monitor and track. Especially since the most sensitive US technology is being legally shipped to friendly nations—some of whom then turn around



and immediately ship it illegally to China. American investigations of Chinese stealing military/space-technology have increased by 75%, despite most US experts thinking that China is still at least a decade behind us in that technology.

## The Dark Side of Data-Lists

Consumer data-lists are nothing new, and much of the marketing information comes from applications, registrations and surveys we all fill out online. But a disturbing tidbit at the end of December 2013 shows how "data collection" is now being compiled into seriously invasive lists. *CNN Money* reported that secretive consumer data companies are now [selling lists](#) of rape victims, seniors with dementia, and those suffering from HIV and AIDS.

The World Privacy Forum (WPF) uncovered these lists, while investigating how data brokers legally collect and sell consumer information to marketers so they can target shoppers. Other lists accidentally uncovered included home addresses of police officers, a mailing list for domestic violence shelters, and a list of people with addictive behaviors towards drugs and alcohol.

These lists could put people at risk for everything from scams to extortion to physical harm—and most of these folks have no idea they are on these lists to begin with. The report was presented by the WPF to a Senate committee that was concluding a year-long investigation into the \$156 billion data-brokerage industry. *Gawker* additionally reported that one data broker is selling lists of consumers suffering from cancer, diabetes and depression—and [the medications](#) they take for those conditions. Other lists name consumers' credit scores and specific health conditions.

Nine companies were named: Acxiom, Experian, Epsilon, Reed Elsevier, Equifax, TransUnion, Rapleaf, Spokeo and Datalogix. But only a few were mentioned as being "cooperative" with the investigation, like Equifax, while most refused to explain how they collected their data, or who they were selling their lists to. With these extremely sensitive databases continuing to grow, the call is for relevant consumer protection laws to also protect individual privacy.

Huge data-breaches of consumer information seem to occur monthly in the US, the latest being 40 million customers of Target. But Associated Press (through the *HonoluluStarAdvertiser*) at the end of December 2013 reported on a [Casino company data breach](#) from March to October 2013. [Affinity Gaming](#) announced that credit and debit card information of patrons at eleven sites had been compromised from March through October 2013. This would be a lucrative example of people who could end up on unsavory data broker lists, since gamblers usually have the financial means and mindset to be targeted for "risky financial behavior."

## Patent Wars: A Major Victory, Better Descriptions,

## and a Unified European Patent Court

In August 2013, *Business Insider* (through Yahoo!News) ran an article about Kevin O'Connor, who had just sold his start-up DoubleClick to Google for \$3.1 Billion. O'Connor then turned around and started [FindTheBest](#) aimed at [helping consumers](#) make "informed choices" about anything they are about to invest in, from smartphones to universities. But O'Connor was immediately sued by an alleged patent troll (Lumen View) who claimed to hold the patent for "a system and method for facilitating bilateral and multilateral decision-making" that FindTheBest was supposedly infringing upon.

According to a 2012 study from the [Boston University School of Law](#), patent trolls cost US companies nearly \$30 Billion a year in "direct costs." Patent trolls target start-ups, since it's usually too expensive for a start-up to fight them in court. But Kevin O'Connor is wealthy—and he was ready and eager for a court fight. By the end of November 2013, the *LATimes* reported that O'Connor had [won a major victory](#) against Lumen View in a New York federal court, when Judge Denise Cote threw out the troll's patent. The Judge ruled that Lumen View's claim "was an abstract concept, not an invention, and therefore should not have been granted a patent" in the first place, since "having two or more parties input preference data is not inventive. Matchmakers have been doing this for millennia."

Also in August 2013, the *LATimes* (through the *Seattle Times*) reported that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) countered the charge that patent trolls are responsible for a surge in [patent litigation](#). The GAO asserts in a new report that most patent trolls are "nonpracticing entities" (or NPEs), and only account for 20% of all patent litigation. While the other 80% comes from "practicing entities," or real companies like Apple, Google, Samsung and so on. The real focus should be on software patents, according to this GAO report, which account for 89% of patent litigation. "The problem is that many patents are too vague or broad, essentially opening the door to endless litigation." The GAO suggests that the US Patent and Trademark Office redesign their patent applications, to provide less vague descriptions of especially software.

*The New York Times* in September 2013 ran a story about how the tech giants fear that patent wars will [spread to Europe](#). Google, Apple and Microsoft have spent millions of dollars to defend patent-infringement lawsuits in the US, and are worried that Europe could be the next battleground. Fourteen US tech companies sent a letter to European officials about the coming change that will give most of Europe a [Unified Patent Court](#). While applauding this pan-European effort, the American tech companies fear the new system could be vulnerable to patent trolls who would court-shop to find the most sympathetic jurisdictions. The UPC's legal status as of the end of 2013 is still "proposed," but it is expected to be in force by 2015.

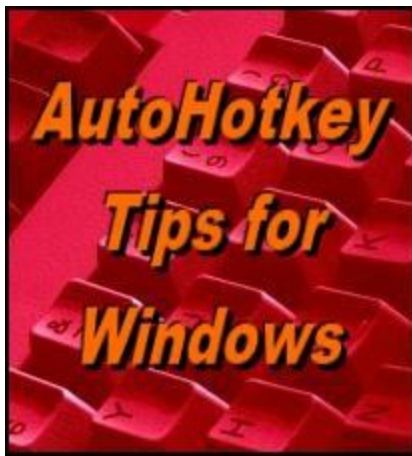
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*Marilyn is a freelance writer and humorist, with a special interest (besides computers and technology) in Science Fiction. She has several SciFi [series of e-novellas](#) available on*

Amazon Kindle: [Past Examination Technology](#) (Time Travel, Dystopian Future) and [Hunting Monster Aliens](#) (Science Fiction, Horror, Humor).

Just in 2013, she's had short SF stories published in the anthologies *Universe Horribilis* and *Lost Worlds, Retraced*, and magazines *Fiction Vortex* (First Place winner in June issue), *Encounters* and *Bewildering Stories*.

In addition, her *ComputerEdge* humor columns have been collected into a series of e-books found at [ComputerEdge E-books](#), "The Best Computer and Internet Humor, Anecdotes and Jokes Found on the Web." And twelve months (July 2012 - June 2013) of Little Known High Tech articles have been compiled into a multiple-index almanac: [Little Known High Tech Stories, Obscure News Items](#) for Amazon Kindle.



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

# Building a Recipe Book with AutoHotkey, Part VI: Finishing Up

## “A Few Things to Make Any AutoHotkey App a Little Better” by Jack Dunning

*While it's true that a program is never really completed, here are a few things, such as automatic backup, resizing fields with the window, saving the GUI windows size and position, showing the window with a hotkey or tray menu, checking for changes in the data, and saving on exit, which will make your app a little safer and more usable.*

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*If you're new to AutoHotkey, the material in this column may seem a little overwhelming. However, there are thousands of simple things that you can do on your Windows computer with AutoHotkey which will make your computing life so much better—and they're easy to do. For a quick look, check out this page: [Introduction to AutoHotkey: A Review and Guide for Beginners](#).*

Truthfully, even though we've reach the point where the AutoHotkey RecipeTree script is useful, an app is never really completed. There is always something else to add or improve. It is quite possible to spend the rest of your life on perfecting that script. But, it's never perfect. At some point you need to make the decision that unless someone finds a bug, you're going to move on to the next project. However, here are a few ideas that might help get the app a little closer to where you want it.

## Backup Data File

In the original script, we merely deleted the old file CSV data file before saving the new one. It's always a good idea to backup at least the last version of the data file before saving the new one. Rather than deleting the old file in the *UpdateFile()* function, the following line of code is used to rename the file (as discussed in a [previous column](#)):

```
FileMove, RecipeTree.csv, RecipeTree.bak, 1
```

This line uses the [FileMove command](#) to copy the data file to a backup (BAK) file, then deleting the original data file—effectively renaming the file. Notice that the "1" flag is required to overwrite the previous backup file. (Possibly the command deletes the old backup first, then renames the data file to the backup file name—the effect is the same.)

If you want to keep more backup copies, then add the *A\_Now* date/time stamp to the backup filename:

```
FileMove, RecipeTree.csv, RecipeTree%A_Now%.bak
```

This will create a new file every time you save the data file. This technique will create

numerous backups, so you may need to occasionally delete the older backup files.

To restore an older data backup, delete (or rename) the current data file and change the name of the desired backup to *RecipeTree.csv*.

## Fields Resize When a Window Is Resized

Since the first version of RecipeTree, the fields inside the window resize to fit when you resize the GUI. While not discussed in the previous *TreeView* columns, the following code is used to create that effect:

```
GuiSize: ; Expand or shrink the TreeView in response to the user's resizing of the w:
if A_EventInfo = 1 ; The window has been minimized. No action needed.
    return
; Otherwise, the window has been resized or maximized. Resize the ListView to match.
GuiControl, Move, MyTreeView, % " H" . (A_GuiHeight - 40) ; "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 20) .
GuiControl, Move, MyEdit, % "W" . (A_GuiWidth - 275) . " H" . (A_GuiHeight - 40)
GuiControl, Move, Button1, % "y" . (A_GuiHeight - 30)
Return
```

This feature is discussed in the "[Making GUIs Resizable](#)" section of an earlier column.

## Save GUI Windows Size and Position

In the "[Save Size and Position on the Screen](#)" section of the column mentioned above, the script saves the coordinates in the first line of the data file so that the last position and size of the window is used when the app is reloaded. By saving this data, it's not necessary to reposition and resize the window on each load.

The main point when implementing this feature is that the first line of the data file is read during the auto-execute section before displaying the window and the remaining data is read starting on the second line in the data file.

The primary issue is that the window needs to be displayed on the screen when the coordinates are saved. If the window is minimized, then it must be put back on the screen (either through [Gui, Show](#) or [WinRestore](#)) before the coordinates are captured, see "[Minimized Window Problem](#)" section in this linked column. Otherwise, there will be negative numbers saved for the coordinates causing future loading problems. Unless you put a trap in the loading script for negative coordinates, the file will need to be edited by hand to correct the problem.

## Activate the Window with a Hotkey or Tray Menu

Sometimes we want to minimize or even close a window, but leave it running in the background. In that case it may be convenient to reopen the window with a hotkey combination. However, it's not always easy to remember the hotkey, so adding it as an item in the System Tray icon right-click menu solves the problem as shown in the "[Adding Hotkey Combination and System Tray Right-click Item to Show Windows](#)" of this earlier column.

```
Hotkey, ^!r, ShowRecipe ; Auto-execute section
Menu, Tray, Add, Show Recipe Tree, ShowRecipe ; Auto-execute section
```

All that is needed is the label (subroutine) with the *Gui, Show* command:

```
ShowRecipe:
    Gui, Show,, Recipe Tree
Return
```

## Add a Check for Changes in the Data

There is no point in saving data to the file if it hasn't changed. I looked for ways to visually indicate that some editing had occurred, but there were few options. One method that does the job is using the [GuiControl command](#) to change the background color of the *TreeView*. (This technique doesn't work for the *Edit* field since it does not have the *+background* as an option.) By adding the line:

```
GuiControl, +backgroundFFFFCC, MyTreeView
```

at the appropriate places in the script, the user is visually warned about any changes by the pale yellow change in the *TreeView* background (see Figure 1).

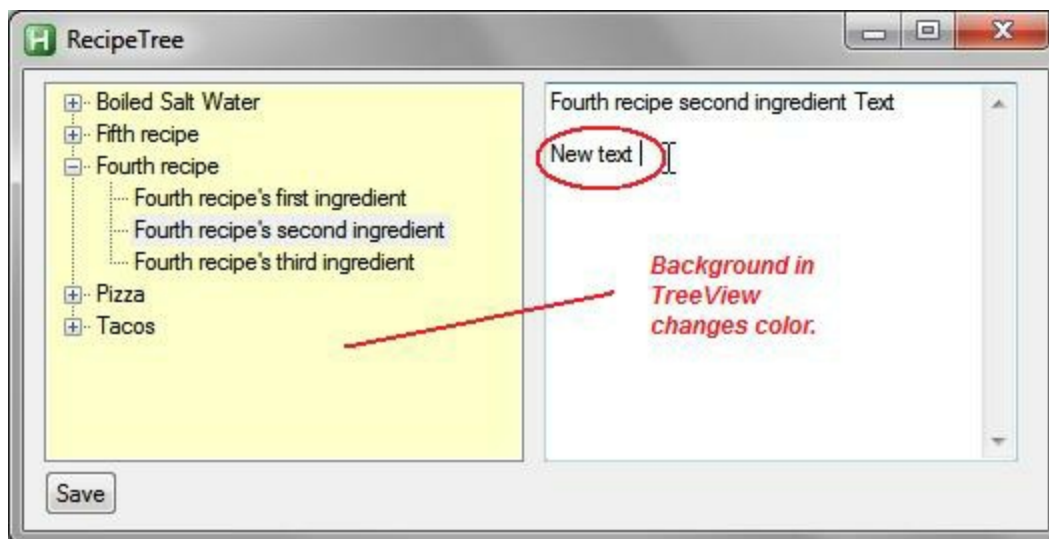


Figure 1. The background of the *TreeView* changes to pale yellow whenever there is editing. It reverts to white on the

next save.

Another technique for tracking changes is to add a variable to track whenever any editing begins. In this case we added:

```
RecipeChange := 0
```

A value of 0 indicates that there have been no changes. Both the `GuiControl` command and a change in the value of `RecipeChange` are included at the proper place to detect editing in the `MyEdit` field and the `TreeView` branches.

```
GuiControl, +backgroundFFFFCC, MyTreeView
RecipeChange := 1
```

Adding these lines to the `MyEdit` label which triggers whenever there is a change in the `Edit` field accomplishes the task for the right-hand edit box. Detecting changes in the text in the `TreeView` branches using [A\\_GuiEvent](#) is just a little more involved:

```
If A_GuiEvent = E
{
    GuiControl, +backgroundFFFFCC, MyTreeView
    RecipeChange := 1
}
```

This snippet of code is added to the `MyTreeView` label.

The reverse code is added to the `Save` label to show that the data has been saved:

```
GuiControl, +backgroundWhite, MyTreeView
RecipeChange := 0
```

These lines could have been added to the `UpdateFile()` function, but the variable `RecipeChange` would need to be declared [Global](#). Otherwise the function would treat it as a local variable and not update the value for use in the rest of the script.

## Saving on Exit

If we have made any changes, then it would be nice to be warned before we exit the app and lose all those changes. This is where the `RecipeChange` variable comes in handy. The [GuiClose label](#) triggers whenever there is an attempt to exit the script:

```
GuiClose: ; Exit the script when the user closes the TreeView's GUI window.
    If RecipeChange = 0
        ExitApp

    MsgBox, 4100, Data Changed! Save?, Data Changed! Save? Click Yes or No?
    IfMsgBox No ;Don't delete
        ExitApp
```



```

UpdateFile()
ExitApp
Return

```

If there are no changes (*If RecipeChange = 0*), the app exits immediately. Otherwise a [MsgBox command](#) queries whether you want to save the data. If "No", the script exits without saving. If "Yes", the script runs *UpdateFile()*, then exits.

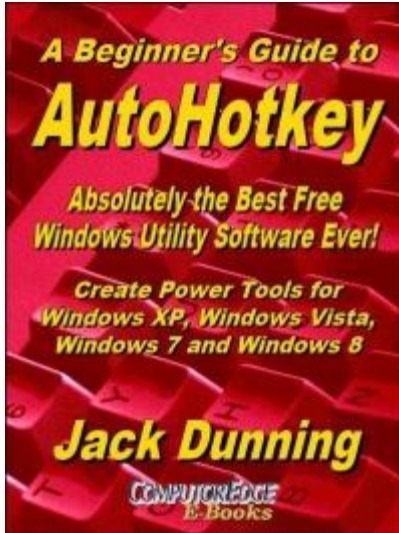
The last problem occurred when I exited the script using the Exit option in the right-click menu for the System Tray icon. It never asked to save. Adding the line:

```
OnExit, GuiClose
```

at the beginning of the auto-execute section of the script resolved the problem.

Many of the changes (not all) suggested here have been incorporated and can be found in the current version of the script (*RecipeTree 1.6.ahk*) which can be found (along with older versions) in the ZIP file *RecipeTree.zip* found at *ComputerEdge* [AutoHotkey Dropbox download Web site](#).

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The new 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](#) offers a gentle approach to learning AutoHotkey.

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.

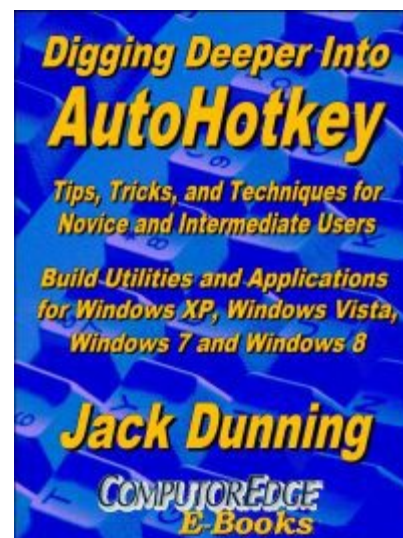
Based upon the series of articles in *ComputerEdge*, Jack takes you through his learning experience as he explores writing simple AutoHotkey scripts for adding repetitive text in any program or on the Web, running programs with special hotkeys or gadgets, manipulating the size and screen location of 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!](#)

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Jack's latest AutoHotkey book which is comprised of updated, reorganized and indexed columns from *ComputerEdge* is now available at [Amazon for Kindle hardware](#) (or free software) users. 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.



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

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

*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.computoregde.com](http://www.computoregde.com). He can be reached at [ceeditor@computoregde.com](mailto:ceeditor@computoregde.com). Jack is now in the process of updating and compiling his hundreds of articles and columns into e-books. Currently available:*

[\*Hidden Windows Tools for Protecting, Problem Solving and Troubleshooting Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP Computers.\*](#)

Jack's [\*A Beginner's Guide to AutoHotkey, Absolutely the Best Free Windows Utility Software Ever!: Create Power Tools for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8 and Digging Deeper Into AutoHotkey.\*](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Wally Wang's Apple Farm

“The Mythical Reasons to Stay with Windows” by  
Wally Wang

## Wally Wang's Apple Farm

*The Mythical Reasons to Stay with Windows; A 3D Printed Liver; Creating Math Equations in Word 2011; 12 Days of Gifts; Tweets Show Popularity; Disappearing Brands; AutoCorrect.*

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In the old days, people stuck with Windows because they didn't want to learn a new user interface and they didn't want to pay any more for a computer than they had to. Of course now both of those reasons are no longer valid any more.

When Microsoft introduced Windows 8, they offered a schizophrenic user interface that confuses people with disappearing menus and cryptic icons along with adding multiple steps to do the simplest tasks. In Windows 7, you can shut down your computer in two steps. In Windows 8, it takes four steps to do the exact same thing, plus you have to look for the hidden Charm Bar that pops out when you move the mouse to the right corner of the screen. Since there are no visual cues that the Charm Bar even exists, you'll likely never find it on your own, which makes Windows 8 extremely non-intuitive.

Given a choice between using the simpler, familiar interface of Windows 7 or the confusing, less productive interface of Windows 8, there's little reason for Windows 7 users to switch to Windows 8. Those people who do switch to Windows 8 often use a program like Classic Shell to make Windows 8 look and behave more like Windows 7, which tells you how popular and successful the Windows 8 interface really is even among Windows enthusiasts.

If you're currently using Windows 7, Microsoft has effectively given you zero reasons to switch to Windows 8. If you're willing to tackle the frustrating and confusing interface of Windows 8, then switching to the simpler interface of either OS X or Linux will actually be easier, especially if you're familiar with Windows 7.

Besides the user interface issues, Windows enthusiasts used to claim that Windows PCs cost less. Yet Chromebooks cost even less, so if price is your main criteria, you can get a \$199 Chromebook instead of a \$400 Windows 8 PC. According to Amazon, Chromebooks were the [most popular laptops](#) sold this Christmas season.

If you don't want to buy a new computer, just replace Windows on your current PC with a free copy of Linux. There's even a new Linux distribution called [elementary OS](#) that mimics the OS X interface. If you think that Macintosh computers cost too much, then any amount you pay for Windows will always cost more than a free copy of Linux. If your whole justification for using Windows instead of a Macintosh is price, then you should dump Windows and switch to a free copy of Linux instead.



Figure 1. The Linux-based elementary OS looks like OS X.

To further drive a stake through the myth that Macintosh computers cost more than similar Windows PCs, Futurelooks took two versions of Apple's latest Mac Pro to determine if you could build a [similar PC for less](#). The Futurelooks editor found that to duplicate a fully loaded \$9,599 Mac Pro would cost \$11,530.54, which means you're paying 20 percent more for a Windows PC. To duplicate the features of the \$2,999 entry-level Mac Pro, Futurelooks found that you would pay \$3,994.65, which represents a 33 percent higher price over the Mac Pro.

If you're using price as a reason to stay with Windows, you now have two choices. First, you can save even more money by switching to Linux or ChromeOS. If you want the most powerful personal computer currently on the market, then it's actually cheaper to get a Mac Pro rather than a Windows PC. In both cases, a Windows PC is actually the more expensive option. If price is your main criteria, then you don't want a Windows PC.

The myth that a Windows PC is always less expensive is simply not true. Knowing this, you can either hide your head in the sand and pretend this evidence doesn't exist (which many Windows enthusiasts will have no problem doing) or you can calmly examine your options and decide if learning the strange interface of Windows 8 and paying more for a Windows 8 PC is

worth sticking with Windows.

For the technically-inclined, switch to Linux and run [VirtualBox](#) so you can convert your current Windows PC into a virtual machine. For those who want a simpler solution, switch to OS X and run [Parallels](#) so you can run both Windows and OS X programs, giving you access to the largest software library in the world.

If you think the idea of running another operating system within another operating system is too messy and complicated, then you have yet another reason to avoid the newest batch of Windows 8 PCs. The latest trend is to create [hybrid PCs](#) running both Windows 8 and Android. The idea is that Windows 8 still isn't optimized for tablet use, so rather than torture people into using Windows 8 as a tablet operating system, they can just use Android instead.

If you want to pay more to get a Windows 8 PC, you can then deal with the frustrating and confusing Windows 8 interface and lose the ability to run OS X software. Toss in the need to get and maintain an antivirus program for a Windows 8 PC that will take up space and slow down your computer, and you can see why so many people are avoiding Windows 8 PCs. By making Windows 8 so hard to use and charging so much for a single copy, Microsoft has given everyone two huge reasons to consider alternatives to Windows altogether.

[The NPD Group](#) has tracked sales of computers over the past year and their data shows declining sales of both desktops and laptops with increasing sales of tablets and Chromebooks. Remember when critics claimed that tablets were worthless compared to regular laptops? (Chances are good that most critics of tablets have conveniently forgotten their earlier criticism of tablets as well.) If these trends continue, the future will be anything but Windows.

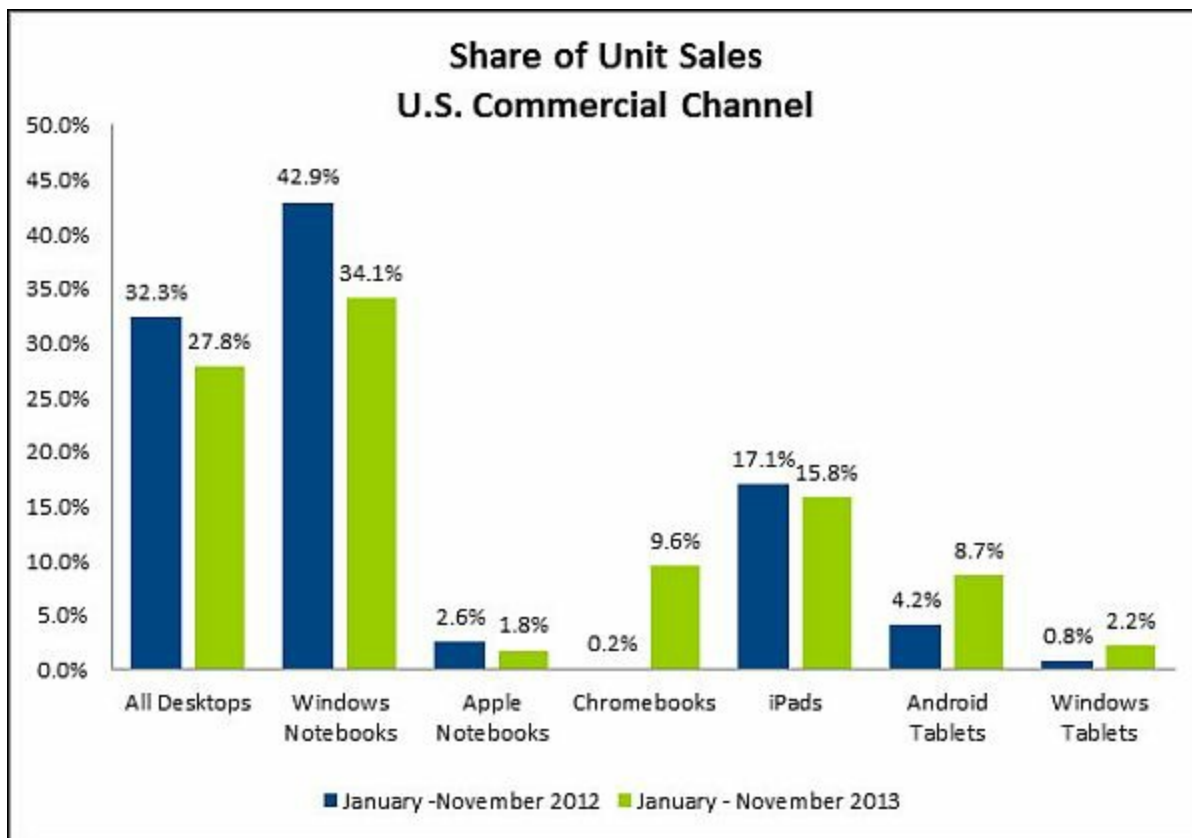


Figure 2. Sales of computers are falling while tablets and Chromebooks keep rising.

## A 3D Printed Liver

In 2014, San Diego-based bio-printing company Organovo, expects to unveil the world's first printed organ—a [human liver](#). Currently printing living cells hasn't worked since the living cells often die before the 3D printer can finish. Organovo has managed to keep 3D printed cells alive for up to 40 days.

Initially 3D printed organs can be used to create human organs for drug testing. Right now most drug testing takes place on animals, which can create skewed results in humans. By testing directly on human tissue, drug companies can see the effect directly on human cells.

Of course, once companies can get 3D printed organs working, it's only a matter of time before they can create organs for transplants. Since the 3D printer can create cells out of your own DNA, there should be no problems with organ rejection since the 3D printed organ will essentially be your own.

Strangely, research into whole organ regeneration currently receives less than \$500 million in funding a year in the US, compared to \$5 billion for cancer research and \$2.8 billion for HIV and AIDS. Of course, the latest Dallas Cowboys football stadium only cost [\\$1.3 billion](#) of public money to benefit a private business, so you can see where society's priorities currently

lie.

## Creating Math Equations in Word 2011

Most people think a word processor is just for typing text, but many word processors now let you create math equations and symbols, which can be handy if you need to write mathematical papers. If you're using Microsoft Word 2011 for the Mac, you can easily insert math equations by clicking the Insert menu and choose Equation.

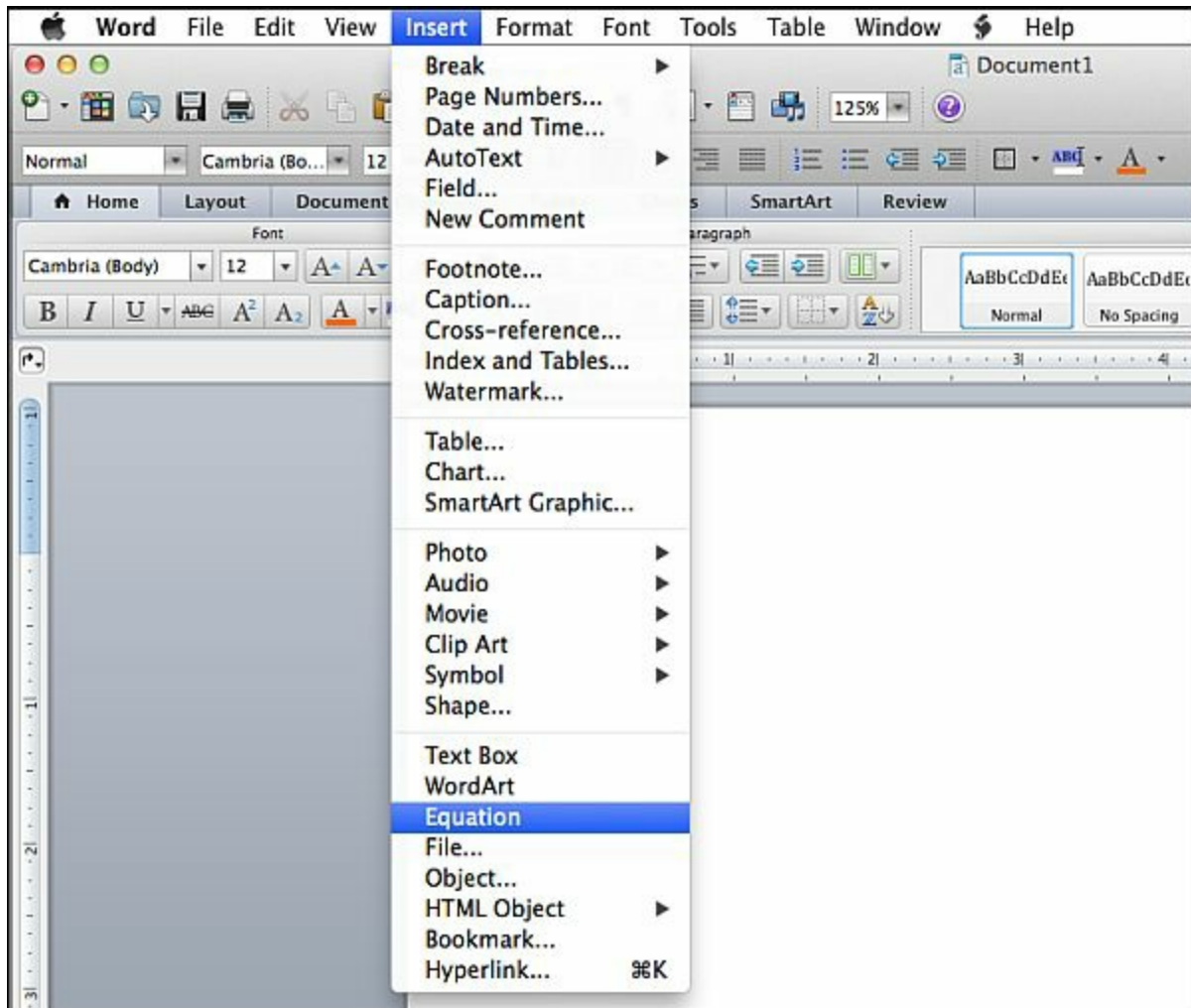


Figure 3. The Equation command opens the math editor.

At this point, Word displays additional commands that let you click on a symbol to insert it in your document such as the infinity sign.



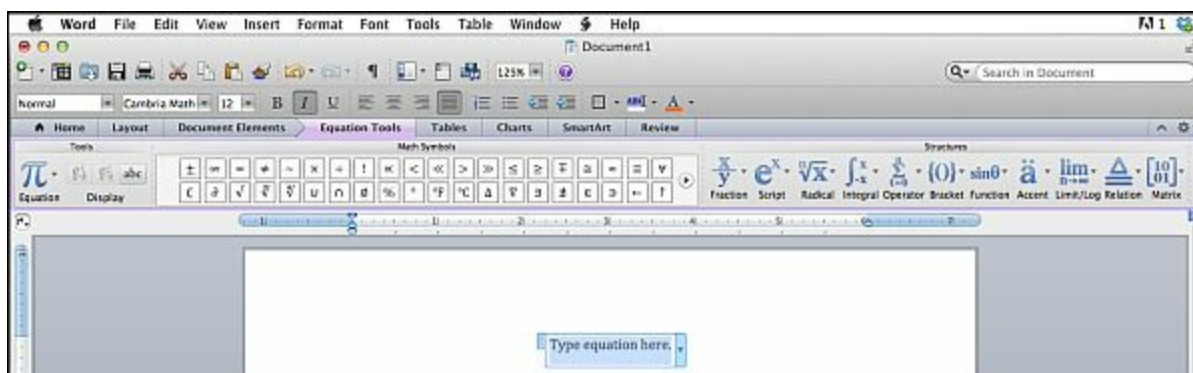


Figure 4. You can click on a symbol to insert it into a document.

Rather than type individual mathematical symbols, you can also use different categories of mathematical symbols such as Fractions, Integrals, and Functions. When you choose one of these features, a menu appears, letting you choose the equation that most closely matches what you need.

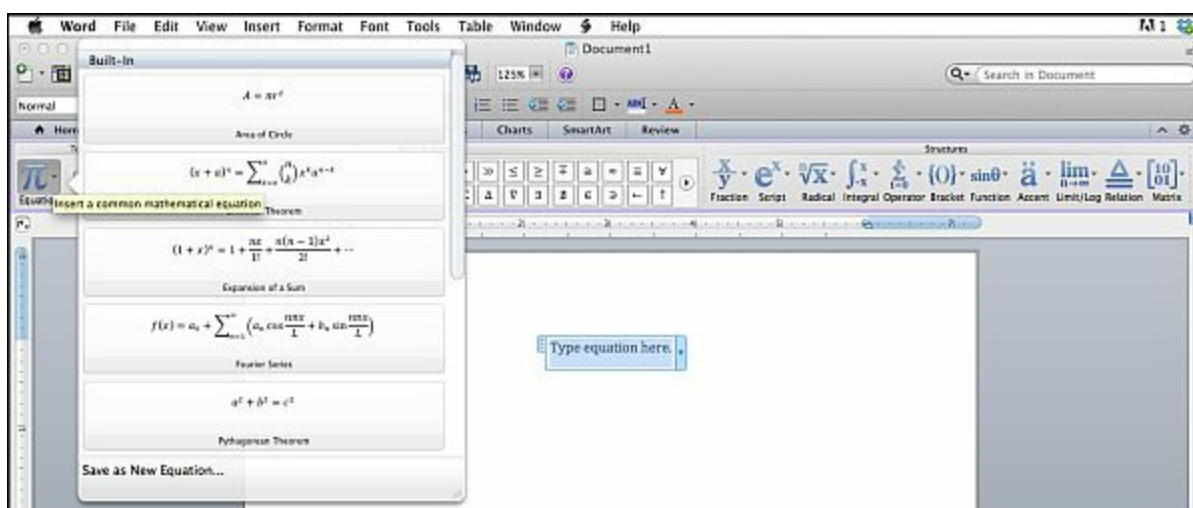


Figure 5. Menus let you choose the type of equation you want to insert.

When you choose an equation, you can then edit it to type in your own variables, numbers, or mathematical operators such as a < sign. Basically, creating math equations in Word just involves picking an equation close to what you want and then editing it so you get exactly what you want.

Not everyone needs to type math symbols or equations, but for those who do, this can be an obscure feature that's handy to use. Creating math equations in a word processor isn't hard, but it's not as easy as typing ordinary text either. After a little bit of practice, you'll soon get the hang of it and find that creating different types of mathematical equations can be tackled fairly easily with a little bit of patience.

## 12 Days of Gifts

If you download Apple's [12 Days of Gifts](#) app, you can receive a different gift every day. Although Apple started the gifts several days ago, some of the earlier gifts are still available for free through the 12 Days of Gifts app. Some of the free gifts include songs from Justin Timberlake, games, and the movie *Hugo*.

Once the promotion for the 12 Days of Gifts app runs out, you can continue looking for free apps by visiting the [Apple Sliced](#) or [AppShopper](#) sites. Both sites list the latest free apps along with price drops for popular apps. By taking advantage of price drops, you can pick up useful apps for less.

## Tweets Show Popularity

[Topsy](#) offers an interesting interactive graph that measures the frequency of certain words mentioned on Twitter. By typing in phrases like "Android," iPad," and "Kindle," you can see what people tweeted about around the holiday season. Not surprisingly, tweets about the iPhone and iPad skyrocketed around Christmas.

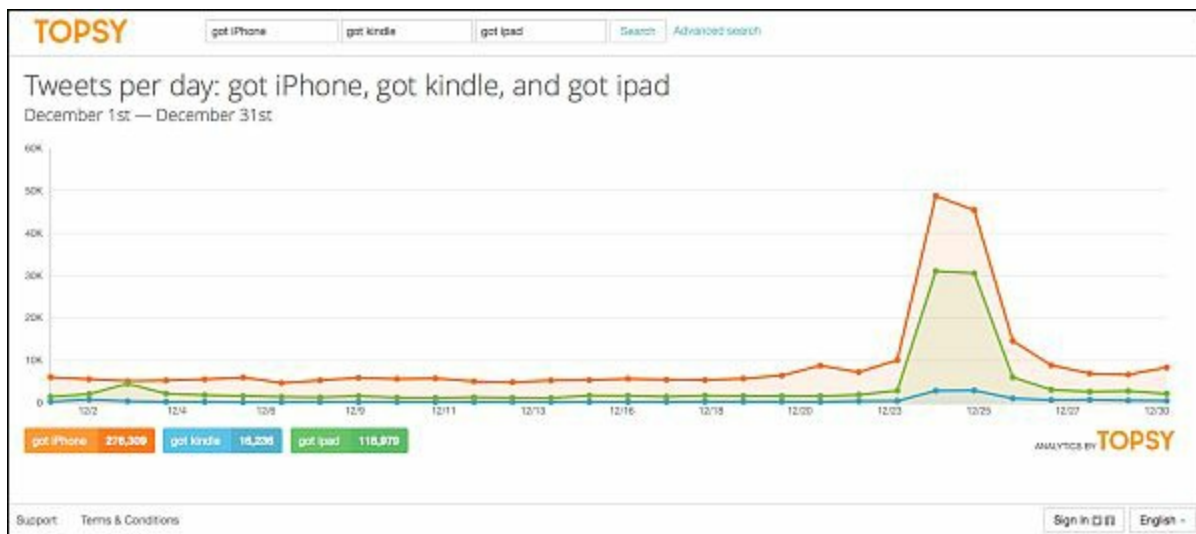


Figure 6. The frequency of tweets indicates that many people got an iPhone or iPad for Christmas.

By typing in different phrases such as "got Android" or "got Samsung," you can see the popularity of other devices around Christmas compared to an iPhone or iPad. While not completely scientific, this measurement of tweets does suggest that many people received an iPhone or iPad as a gift while others either didn't feel the need to tweet that they got a Samsung tablet or Android phone, or they didn't get one in the first place.

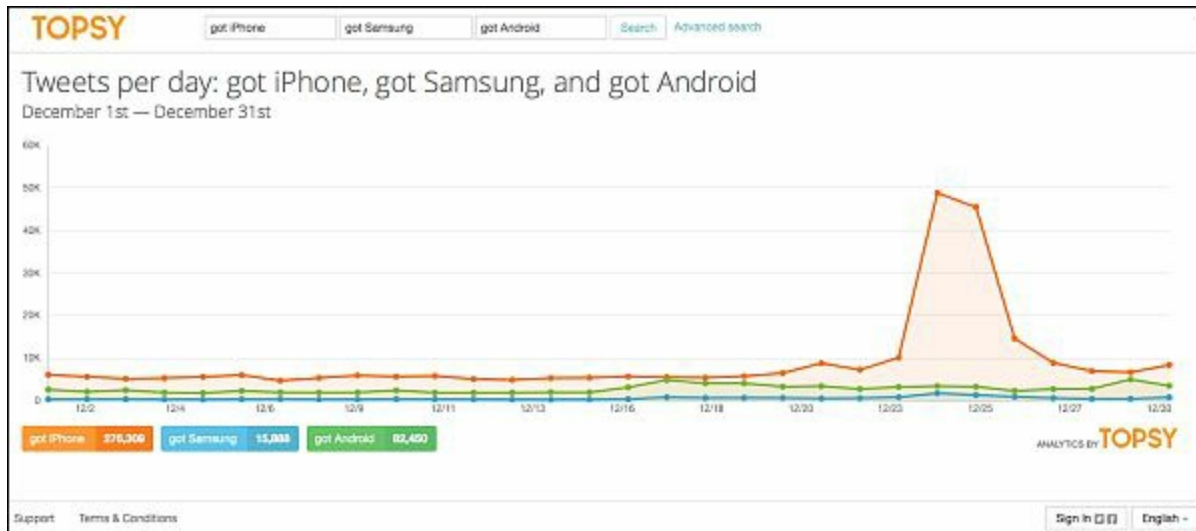


Figure 7. Tweets about Samsung and Android devices seem much less than iPhones.

By examining phrases like "got laptop," you can see a definite increase around Christmas. Yet when you type "got Surface," you won't see a similar jump around Christmas. Whatever the reason for the jump in tweets about the iPhone and iPad compared to an Android device or a Surface tablet, the Topsy site lets you see what's popular on Twitter at any given time. Chances are good that interest around the iPhone and iPad was fairly high during Christmas, which likely translated into higher sales during the holiday season.

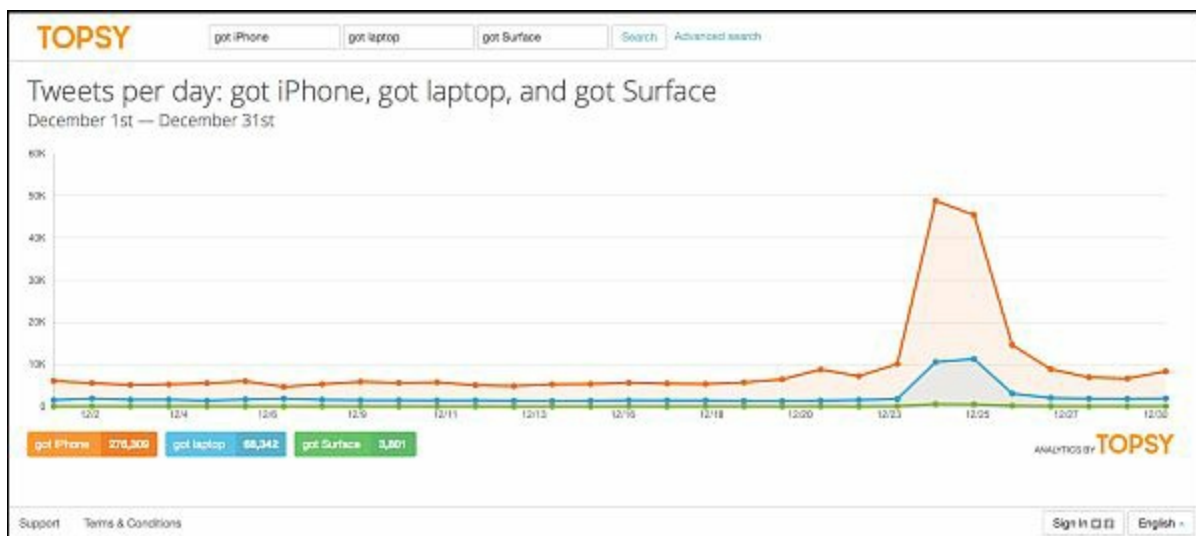


Figure 8. Tweets about laptops increased around Christmas.

## Disappearing Brands

We already know Blackberry won't be a leader in the smartphone market any more, but the *Huffington Post* lists ten brands that will likely [disappear in 2014](#). Not surprisingly, one of them is Barnes & Noble's Nook. Analysts estimate that Amazon receives 130 million visitors a

month while Barnes & Noble's site just receives 6 million visitors each month. Given those numbers, it's hard to see how the Nook can survive, especially when the market for dedicated e-readers keeps dropping in favor of general purpose tablets. Don't be surprised if both the Nook and Barnes & Noble's retail stores disappear in 2014.

Another future casualty is LivingSocial, a competitor to Groupon. The idea of merchants taking huge discounts and sharing their minor profits to attract cheapskate customers is simply unsustainable. Anyone can offer a huge discount to attract customers, but cutting prices to attract customers means you'll work harder to make less. The less money you make, the less service you can provide so you'll wind up dealing with stingy customers who cause the most trouble.

In any business, you never want to lower prices so low that you have to work hard to make pennies. People who shop solely by price tend to be the most troublesome customers because they demand value without paying for it. By raising your prices, you actually weed out the most troublesome customers and spend less time making more money, selling products and services to people willing to pay for value.

This is why Apple makes the bulk of the smartphone profits while Android grabs the bulk of the market share. Android backers like Samsung have to flood the market with different devices while still making less than Apple, and they wind up with less loyal customers than Apple. So Samsung works harder to earn less while Apple works less and makes more. Which business model do you want to follow? If you hate Apple just because of their prices (which are often no higher than Android smartphones), chances are good you're probably one of those troublesome customers unwilling to pay for anything while demanding everything.

Perhaps the most surprising brand that may disappear soon is Martha Stewart's *Living Magazine*. The publishing division of Martha Stewart's empire lost \$62 million last year. Most likely the high cost of printing combined with the decline of advertising revenue spells doom for most print publications.

In the old days, companies had to advertise through magazines, newspapers, TV, and radio. Now with the Internet, advertisers can reach customers without paying a middleman for access to an audience. Advertising is essentially free, which is why the Yellow Pages is disappearing along with newspapers and magazines.

Brands in danger of disappearing simply aren't meeting the needs of their customers. Instead of catering to the needs of today's customers, they're catering to yesterday's market. By avoiding the mistakes of these endangered brands, you can insure your own survival in the future. By ignoring trends clearly evident today, you risk disappearing just like Barnes & Noble, Blackberry, and LivingSocial.

\* \* \*

If you're using OS X Mavericks, you probably have its AutoCorrect feature turned on. While mostly helpful, AutoCorrect can sometimes replace misspelled words with a correctly spelled word that completely changes the meaning of what you wanted to say.

One way to correct this is to turn off AutoCorrect altogether. Click the Apple menu and choose System Preferences. When a System Preferences window appears, click the Language & Region icon. Then click the Keyboard Preferences button and then the Text tab.

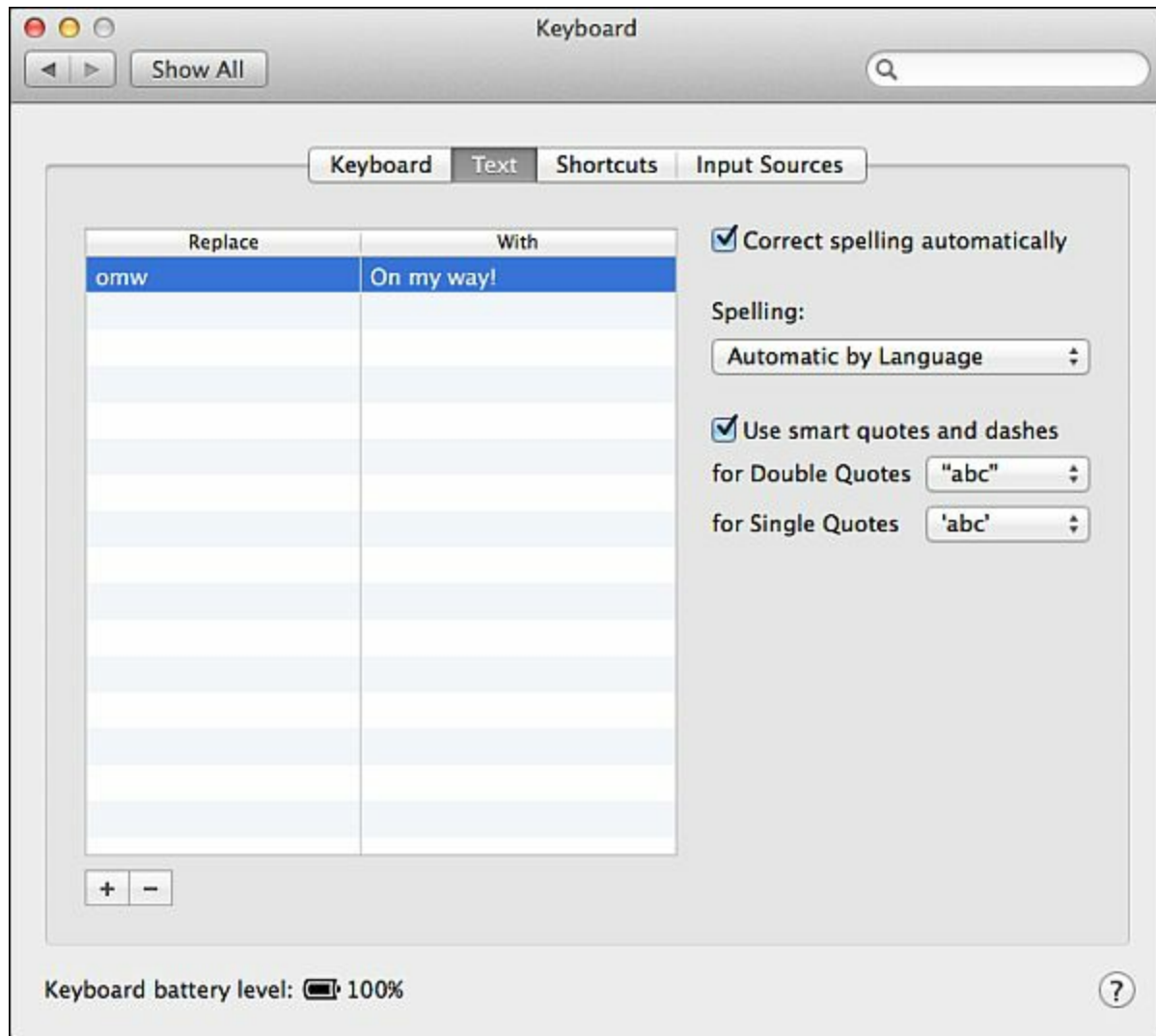


Figure 9. Turning off or modifying AutoCorrect.

To turn off AutoCorrect, clear the "Correct spelling automatically" check box. If you want to define the specific language spelling to use, click in the Spelling pop-up menu and choose U.S. English or British English.

You can also define your own commonly misspelled words by typing the misspelling in the Replace column and then typing the correct spelling in the With column. This also lets you type abbreviations that OS X can expand into full text such as typing "On my way!" and have OS X type "On my way! automatically.

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

*Wally is responsible for the following books:*

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

[\*Beginning Programming for Dummies\*](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[\*Erotophobia \(A novel\)\*](#)

[\*Math for the Zombie Apocalypse\*](#)

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](mailto:wally@computoredge.com) or you can follow him on Twitter [@wallacewang\\_com](#).



- 🌐 Don't say we didn't warn you.
- 🌐🌐 What is that store's return policy?
- 🌐🌐🌐 We've seen better, we've seen worse.
- 🌐🌐🌐🌐 You'll probably be happy you did.
- 🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 What are you waiting for?

# Worldwide News & Product Reviews

**“The latest in tech news and hot product reviews.”** by Charles Carr

*Marketing Expert Shares Inside Tips for Success in 2014; KillScreen's Best Games of 2013; Polaroid is Back.*

## Marketing Expert Shares Inside Tips for Success in 2014

Becky Robinson, the founder and CEO of [Weaving Influence](#), says the key to effective marketing in the new year begins with a company's Web site. She shares four imperative questions that companies must address for best results in 2014:

The clock is about to tick its last tock in 2013 and leading companies are ready to activate their full marketing strategies for a new year. Social media expert and marketing strategist Becky Robinson says that the foundation of today's branding success includes a solid social media strategy but begins with a thorough and polished Web site.



Any social media building efforts must begin with attention to your Web site. To get there, it is imperative companies ask themselves these four questions to ensure optimization of their Web sites for success in 2014 and beyond.

1) Is your Web site mobile responsive?

Increasingly, people are accessing Web sites from mobile devices. In fact, Internet Retailer reported recently that the mobile revolution has reached a new milestone. Citing a comScore survey, the group reported that by mid 2013 and for the first

time ever, a majority (55%) of time spent with e-retail now occurs on a mobile device.

Robinson says that it is imperative that companies' Web sites be mobile responsive or they may miss the opportunity to connect with potential customers who may have little patience for sites that don't render well on their devices. She adds that if it's not easy for customers to find value on a Web site, people will click away until they find easy-to-consume content.

## 2) Are you posting new content regularly?

Companies must give people a reason to come back to their sites. "If your Web site is static, people have no reason to come back to your site. You must create a plan for posting fresh content regularly—no less than once per week—and make sure that your fresh content (blog posts, articles) are engaging, helpful, and tailored to fit your audience," says Robinson. By doing this, you are positioning yourself to become an invaluable resource to your visitors.

## 3) Are you promoting your content effectively?

Many people take the "if you build it, they will come" approach to Web influence. While a company's Web site is their best asset in building online influence and generating leads, traffic won't automatically appear. Robinson shares, "If you want to build Web traffic, you'll need healthy, growing communities on Facebook and Twitter. When you write new content, you'll need to share it (multiple times, in various ways) to draw visitors to your site."

## 4) Are you converting your visitors to your mailing list?

"If the Web site does not have an obvious, easy-to-access opt-in to your mailing list, you are missing an opportunity to deepen your relationship with your customers," says the strategist. "Though some people predict the demise of e-mail, e-mail still is offering a great opportunity for you to stay closely connected to prospects and customers." Robinson and team advise clients regularly to be sure that any e-mail sent is relevant and valuable to the client's community. "Before hitting send, be clear about your why for sending an e-mail and what you hope to accomplish," she finishes.





# KillScreen's Best Games of 2013

Our colleagues over at KillScreen write in this week:

After polling, politicking, arguing, crying, hugging, playing, re-playing, and, finally, writing, we assembled a list of the top 25 video games of 2013. If you're looking for something to play this holiday, start there.

25. Ridiculous Fishing (Vlambeer)
24. Salty Bet (Salty)
23. Europa Universalis IV (Paradox Development Studio)
22. Dota 2 (Valve)
21. Corrypt (Michael Brough)
20. Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon (Next Level Games)
19. Candy Box (aniwey)
18. The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds (Nintendo EAD 3)
17. Grand Theft Auto 5 (Rockstar North)
16. Super Mario 3d World (Nintendo EAD Toyko)
15. Miasmata (IonFX)
14. Bioshock Infinite (Irrational Games)
13. Device 6 (Simogo)
12. Ni No Kuni (Level-5)
11. Metal Gear Rising (PlatinumGames)
10. 868-Hack (Michael Brough)
9. Tomb Raider (Crystal Dynamics)



8. Saints Row IV (Deep Silver Volition)



7. Proteus (Ed Key and David Kanaga)



6. Fire Emblem Awakening (Intelligent Systems)
5. The Stanley Parable (Galactic Cafe)
4. Kentucky Route Zero (Cardboard Computer)
3. Papers, Please (Lucas Pope)
2. The Last of Us (Naughty Dog)
1. Gone Home (The Fullbright Company)



Quite a few of the winners are available for PC. Read detailed descriptions at [killscreendaily.com](http://killscreendaily.com).

## Polaroid is Back

Product: [Z340E 14-megapixel instant print digital camera](#)

Manufacturer: Polaroid

Web site: [www.polaroidstore.com](http://www.polaroidstore.com)

Price: \$249

For many of us who watched Polaroid grow into a juggernaut of instant photography in the 60s and following decades, their decline was painful to watch (think Blackberry smartphone maker RIM in recent times). Now, Polaroid is mounting something of a comeback with several new products that feel old in the best way possible.

Even in this day of instant digital photos and personal color printers, Polaroid still sees a market for a personal camera that prints out pictures within moments of taking them: a realtor touring a home with a client, a teacher with his/her class, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, etc.



The Z340E uses something called Zero Ink Printing Technology (ZINK) to print 3 x 4 inch full-color pics on ZINK instant film without ever needing to buy a single ink cartridge. The prints aren't incredible, but they look pretty good. They're also smudge-proof, water-resistant, and tear-resistant. Photos take about a minute to print and you get about two dozen prints per battery charge—many more than that if you're just storing them in memory. ZINK paper refills cost about \$60 for 100 sheets. I saw 50 sheets for \$27. Not exactly something you'll want to squander.

But, of course, that's the beauty of digital. Use the camera's 2.7-inch LCD screen to view and edit images before committing them to paper. And what a pile of options you get: pre-shot presets like daylight, night, sepia, sunset, and b&w; and whacky after-shot effects like snow, party, soft skin, flowing water, and fisheye. There's also a pretty cool feature called Pre-composition Mode that allows you to insert someone in front of a precaptured background.



And you can add an immense number of borders including the iconic white Polaroid frame with the wide bottom just like back in the day—you know, the ones we used to "wave" or "shake" to hasten developing (which was an urban myth, according to the company).

The Z340E has a micro SD card slot (and a measly 30 MB of onboard storage) so you can store images for archiving, home printing, or uploading to social networking sites at your leisure.

The Z340E also records audio and even shoots video at several resolutions maxing out at 1280 x 720 (16:9) (Support SDHC\_Class(6)).

While the ZINK instant film is cheaper than the old chemical type, it still works out to about 50 cents per pic. So be sure you're prepared to burn through some cash when you take it to your little niece's birthday party. Also, prints from most modern home printers will probably look brighter and sharper than what comes out of the Z340E.

If you find yourself in situations where you need to put a pic in someone's hand within a minute, the Z340E just might be the right tool for the job.




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*SPECS (from Polaroid):*

*14-megapixel digital camera that prints 3-inch by 4-inch photos instantly*

*2.7-inch bright color LCD screen for viewing images*

*Micro SD compatible for expanded memory.*

*Internal memory: 30MB flash memory*

*Up to 5x digital zoom*

*External memory: SD (up to 4GB), SDHC card (up to 32GB guaranteed)*

*Prints without ink using ZINK Zero Ink Printing Technology from ZINK Imaging*

*Color: Black*

*Compatible with ZINK Z3X4 (3 inch by 4 Inch) instant film*

*Download FREE Z340E instant camera borders*

*1-year limited warranty*

*INCLUDED: 10-sheets of Polaroid ZINK paper, PC and MAC software, a rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery, and AC adapter/charger, a USB cable, and a hand strap.*

*NOTE: Polaroid also offers the [Z2300](#), a similarly-featured 10-megapixel model that lists for \$179.99*

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*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](http://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](http://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

*"Windows 8 Pro Another Incremental Advance," "Copy from MS Word to Outlook"*

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### Windows 8 Pro Another Incremental Advance

[Regarding Jack Dunning's December 13 [article](#), "Windows 8 Fails":]

Let's face it, every version of Windows since Windows 95 has been an incremental improvement over the previous version. And the new UI changes have often been an annoyance. Windows 8 Pro fails mainly in the new UI annoyance factor. Fortunately this can be completely reversed with the purchase of Stardock's \$8 combo of "Start8" and "Modern Mix".

However, it should be mentioned that the "RT" version, called "Windows 8" now, that mainly runs store (Metro) apps, is Microsoft's attempt at simplifying and making Windows more secure and less troublesome than the so-called "Pro", "real", or "full" versions. It may some day come to pass that store apps will be adequate for most people's needs, especially if coupled with Cloud services, so that "real" Windows can be phased out.

-Ron Cerrato, San Diego, CA

### Copy from MS Word to Outlook

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

Any time you open a new MS Office program (like Word or Outlook) the system clears the clipboard contents. This means that the alternate CTRL+C and CTRL+V will not work as the clipboard is empty. To be able to copy from Word to Outlook, you must first open each of the programs, then copy from one, switch to the other and then paste. Been there, done that many times.

A quick test. Try a quick copy swipe from this text and then open the ClipBoard Viewer. Your copy will be there. Now open an occurrence of Word or Outlook. Go back to ClipBoard Viewer and note that the clipboard is now empty. Wiped out by MS Office.

-Rich, San Diego, CA

Contrary to Rich's experience, when I open a MS Office 97 application in XP SP3, the clipboard contents are not cleared and I can paste without re-copying.

-Jay, Lake Forest, CA

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*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](http://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](mailto:ceeditor@computoredge.com). If you would like to review our recent e-books, please visit [ComputerEdge E-Books](#).*

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